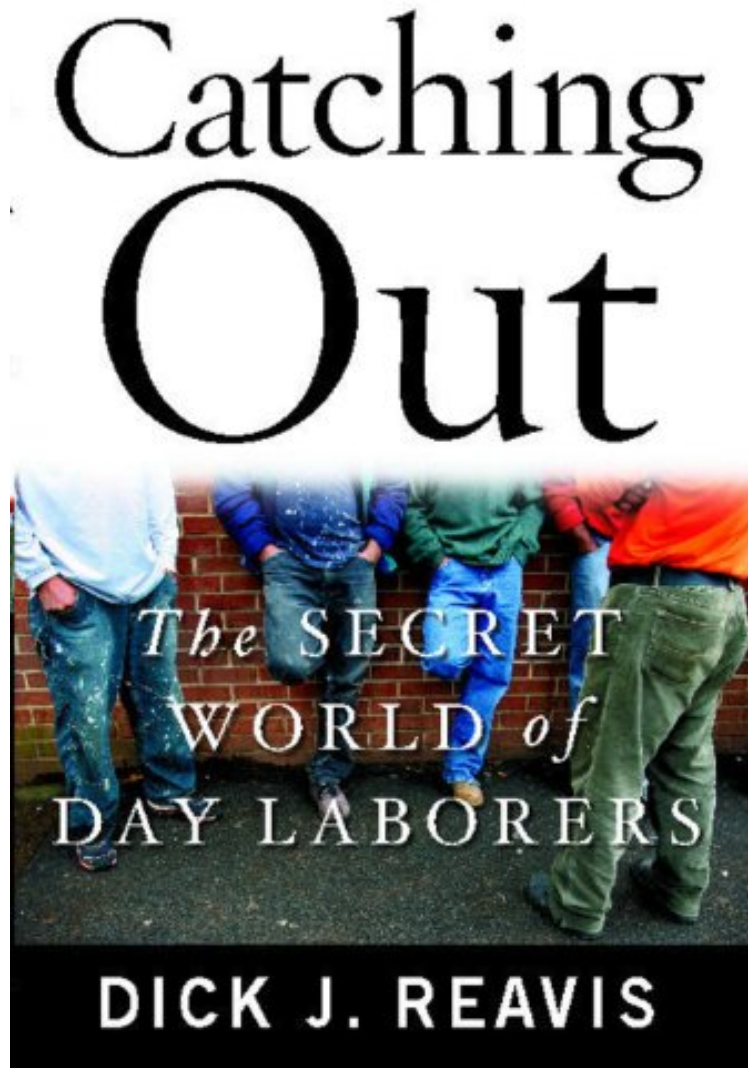


(Free pdf) Catching Out: The Secret World of Day Laborers

Catching Out: The Secret World of Day Laborers

Dick J. Reavis

**Download PDF / ePub / DOC / audiobook / ebooks*



DOWNLOAD



+

READ ONLINE

#1755425 in eBooks 2010-01-26 2010-02-16 File Name: B0035XOQVS | File size: 51.Mb

Dick J. Reavis : Catching Out: The Secret World of Day Laborers before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Catching Out: The Secret World of Day Laborers:

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Desperately needed exposure for a horribly neglected sector of US economyBy CustomerAs a native of the unnamed city where the Labor-4-U agency is located, I easily recognize the setting and cast of characters that Dick Reavis vividly depicts in Catching Out: The Secret World of Day Laborers. I was thrilled when I found out that Reavis (a mentor of mine for many years) had written this book."Catching Out" details the exploitative sector of the work force known as day labor, a particularly pernicious form of temporary employment where most workers show up at pre-dawn hours at "hiring halls" in the hopes of landing a one-day gig

