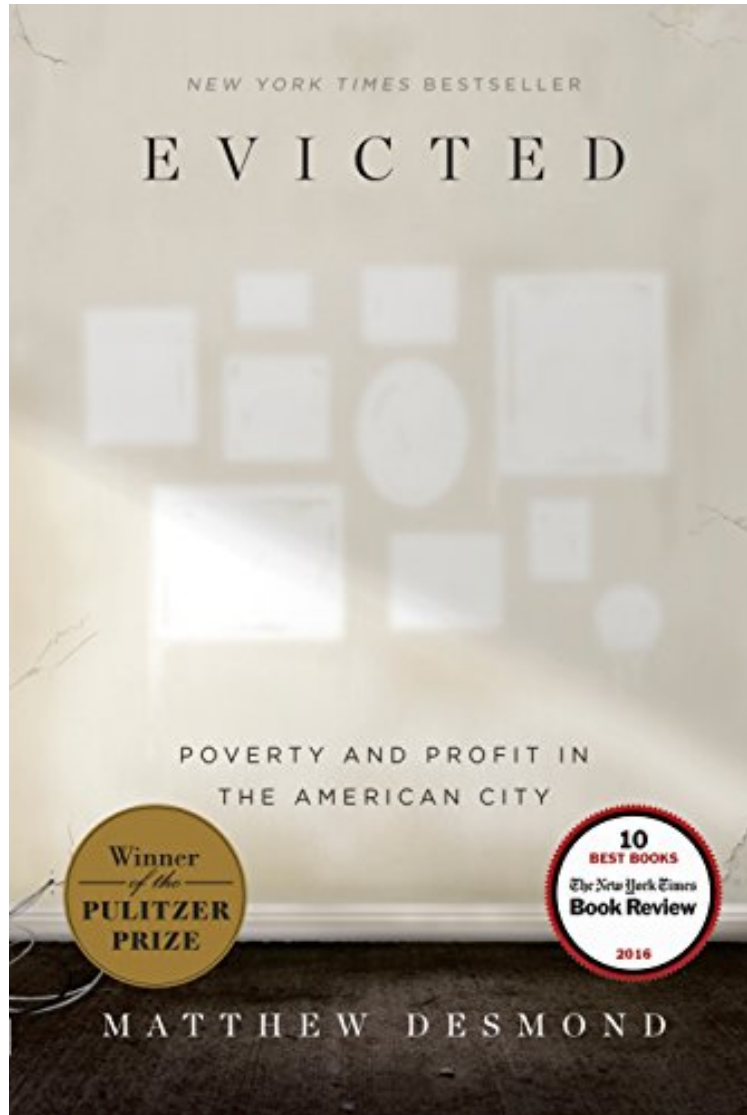


[FREE] Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City

## Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City

*Matthew Desmond*

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**Matthew Desmond : Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City:

502 of 524 people found the following review helpful. The 'Hood is Actually Not So GoodBy MilwaukeeJoeI have been involved with low income housing in Milwaukee for over three decades as a landlord and as an attorney for landlords and tenants. I know the neighborhoods and characters in this book all too well. If you want insight into poor people's lives as they struggle to keep a roof over their heads, you should buy this book. The other reviews are right about how gripping those stories are. But if you are a graduate of Trump University and think yoursquo;ll get some insight into how to make obscene profits by renting to the poor yoursquo;ll find anecdotes but no real verified

