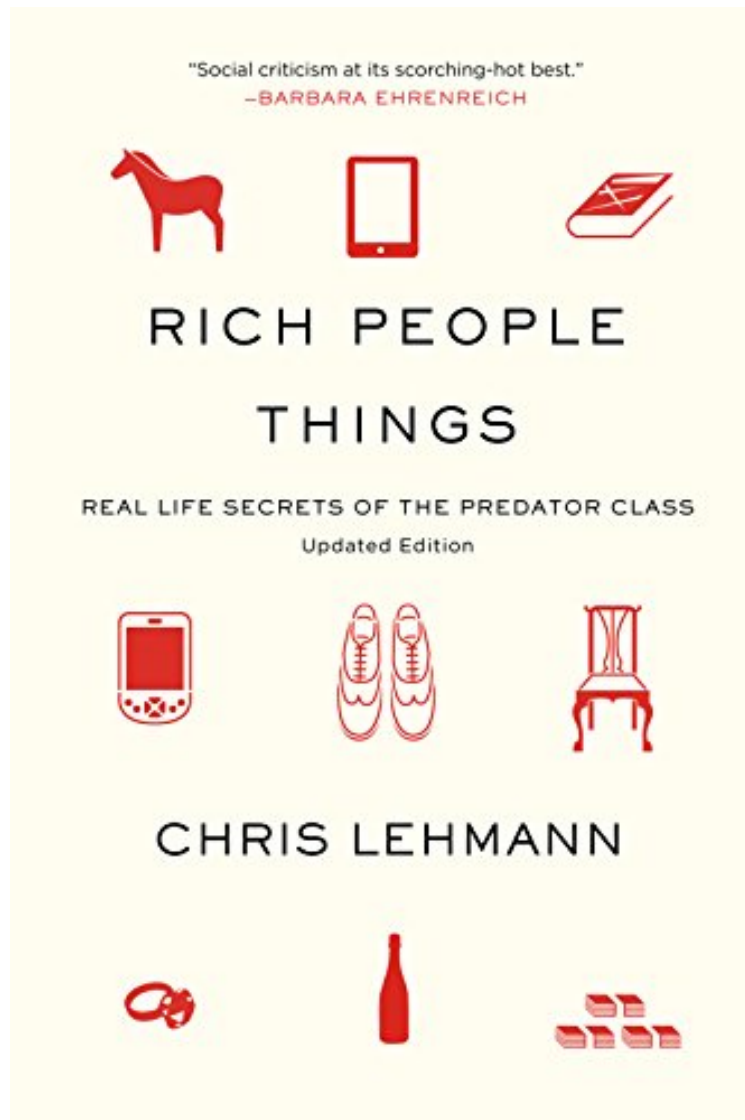


(Ebook pdf) Rich People Things: Real-Life Secrets of the Predator Class

Rich People Things: Real-Life Secrets of the Predator Class

Chris Lehmann

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Chris Lehmann : Rich People Things: Real-Life Secrets of the Predator Class before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Rich People Things: Real-Life Secrets of the Predator Class:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Some hot, some mehBy Jonathan Jackson, Jr. There are some really great essays here, i.e. Gehry, and then some really obvious ones, like Reality Television. The great essays speak for themselves. The bad ones, usually about more popular cultural topics, hardly speak at all.6 of 6 people found the

