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2 By comparison: Figures are from company news releases, websites, and federal filings.

Notes to Chapter 1


In bonuses: This included more than $365 million in bonuses to recognize hourly employees “for their hard work and dedication to serving customers in a time of an unprecedented national health crisis,” as well as $180 million in an accelerated payout of their next scheduled quarterly bonus. See “Walmart Announces Special Cash Bonus and Early Payment of Q1 Bonuses Totaling Nearly $550 Million for Hourly Associates,” corporate news release, March 19, 2020. **Would eventually total:** “Walmart Announces More Than $700 Million in Additional Associate Bonuses, Tops $2.8 Billion in Total Cash Bonuses to Associates in 2020,” corporate news release, Dec. 3, 2020. **To backfill:** See *Squawk Box* interview with Walmart CEO Doug McMillon, CNBC, May 20, 2020; interview with Drew Holler, Walmart senior vice president, by the author.


**After four years:** All details on Love that are not in the op-ed are from interviews with her by the author. **Her pandemic bonus:** “Walmart Announces Special Cash Bonus and Early Payment of Q1 Bonuses Totaling Nearly $550 Million for Hourly Associates,” corporate news release, March 19, 2020. **At Disneyland:** All Disney parks across the globe were shut down as of March 16, 2020; Disneyland reopened April 30, 2021. **One of**


6 At very low prices: Some economists have long pointed to the low prices offered by Walmart as a big social benefit. See, for instance, “Wal-Mart: A Progressive Success Story” by Jason Furman, Nov. 28, 2005; “The Low Prices Are Good News” by Jason Furman, Slate, June 26, 2006; “Consumer Benefits from Increased Competition in Shopping Outlets: Measuring the Effect of Wal-Mart” by Jerry Hausman and Ephraim Leibtag, National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper 11809, Dec. 2005. “Tell people all the time”: Interview with Morial by the author. “I’d rather have”: “Grocery Unions Battle to Stop Invasion of the Giant Stores,” Los Angeles Times, Nov. 25, 2003. Also quoted in Wartzman, 339. Came up through: See corporate.walmart.com/newsroom/company-facts. This refers to salaried store operations management, not hourly positions that may have “management” in the title. Of course, the chances of landing one of these top store jobs—when there are a million
frontline workers spread across about 5,300 Walmart and Sam’s Club locations—are akin to winning the lottery. On this point, see Reich and Bearman, *Working for Respect*, 76–77. **Been incarcerated:** “Banning the Box: The Labor Market Consequences of Bans on Criminal Record Screening in Employment Applications,” a 2016 working paper by Daniel Shoag of Harvard University and Stan Veuger of the American Enterprise Institute, notes that Walmart in 2010 stopped asking for information about an individual’s criminal history when hiring. The flip side is that having a criminal record “can compel one to stay at a job one hates” and “scare people into silence at work,” as noted in Reich and Bearman, 81. **Guaranteed a job:** “Today Walmart Launches Veterans Commitment and Plans to Hire 100,000 Over the Next Five Years,” corporate news release, May 27, 2013. In July 2020, the company announced that it had hired more than 265,000 veterans since the program’s inception.

**7 “Saved them from situations”:** Reich and Bearman, 67. **“Associates are not choosing”:** Reich and Bearman, 65. **Opened two stores:** Reich and Bearman, 65.

company, he went to work for the United Food and Commercial Workers union.


8 **Caused a stir:** All details are drawn from “Is Walmart’s Request of Associates to Help Provide Thanksgiving Dinner for Co-Workers Proof of Low Wages?,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Nov. 18, 2013. **Ashton Kutcher:** Nov. 19, 2013, tweet.

9 **“Part of the company’s culture”:** “Is Walmart’s Request of Associates to Help Provide Thanksgiving Dinner for Co-Workers Proof of Low Wages?,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Nov. 18, 2013. **“Act of human kindness”:** Nov. 19, 2013, tweet from the Walmart newsroom to Ashton Kutcher. **“Wouldn't be necessary”:** Reich and Bearman, 118.

