



Beyond Belief: The Moors Murderers. The Story of Ian Brady and Myra Hindley.

Emlyn Williams

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Beyond Belief: The Moors Murderers. The Story of Ian Brady and Myra Hindley. Emlyn Williams
Emlyn Williams' classic account of the notorious Moors Murderers, Ian Brady and Myra Hindley, who between 1962 and 1965 abducted, brutally abused and murdered five children - Pauline Reade, John Kilbride, Keith Bennett, Lesley Ann Downey and Edward Evans - and buried them in shallow graves on Saddleworth Moor, in Lancashire.

Beyond Belief: The Moors Murderers. The Story of Ian Brady and Myra Hindley. Details

Date : Published June 5th 1992 by Pan (first published 1967)

ISBN : 9780330020886

Author : Emlyn Williams

Format : Paperback

Genre : Crime, True Crime, Nonfiction, Mystery, History



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From Reader Review Beyond Belief: The Moors Murderers. The Story of Ian Brady and Myra Hindley. for online ebook

Carol Mcleod says

This was the first book that I ever read on the infamous Moors Murderers and I must say that it has had me gripped and intrigued on the subject now since I first read it 26 years ago!

It was a good read and it fascinated me. However, it is not the best book that I have read on the subject, but it was my first and one of the few books on the subject available back then. Knowing now from what I have read and researched over the years, I now know that there are a lot of inaccuracies in the book, but it is still an amazing read into this subject. It is of course classed as a non fiction novel, hence my statement about the inaccuracies in the book and for that I still give this book a well deserved 4/5.

Sam says

This is probably one of the most accurate and thorough accounts of the Moors Murders ever, and also one of the best True Crime books ever written.

Even more haunting when you know the area. Williams really delved into the psyche, particularly of Hindley, the devout catholic who met a scottish clerk and gave up her soul willingly. One of those books that chills you to the bone because it is all horribly true.

♥ Marlene♥ says

The Moors Murders are the most brutal, senseless and cold blooded killings to have occurred in Great Britain in many years. Between November 1963 and October 1965, Ian Brady, clerk, and Myra Hindley, typist, killed at least three—and possibly as many as five—young people varying in age from ten to seventeen, for no apparent motive. On May 6, 1966 the two murderers were sentenced to life imprisonment (capital punishment has been abolished in England). Beyond Belief, an uncanny feat of re-creation of the minds, hearts, and motivations of the two killers, is the story of this case. In it Emlyn Williams has achieved superbly his objective: “The dual accuracy of history and of imaginative understanding.

The way this book was written was very annoying to me at first.

English is not my mothers' tongue, well it is, she is English, :-) but I was raised speaking Dutch only)

here is an example (The author must have fabricated all the dialogues between Ian and Myra.)

Ian: and if were caught which will not happen, ye must imagine yerself in an airport wi' your luggage searched, it's full of contra band, well ye, re just to sayye dinna ken a thing about it. I'll teach ye a code, what a superb evenin.

And this go's on continually.

Besides that I did find it interesting because I did not know anything about the Moors Murderers and the author does provide some interesting information.

8.5

read on March 25th 2007

Maxine (Booklover Catlady) says

I couldn't put this book down once I started reading it. It was not what I expected, in fact it was better.

Strangely, Ian Brady died in the facility he was locked up in the day after I read this book. It was weird hearing his name on the news and it made me think even more about what I had garnered from this book.

This is not written like a typical true crime book. What the author has done is quite clever, you read it as though it's a story and you are in that story with the characters. You are behind the words of Myra and Ian and immersed in the era fully. It's very realistic. There is a LOT of Yorkshire slang and dialect with the dialogue in this book, it adds authenticity but some will struggle to grasp it. I personally liked it.

The author poses questions for us as he tells us about their lives from birth through to incarceration. **The book reads almost like a novel in some ways which will appeal to some readers but not all.**

After this book went to print, two further children were announced as being victims of the duo. Interestingly they are mentioned at the back of the book as unsolved disappearances at the time of print, later confessed to.

Some information in this book was found to be untrue in the latest book written about Ian Brady - the only book that Brady agreed to be interviewed for. Specifically they are the claims that he was cruel to animals (in fact he was a great animal lover) and the role of Myra in the sexual attack and killings is much more on par and equal to Brady.

Aside from that, there is so much detailed information in this book and it makes for both horrifying but fascinating reading. The dynamics of their relationship with each other and Myra's response after arrest I found very interesting. My heart just was so heavy thinking of what those poor children and teens went through after falling into the manipulative hands of these two.