research about the business of landlording. Most significantly, you will not learn the truth that bringing evictions totally destroyed the rental business of Sherrena, the leading landlord protagonist. Strangely, though Desmond interviewed 30 landlords he only focuses on two. One is Tobin, a mobile home park operator on Milwaukee's south side, which is largely white and Hispanic. Tobin indeed makes a lot of money but that is because he does not have to maintain or repair 95% of the dwellings in his park. Tobin rents out a concrete slab with utility connections and the tenants buy or bring their own trailers and pay their own utilities. As owners they are responsible for the exterior and interior condition of their dwelling. Only 5% of the trailers are owned by the park and rented to tenants as a living unit. So Tobin is a landlord only in the sense that you might have a landlord this summer when you drive your Winnebago to a Jellystone Park and pay rent for the parking pad and utility hookups. Then we have Sherrena who with her husband runs about 18 buildings (mostly two-family flats) in the African-American neighborhoods on the north side of Milwaukee. In a chapter titled "The Hood is Good"; Desmond blithely accepts Sherrena's boast that she has a net worth of \$2 million and nets \$10,000 a month in rental income. Desmond is honest in portraying the many difficulties Sherrena has in collecting rent from her struggling tenants but he doesn't do the background research (available from local court records) about the many thousands of dollars in unpaid rents and damaged units which sort of cut into profits a little bit. As to her supposed net worth of \$2 million, that averages out to \$111,000 for each of these 18 ghetto properties - certainly far more than some of the real dumpy ones are worth; but the author does not research the amounts of the recorded mortgages against these properties (ranging between \$64,000 and \$119,200) which further greatly reduce the claimed net worth. That would have been revealed in the many foreclosures filed against Sherrena's properties which started within a year after Desmond's visit to Milwaukee. So when this book came out in 2016 the curious reader might want to know: if the "hood is good" for the landlord how much better has it gotten since the author did his study in 2009? Research so far shows that not one of Sherrena's properties remains in her ownership. Starting in 2010 many were bulldozed, went into city ownership via foreclosure for nonpayment of real estate taxes or today sit as haunting, blighted eyesores. A few were foreclosed by lenders, were fixed up and are under new ownership. Evictions by Sherrena ended in the year 2010. So did her non-existent profit. She joins many small-time under-capitalized landlords who have gone bust in Milwaukee and elsewhere since the Great Recession started in 2008 with the bursting of the housing bubble. Please note that I still give the book 4 stars. Its significant defects in reporting on the "profit" aspect of its subtitle are outweighed by the important and detailed research on the effects of eviction in creating and perpetuating poverty. A better and expanded housing voucher program for low income tenants is much needed. Landlords nationwide should join Matt Desmond's call for its implementation. 263 of 275 people found the following review helpful. Eye opening. By G. Kellner "Evicted" is the story of eight families in Milwaukee, WI--six families struggling mightily to pay the rent on their increasingly crappy apartments, and two sets of landlords. The landlords are either a new breed of venture capitalists or merely slumlords, depending on your perspective. Since roughly 2000, rents have shot up while the properties have either stayed the same or declined, so that by 2013 about one out of every three poor families spent seventy percent of their income on housing. Think about that for a minute. As a result of this, poor families are always one crisis--really one unexpected expense--away from being evicted. The ramifications of being evicted on one's emotional, financial, and physical states are profound. First, once someone gets evicted, finding any kind of housing becomes extremely difficult--one of the ladies called 90 apartments before she found one that would take her and her two kids. You can place blame on these struggling families if you want to, but the fact of the matter is it's extraordinarily difficult for them to succeed, or even to just get by. I found this book very interesting--to say I enjoyed it would be wrong because much of it is depressing. It made the problems of the urban poor personal. I quite liked some of them and I was rooting for them--"Please, let this landlord call her back!" I felt bad when Vanetta went to prison for armed robbery after her hours were cut, and I cheered when Scott finally got clean. I read it all the way through the endnotes, which are also quite interesting and provide some insights or background info. I really wanted to find out how all the families were doing today (the book takes place in 2008-2009) because I became attached to them and had come to care about them. Unfortunately the author doesn't tell you what became of them, although if I had to guess I'd say their lives continued on in more or less the same vein. A word on the swearing: this is a well written, professionally done sociological study. The author only uses swears when he's quoting one of the people he interviewed. If you were desperate, poor, depressed and angry, you, too might be given to curse words. If you enjoy sociological and/or cultural topics, if you care about equality in America, if you are interested in how grinding poverty affects families, pick this up. I learned a lot. 237 of 253 people found the following review helpful. I Have Been there Myself.... By Steve J. A difficult book to get through. Not that it was poorly written or boring just its subject matter was hard. And that is what made it so powerful. More real stories than boring analysis which is right up my alley. Statistics are fine but I want to know about the real people and their stories not just graphs and charts. I had a real rough patch 25 plus years ago and was very near what a lot of these people are going through. I know their fear, panic, depression, feeling of worthlessness first hand and that is what made this book an excellent read for me. When I got my feet back on the ground and bought my first house we used to have a mail box right out front. At the end of the month I used to write my check for my mortgage at night when I did my bills and go to the