9 **Upped its lowest hourly wage:** “Walmart to Increase Wages for Current U.S. Workers to $10 an Hour or Higher, Launches New Skills-Based Training for Associates,” corporate news release, Feb. 19, 2015. **“Got our associates”:** Interview with McMillon by the author.


10 **Into small teams:** “Investing in Our Associates and Roles of the Future,” corporate news release, Sept. 17, 2020. **Complete autonomy:** Interview with Bursey by the author.

11 **Department managers:** Details on the shift in roles were supplied by the Walmart communications team. Starting pay for a
“team lead” ranges from $18 to $21 an hour; starting pay for a department manager ranged from $12 to $15 an hour. “Unlocking the potential”: Interview with Holler by the author. Doubled the number: “This Is One of the Fastest Growing Jobs at Walmart,” CNN Business, Feb. 12, 2021.


The second: “Walmart Will Raise Hourly Pay for 565,000 Workers,” New York Times, Sept. 2, 2021. The company also raised the minimum wage at its Sam’s Club unit to $15 an hour from $11. See “Walmart-Owned Sam’s Club Raises Minimum Wage to $15, as Retailers and Restaurants Compete for Talent,” CNBC, Sept. 14, 2021. At the same time, Walmart scrapped its long-standing quarterly bonus system for hourly workers, called MyShare. The company said that workers would still come out ahead—though, in many cases, by only a small amount. A Brookings Institute analysis found that those bonuses averaged $1,400 in 2020. Accounting for the $1,400 in lost bonuses, the adjusted real pay increase for a full-time Walmart employee working 36 hours per week for 52 weeks a year would be just 2%, compared to 9% without adjusting for the lost bonuses. See “Walmart to End Quarterly Bonuses for Store Workers,” Wall Street Journal, Sept. 9, 2021; “With Inflation Surging, Big Companies’ Wage Upticks Aren’t Nearly Enough” by Molly Kinder, Katie Bach, and Laura Stateler, Brookings Institution, Dec. 13, 2021.


Notes to Chapter 1


12 Turn his wisdom back: In “From Affective Shareholding to OUR Walmart: Organizing Labor in a Post-Union World,” New American Notes Online, Dec. 2015, Christine Labuski and Nick Copeland write: “OUR Walmart has strategically reappropriated Sam Walton’s concept of respect for the individual in order to publicly shame the company into improving the material conditions of its workers....By showing how Sam Walton’s family values and discourses of respect are meaningless without material rights and collective worker solidarity, OUR Walmart uses shame to reformulate labor norms...and establish a novel space for worker action.” “Sam’s Rules”: The 10 rules can be found in Walton, Made in America, 246–249. Liked to invoke: United for Respect was known previously as the Organization United for Respect at Walmart, or OUR Walmart. Its Declaration of Respect quotes Sam Walton several times and ends this way: “And finally, we close with one more rule from Mr. Sam: ‘Share your profits with all your Associates, and treat them as partners.’”

13 He knew how: See Walton, 34–35.


13 “It was at Penney”: Ortega, 22.
Notes to Chapter 1


14 From his competitors: Walton, 22–23; Ortega, 26; Vance and Scott, 8. This was a practice that Sam Walton first began when he was a J. C. Penney trainee, when he’d go to visit the nearby Sears and other retailers. “On family trips, too, he’d habitually wander off to visit Woolworths, or Kresges, or whatever other stores he might find of interest,” Ortega writes. Popcorn maker: Walton, 26; Ortega, 28.


16 “Thinking up new things”: Walton, 34.


17 The biggest: Ortega, 32. This was in partnership with his brother, Bud, and his in-laws. Tri-Pacer: Ortega, 54. This had replaced Walton’s original Air Coupe. New crop of competitors: Ortega, 46–48; Lichtenstein, *The Retail Revolution*, 26–31; Vance and Scott, 30–38. “Buy it low”: Walton, 42; Vance and Scott, 40; Ortega, 48.