I highly recommend this book if you are keen to learn more about The Moors Murderers. Be prepared to be fully immersed in their worlds, from childhood events all the way to their court case and beyond. The characters that surround this duo really come to life in the way it's written.

4 stars from me. A different telling of the chilling story that made these two so well known around the world. Recommended reading!

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Alayne says

This was a hard book to read. The subject definitely was beyond belief. But the book was published in 1967, 18 years before Hindley and then Brady confessed to the Moors murders (even tho they had been in prison since 1966). So there was a lot of speculation (most of the book was speculation) about what actually happened, and I got the feeling that the author took Hindley's version as "truth" when in 1985 it was revealed that she was much more involved than she had let on. He was (is - he is still alive and still in prison) definitely a psychopath, but I am totally bamboozled as to why she would have gone along with him. She was obsessed with Brady, but how that translated into brutal torture, sexual assault and murder is beyond me.

Lisa says

True crime fans, you've never read one quite like this. Emlyn Williams' searing true-life account of the "Moors Murderers" Ian Brady and Myra Hindley exceeds "In Cold Blood" for excellence in this genre. Based on fact, this is a harrowing story composed using equal parts court records, interviews, and the author's speculation. It's blood-curdling down to the last page. Myra Hindley died in 2002; Brady lives on in prison. If you need more current details, HBO's fantastic production of "Longford" expounds on this case by recounting Hindley's relationship with naive, well-meaning Lord Longford, who tried to free her from prison. Ian Brady got wind of this and stopped it by admitting to additional murders committed by the pair, and showed where at least one body was buried. These include the cases author Williams guesses their involvement in, but were never proved in his lifetime. "Beyond Belief" is atmospheric as hell. Williams brings the mid-Sixties of Britain shockingly to life in a startling abundance of mundane, often poignant, daily details. He does take flights of pure imagination in what they actually said and who did what when. It's completely chilling, and completely credible. Not for the sensitive: these two abducted, tortured, and killed children. And tape-recorded it. And photographed it. This one is liable to give you nightmares. Update: I finally saw the British film "See No Evil" about this case. It flat-out sucked. The more you know about this case, the worse the movie is. Avoid it. "Longford" was much better, even though they weren't the central focus.

Mieczyslaw Kasprzyk says

The Moors Murders have a special place in the memories of those living in the shadow of the Pennines around Oldham and Ashton in the 60s. I have vivid memories of the bodies being brought down to the coroner's offices and the whole, grim story being slowly revealed. This excellent book tells that story and manages to capture the atmosphere of those times in a dramatic manner.

Sophie Carsenat says

I first read this in 1985 - a gift from my stepfather who encouraged my interests, no matter how morbid. Sort of a 'nonfiction novel', Williams writes half in straight reportage, and half from the imagined point of view of

Ian Brady and Myra Hindley. There is a slight danger with this; it made the otherwise revolting crimes seem a little glamourized to fifteen-year-old me. The dashing young psychopath and his bleached bride. Re-reading it later I recognized the false sheen that adolescence puts on heinous deeds, and then realised that Brady and Hindley were not far from adolescence themselves - that psychopathy keeps one in that state permanently in a way, and Williams transmits this ingeniously.

Diana says

From what I can remember, this book was pretty excellent, but it made me feel physically sick because of the recreations of the thoughts of Ian Brady, the murderer. It haunted me for months; I couldn't get these sick images out of my mind, I couldn't stomach the fact that someone existed who really thought and acted in such a horrible way, and enjoyed killing and had such disregard for his victims. The fact that he found a girlfriend to go along with his murder schemes was just as disgusting and unbelievable. This book made me realize I have to be careful about the type of books I read; I can read true crime, but only if it's presented in a certain way. If too many gruesome details from the killer's point of view are presented, I become too upset. So, good book, but too disturbing for me.

Paul says

An interesting attempt to cover these notorious crimes, the author creates a part fictionalised account of the perpetrators motives and madness. It was written contemporaneously though so ignores the developments in the case in the eighties, thus undermining the timeline and plotting somewhat. It is very well written though, far superior to most true crime books.

John says

Difficult to rate as don't want to say really liked it due to subject, But a must read into the lives of people who don't belong in society, but locked away from it.

For the record; the argument for capital punishment as a deterrent? When they were doing what they did, capital punishment was still law..

joolz says

I was probably too young to have read this book when I did (early teens), but then I don't think you could ever prepare yourself to read a book like this. I remember hearing about the case and when I saw the book I wanted to try and understand how someone, especially a woman, could get involved in such horrific crimes against children.

