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Tavis Smiley, Cornel West
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A POVERTY MANIFESTO

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Tavis Smiley, Cornel West : The Rich and the Rest of Us: A Poverty Manifesto before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Rich and the Rest of Us: A Poverty Manifesto:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A compelling, informed case on the plight of the poor in the U.S. By lexi "The Rich and the Rest of Us" is what it sells itself to be: a poverty manifesto. Tavis Smiley and Cornel West provide a comprehensive, compelling account of the history and experience of poverty in the United States. From the outset, they unapologetically appeal to the reader in their "attempt to unsettle, unnerve, and unseat the powers that deny and downplay the rights of the impoverished (Smiley and West, 2012:10). In this appeal, they provide evidence which calls upon their audience to act to embark upon radical social transformation" (Smiley and

West 2012:11). The work is thick with historical accounts mingled with quotes from thought leaders and supplemented with statistics and data. Such evidence bolsters the credibility of the authors' claims; not like the choir to whom Smiley and West preach to need to be convinced. Smiley and West often discuss how politicians fail to attend to the needs of the poor in the U.S. They illustrate how "the institutionalized precedent of greed" empowers one percent of the nation's population to control 42% of its wealth (Smiley and West 2012:7). The theme of the evidence is, most simply, then versus now. Comparisons are drawn between how money used to be better distributed; how more people used to be given government aid as a means to rise from poverty; how politicians used to advocate for the poor and no longer do; and the list goes on. Much of *The Rich and the Rest of Us* contains personal stories of real people who have struggled with living in poverty. Many of these stories derived from Smiley and West's "Poverty Tour," where they traveled across the U.S. to put a face to poverty. In sharing stories from their Poverty Tour, Smiley and West elucidate attitudes which cannot be as complexly explained through data and history. Smiley and West recount how a resident of a town which they visited on their tour did not want the authors in town because she claimed there was no poverty there. The authors go on to explain that "affirming poor people is dangerous" because it allows the non-poor to understand that anyone can become impoverished at any time; which can be scary to accept (Smiley and West 2012:73). To conclude their diagnoses of the causes and symptoms of poverty, Smiley and West delve into twelve solutions to help solve the poverty epidemic. These suggestions include increasing wages to keep them aligned with the rate of inflation; creating a twenty-first century jobs plan to compensate for the loss of manufacturing jobs; overhauling the racist prison system; and ending tax break loopholes. I would recommend this book for anyone seeking to learn about the history and experience of poverty in the United States. *The Rich and the Rest of Us* interweaves informed pulls to the head and the heart to present a compelling case on the plight of the poor in the U.S.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Telling it like it is

By K. Pring

Some people don't like politics, especially if it comes from the left, however, this isn't so much a political statement against the right, rather it's a statement of facts that cast blame on both sides of the aisle who have ignored working-class Americans. Written in a style that mixes Travis Smiley and Cornel West's unique writing styles in a way that feels like a conversation with both. Another part of the book is the use of resources to back up what is being said throughout and referenced later for more detail very much like a research paper for college, but in a much easier and well drafted format. Sadly, there is more truth in this book that gives a grim and unabashed look at where the poor and working class came from and are continuing to go. Since the Wall Street bubble burst in 2008 it's been a struggle to get everyone back on their feet, and many have never made it. This book is based around them, innocent people who happened to live paycheck to paycheck and are suddenly found wanting after the disaster on Wall Street. It's a good read filled with facts every person should know who is in our manner of living, one of the 85% of Americans who haven't really seen and increase in our paychecks over the past 50 years while the upper 15%...well, I'll let you read the book. The book isn't a feel-good story, it's a can-do story of ideas and information for the average person to know and think about. Hopefully if enough of us can put our heads together we can find a way to help those who are less fortunate than us and in doing so uplift all of us. Thanks for reading and have a nice day!