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18  Pledged to provide: Ortega, 55. “From day one”: Walton, 47. Something to behold: All figures are from Vance and Scott, 44–45. They are also quoted in Ortega, 56.


19  Weren’t terribly advanced: Ortega, 58; Vance and Scott, 48. “We didn’t have”: Walton, 50–51.


21  50 new stores: Lichtenstein, *The Retail Revolution*, 32. The company opened 258 stores in all during the ’70s, according to its 1980 annual report. Almost 100: Ortega, 84. 21,000 people: Ortega, 84; Lichtenstein, *The Retail Revolution*, 32.

Notes to Chapter 1

Rather the company contributed about 6% of an employee’s earnings to the plan dependent upon the degree to which Wal-Mart hit certain predetermined earnings and profit targets.”

21 Tacked on: Ortega, 90; Walton, 134–135; Vance and Scott, 75.
Circumvent: Walton had set up his stores as separate corporate structures—all linked back to a single financial partnership that he and his family controlled—so that revenues would come in at less than $1 million apiece, a threshold that permitted each location under government rules to pay less than the minimum wage. See W. W. West et al. v. Wal-Mart-Inc., Wal-Mart of Springdale Inc., and Wal-Mart of Harrison Inc., Civil Action No. 575, District Court of the United States for Western District of Arkansas, Fayetteville Division, 1967; Thomas Jessen Adams’s essay “Making the New Shop Floor: Wal-Mart, Labor Control, and the History of the Postwar Discount Retail Industry in America” in Lichtenstein, Wal-Mart: The Face of Twenty-First-Century Capitalism, 218. Also see Greenhouse, The Big Squeeze, 141; Wartzman, 331; Lichtenstein, The Retail Revolution, 89; Humes, Force of Nature, 37; Jaffe, Necessary Trouble, 78; Rosenfeld, You’re Paid What You’re Worth, 115. “Chintzy”: Walton, 127. Paid poorly: Moreton, 70. Stave off: Walton, 129; Ortega, 87–90.


23 Interact with Walton: Vance and Scott, 78–79. In verse: Quoted in Lichtenstein, The Retail Revolution, 65. This was from 1989.


Began publishing: Vance and Scott, 74. “I’ve been repeatedly asked”: All the editions of Wal-Mart World that are cited can be found through the Walmart Digital Museum at walmartmuseum.com/content/walmartmuseum/en_us.html.


Logistics and distribution: Ortega, 129–132; Lichtenstein, The Retail Revolution, 35–44; Vance and Scott, 70–73, 93–95. For every dollar: Ortega, 130. These figures are for 1983.

Rocketed ever further: All figures in this paragraph are from the retailer’s annual reports for 1980 and 1990. As the company entered the 1980s, there were 1,402 Walmarts and 123 Sam’s Wholesale Club units, to be precise—up from 276 Walmarts in 1970. Appropriated the concept: Walton, 200; Ortega, 140–148.


Notes to Chapter 1


Two Supercenters: All figures in this paragraph are from the retailer’s annual reports for 1989 and 2000. For more background on the origins of the Supercenter, see Vance and Scott, 129–135. Also see Humes, 42. “The most under-appreciated”: “David Glass, the Man Who Took Sam Walton’s Job at Walmart, Dies at 84,” Forbes, Jan. 18, 2020.


Notes to Chapter 1


31 The same dynamic: This is based on the author’s review of some of the key wage-and-hour cases, including the judges’ findings. Also see Humes, 38–39. “A rogue manager”: Interview with Parritz by the author. Class-action lawsuit: “Wal-Mart to Pay $54.25 Million to Settle Minn. Lawsuit,” Minnesota Public Radio, Dec. 9, 2008; “Updated: Joint Statement from Walmart and Counsel for Plaintiffs Regarding Wage and Hour Class Action Case of Braun v. Walmart,” corporate news release, Jan. 14, 2009.