The four stars isn't because I 'enjoyed' the book, but because it's a well written, though horrifying, look at a topic that is so shocking you don't want to believe it. It makes you believe it though by dealing with events in a fairly factual manner and by bringing many views into the book eg interviews with the people involved and

including some court transcripts verbatim. I'll NEVER forget reading the transcript of the Lesley Ann Downey tape that was played in court. I could barely read it for crying, and I think I'd still have that same reaction as an adult. At the time the book was written there was still hope that all the victims would be found. Alas that wasn't to be and Keith Bennett is still alone on Saddleworth Moor.

If you read this book you'll understand why my blood chills whenever I see that iconic photograph of Hindley.

Ramsey says

Classic true crime account of the Moors murders, a string of child murders in North England in the 1960s perpetrated by Ian Brady and his girlfriend Myra Hindley. I decided to read it after seeing it on David Peace's list of the ten best works of UK true crime. (Peace's Red Riding Quartet is hands down the best work of crime fiction I've ever read.) Listening to Throbbing Gristle's horrifying recording ("song" would be a stretch) Very Friendly further piqued my interest. Beyond Belief is bleak and unsettling, as you can imagine given its subject matter. It definitely falls in the nonfiction novel category, with plenty of speculative dialogue and next to no sourcing for the details of its account. This would be unacceptable to me in a work of history, but I can tolerate it in true crime. The book is incomplete - written a year or so after Brady and Hindley's convictions, it does not provide full accounts of two additional child murders to which Brady and Hindley confessed in the mid-1980s (though the disappearances of the children are noted in an appendix, insinuating their involvement). Well written, with extensive use of northern dialect, it captures the desolate geography and times (postwar Northern England) and manages to evoke two very disturbing personalities.

Fishface says

All superlatives. Manages to cover all the major interesting points without treating the killers like rock stars or the survivors like non-entities. I only wish we could have learned more about their victims, who after all are the important ones here. I have to say that after reading Ann West's FOR THE LOVE OF LESLEY, I saw this book with entirely new eyes. The author has a pretty lousy way of getting people to give him interviews.

Julie says

difficult to read in more ways than one. The style takes some getting used to but also the details of the murders is pretty hideous. As someone who did not grow up in the era of the murders but remembers the publicity when Pauline Read's body was finally found I didn't really know all of the facts except that two evil people, one of them a woman, had killed children for kicks. This made things clearer but documented things that I really found disturbing to read, but i'm glad I did.

Flora says

A brilliant "nonfiction novel" about the Moors Murders -- and in its own style, not Truman Capote's!

Undercelebrated and fantastic.

Jill Hutchinson says

The Moor Murders resonate to this day through England....the sexual assault and murder of five children by a young couple named Ian Brady and Myra Hindley who buried their victims on the moors. Although the subject is certainly horrifying, it is a story that should be told in a straightforward manner.....what made this couple kill, what clues led the police to suspect them, etc. This is a book best handled by a true crime writer.....Emlyn Williams was a talented playwright, author, and actor but why he decided to write this book escapes me. His device of being the voice of Brady in the majority of the book began to irritate this reader very quickly.....it is almost a stream of consciousness narrative that might have been more appropriate in a play and is based on supposition rather than fact. Frankly, I had a hard time getting through it and not because of the subject but because of the maddening style. This book just wasn't for me....maybe I have read too many Ann Rule true crime stories!!

It should also be noted, that the book is outdated (although that is not the fault of the author). When Brady and Hindley were sent to prison for life in 1965, there were only three known victims. The book was written in 1967. In 1985, Brady confessed to two more child murders. although one of the bodies has never been found.

Sheryl Roberts says

People have criticised this book for the author's style of writing, but i find that exactly the opposite it true. I like Emlyn Williams' style as it is unique and i feel it gives the narrative a kind of driving urgency. This book is a tour de force as a study of human evil. It is well researched and planned, and i recommend it unreservedly.

Lauren Beckett says

Don't read this - hugely outdated as it was written before two of the murders were known about so it's not comprehensive.

Also pretends to be factual with a disclosure at the start but then adopts a really odd style, oftentimes emulating Brady's voice and pretending he thinks he's a king. Those sections make for very weird reading and are dreadful.

Redeemed slightly by the presentation of the case at the end. One Of Your Own by Carol Ann Lee is much more balanced and is written really well with up to date information.

Elwycke says

This book is completely out of date.Both factually and with it's immensely patronising, insulting and confusing method of trying to recreate the Yorkshire accent and dialect. It was actually embarrassing to read and somehow reduced the horror of the account.

I wanted to find out about this case as it all happened around the time i was born. I don't feel any the wiser.