mailbox and put it in. I used to look up at the stars, close my eyes, and thank God that I had a place to stay for another 30 days. Although many years have past the scars of that time never left me and never will and I am glad. A reminder of what could happen. All of these people have my sympathy because I have been there myself. Powerful and relevant-well worth the time.

WINNER OF THE 2017 PULITZER PRIZE GENERAL NON-FICTION  
From Harvard sociologist and MacArthur "Genius" Matthew Desmond, a landmark work of scholarship and reportage that will forever change the way we look at poverty in America  
In this brilliant, heartbreaking book, Matthew Desmond takes us into the poorest neighborhoods of Milwaukee to tell the story of eight families on the edge. Arleen is a single mother trying to raise her two sons on the \$20 a month she has left after paying for their rundown apartment. Scott is a gentle nurse consumed by a heroin addiction. Lamar, a man with no legs and a neighborhood full of boys to look after, tries to work his way out of debt. Vanetta participates in a botched stickup after her hours are cut. All are spending almost everything they have on rent, and all have fallen behind. The fates of these families are in the hands of two landlords: Sherrena Tarver, a former schoolteacher turned inner-city entrepreneur, and Tobin Charney, who runs one of the worst trailer parks in Milwaukee. They loathe some of their tenants and are fond of others, but as Sherrena puts it, "Love don't pay the bills." She moves to evict Arleen and her boys a few days before Christmas. Even in the most desolate areas of American cities, evictions used to be rare. But today, most poor renting families are spending more than half of their income on housing, and eviction has become ordinary, especially for single mothers. In vivid, intimate prose, Desmond provides a ground-level view of one of the most urgent issues facing America today. As we see families forced into shelters, squalid apartments, or more dangerous neighborhoods, we bear witness to the human cost of America's vast inequality—and to people's determination and intelligence in the face of hardship. Based on years of embedded fieldwork and painstakingly gathered data, this masterful book transforms our understanding of extreme poverty and economic exploitation while providing fresh ideas for solving a devastating, uniquely American problem. Its unforgettable scenes of hope and loss remind us of the centrality of home, without which nothing else is possible. NEW YORK

TIMES  
BESTSELLER  
WINNER OF THE NATIONAL BOOK CRITICS CIRCLE AWARD FOR NONFICTION  
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Shelf Awareness

.com An Best Book of March 2016: It's the rare writer who can capture a social ill with a clear-eyed, nonjudgmental tone and still allow the messiness of real people its due. Matthew Desmond does just that with *Evicted* as he explores the stories of tenants and landlords in the poorest areas of Milwaukee during 2008 and 2009. It's almost always a compliment to say that a nonfiction book reads like a novel and this one does—mostly because Desmond gets very close to the "characters," relating their words and thoughts and layering on enough vibrant details to make every rented property or trailer come alive. You can almost forget that these are actual people with actual problems until he delivers a raw jolt of reality: the woman who's evicted because her boyfriend beats her up; the tenant whose baby daughter dies in a house fire; the tenant who pushes a "friend" out a window for using all her cell phone minutes; the landlord who refuses to fix stopped-up pipes, so tenants allow garbage and sewage to pile up in the property. Through both personal stories and data, Desmond proves that eviction undermines self, family, and community, bearing down disproportionately hard on women with children. In Milwaukee, being behind on rent gives landlords the opening to serve an eviction notice, which leads to a court date. On the face of it, it may seem easy to side with the landlords—of course tenants should pay their rent. But as *Evicted* pulls back layer after layer, what's exposed is a cycle of hurt that all parties—landlord, tenant, city—inflict on one another. Whether readers agree with Desmond's conclusions for how to break this cycle in order to strengthen families and neighborhoods, it's obvious by the end of *Evicted* that there is no easy fix, and that people—some addicts, some criminals—will slip through the cracks. But it should be just as obvious that we must still try. —Adrian Liang "Astonishing... Desmond has set a new standard for reporting on poverty." —Barbara Ehrenreich, *New York Times Book Review* "After reading *Evicted*, you'll realize you cannot have a serious conversation about poverty without talking about housing.... The book is that good, and it's that

