



Urban Injustice: How Ghettos Happen

By David Hilfiker

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David Hilfiker has committed his life, both as a writer and a doctor, to people in need, writing about the urban poor with whom he's spent all his days for the last two decades. In *Urban Injustice*, he explains in beautiful and simple language how the myth that the urban poor siphon off precious government resources is contradicted by the facts, and how most programs help some of the people some of the time but are almost never sufficiently orchestrated to enable people to escape the cycle of urban poverty.

Hilfiker is able to present a surprising history of poverty programs since the New Deal, and shows that many of the biggest programs were extremely successful at attaining the goals set out for them. Even so, Hilfiker reveals, most of the best and biggest programs were "social insurance" programs, like Medicare and Social Security, that primarily assisted the middle class, not the poor. Whereas, "public assistance" programs, directed specifically towards the poor, were often extremely effective as far as they went, but were instituted with far less ambitious goals.

In a book that is short, sweet, and completely without academic verbosity or pretension, Hilfiker makes a clear path through the complex history of societal poverty, the obvious weaknesses and surprising strengths of societal responses to poverty thus far, and offers an analysis of models of assistance from around the world that might perhaps assist us in making a better world for our children once we decide that is what we must do.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Hilfiker, a white doctor who has worked with homeless and HIV-positive men in Washington, D.C., for nearly 20 years, begins by noting, "[W]hen most Americans think about poverty, or see the poor on television, or read about them in the newspapers, the images are of poor black men hanging around the street corner, poor black teenagers selling drugs, poor black single mothers living on welfare, poor black inner-city schools failing their children." Yet only 12% of the nation's poor are African-American, according to his extrapolation from the 2000 census. In a calm, thoughtful yet impassioned voice, Hilfiker sets out to explain why this state of affairs persists, tracing the failure of programs to alleviate poverty, from Reconstruction through the New Deal to the contemporary battles over welfare. He is even brave enough to suggest solutions for the end of poverty and ghettos, to "remove this stain upon our American democracy." This accessible, clearly written book includes an excellent annotated bibliography and may inspire ordinary people to work toward full desegregation of our society.

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From Library Journal

Hilfiker is a compassionate white doctor who has spent more than two decades living with the poor and practicing "poverty medicine" in Washington, DC. He began doctoring with the premise that with sufficient "strengthening" he could turn his patients' lives around. This book represents his exploration of that failed premise and his answer to why African American poverty is intransigent and structural. He includes an especially good chapter on welfare history, including the 1960s "skirmish" on poverty. The last chapter suggests very practical public policies and budgets that could win a real war on poverty if the United States would surmount the political problems inherent in it. Hilfiker's two previous books, the prize-winning *Healing the Wounds* and *Not All of Us Are Saints*, are reflections on a doctor's work and patients. Clear and authoritative without being academic, this title is good reading for those who don't want to wade into texts by William Julius Wilson or Michael B. Katz, leading scholars of similar proclivity. Recommended for public libraries and for high school and college students. Janice Dunham, John Jay Coll. Lib., CUNY

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Review

"Hilfiker knows a good deal about an America about which most folks in this nation have very little real knowledge, other than disturbing stereotypes, cliches, and misinformation.... It is a welcome addition to a field that may, indeed must, one day spark change."

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Helen Henson:

A lot of people always spent their particular free time to vacation as well as go to the outside with them family or their friend. Did you know? Many a lot of people spent many people free time just watching TV, or maybe playing video games all day long. In order to try to find a new activity here is look different you can read a new book. It is really fun for yourself. If you enjoy the book which you read you can spent all day long to reading a e-book. The book *Urban Injustice: How Ghettos Happen* it is rather good to read. There are a lot of people who recommended this book. These folks were enjoying reading this book. In the event you

did not have enough space to deliver this book you can buy the actual e-book. You can more easily to read this book from the smart phone. The price is not too costly but this book possesses high quality.

Walter Gagne:

Urban Injustice: How Ghettos Happen can be one of your beginning books that are good idea. Many of us recommend that straight away because this publication has good vocabulary that could increase your knowledge in words, easy to understand, bit entertaining however delivering the information. The writer giving his/her effort to set every word into pleasure arrangement in writing Urban Injustice: How Ghettos Happen however doesn't forget the main place, giving the reader the hottest and based confirm resource facts that maybe you can be certainly one of it. This great information can drawn you into new stage of crucial contemplating.

Susan Parker:

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