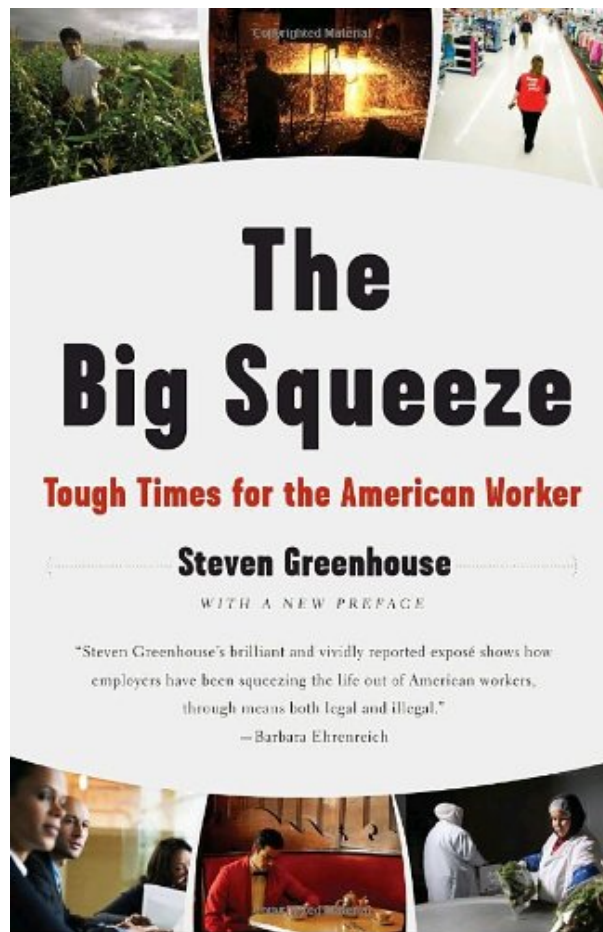


# THE BIG SQUEEZE: TOUGH TIMES FOR THE AMERICAN WORKER BY STEVEN GREENHOUSE



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# The Big Squeeze

**Tough Times for the American Worker**

..... **Steven Greenhouse** .....

*WITH A NEW PREFACE*

"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."

— Barbara Ehrenreich



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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.

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## Features

- Used Book in Good Condition

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Something we need to care about

By snk1414

If you find yourself wondering, "Is this all I'm worth?" when you look at your paycheck, meager benefits (or lack thereof), other poor job opportunities or rising gas, college and home costs, and the increasingly unattainable "American Dream", you are not alone...

This book is an excellent primer for those of us who want to know why American jobs are so much less fruitful than those of our parents or grandparents generations (for 20 or 30 somethings). It is a sociological eye-opener on par with "Fast Food Nation". It emboldens us to get more politically involved, and helps us form opinions on many of today's very relevant pressing issues (health care, illegal immigrants, the minimum

wage, dwindling union support, offshoring and job security, education costs and standards, corporate corruption).

The Big Squeeze covers several case studies sprinkled with analysis and history of all parties involved in our mighty economy. Greenhouse makes a very well informed argument for adapting to changing and new economic pressures and in the end of the book lays out his proposals (albeit too idealistic for most administrations) for solving many of the problems he has dissected. I commend him for tackling such a huge subject with so many variables and attempting to pull it all together into a comprehensive book that educates the lay person (who is not an economist) on what is happening in this country. He makes the reader aware that this is truly an epidemic and raises the red flag.

While this book is not "light" reading, it does tell positive tales of employers doing the right thing, and of immigrants who have succeeded and injustices that have been unveiled so as to balance the overwhelming sea of pessimism and hopelessness that these types of books tend to hold between their pages.

42 of 48 people found the following review helpful.

Corporate power and arbitrariness harm American workers (3.5 \*s)

By J. Grattan

The book is both an overview of the deteriorated state of affairs for American workers as well as a few up close and personal looks at some of those so affected. For one brief generation after WWII, American workers empowered through union contracts, achieved a somewhat harmonious status with their employers, which included good wages and benefits and expectations of job security. And the government provided support as well, especially for veterans. But that's not the way things are now.

As the author so well examines, employees are now viewed as mere factors of production and can be subjected to egregious capriciousness. They now can be fired arbitrarily, forced to work off the clock, have their time sheets altered, forced to work as so-called independent contractors or part-time, etc. Employee wages have been flat for over thirty years, despite increasing productivity over those years, while CEO pay has skyrocketed. The labor movement is a mere shell of its former self with private sector union membership being at the same density as one hundred years ago. Advances in computers and telecommunications have facilitated shipping even high tech jobs overseas; trade agreements have enabled establishing production off shore for intra-corporate trade; and immigration is having profound impacts on jobs and wages domestically. Those left behind after downsizing have to redouble their efforts with apparently little appreciation by many employers. The traditional way to advancement, education, is increasingly becoming out of reach for many because of the costs. American workers have truly become an afterthought or invisible.

There really is nothing in this book that has not been discussed repeatedly in the electronic media, books, and newspapers over the last several years. The Wal-Mart model has become pervasive. Occasionally an organization will come along like Costco that demonstrates that workers can be treated well despite the demands of the retail world, but they are an exception.

US corporations are ascendant; they have a great deal of control over media content, they dominate the political process, and they hide behind the mantra of competitiveness to squeeze American workers for higher and higher profits. The author, more hopefully than convincingly, calls for a return to kinder times. But there will be no voluntary relinquishment of power. There has to be a realization on the part of American workers on the realities of excessive corporate power and a willingness to assert political power to transform the process in favor of workers. This book clearly shows that American workers are now being squeezed almost beyond imagination with no end in sight.

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful.

A Great Reminder Of What America Was and Is All About

By Capt.Riceman



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.

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