unignorable."mdash;Jennifer Senior,nbsp;New York Timesnbsp;Criticsrsquo; Top Books of 2016ldquo;My God, what [Evicted] lays bare about American poverty. It is devastating and infuriating and a necessary read.rdquo;mdash;Roxane Gay, author ofnbsp;Bad Feministnbsp;andnbsp;Difficult Womenldquo;Written with the vividness of a novel, [Evicted] offers a dark mirror of middle-class Americansquo;s obsession with real estate, laying bare the workings of the low end of the market, where evictions have become just another part of an often lucrative business model.rdquo;mdash;Jennifer Schuessler, New York Timesldquo;In spare and penetrating prose... Desmond has made it impossible to consider poverty without grappling with the role of housing. This pick [as best book of 2016] was not close.rdquo;mdash;Carlos Lozada,nbsp;Washington Postldquo;An essential piece of reportage about poverty and profit in urban America.rdquo;mdash;Geoff Dyer,nbsp;Thenbsp;Guardiansquo;s Best Holiday Reads 2016"It doesn't happen every week (or every month, or even year), but every once in a while a book comes along that changes the national conversation... Evicted looks to be one of those books."nbsp;mdash;Pamela Paul, editor of the New York Times Book "Should be required reading in an election year, or any other."mdash;Entertainment Weeklyldquo;Powerful, monstrously effective... the power of this book abides in the indelible impression left by its stories.rdquo;mdash;Jill Leovy, The American Scholarldquo;Gripping and importanthellip;[Desmond's] portraits are vivid and unsettling.mdash;Jason DeParle, New York of Booksldquo;An exquisitely crafted, meticulously researched exploration of life on the margins, providing a voice to people who have been shamefully ignoredmdash;or, worse, demonizedmdash;by opinion makers over the course of decades.rdquo;nbsp;mdash;The Boston Globe"[An] impressive work of scholarship.... As Mr. Desmond points out, eviction has been neglected by urban sociologists, so his account fills a gap. His methodology is scrupulous."mdash;Wall Street JournalKirkus Prize for Nonfiction FinalistWinner of the 2017 Robert F. Kennedy Book AwardWinner of the 800-CEO-READ Book Awardnbsp;mdash;nbsp;Current Events Public AffairsWinner of the American Bar Association's 2017 Silver Gavel AwardOne ofnbsp;The Los Angeles Times' 10 Most Important Books of 2016Anbsp;New York Timesnbsp;Editors' ChoiceOne ofnbsp;Wall Street Journal's Hottest Spring Nonfiction BooksOne ofnbsp;O: The Oprah Magazine's 10 Titles to Pick Up NowOne of Vulture's 8 Books You Need to Read This MonthOne of BuzzFeed's 14 Most Buzzed About Books of 2016One ofnbsp;The Guardian's Best Holiday Reads 2016About the AuthorMatthew Desmondnbsp;is the John L. Loeb Associate Professor of the Social Sciences at Harvard University and codirector of the Justice and Poverty Project. A former member of the Harvard Society of Fellows, he is the author of the award-winning booknbsp;On the Fireline,nbsp;coauthor of two books on race, and editor of a collection of studies on severe deprivation in America. His work has been supported by the Ford, Russell Sage, and National Science Foundations, and his writing has appeared in thenbsp;New York Timesnbsp;andnbsp;Chicago Tribune. In 2015, Desmond was awarded a MacArthur ldquo;Geniusrdquo; grant.