following review helpful. Good starting point with its coverage of a broad range of topics on the take over by the overlords. By Winter Chris Lehman covers a great many topics to show how what he refers to as the "overlords" control the American government and the country's economy, much to the detriment of the working classes. Overall he does a good job of highlighting areas where the 1% with their lack of scruples and integrity have gamed the sociopolitical environment to such a degree that the net effect is truly hopeless. The problem with this collection of essays is that they provide only a cursory examination of the areas covered and only for a short period of time and often without context. For example he comments on the tax structure in the state of California and blames the two-thirds majority requirements for increasing income taxes and Proposition 13 that has limited property taxes as the source of the problem. He even refers to Proposition 13 as a taxpayer tantrum, clearly not understanding that with the tech boom in California a great deal of real estate suddenly increased in value by 20% or more a year and as a result property taxes also increased greatly. The majority of the people living in Silicon Valley and other hot spots did not have an increase in real income and the increased valuation of their homes meant nothing but they would get a property tax bill for an additional \$5,000 and so end up selling their home for years. The problems with Prop 13 were that it was written to apply to both homeowners and businesses with commercial property. Shopping malls and banks and gas stations and super markets were locked in at a low rate and with such property seldom being sold the rate would never increase. Second, the key problem in California is the dependence on property tax in the first place, instead of on income tax. And when companies such as Apple pay no income tax to the state then it is their workers and everyone else who has to make up the difference. I do recommend this book as a starting point to expose people to a wide range of societal ills but it will provide no insights as to solutions or where to look for them. It has become increasingly clear to me that the power of the overlords is too great and as my own ancestors left Europe in the 1600's to escape conditions there from its overlords, and came to America, it is time for Americans to consider emigrating to countries where there is still a semblance of democracy and where socialism is considered a sensible and humane approach and not a threat to the uber wealthy. 15 of 19 people found the following review helpful. Jeremiads Old and New Plus Screeds Against "The Gatekeepers" By Laurence R. Bachmann Chris Lehmann is nothing if not timely publishing Rich People Things, ready to ride the OWS wave. Indeed, if there's an OWS supporter still on your Christmas or Hanukkah list--here's their present. Someday, the author is going to be one of those cranky, curmudgeonly men who chases kids off his lawn with a hose; but for now he is a fired-up lefty who is really pissed off. At whom? Well, pretty much everyone. In 30 short (I think too short) essays, Lehmann tackles pretty much all the powers that be--elites of every kind. Sometimes shining a light on a topic not thought of enough, sometimes heckling and haranguing the all too familiar. Each huff and every puff is on behalf of the working class and middle class schlub, like you and me. Some of Lehmann's targets are mastedons: Who with half a brain and a smidgeon of soul wouldn't despise the Roberts' Court? The dig at our Founding Fathers is a deserved if pointless jibe (good luck de-sanctifying that crowd) and is used to set up the premise that the monied class has always written the rule book, whether it is the applications we fill out for jobs and college or the very documents that govern us. It's a good point and I think to varying degrees true. Herein lies one of the book's problems. Everyone seemingly offends Lehmann equally. For example, the screed against David Brooks, who really gets under Lehmann's skin was a big "yeah, so?" for me. I don't know anyone who doesn't think Brooks isn't a mouthpiece for the powerful. On the other hand his piece on The New York Times, which makes some insightful and iconoclastic points is all too brief. Incredibly Brooks gets more ink than his employer which is simply bizarre. Does Lehmann think they are of equal import? So why not expand upon The Times' betrayal of Liberal principles. It's not as though he is ever going to work there. I get why his column is limited in space. But his book? Personally, I was pleased to watch him (with the help of Stephen Pinker) excoriate Malcolm Gladwell--I never got MG's popularity. But again, I think it's an essay that shouldn't have made the cut. Do we really think he's the problem? Indicative of a problem, but hardly important. A blip on the radar at best. I'm not sure why Frank Gehry gets lambasted. He struggled for 25 years before making it, but apparently that's not enough for Lehmann. Or the fact that he achieved success at all must make him a sellout. It's sometimes very silly. But not always. What the author does do very well is point out the scam, the film-flam, the sleight of hand and smoke and mirrors of those People, Places and Things that are supposed to be the engines of meritocracy, those supposedly leveling the playing field, but who are all just part of the same plutocracy. Reality TV is the double edged sword, degrading working class folk who become eager buffoons for a bit of notoriety and change. A too brief chapter on Class Warfare is a clarion call to arms and I wish Lehmann has spent more time expanding this essay as well. The one that is, for me, just perfect is his lambasting of Ayn Rand. It's great, as is his lampoon of the stupid cons who share only her fetish for capitalism. A brilliant carve-up. However, too few have that feeling of "just the right balance" of content and import. Indeed, that is a complaint about all of the good essays here--they are frustratingly brief. RPT would have been better with an editor who told Lehmann to cut the number of pieces in half but expand the best. His voice is great and he writes well. So, Rich People Things isn't bad. Sometimes a bit ridiculous, but often on the mark. It could have been much better. And that's a shame. Liberals have been wandering in a scorched desert for 40 years. RPT doesn't do more than wet our whistle.

"Social criticism at its scorching-hot best." Barbara Ehrenreich "Think H.L. Mencken crossed with Jon Stewart." The

