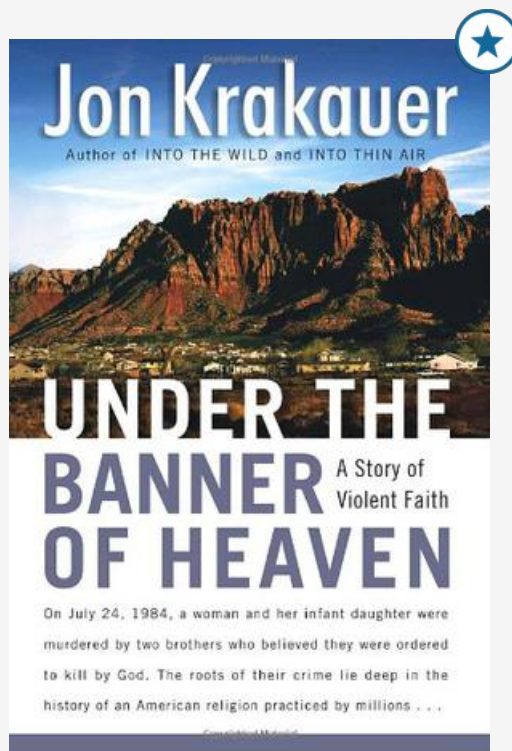


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Krakauer lays the portent on beautifully, building his tales carefully from the ground up until they irresistibly, spookily...

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UNDER THE BANNER OF HEAVEN

The jarring story of a double murder committed by fundamentalist Mormons, told with raw narrative force and tight focus.

Yet this is far more than just the retelling of a grisly murder, for Krakauer (*Into Thin Air*, 1997) would like to know what was going on in the heads of the men, Dan and Ron Lafferty, when they killed Brenda Lafferty and her 15-month-old daughter Erica (who happened to be their sister-in-law and niece, respectively), and why Dan, in particular, could be so equi-poised when talking of the event as to display an utter lack of remorse. Finding out requires an extended journey through the world of Mormonism, its history and schisms, and by extension the history of its expansion over the western half of the country. Fundamentalist Mormons differ from mainstream Latter-day Saints in many ways, but their practice of polygamy, notions of blood atonement (revenge), and belief in the importance of personal revelation—their listening to that “still small voice” of God, once a hallmark of Joseph Smith’s religion, until he realized it would compromise his authority in matters of church doctrine—made them outlaws in the eyes of the establishment Mormons. Dan’s “yearning to return to the mythical order and perfection of the original church,” one that had been corrupted by the church hierarchy for years now, led him to fundamentalism, which in turn led him to believe his brother Ron’s revelations: that Brenda and Erica must die for the good of the Lord’s work (that Brenda encouraged Ron’s wife to leave him may have played, let’s say, a small role in the revelation). Krakauer worms deeply into the Mormon religious experience, its fractures, violence, and fight against the growing power of the central government. At the moment “when religious fanaticism supplants ratiocination,” then “all bets are suddenly off.”

Krakauer lays the portent on beautifully, building his tales carefully from the ground up until they irresistibly, spookily combust.



1



Pub Date: July 15, 2003

ISBN: 0-385-50951-0

Page Count: 320

Publisher: Doubleday

Review Posted Online: May 20, 2010

Kirkus Reviews Issue: May 15, 2003

Categories: PHILOSOPHY & RELIGION | TRUE CRIME

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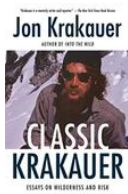
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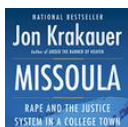
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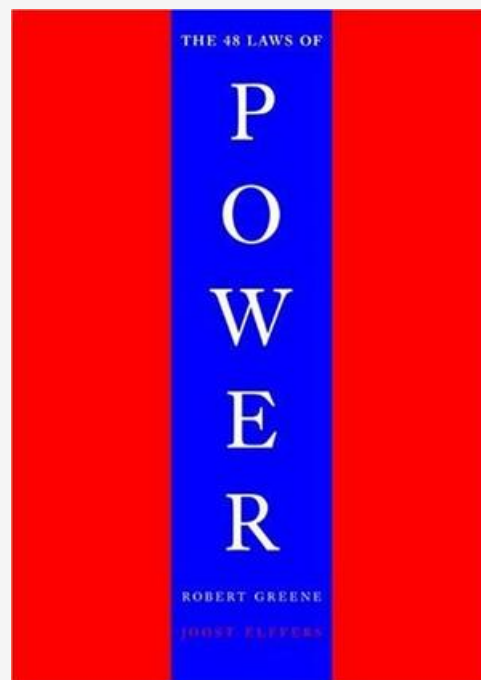
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If the authors are serious, this is a silly, distasteful book. If they are not, it's a

brilliant satire.

+ BOOKSHELF

THE 48 LAWS OF POWER

BY ROBERT GREENE
RELEASE DATE: SEPT. 1, 1998

The authors have created a sort of anti-Book of Virtues in this encyclopedic compendium of the ways and means of power.