“Why should”: Ortega, 374. Similar resistance: Fishman, 263.

Introduced a bill: Sanders unveiled the legislation with Rep. Ro Khanna. The full name of the bill is the Stop Welfare for Any Large Monopoly Amassing Revenue from Taxpayers Act, the implication being that if workers make less than $15 an hour, they’re forced to rely on the public safety net—an indirect taxpayer subsidy to a company like Walmart. See “Sanders Wants to Penalize Walmart’s Owners Unless They Pay Their Workers $15 an Hour,” Washington Post, Nov. 14, 2018.


Notes to Chapter 1


39 Into New York City: See “Fighting Back: What the Unions Have Learned—and What They May Still Need to Learn—About Fighting Wal-Mart’s Expansion,” *The American Prospect*, April 13, 2011. “Cynical ploy”: Interview with Warren by the author. Also see “Wal-Mart’s Honest Graft” by Peter Dreier and Donald Cohen, *Dissent*, June 21, 2012; Fisher, *Big Hunger: The Unholy Alliance Between Corporate America and Anti-Hunger Groups*, 89–96. In 2015, a group of 13 community and labor activists went so far as to ask the Internal Revenue Service to investigate whether the Walmart Foundation “has acted contrary” to its tax-exempt status “by engaging in activities designed to advance the private business interests of its non-exempt corporate sponsor.” A copy of their letter to the IRS can be found at consumerist.com/consumermediallc.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/walmart-foundation-irs-complaint-cover-letter-6-12-15-final2.pdf.

39 “Are we not saying”: Interview with Kinder by the author. “Have the means”: “Amazon and Walmart Have Raked in Billions in Additional Profits During the Pandemic, and Shared Almost None of It with Their Workers” by Molly Kinder and Laura Stateler, Brookings Institution, Dec. 22, 2020.


Chapter 2

43 News photograph: The original news photo was taken by Nicholas Kamm of Agence France-Presse about 30 miles west of New Orleans on Sept. 1, 2005.


44 1,800 people: “Katrina Impacts,” the University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Oceanography. Bottles of water: This scene, including the quotes by Scott, was recounted by McMillon in his Nov. 4, 2016, speech to the Net Impact Conference.

45 “We saw it”: From McMillon’s May 27, 2021, speech to the graduates of Harvard Business School.


Notes to Chapter 2


50 **Not long after:** All of the details and quotes from the trip to Costa Rica are as recounted by Seligmann in an interview with the author. Rob Walton declined to be interviewed for this book. Also see Humes, 76–77; “The Green Machine,” *Fortune*, July 31, 2006. At the Fortune Brainstorm Green Conference in 2012, Walton offered a slightly different account, recalling that Seligmann had first pitched Lee Scott, the CEO, during the initial meeting with E. O. Wilson. See corporate.walmart.com/_news_/executive-viewpoints/how-we-came-to-embrace-sustainability.

51 **For the kill:** At this time, Seligmann also asked Rob Walton to join the Conservation International board, which he did.

52 **His first granddaughter:** As recounted by Seligmann in a note to the author.

52 **“With all due respect”:** As recounted by Ellison in an interview with the author.


52 **“Faced a decision”:** Humes, 82.

53 **When Scott asked:** This scene, including all of the quotes, is as recounted by Ruben in an interview with the author.

53 **Every area of the business:** Humes, 86. **“Collaborating with”:** Humes, 83.

54 **The company discovered:** Humes, 86–88. **“The wins”:** Interview with Ruben by the author. “Little by little”: Humes, 89.

54 **Ellison arranged:** Humes, 84. **Hamburg began:** This scene, including the quotes by Scott, is as recounted by Hamburg in an interview with the author. Hamburg would later become the Environmental Defense Fund’s chief scientist.

