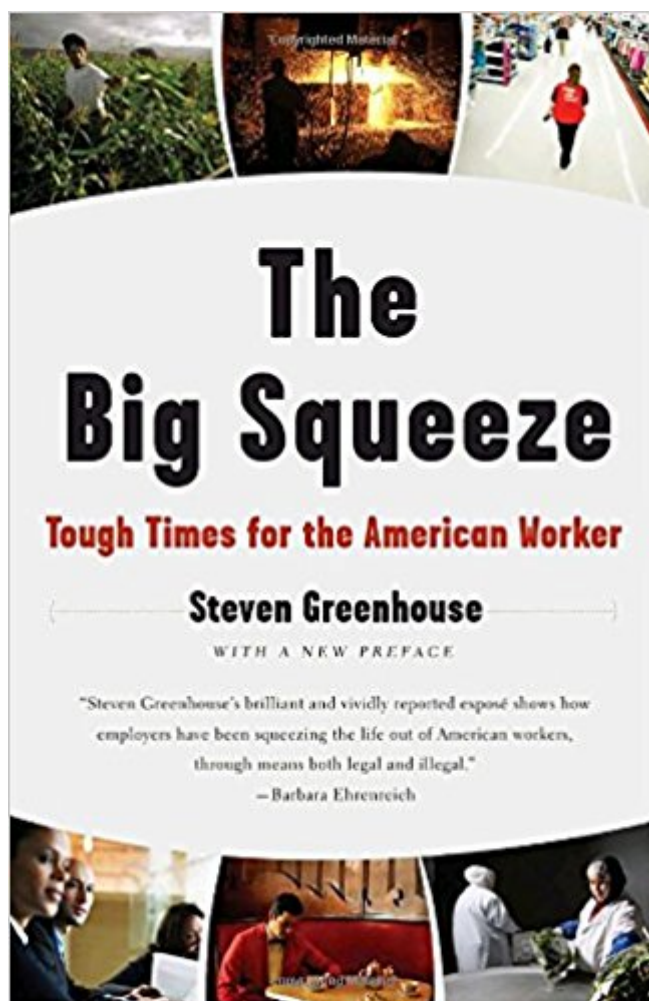


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# The Big Squeeze: Tough Times For The American Worker



## Synopsis

Why, in the world's most affluent nation, are so many corporations squeezing their employees dry? In this fresh, carefully researched book, New York Times reporter Steven Greenhouse explores the economic, political, and social trends that are transforming America's workplaces, including the decline of the social contract that created the world's largest middle class and guaranteed job security and good pensions. We meet all kinds of workers—white-collar and blue-collar, high-tech and low-tech, middle-class and low-income—as we see shocking examples of injustice, including employees who are locked in during a hurricane or fired after suffering debilitating, on-the-job injuries. With pragmatic recommendations on what government, business and labor should do to alleviate the economic crunch, *The Big Squeeze* is a balanced, consistently revealing look at a major American crisis.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Greenhouse, labor correspondent for the New York Times, offers up a bleak picture of the current workplace environment. Violations of child labor laws and forced slave labor conditions associated with Third World countries or the robber baron era are occurring on a wide scale right here in America, expanding the ranks of the working poor. This isn't just some hidden sweat shops; it's happening in our largest corporations, such as Wal-Mart. Factory workers are forced to ramp up production to a pace rivaling that of Charlie Chaplin in *Modern Times*; others are fired for menial "violations" such as going to the bathroom during their shifts; and anyone daring to organize a labor movement is brutally harassed and humiliated. Meanwhile

multimillion-dollar CEOs such as Al “Chainsaw” Dunlap and Jack “Neutron” Welch have become the models for corporate success by laying off hundreds of thousands while Wall Street cheered. Greenhouse did find businesses that treat workers fairly, such as Costco and Timberland, which pay higher wages but are rewarded with worker loyalty and higher productivity. He also offers up ways to solve the current crises in wage stagnation, health care and retirement shortfalls. This is a real call to arms—a stark, jaw-dropping exposé with the usual, but inspiring, glimmers of hope. --David Siegfried --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“Steve Greenhouse has written the essential economic book for 2008. Long before most analysts noticed the downturn, Greenhouse was reporting how troubled our economy looked from the bottom-up. A hugely talented reporter with a passion for justice, a shrewd student of the new economy and a brilliant guide to the contemporary labor movement, Greenhouse writes with clarity, energy and grace.” —E. J. Dionne Jr. “Steven Greenhouse’s brilliant and vividly reported exposé shows how employers have been squeezing the life out of American workers, through means both legal and illegal. My blood boiled when I read The Big Squeeze. Any presidential candidate or voter who overlooks this book will be clueless about what’s really going on in America.” —Barbara Ehrenreich “In this shocking and important book, Steven Greenhouse explains and tells the stories of how U.S. workers are paying the price for the lower labor standards and wages that are the result of poorly-managed globalization.” —Joseph E. Stiglitz “Excellent and relentless . . . Greenhouse’s book gives a convincing portrait of a business culture that has been more and more aggressive toward workers.” —Jeff Madrick, New York Review of Books “An excellent book . . . Greenhouse exhibits outrage and moral indignation and an idealism one doesn’t necessarily expect from a hard-bitten New York Times reporter.” —The Washington Monthly “Important and infuriating.” —Chicago Tribune “Riveting . . . a sobering examination of a growing American crisis, and . . . nothing short of brilliant.” —Tucson Citizen “New York Times labor correspondent Greenhouse drops a bombshell on local bookstores . . . Greenhouse’s clear and level prose is investigative journalism at its finest.” —Rocky Mountain News “Greenhouse’s The Big Squeeze is a fresh, probing look at the critical issues facing both blue- and white-collar American workers . . . The Big Squeeze will be an eye-opener for many. Don’t miss

