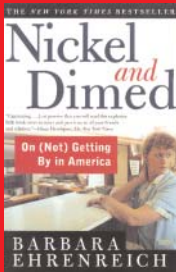




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Journalist and Author of the million-copy best-seller *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By In America* and the *New York Times* best-seller *Bait & Switch: The (Futile) Pursuit of the American Dream*.

Journalist, historian, and social critic, Barbara Ehrenreich is the author of fourteen books. In 2001, Ehrenreich's *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America* became a *New York Times* bestseller, and has since sold over one million copies. *Nickel and Dimed*, a trenchant examination of working-class poverty that chronicles Ehrenreich's own attempt to live on minimum wage, is now required reading at more than 600 colleges and universities, from University of the Ozarks to Yale University to Western Wyoming Community College. It has been adopted for the stage by Joan Holden and performed in major cities across the United States. In 2005, Ehrenreich's *Bait and Switch*, also a *New York Times* bestseller, exposed the ever more prevalent phenomenon of white-collar unemployment.

A frequent contributor to *Harper's* and *The Nation*, Ehrenreich has been a columnist at *The New York Times* and *Time* magazine. Her articles, reviews, essays and humor have appeared in a range of national publications, including *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Washington Post Magazine*, *Ms.*, *Esquire*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, *The Nation*, and newspapers throughout the world. In 2004, she received the Nation Institute/Puffin Foundation Prize for Creative Citizenship, given annually to an American who challenges the status quo "through distinctive, courageous, imaginative, socially responsible work of significance."

In addition to her work on economic themes, Ehrenreich is a historian and author of *Blood Rites: Origins and History of the Passions of War*, which the *New York Review of Books* described as 'brilliant' and *Dancing in the Streets: A History of Collective Joy* (Metropolitan Books 2007).

NICKEL AND DIMED: On (Not) Getting By In America

In early 1998 Barbara Ehrenreich, arguably our sharpest and most original social critic, posed the following questions to an editor at Harper's Magazine: How does anyone live on the wages available to the unskilled? And how, in particular, were the 12 million women about to be booted into the labor market by welfare reform going to make it on \$6 or \$7 an hour? Millions of Americans work full-time, year around, for poverty-level wages; in 1998, Ehrenreich joined them. What ensued is an unprecedented and illuminating work of immersion journalism, captured in its provocative entirety in *NICKEL AND DIMED: On (Not) Getting By in America*, which became a *New York Times* bestseller. To answer her own questions, Ehrenreich left her home, took the cheapest lodgings she could find, and accepted the highest-paying jobs she was offered. Moving from Florida to Maine to Minnesota, she worked as a waitress, a hotel maid, a cleaning woman, a nursing-home aide, and a Wal-Mart sales clerk. She lived in trailer parks and crumbling residential motels, discovering quickly that no job is truly 'unskilled,' that even the lowliest occupations take an enormous mental and physical toll, and that one job is not enough - not, that is, if you intend to live indoors. "With all the real life assets I've built up in middle

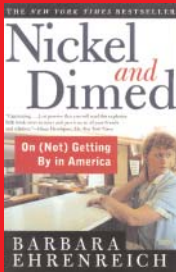
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age - bank account, IRA, health insurance, multiroom home - waiting indulgently in the background, there was no way I was going to 'experience poverty' or find out how it 'really feels' to be a long-term low-wage worker," Ehrenreich cautions. "My aim here was much more straightforward and objective - just to see whether I could match income to expenses, as the truly poor attempt to do every day." What she discovered was that, in fact, she could not. Ehrenreich's hair-raising and darkly funny odyssey through the underside of the working world brilliantly limns low-rent America in all its tenacity, anxiety and surprising generosity. A rare view of "prosperity" from the bottom puts a human face to the lives sustaining our economy.

BAIT & SWITCH: The (Futile) Pursuit of the American Dream

In *Bait and Switch*, Barbara Ehrenreich takes on the problems of the college-educated worker facing lay-offs, outsourcings, and downsizings. Going undercover as a white collar job seeker with a plausible résumé, she attempts to land a middle-class job -- undergoing career coaching and personality testing, then trawling a series of EST-like boot camps, job fairs, networking events, and evangelical job-search ministries. She gets an image makeover, works to project a winning attitude, yet is proselytized, scammed, lectured, and -- again and again -- rejected.

Bait and Switch highlights the people who've done everything right -- gotten college degrees, developed marketable skills, and built up impressive résumés -- yet have become repeatedly vulnerable to financial disaster, and not simply due to the vagaries of the business cycle. Today's ultra-lean corporations take pride in shedding their "surplus" employees -- plunging them, for months or years at a stretch, into the twilight zone of white-collar unemployment, where job searching becomes a full-time job in itself. As Ehrenreich discovers, there are few social supports for these newly disposable workers -- and little security even for those who have jobs.

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