55 **But exceed:** Humes, 150. The company wound up selling 137 million compact fluorescent light bulbs. **“Wildly ambitious”:** “Wal-Mart Puts Some Muscle Behind Power-Sipping Bulbs,” *New York Times*, Jan. 2, 2007. **By 2011:** Calculation provided by
Notes to Chapter 2


56 “If we were not”: Interview with Ruben by the author. “Lee called me up”: From an email that Hawken sent to the author.

56 “From an Arkansas company”: Interview with Ruben by the author.

57 “Feared to go”: The full text of Scott’s speech, “Twenty-First Century Leadership,” can be found at corporate.walmart.com/_news_/executive-viewpoints/twenty-first-century-leadership.


60 Conked on the head: Ortega, 87–88; Lichtenstein, The Retail Revolution, 121. “Hate unions”: Lichtenstein, The Retail Revolution, 121.
Notes to Chapter 2


61 **Should fire them:** Lichtenstein, *The Retail Revolution*, 123. **“Would be closed”:** Ortega, 107; Lichtenstein, *The Retail Revolution*, 129. **“Bless them all”:** Lichtenstein, *The Retail Revolution*, 129.

62 **“Going to be wealthy”:** Interview with O’Neill by the author.

62 **“Started to blow up”:** Interview with Lind by the author. **“Think your job”:** This was the subtitle of a May 17, 2004, piece headlined “Up Against the Wal-Mart.”

62 **“If you tried”:** Interview with Fiedler by the author. **“Pure delusion”:** From “A Wal-Mart Workers Association? An Organizing Plan” by Wade Rathke in Lichtenstein, *Wal-Mart: The Face of Twenty-First-Century Capitalism*, 270. **Several fronts:** Rathke, the founder of ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) and Service Employees International Union Local 100, ran a pilot program in 2005 that aimed for workers to gain power by joining an organization in which, together, they could actively engage management on important issues without winning a union contract or going through the traditional collective bargaining process. This became the Wal-Mart Workers’ Association, and it signed up about 1,000 workers in Central Florida over the course of about nine months. In the meantime, Rathke also helped lead resistance to Walmart’s expansion into India. See Rathke, *Nuts & Bolts*, 478–490; Rathke, *Citizen Wealth*, 74–77; “Wal-Mart Workers Are Finding a Voice Without a Union,” *New York Times*, Sept. 3, 2005. **Resistance to the opening:** Rathke (*Nuts & Bolts*, 484) says that “through a combination of strategies and tactics we were able to prevent the construction and permitting of 32 consecutive applications to build new Walmart stores.”

Notes to Chapter 2


63 “Basically spies”: Lichtenstein, The Retail Revolution, 145. Was dispatched: Lichtenstein, The Retail Revolution, 143–147. Unfair labor practice charges: Lichtenstein, The Retail Revolution, 142–143. In all, 94% of the charges filed “were weighty enough” to generate a formal National Labor Relations Board complaint against the company. Also cited in Wartzman, 335.


64 “Blood-sucking parasites”: Lichtenstein, The Retail Revolution, 147–148. More than a third: The highest mark, reached in 1953, was 35.7%, according to Troy and Sheflin, Union Sourcebook, Appendix A, Historical Statistics, 1897–1983. Fewer than 10 percent: The figure that Tate cited was 9%. US Bureau of Labor Statistics data for 2004, released several months after he spoke, put it at 7.9%.

65 Seeded a nonprofit: Records show that the Center for Community and Corporate Ethics received its tax-exempt status as a nonprofit in January 2005. Christened Walmart Watch: Although the UFCW and SEIU campaigns would turn rivalrous,
the SEIU actually purchased use of the domain name “Wal-Mart Watch” from the UFCW, which owned it but had allowed it to go dormant.

65 “As an air war”: Interview with Shenk by the author.

65 “Are screwing America”: Interview with Stern by the author.