it. **Providence Journal-Bulletin** "The power of Greenhouse's book lies . . . in its reporting, especially on low-wage workers . . . his best material vividly focuses on the always difficult and often abusive working conditions of low-paid employees. Such stories get far too little airing and rarely are they so well told. **Business Week** "Greenhouse paints a wrenching portrait of decent people who, by no fault of their own, have been fired, demoted, downsized, displaced, abandoned . . . Greenhouse's picture should unnerve anyone committed to a stable future for American democracy. **Patrick J. Deneen, American Conservative** "[Greenhouse's] reporting skills serve his book's readers well. **Washington Post** "A book . . . that will confirm your worst suspicions and fears, open your eyes and turn your stomach. **The Buffalo News** "Greenhouse has mastered labor market economics in a way few journalists do . . . his profiles are . . . rich in evoking sympathy and understanding for workers who struggle to both adapt and resist . . . The Big Squeeze becomes the one essential book on today's American workplace. **Jack Metzgar, Dissent**

This book doesn't really provide a complete picture of the situation. The economics of the situation of American workers are ignored, unions are revered as pure and incorruptible champions of its workers it claims to represent, and the other side's reasoning isn't explained but rather demonized.

I enjoyed reading this book so much. People might think this book would be all about statistics and chastising the American way of life. Well, you can take rest it is not that type of book. This book is very personal and emotional that tells a very human tale about the American way of living in our lifetime. The author, Steven Greenhouse, gives justice to the ordinary and average American workers who are being mistreated and exploited here in the U.S. The book contains several stories about the personal struggles of individuals who were all just searching for a better treatment at work. What I gained reading from this book is that this is The United States of America the nation that ended child labor, gave women the right to vote, equality to all, and a bright future for everyone. So, why can't we maintain all of those and strive to better our work environment/salary/life? It is very apparent that our wages are not raising along with the expenses we incur in our livelihood. It is time for the corporation to raise wages and stop messing with our healthcare plans because these are the very things that made the USA the greatest and wealthiest nation around the world from the 1950s onward to the 1990s. Well, I encourage people especially in Business Ethics courses in

college to read this book. Also, I'm looking at you UCF Cornerstone course if you want your students to learn more about how to manage workers in business then this is one of those books students should read about in their classes.

Great book for voicing the opinion of the working class. However, the book didn't do well to rationally explain the opposing viewpoint, simply demonizing them at every opportunity. The book opened my eyes to some things I really had no idea about, so I'm grateful for that.

What a wonderful book, filled with real stories of hard workers who can't quite make it in modern America. The book clearly shows how the balance of power between management and labor has led to a low-paying jobs and tremendous injustices at the workplace. This is a must-read book for anybody who wants to understand why hard-working, educated people can't find decent jobs. Imagine what it's like for less educated people! Greenhouse gets into that, too.

Then read this book. It is both depressing and inspiring all at once. The author is admittedly biased, but he does present some solid data in regard to the decline of the middle class in this country. It's too bad that even though the data is out there, many Americans refuse to look at it and believe it and keep voting for politicians who make policy that benefits the very wealthy. The game is rigged and this book exposes it.

It's a good book. None of the pages were missing, but it's a little dirty.

This book should be a mandatory read for all graduating high school seniors. They are in for a rude and damaging shock if they think that corporate America will give them a fair shake. I loved the many real stories that the author gives the reader that show time and again how the rich, established business interest will go to almost any means to take advantage of our most vulnerable, hard working citizens. Where is our government? Why is it not protecting us? The short answer is that our government is for sale and corporate America has the money so they buy what they want. I hope that we can find the political will to put back in place strong workplace protections for workers and at the same time, demand that our large companies treat their employees in an ethical, honest and fair manner. This book tells all the dirty secrets and it is a disgusting, heart wrenching story. Not only did our large corporations wreck our economy, they are hell bent on making us a 3rd World workplace!

Anyone seeking insights into the problems faced by the American worker should start here. Greenhouse writes a terrifying yet compelling narrative of ordinary Americans who have been increasingly squeezed as corporations relentlessly search for profits.

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