where they will be paid at the end of the workday. Many of these workers---mostly men---are guys most Americans would consider marginalized, discriminated against, unemployable, dysfunctional, or all of the above. However, the catalysts that push adults into this oppressive job sector are complex, multifaceted, and defy the easy explanations and stereotypes that too many Americans of privilege use to dismiss the working poor in this country. Sadly, I recognize many of the folks that people Reavis's narrative: they are my cousins, uncles, neighbors, fellow bus riders, workers I struggled alongside as an organizer, or homeless people that I've met and talked to in nearly every city I've visited. Unlike most members of this book's intended audience, I personally experienced the socioeconomic conditions that are an everyday reality for most day laborers: childhood poverty, single parent with limited education, an upbringing in low-income communities of color. As a younger person I worked my share of low-paying, dead-end jobs, before I finally decided to use the brains the Creator gave me and attend college. However, as Reavis points out, even education and work experience isn't enough to save many Americans from temporary jobs and day laboring, especially in this period of high unemployment. Reavis also reminds us that our dismissal of the working poor and other marginalized communities will ultimately lead to our own collective economic undoing.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Grit and Grime written with Gusto! By D_shrink The author is basically on a crusade to show that the impoverished underclass is being exploited by society as a whole and the employers of day-laborers in particular. It is very evident that the author is passionate in his beliefs and is a wonderful storyteller at the same time. It should be noted that the author is a professor at NC State in Raleigh and not a permanent day-laborer type, but went undercover for a period of time to get the proper background information for the book. The author noted that although he is not in the permanent day laboring camp, he has grown up knowing hardship and is certainly not a member of the upper or upper middle class, by his own admission. He gives wonderful anecdotal experiences about the jobs he was ticketed to, or to use the title expression, he was able to "Catch Out" a job ticket. His description of the various personalities was also great. The only problem I saw with the writing was some confusion between some pronouns and the verbs to which they were referenced. A minor point for most, but a little more problematic for an English professor and author. I liked the book a lot, but would disagree with the author's conclusion that our problems would be solved with more unionization and universal health care. He also mentions that he is an Obama supporter at several points in the narrative, so the conclusion is not all that surprising. I disagree with the conclusion but feel the book at only 203pp is a worthwhile purchase.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An insight into a rarely explored portion of the workplace By John This book was well-written and provides the only recent account of working as an on-the-books day laborer that I was able to track down while researching the topic for a law review article. While Reavis' narrative feels a little aimless at times, overall he paints a thoughtful yet clear-eyed account of life as a day laborer. I particularly enjoyed the beginning and the end, where he puts his personal experiences into the broader socio-economic context. In those sections, it is clear that he's done his homework and that this account is more than just a diary.

Reavis reported to a labor hall each morning hoping to "catch out," or get job assignments. To supplement his savings for retirement, the sixty-two-year-old joined people dispatched by an agency to manual jobs for which they were paid at the end of each day. Reavis writes with simple honesty, sympathy, and self-deprecating wit about his life inside day labor agencies, which employ some 3 million Americans. . Written with the flair of a gifted portraitist and storyteller, the book describes his days on jobs at a factory, as a construction and demolition worker, landscaper, road crew flagman, auto-auction driver and warehouseman, and several days spent sorting artifacts in a dead packrats' apartment. On one pick-and-shovel job, Reavis finds that his partner is too blind to see the hole they're digging. In each setting, he describes the personalities and problems of his desperate peers, the attitudes of their bosses, and the straits of immigrant co-workers. This is a gritty, hard-times evocation of the sometimes colorful men and women on the bottom rung of the workforce. It is partly a guide to performing hard, physical tasks, partly a celebration of strength, and partly a venting of ire at stingy and stern overseers. Reavis wants to make the point that physical exertion, even when ugly, painful or unpleasant, remains vital to the economy—and that those who labor, though poorly paid, bring vigor, skill and cunning to their tasks. .

From Publishers Weekly Though a writer and English professor by trade, Reavis found himself taking on the role of a day laborer to help supplement his retirement and savings. Appearing at the local labor hall to catch out, that is, get picked for a job, Reavis, who wrote about illegal immigrants in his first book, *Without Documents*, becomes one of the millions of Americans who work all manner of manual labor gigs and are, economically and socially, living on the edge, as he lugs boxes, digs ditches, and hauls debris with fellow workers. Despite each of the jobs being unrelated, the book is held together by Reavis's central focus on the plight of a working class that has no health insurance, for the most part must rely on others for transportation, and, in many cases, may not even have a home to return to at the end of a long day. Also to his benefit, Reavis allows his colleagues—hard drinkers like *Real Deal*, shirkers like *Tommy*, softies like *Office Skills*, and hard workers like *Sung*—to take center stage in his tales, which run the gamut from humorous to heartrending. This ability to bring the small successes, daily struggles, and measured dreams

of these down-at-heels working stiff makes the book's final chapter, in which Reavis outlines the legal and economic reforms needed to help day laborers get fair wages and treatment, overwhelmingly persuasive. (Feb.) Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "Dick Reavis reveals what he learned working among millions of day laborers on the bottom rung of our workforce. With this trenchant report he does what Barbara Ehrenreich did for women in Nickel and Dimed." -- Mario M. Cuomo

About the Author Dick J. Reavis is a former staff writer at Texas Monthly. He has written about motorcycle gangs, undocumented immigrants, guerrillas, convicts, coal miners, security guards, and bankers for publications as diverse as Soldier of Fortune and The Wall Street Journal. He is a professor in the English Department at North Carolina State University.