

# Film critique - wage slaves: not getting by in america



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"Wage Slaves: Not Getting By in America" is based on the Barbara Ehrenreich book Nickel and Dimed. This two hour documentary that originally was broadcasted on A&E's "Investigative Reports" in 2002 advocates the raising of the minimum wage due to the poor not being able to make it by working for this pay. Five single parents discuss their plights during the film. Two advocates and detractors speak on the minimum wage issue. Over all the statistics and biases make "Wage Slaves: Not Getting By in America" a substandard film.

The most memorable moment in this film was when the two conservative from George Mason University spoke about how well off the poor in America have it. Apparently since the poor in America has luxuries like televisions, telephones, and microwaves, they are the richest poor in the world. Just because our poor do not walk around without shoes, live in mud huts, or wear threadbare clothes, individuals should do nothing to help these individuals. These are not individuals on welfare, but working Americans. For these two educated individuals to disparage people that are at least working is a travesty. The five Americans making minimum wage were trying support themselves and their children. When a society does not worry about their poor, it has lost compassion. The display of the conservatives' self righteousness and lack of compassion was sickening.

The conservatives suggested abolishing minimum wage and letting supply and demand dictate wages. For honest businesses that might work, but the unscrupulous business would take advantage of the situation. The businesses that employ illegal aliens for a fraction of the cost American citizens make show that self regulation will not work for all businesses. There argument is ludicrous.

This film was not helpful in diffusing stereotypes. The stereotypical uneducated parent was presented in this film. Not all uneducated individuals or parents make minimum wage. This film portrayed this bias. Many minimum wage earners can be returning to the workforce homemakers, students just out of school, or individuals down on their luck. In today's economy, many educated workers are taking minimum wage jobs.

This film did not change my views or attitudes about the population making minimum

wage. No one should be judged when they are trying to make a living.

Conservatives with more education, money, and other advantages need to have more compassion for their fellow man. These workers that make minimum wage are at least working. They are not asking for a handout. I respect anyone who will work for a living.

This film impacted me on an emotional level. I felt sorry for the workers making minimum wage. Any worker that will take any job to support their family is admirable. These types of people will survive during a crisis.

Workers that feel jobs are beneath them do not have the survival instincts it takes to live in a crisis situation. While I felt sorrow and emotion for the workers, the commentators made me sick. These minimum wage people are fellow Americans, not leeches on society or test subjects. The statistics and dry commentary made me angry. Instead of trying to understand or even solve the minimum wage problem, this documentary was trying to portray the problem for the cameras alone.

The information needed in order to work effectively with this population is background information. The main question to ask is why these individuals did not receive a higher education? College graduates earn higher salaries

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than drop outs or even high school graduates. The funding for college and childcare is available for individuals that make minimum wage. These individuals need to be advised on how to make themselves more valuable employees. All the background information gleaned the better.