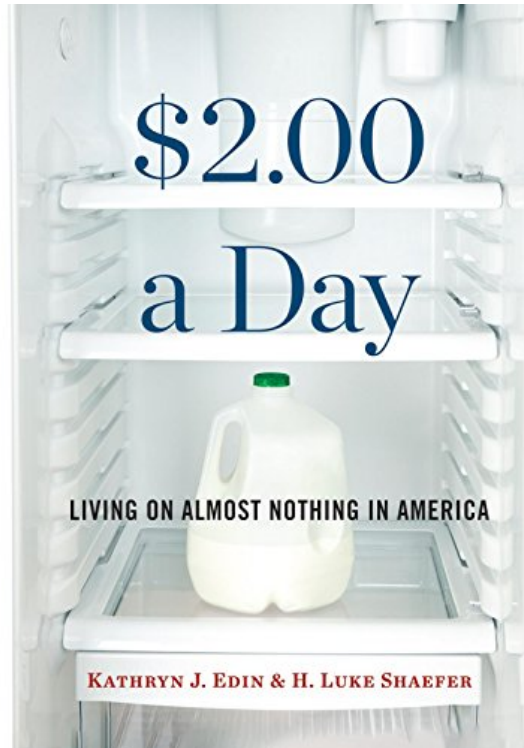


(Free download) \$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America

## \$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America

*Kathryn J. Edin, H. Luke Shaefer*

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**Kathryn J. Edin, H. Luke Shaefer : \$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised \$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America:

161 of 170 people found the following review helpful. A solid and perhaps time-sensitive read By Dame Droiture This book makes me want to thank my mother, profusely, for everything she did for me/us while I was growing up. Until reading this exposé, I hadn't really realized that some of her own strategies *\*were\** actually strategies -- I just thought that, for example, going to the library a few times a week was what everyone did. It also made me think to the time I spent living in the Bronx during grad school (yes!), making dismal adjunct wages relative to New York City living conditions. My neighbors would occasionally see me out reading on my stoop -- not making dinner --, and one family in particular paid special attention: even though the 3 of them (a mother, father, and teenage daughter) lived in a one-bedroom apartment, they often brought me a plate of whatever meal they had made. I knew that they did not have much, but of course to refuse the meal would be rude (and besides, the food was hearty and delicious). Since meeting them, I have had a soft spot for the supposed "lazy" people who get government subsidies. Some, like the family I knew, made do fairly well with what they had. Others, such as the people featured in this book, could only *\*wish\** they had enough food to share. In some senses, \$2 A Day preaches to the choir; it's likely that those who are buying and reading the book 1) aren't in the position of its case studies, 2) already know there's a problem with how America's

poor are "dealt with," and 3) are already fairly sympathetic to the issues that this volume addresses. But in many other ways, the book is, not to sound too cliché, a revelation. For one, the notion that "we, as a country, aren't spending less on poor families than we once did. ... In fact, we now spend much more" struck me in particular, and signals that the very readership the book probably targets are also probably the most able and willing to address the problems. While the book sometimes veers into moderately-lengthy analyses of government policies, which might tire some readers, I feel that it presents a good mixture between these and the case studies showing these policies "at work," so to speak. I don't think this book will be the next Freshman Read, but I do think it can hold its own in the roster of readable sociology texts for perhaps the next decade. (Hopefully, the next book coming out won't present a worse picture of things.) If anything, it makes one think about what one has, or hasn't had.

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. how a large number of poor Americans exist on \$2.00 day or less in cash money, whether or not they are in the social safety net. When welfare was reformed during the Clinton administration actual cash payments for the majority ceased to exist. There are cash equivalents, but legally they cannot be converted to money to pay for bus or taxi service to get to a job interview, or to a job between paydays. Ms Edin explores how this lack of cash can impact so many aspects of daily life that many of us take for granted: if you don't have a washer or dryer, or a car or money, how do you get to the laundromat and be able to wash and dry your clothing? Once unemployment runs out, often there is no legal source of cash if the person has not yet found a job. I think everyone should read this book and pay special attention to the suggestions made by the author to help reverse this situation. In my opinion, no one should have to sell their blood plasma twice a week to have cash to get to a job interview or take their sick child to the doctor.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Must read for anyone but especially those involved in public policy.

By Patrik H. This is an excellent book on the economics of poverty. It's a must read for any that thinks people want to be poor or that living on the welfare is somehow a life of luxury. The authors do a great job of documenting the challenges the extremely poor face on the new welfare system. It also does a great job of demonstrating that food assistance is not enough in an economy where cash is king, and that minimum wage is not sufficient to support a family either. The book is very well balanced showing how poverty affects all ethnic backgrounds. The book is well researched and well documented and sheds light on what is effectively and underclass our own society created.

The story of a kind of poverty in America so deep that we, as a country, don't even think exists from a leading national poverty expert who defies convention (New York Times). Edin and Shaefer tell the stories of eight families who live on what is almost unimaginable—an income that falls below the World Bank definition of poverty in the developing world. Their stories need to be heard, especially as we head into our election year that will highlight the questions on income and inequality, and our commitment to making prosperity available to all. We have made great steps toward eliminating poverty around the world—extreme poverty has declined significantly and seems on track to continue to do so in the next decades. Jim Yong Kim of the World Bank estimates that extreme poverty can be eliminated in seventeen years. This is clearly cause for celebration. However, this good news can make us oblivious to the fact that there are, in the United States, a significant and growing number of families who live on less than \$2.00 per person, per day. That figure, the World Bank measure of poverty, is hard to imagine in this country most of us spend more than that before we get to work or school in the morning. In *\$2.00 A Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*, Kathryn Edin and Luke Schaefer introduce us to people like Jessica Compton, who survives by donating plasma as often as ten times a month and spends hours with her young children in the public library so she can get access to an internet connection for job-hunting; and like Modonna Harris who lost the cashier's job she held for years, for the sake of \$7.00 misplaced at the end of the day. They are the would-be working class, with hundreds of job applications submitted in recent months and thousands of work hours logged in past years. Twenty years after William Julius Wilson's *When Work Disappears*, it's still all about the work. But as Edin and Shaefer illuminate through incisive analysis and indelible human stories, the combination of a government safety net built on the ability to work and a low-wage labor market increasingly designed not to deliver a living wage has delivered a vicious one-two punch to the would-be working poor. More than a powerful expose of a troubling trend, *\$2.00 a Day* delivers new evidence and new ideas to our central national debate on work, income inequality, and what to do about it.

A remarkable book that could very well change the way we think about poverty in the United States . . . This essential book is a call to action, and one hopes it will accomplish what Michael Harrington's *The Other Americans* achieved in the late 1960s—arousing both the nation's consciousness and conscience about the plight of a growing number of invisible citizens. The rise of such absolute poverty since the passage of welfare reform belies all the categorical talk about opportunity and the American dream. The New York Times Book Review says "With any luck (calling Bernie Sanders) this important book will spark election year debate over how America cares for its most vulnerable." Mother Jones says "Affluent Americans often cherish the belief that poverty in America is far more comfortable than poverty in the rest of the world. Edin and Shaefer's devastating account of life at \$2 or less a day blows that myth out of the water. This is world

class poverty at a level that should mobilize not only national alarm, but international attention.