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. THE POVERTY REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE TELEVISED

By Alan Warner

This book does an excellent job of detailing the plight and everyday struggles of us poor people as stated in the middle of page 153 "Poverty is the new slavery, and the oligarchs are the new kings. The blinders are firmly affixed, and the necessary checks and balances have disappeared. Taxation without representation is now reflected in policies that allow the wealthy to be coddled and under-taxed while the perennially poor, working poor, and "new poor" are ignored and rendered invisible. It is time to reawaken American democracy. It is time for a nonviolent democratic revolution. It is time for righteous indignation against the fleecing of America's poor. And there is no time like the present, given the indifference toward the poor that has infected our political discourse." No one should go hungry in America but unfortunately that is not the case as stated on page 161 "It was no surprise that hunger in America and food scarcity were on the mind of Vicki B. Escarra, President and CEO of Feeding America, the nation's leading domestic hunger-relief charity, during our Remaking America symposium: "While we're working on the longer term and as we think about poverty and all the things that really affect and are a part of poverty, hunger is the one issue that is solvable in our country." It's "criminal", Escarra told us, when 17 million kids in this country go to school hungry every day. Malnutrition affects how they comprehend, behave, learn, and excel at school. Surely, this is a solvable problem, Escarra insisted: "There's enough food produced in America not only to feed every person in this country but also most of the developed world. What I would do is find a way to work on the food system so that we can get what farmers grow to the plates of people that need food." Also dealing with employment for us poor people as stated on page 170-171 "Despite talk of the job market's seeming recovery, it remains harder than ever to find work in America. For many, having a job is still not enough. Even as corporate profits have soared (with 40 percent going to big banks), more adults are in poverty than ever before. Middle class jobs are vanishing. In 2011, high-wage industries accounted for only 14 percent of new jobs. Meanwhile, low-wage work made up almost half of all the job growth. Close to 9 million people said they were working part-time only because they could not find full-time employment. We can no longer judge anyone who is living poor in America as someone who is lazy or who has made a series of avoidable bad

choices. Such pat indictments and stereotypes obscure a fundamental truth: there is poverty of opportunity in America. America no longer has enough work for able-bodied people, and too many working people are not paid a living wage. The catastrophic downward spiral created by the Great Recession and exacerbated by the unfair tax exemptions on America's wealthiest 1 percent has now sentenced millions to the unenviable ranks of those who have lost the ability to earn a living in America."The corporate media owned and controlled by the 1% are constantly feeding us lies about poverty in America but the truth is this, starting on page 171-175 "It took the Great Recession to make poverty a real threat to the American Psyche. When folk who didn't fit the stereotype started losing their businesses, jobs, and homes, and had to rely on government handouts, they took notice." On page 173-175 "TEN LIES ABOUT POVERTY THAT AMERICA CAN NO LONGER AFFORD:....." If you want to know what these 10 lies are you will have to buy and read this book every poor person in America should use this book as a guideline manual for the fight against poverty.

Record unemployment and rampant corporate avarice, empty houses but homeless families, dwindling opportunities in an increasingly paralyzed nation—these are the realities of 21st-century America, land of the free and home of the new middle class poor. Award-winning broadcaster Tavis Smiley and Dr. Cornel West, one of the nation's leading democratic intellectuals, co-hosts of Public Radio's Smiley West, now take on the "Prdquo; word—poverty. *The Rich and the Rest of Us* is the next step in the journey that began with *The Poverty Tour: A Call to Conscience*. Smiley and West's 18-city bus tour gave voice to the plight of impoverished Americans of all races, colors, and creeds. With 150 million Americans persistently poor or near poor, the highest numbers in over five decades, Smiley and West argue that now is the time to confront the underlying conditions of systemic poverty in America before it's too late. By placing the eradication of poverty in the context of the nation's greatest moments of social transformation—such as the abolition of slavery, woman's suffrage, and the labor and civil rights movements—ending poverty is sure to emerge as America's 21st-century civil rights struggle. As the middle class disappears and the safety net is shredded, Smiley and West, building on the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr., ask us to confront our fear and complacency with 12 poverty changing ideas. They challenge us to re-examine our assumptions about poverty in America—what it really is and how to eliminate it now.