Phoenix
In *Rich People Things*, Chris Lehmann lays bare the various dogmas and delusions that prop up plutocratic rule in the post-meltdown age. It's a humorous and harrowing tale of warped populism, phony reform, and blind deference to the nation's financial elite. As the author explains, American class privilege is very much like the idea of sex in a Catholic school: it's not supposed to exist in the first place, but once it presents itself in your mind's eye, you realize that it's everywhere. A concise and easy-to-use guide, *Rich People Things* catalogs the fortifications that shelter the opulent from the resentments of the hoi polloi. From ideological stanchions such as the Free Market through the castellation of media including *The New York Times* and *Wired* magazine, to gatekeepers such as David Brooks, Steve Forbes, and Alan Greenspan, Lehmann covers the vast array of comforting and comprehensive protections that allow the ber-privileged to maintain their iron grip on almost half of America's wealth. With chapters on Malcolm Gladwell, the Supreme Court, the memoir, and more, no one is spared from Lehmann's pointed prose. Chris Lehmann is employed, ever precariously, as an editor for Yahoo! News, Bookforum, and *The Baffler*, while dissecting the excesses of his social betters for his column *Rich People Things* at *TheAwl.com*. He lives in Washington, DC, with his wife Ana Marie Cox and a quartet of excellent pets.

This book made me laugh and cry. And wish I were a plutocrat. Chris Lehmann is an amazing writer. I will read his books until I die. Gary Shteyngart
What a delight it is to have finally! an entire book in which Lehmann gives the plutocrats of this world the drubbing they deserve in delicious detail. His scoffing is a tonic. Thomas Frank
I am always searching for books that can educate my six grown-up children, not to mention certain recidivist friends, about how this country came to be seduced, pushed, and betrayed into its present state by the money power and its Wall Street Washington nerve center. When I read Chris Lehmann's *Rich People Things*, I was so impressed by its wit, wisdom, and acuity on this matter, by the variety, aptness, and richness of its perceptions and examples, that I bought ten copies to give to family and friends. With my own money. Hard cash. Can I say more? Well, yes, I can. I wish I had written it. Michael C. Thomas, author, *Love and Money*
Scathing, scintillating chapters on Malcolm Gladwell; on the *Times*, and on its chirpy and delusional columnist David Brooks; on *Wired* magazine's breathless paeans to new media's broken promises; and on other ventures and adventurers who, often unwittingly, work hard to suppress or deflect their own and their audiences' understandings of what consumer and casino-finance capitalism are doing to us. Talking Points Memo
Lehmann began his economic blog inspired by the omission of real economic conditions from the accounting of the republic's collective life. Now in book form . . . Lehmann illustrates the ideas, institutions, and individuals he sees as tools for the rich to keep themselves rich or make themselves richer. The list of offenders includes the US Constitution, the iPad, Reality TV, and the *New York Times* (in particular, columnist David Brooks). The author explores meritocracy, class warfare, the powerful intellectual opiate called the free market, and other hoary American myths. Chapters include a description of *Atlas Shrugged* as a doorstop-sized digest of ideological boilerplate disguised as fictional dialogue, plotting, and character development and memoirs, or memoirs, (James Frey makes the list) that allow affluent readers to cast one's fellow citizens as monolithically soulful, suffering, and exoticized others. Lehmann concludes his wholly entertaining effort with a particularly astute explanation of how the myth of the middle class has left Americans with an inadequate vocabulary to discuss economic woes; instead, we are committed to the dogmatic belief that we are all affluent entrepreneurs waiting to happen. Brutal. Publishers Weekly
Perusing Mr. Lehmann's volume I found myself wondering, again and again, what exactly is the target psychographic of this veritable wardrobe montage of proletarian resentments? I visualized: employees of used bookstores and/or independent coffee shops, people who don't own televisions, people who do own televisions on which they occasionally watch *Portlandia* and other shows they are capable of enjoying with substantial reservations, people who commute to their titular jobs on bicycles they have owned for more than five years, bartenders with a higher than average propensity to reward regular customers with complimentary beverages (thus cheating their bosses, which they excuse by some deluded ethical calculus by which the right to steal is a just reward for being sufficiently overeducated to command the loyalty of like-minded freeloaders), titular business owners foolish enough to employ such mediocrities, people at once eminently capable of constructing formidable and eloquent arguments making the case for socialized health care on the basis of a litany of broad-based macroeconomic factors and yet chronically incapable of holding down jobs that provide health insurance, childish people who know nothing of money and yet ceaselessly attempt to provoke class warfare by plugging loaded terms like rich and millionaire into otherwise civilized conversations about aspirational luxury, tastemaking lifestyles, the urgent need for deficit reduction by way of entitlement reform, etc . . . parasites, in other words. Given that the authorship of a nonfiction book is widely understood to be an undertaking aimed primarily at marketing one's services as a paid motivational speaker, it's hard to imagine why Mr. Lehmann would squander 256 pages addressing such a fragmented and under-capitalized audience. Having read *Rich People Things* in its entirety, however, it occurred to me that the parasite class does, at least, have time to read books, and that Mr. Lehmann would be an abysmal motivational speaker. Moe Tkacik, unemployed leftist