67 “We cannot directly”: Draft campaign plan, dated April 23, 2007, and provided to the author by David Nassar, former Walmart Watch executive director.

67 “I felt like Walmart”: Interview with Grossman by the author. “With the reelection”: Interview with Sefl by the author.

Notes to Chapter 2


69 The package landed: As recounted by Grossman in an interview with the author. Also see “Wal-Mart Hits the Wall,” *Newsweek*, Nov. 13, 2005.

70 “Bold steps”: What had been sent to Walmart Watch was an earlier draft. After the *New York Times* contacted Walmart
Notes to Chapter 2

about the memo, the company made available to the newspaper the final version that was sent to the board. It is available at nytimes.com/packages/pdf/business/26walmart.pdf. Also see “Wal-Mart Memo Suggests Ways to Cut Employee Benefit Costs,” New York Times, Oct. 26, 2005.

71 The next morning: This scene, including all quotes from Grossman and Sefl, is based on interviews with the two of them by the author.


72 “Young and scrappy”: Interview with Wicks by the author. Also see “Logging On with a New Campaign,” Washington Post, May 31, 2005; “Big Names Enlist in Campaign Against Wal-Mart,” NBC News, April 23, 2006. “Attack of the Wal-Martyrs,” Fortune, Nov. 28, 2006. “Walmart Slayer”: This is according to Ron Galloway, who became a close ally of the company after making a pro-Walmart film, in an interview with the author. Also see “Buffy the Hillary Slayer,” Huffington Post, Jan. 28, 2008. From the Dean camp: They included Paul Blank, who had been political director for the Dean campaign, and Jeremy Bird. A top adviser: This was Chris Kofinis, who served as Wake Up Walmart’s communications director. Digital operations: This was Brendan Bush.

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73 “Good at what I did”: Interview with Debbie Bird by the author. “A bad taste”: Interview with Bird by the author.


75 **For 35 days:** “WakeUpWalmart.com Launches 2006 ‘Change Wal-Mart, Change America’ Cross-Country Bus Tour,” UFCW news release, July 31, 2006. **Two of the crew:** Interview with
Laura Tatum, one of the Wake Up Walmart staffers on the bus, by the author. “Trying to do a lot”: Interview with Bird by the author. “He’d driven”: Interview with Wicks by the author.


Chapter 3


“I’m a troublemaker”: This and the other quote in this paragraph by Dach are from an interview with him by the author.

“Thank God”: From an interview with Dach by the author.

Union officials: From interviews by the author. “The only


81 **Were said to have**: See “The Big Tech Antitrust Report Has One Big Conclusion: Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Google Are Anti-Competitive,” _Vox_, Oct. 6, 2020. **“Curse of Bigness”**: This is the title of a chapter in Brandeis’s 1914 book, _Other
Notes to Chapter 3


81 “Chain store menace”: Moreton, 18. In the 1920s and ’30s, lawmakers tried to tax chain stores and take other actions that would protect mom-and-pop retailers and their suppliers. The major piece of federal legislation that took aim at the chains was the Robinson-Patman Act of 1936. By requiring a business to sell its products at the same price regardless of who the buyer was, it sought to combat unfair trade practices that allowed chain stores to purchase goods at lower prices than other retailers. “Bloodsucker”: Levinson, *The Great A&P and the Struggle for Small Business in America*, 9. Found guilty: Levinson, 4. More specifically, US District Judge Walter Lindley found that the company and its top executives, including its president and chairman, had conspired to violate the Sherman Antitrust Act. “Rather sell”: Levinson, 4. “A&P was Walmart”: “When Creative Destruction Visited the Mom-and-Pops” by Marc Levinson, *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 11, 2013.


“Had their feet”: Interview with Dach by the author.

