

[PDF] The American Way Of Eating: Undercover At Walmart, Applebee's, Farm Fields And The Dinner Table

Tracie McMillan - pdf download free book

Books Details:

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Author: Tracie McMillan

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Description:

Review "The book Ms. McMillan's most resembles is Barbara Ehrenreich's bestseller *Nickel and Dimed*. Like Ms. Ehrenreich, Ms. McMillan goes undercover amid this country's working poor...This is a voice the food world needs."

- Dwight Garner, *The New York Times*

"This book is vital. McMillan has the writing skills to bear witness, the research background to provide context, and the courage to take on the challenging task."

--*Los Angeles Times*

"The book Ms. McMillan's most resembles is Barbara Ehrenreich's best seller *Nickel and Dimed*. Like Ms. Ehrenreich, Ms. McMillan goes undercover amid this country's working poor.... This is a voice the food world needs." —**New York Times**

"With much courage and compassion, McMillan explores the lives of those at the bottom of our food system. Here is a glimpse of the people who feed us—and the terrible price they pay. If we want to change the system, this is where we must begin." —**Eric Schlosser**

"Tracie McMillan is gutsy, scrappy, and hard-working—you'd have to be to write this book. *The American Way of Eating* takes us local in a new way, exploring who works to get food from the field to the plates in front of us, what they are paid, and how it feels. It's sometimes grim but McMillan doesn't flinch; I especially appreciated her openness in telling us what she spent in order to get by (or not). A welcome addition to the urgent, growing body of journalism on food." —**Ted Conover**, author of *Newjack* and *Coyotes*

"These tales lay bare the sinews, the minds, and the relationships that our food system exploits and discards. In a work of deep compassion and integrity, Tracie McMillan offers us an eye-opening report on the human cost of America's cheap food." —**Raj Patel**, author of *Stuffed and Starved* and *The Value of Nothing*

"To uncover the truth behind how our modern food system works, Tracie M. McMillan took jobs in a supermarket produce section, a chain restaurant kitchen, and the fields alongside migrant laborers. If you eat, you owe it to yourself to read this masterful book." —**Barry Estabook**, author of *Tomatoland*

"McMillan provides an eye-opening account of the route much of American food takes from the field to the restaurant table." --*Kirkus*

"Three cheers for Tracie McMillan; this book is a revelation! It is the sort of engaging first person adventure story that reads like a good novel, all the while supplying the facts and figures that make the larger picture clear. I'm grateful to her in equal parts for the stamina and courage to undertake this undercover journey, the narrative skill that makes the account so digestible, and the commitment to social justice for both workers and consumers that infuses the whole project." —**Janet Poppendieck**, author of *Free for All* and *Sweet Charity*

"This is an amazing book. Tracie McMillan will take any reader into new territory. The implacable fierceness of farmwork, the slovenliness behind the produce section at Walmart—prepare to be submerged in harsh little worlds and shocked. But McMillan keeps her cool, always presenting the

context and the content of her struggles with enough analytic detachment to rough out a complete, and convincing, vision of food as a social good. Read her book and your dinner will never look the same."

--William Finnegan, author of *Cold New World*

"Tracie McMillan has written a remarkable book for right now—a book that smartly tells us what is wrong with what we eat and how we might improve it. But what is even more remarkable about the book is how deeply engaging it is. With her intimate and confident portraits of American food workers, she crafts a touching, emotional narrative that will stay with you long after you have finished the last page."
—**James Oseland**, author of *Cradle of Flavor*

"This is a wonderful introduction to the triumph and tragedy of the American food industry. Mixing compassionate participant observation with in depth, up-to-the-minute background research, Tracie McMillan takes us for an eye-opening, heart-rending tour of the corporate food chain. Along the way we meet unforgettable people who, at great personal cost, labor hard so that we can eat cheaply and easily. Having seen what it takes to move our meals from farm to table, the reader will emerge shaken, enlightened, and forever thankful."

