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Someplace Like America: Tales From The New Great Depression



Synopsis

In *Someplace Like America*, writer Dale Maharidge and photographer Michael S. Williamson take us to the working-class heart of America, bringing to life "through shoe leather reporting, memoir, vivid stories, stunning photographs, and thoughtful analysis" the deepening crises of poverty and homelessness. The story begins in 1980, when the authors joined forces to cover the America being ignored by the mainstream media "people living on the margins and losing their jobs as a result of deindustrialization. Since then, Maharidge and Williamson have traveled more than half a million miles to investigate the state of the working class (winning a Pulitzer Prize in the process). In *Someplace Like America*, they follow the lives of several families over the thirty-year span to present an intimate and devastating portrait of workers going jobless. This brilliant and essential study "begun in the trickle-down Reagan years and culminating with the recent banking catastrophe" puts a human face on today's grim economic numbers. It also illuminates the courage and resolve with which the next generation faces the future.

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Customer Reviews

Someplace Like America: Tales From The New Great Depression For decades, it was considered political suicide to even mention the word "depression" in American political discourse. As late as 1978, Stuart Eizenstat, Chief Domestic Policy Advisor in the Carter Administration, said "if we don't fix the nation's economic problems, we could have a "banana". It was not an occasion for humor. Such was the vividness of the Great Depression upon the national psyche that everyone knew what Mr. Eizenstat meant. In their new book, Someplace Like America, authors Dale Maharidge and Michael S. Williamson re-establish a timeline between 20th century and 21st century hardship and deprivation in America, and they do so with a compassion and conviction that allows their work to be viewed as a continuation of that Depression era opus maximus, Let Us Now Praise Famous Men. The face on page 136 is a face we've seen before in the Depression era work of Dorthea Lange, while page 131 shares common ground with Larry Clark's Tulsa. After the inflation induced economic stagnation of the 1970's and Fed Chairman Paul Volker's determination to break the back of inflation, the U.S. embarked on a stretch of unparallel growth and expansion. None of this undermines the document the authors have produced because their thesis is that, even at its most robust, the American economy has always left large slices of its working population outside its growth umbrella. In the place of the industrial economy, whose demise this new book chronicles effectively, the large and burgeoning service economy was known by its acronym FIRE (Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate).

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