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85 “Far from unblemished”: “Strange Bedfellows?,” jeffreyhollender.com blog, Oct. 6, 2008. Seventh Generation began to sell to Walmart on a limited basis in 2008 and expanded over time. Seventh Generation analysis: Hollender supplied a copy to the author. “It didn’t mean”: Interview with Hollender by the author. “Putting increasing distance”: “Some Big Steps Yield a
Notes to Chapter 3


“Change the face”: Humes, 197, quoting Brian Merchant at TreeHugger.com. Built out extensively: For details, go to sustainabilityconsortium.org. “Not a priority”: Interview with Johnson by the author.


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Arranged the rendezvous: From interviews with Villarreal and Adams by the author. Villarreal was: Biographical details are from an interview with Villarreal by the author and his “notable alumni” profile from Indiana University’s Maurer School of Law. “Talk about poverty”: From an interview with Villarreal by the author. “Really curious”: This and all other quotes in this paragraph are from an interview with Villarreal by the author. Walmart, it appears, also had another motivation for making Villarreal a director. In 1995, the company had been sued by a group of Mexicans who had been escorted out of a Walmart in Amory, Mississippi, by a security guard. The men said they were guilty of nothing more than being Mexican. (See “The Mainstreaming of Hate: A Report on Latinos and Harassment, Hate Violence, and Law Enforcement Abuse in the ’90s,” National Council of La Raza, Nov. 1999.) In responding to the case, the National Council of La Raza pressed Walmart to add a Latino to its board, and Lee Scott agreed to do so, according to Charles Kamasaki, then a vice president at La Raza, in an interview with the author.

Just sank”: This and all other quotes in this paragraph are from an interview with Villarreal by the author.

Villarreal contacted: From interviews with Villarreal and Cisneros by the author. As a cabinet member: Details on Cisneros, and all of his quotes, are from an interview with him by the author.

“Cloak-and-dagger”: Interview with Cisneros by the author.

“Banging our way”: Interview with Hyde by the author.

“Worry about you”: As recounted by Cisneros in an interview with the author.

“Eye-awakening”: As shared by Scott with the author. Eight weeks later: The timing was confirmed through campaign records.
Notes to Chapter 3

Asked both men: Interview with Stern by the author. “I’m not here”: As recounted by Stern in an interview with the author.


“A lot of overlap”: Interview with Dillman by the author.

“There was no way”: This and the other quote in this paragraph by Dillman are from an interview with her by the author. “When you oppose”: Interview with Glantz by the author.

“An ombudsperson”: Interview with Stern by the author. “Compliance code”: Interview with Adams by the author.

On wages: From interviews with Adams and Stern by the author.

Kept Joe Hansen apprised: From an interview with Hansen by the author. He said that Stern “was optimistic that a meeting could be set up” between the UFCW and Walmart. “We even talked about possible dates,” but in the end a sit-down with the company never came together. Separately, Hillary Clinton reportedly arranged a meeting between UFCW leaders and Walmart’s Leslie Dach “to tamp down the rancor between the company and the union.” See “As a Director, Clinton Moved Wal-Mart Board, but Only So Far,” New York Times, May 20, 2007. “Like Switzerland”: Interview with Stern by the author.

“Bang on the door”: Interview with Nassar by the author.


Came out in favor: “Wal-Mart Backs Drive to Make Companies Pay for Health Coverage,” Wall Street Journal, July 1, 2009. All details in this paragraph and the quote from the National


102 **I can remember**: Interview with Adams by the author.


103 **End profit sharing:** “Wal-Mart to End Profit-Sharing in Benefits Switch,” Reuters, Oct. 8, 2010. **Contemporary**: “Wal-Mart Overhauls 1.4 Million Workers’ Benefits,” CNN Money,
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Oct. 12, 2010. Steve Reinemund, a Walmart board member, also made the case that the profit-sharing system had outlived its usefulness because profit growth at Walmart had slowed over time. “Legendary stories of the greeter who retires as a millionaire work when the stock price is going through the roof because of the growth,” he said in an interview with the author. “When that slows down, those systems don’t have the same motivating factor…. If the profits are slowing down, the formula just doesn’t work the same for associates.” Cut expenses: See “Wal-Mart to End Worker Profit-Sharing Contributions in February,” Bloomberg, Oct. 8, 2010. In addition to the 401(k) match, Walmart said that it was increasing quarterly and annual cash bonuses. But all told, analysts said, this package was still cheaper for the company than the old arrangement had been. “The beauty”: “Walmart’s Short-Sighted Cost Cut: Profit-Sharing for Workers” by Carol Tice, CBS MoneyWatch, Oct. 11, 2010. “Ebenezer makes”: “Moving the Goal Posts on Pay,” New York Times, May 7, 2011.