Everyone wants power and everyone is in a constant duplicitous game to gain more power at the expense of others, according to Greene, a screenwriter and former editor at Esquire (Elffers, a book packager, designed the volume, with its attractive marginalia). We live today as courtiers once did in royal courts: we must appear civil while attempting to crush all those around us. This power game can be played well or poorly, and in these 48 laws culled from the history and wisdom of the world's greatest power players are the rules that must be followed to win. These laws boil down to being as ruthless, selfish, manipulative, and deceitful as possible. Each law, however, gets its own chapter: "Conceal Your Intentions," "Always Say Less Than Necessary," "Pose as a Friend, Work as a Spy," and so on. Each chapter is conveniently broken down into sections on what happened to those who transgressed or observed the particular law, the key elements in this law, and ways to defensively reverse this law when it's used against you. Quotations in the margins amplify the lesson being taught. While compelling in the way an auto accident might be, the book is simply nonsense. Rules often contradict each other. We are told, for instance, to "be conspicuous at all cost," then told to "behave like others." More seriously, Greene never really defines "power," and he merely asserts, rather than offers evidence for, the Hobbesian world of all against all in which he insists we live. The world may be like this at times, but often it isn't. To ask why this is so would be a far more useful project.

If the authors are serious, this is a silly, distasteful book. If they are not, it's a brilliant satire.

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37



Pub Date: Sept. 1, 1998

ISBN: 0-670-88146-5

Page Count: 430

Publisher: Viking

Review Posted Online: May 20, 2010

Kirkus Reviews Issue: July 15, 1998

Categories: GENERAL BIOGRAPHY & MEMOIR | BIOGRAPHY & MEMOIR | PHILOSOPHY & RELIGION | PSYCHOLOGY | HISTORICAL & MILITARY

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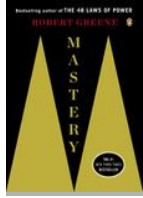
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BY ROBERT GREENE



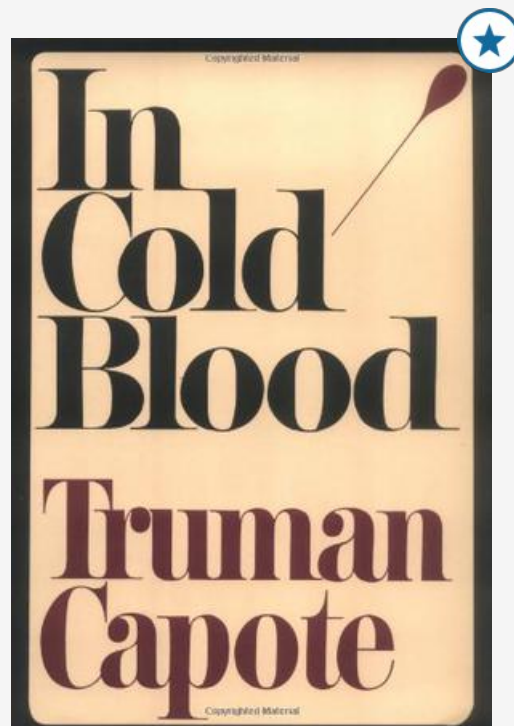
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BY ROBERT GREENE

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BOOK TO SCREEN
Drake Producing *48 Laws of Power* Show

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IN COLD BLOOD

BY TRUMAN CAPOTE
RELEASE DATE: JAN. 7, 1965

"T here's got to be something wrong with somebody who'd do a thing like that." This is Perry Edward Smith, talking about himself. "Deal me out, baby...I'm a normal." This is Richard Eugene Hickock, talking about himself. They're as sick a pair as Leopold and Loeb and together they killed a mother, a father, a pretty 17-year-old and her brother, none of whom they'd seen before, in cold blood. A couple of days before they had bought a 100 foot rope to garrote them—enough for ten people if necessary. This small pogrom took place in Holcomb, Kansas, a lonesome town on a flat, limitless landscape: a depot, a store, a cafe, two filling stations, 270 inhabitants. The natives refer to it as "out there." It occurred in 1959 and Capote has spent five years, almost all of the time which has since elapsed, in following up this crime which made no sense, had no motive, left few clues—just a footprint and a remembered conversation. Capote's alternating dossier Shifts from the victims, the Clutter family, to the boy who had loved Nancy Clutter, and her best friend, to the neighbors, and to the recently paroled perpetrators: Perry, with a stunted child's legs and a changeling's face, and Dick, who had one squinting eye but a "smile that works." They had been cellmates at the Kansas State Penitentiary where another prisoner had told them about the Clutters—he'd hired out once on Mr. Clutter's farm and thought that Mr. Clutter was perhaps rich. And this is the lead which finally broke the case after Perry and Dick had drifted down to Mexico, back to the midwest, been seen in Kansas City, and were finally picked up in Las Vegas. The last, even more terrible chapters, deal with their confessions, the law man who wanted to see them hanged, back to back, the trial begun in 1960, the post-ponements of the execution, and finally the walk to "The Corner" and Perry's soft-spoken words—"It would be meaningless to apologize for what I did. Even inappropriate. But I do. I apologize." It's a magnificent job—this American tragedy—with

the incomparable Capote touches throughout. There may never have been a perfect crime, but if there ever has been a perfect reconstruction of one, surely this must be it.

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10



Pub Date: Jan. 7, 1965

ISBN: 0375507906

Page Count: 343

Publisher: Random House

Review Posted Online: Oct. 10, 2011

Kirkus Reviews Issue: Jan. 1, 1965

Categories: TRUE CRIME

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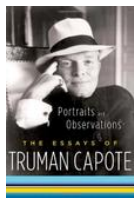
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