— **Warren Belasco**, author of *Appetite for Change* and *Meals to Come*

"This book is vital. [McMillan] has the writing skills to bear witness, the research background to provide context, and the courage to take on the challenging task." —**Los Angeles Times**

"A compelling and cogent argument that eating healthily ought to be easier."
—**Cleveland Plain Dealer**

"Clear and essential." —**The Boston Globe**

From the Back Cover The New York Times:

Before the Food Arrives on Your Plate, So Much Goes on Behind the Scenes

By DWIGHT GARNER

Published: February 20, 2012

One of the first things to like about Tracie McMillan, the author of "The American Way of Eating," is her forthrightness. She's a blue-collar girl who grew up eating a lot of Tuna Helper and Ortega Taco Dinners because her mother was gravely ill for a decade, and her father, who sold lawn equipment, had little time to cook. About these box meals, she says, "I liked them."

Expensive food that took time to prepare "wasn't for people like us," she writes. "It was for the people my grandmother described, with equal parts envy and derision, as *fancy*; my father's word was *snob*. And I wasn't about to be like that." This is a voice the food world needs.

Ms. McMillan, like a lot of us, has grown to take an interest in fresh, well-prepared food. She's

written for *Saveur* magazine, a pretty fancy journal, and she knows her way around a kitchen. But her central concern, in her journalism and in this provocative book, is food and class. She stares at America's bounty, noting that so few seem able to share in it fully, and she asks: "What would it take for us all to eat well?"

The title of Ms. McMillan's book pays fealty to Jessica Mitford's classic of English nonfiction prose, "The American Way of Death" (1963). Ms. McMillan's sentences don't have Mitford's high style -- they're a pile of leeks, not shallots -- but both books traffic in dark humor. Standing in a Walmart, where she has taken a minimum-wage job, Ms. McMillan observes that its "produce section is nothing less than an expansive life-support system." Most days, when it comes to vegetables, she's putting lipstick on corpses.

The book Ms. McMillan's most resembles is Barbara Ehrenreich's best seller "Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America" (2001). Like Ms. Ehrenreich, Ms. McMillan goes undercover amid this country's working poor. She takes jobs picking grapes, peaches and garlic in California; stocking produce in a Walmart in Detroit; and working in a busy Applebee's in the Flatbush neighborhood of Brooklyn. She tries, and often fails, to live on only the money she earns.

The news Ms. McMillan brings about life on the front lines is mostly grim. In the California fields, where she is the only gringa, she makes far less than minimum wage, sometimes as little as \$26 for nine hours of back-breaking work. She lives in cockroach-filled houses, all she can afford, with more than a dozen other people. She delivers a brutal takedown of corporations that, in her view, pretend on their sunny Web sites to treat workers well but in practice use labor contractors that often cheat them. She names names. Here's looking at you, the Garlic Company in Bakersfield, Calif.

She charts the toll this work takes on people's health. "My thighs look as though they've been attacked by an enraged but weaponless toddler," she writes after a day of garlic picking. "My hands, swollen and inundated with blisters the first few days, have acclimatized, but there's a worrisome pain shooting up my right arm." She develops a sprain, which forces her to miss work and ultimately quit. Other workers, she notes, would not have that option.

Among this book's central points is that food workers are, in terms of money and time, among the least able to eat well in America. Most are too exhausted to cook. "By the time I finish my stint at Applebee's," Ms. McMillan says, "I'll have learned how to spot the other members of my tribe on the subway: heavy-lidded eyes, blank stares, black pants specked with grease, hard-soled black shoes."

Ms. McMillan's chapters about Walmart and Applebee's are the book's best. She is not a slash-and-burn critic of either company: both provide needed jobs and treat their employees at least moderately well. But you will steer clear of both places after reading about her travails.

The produce sold at the Walmart where she works is second-rate, often slimy, mushy or merely bland. "Walmart doesn't always have the freshest stuff," one manager says to her. "That's how we keep th

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