Chapter 4

2011. Many experts pointed out that, despite being criticized as amorphous, Occupy Wall Street was actually intentional about its organizational structure and tactics. (See “What Is Occupy Wall Street? The History of Leaderless Movements,” Washington Post, Oct. 10, 2011; “Understanding the Theory Behind Occupy Wall Street’s Approach” by Mike Konczal, Rortybomb, Sept. 30, 2011.) Others have noted that Occupy Wall Street made important and lasting contributions to the American Left. (See “We Are [Still] the 99 Percent,” Vox, April 30, 2019.)


106 Relatively silent: WakeUpWalmart.com was still drawing more than 65,000 visitors a month in the summer of 2010. But this marked “a downward trend continuous over the last few years, hitting its highest point in the summer of ’08,” according to an internal memo from July 14, 2010. In addition, the UFCW launched a new Walmart Watch website in January 2011. But the group didn’t generate anywhere near the level of media attention that it had four or five years earlier. “Never gave up”: O’Neill’s quotes in this paragraph are from an interview with him by the author. Also see “Walmart Organizing Comes of Age: An Interview with UFCW Organizing Director Pat O’Neill,” Truthout, Nov. 21, 2012. Officially: See “Walmart Workers Get Organized—Just Don’t Say the U-Word,” Mother Jones, March–April 2013.

107 “Mini Manhattan Project”: Interview with Schlademan by the author. A fresh approach: Schlademan was hired under a new union banner, Making Change at Walmart.

107 “Perspective shift”: Interview with Young by the author. UFCW had engaged: Part of the UFCW’s original charge for
Young and his firm, Chicago-based ASGK Public Strategies, was to figure out how to harmonize the union’s different Walmart-focused campaigns, including Wake Up Walmart and Walmart Watch, which had joined together to form a single organization in 2009. OUR Walmart emerged out of this work. “Age-old idea”: “Proposal Presented to United Food and Commercial Workers International Union/WakeUp Walmart,” ASGK Public Strategies, Aug. 13, 2010.


109 “How do you organize”: Interview with Young by the author.

109 Less than $20,000: “Stolen Wages and Death Sentences: Stories from the Wal-Mart Worker Tour,” In These Times, March 29, 2011. “People at Walmart”: This and the other quotes in this paragraph by Murray are from an interview with her by the author. Also see “Walmart vs. Union-Backed OUR Walmart,” Bloomberg Businessweek, Dec. 13, 2012; Jaffe, 71–74.

“Courageous people”: Interview with Schlademan by the author. **Warehouse Workers United**: History of the group can be found at warehouseworkers.org/warehouseworkersunited/.


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retirees. **Women made up**: Data are from Walmart’s “Workforce Diversity” report.


113 **12-point manifesto**: The Declaration of Respect lays out these items in a different order than they are presented here.

113 **“Nice to meet you”**: A video of the exchange between Casey and OUR Walmart can be found at youtube.com/watch?v=0sAVwQnqrEw.


115 **The last time**: In May 2012, OUR Walmart representatives followed up with Karen Casey by delivering to her 23 signed letters, which read in part: “Last June many members of OUR Walmart had the opportunity to meet with you and hear your commitment to ensure that there would be no retaliation against associates who participate in OUR Walmart and that
our freedom to associate will be respected by Walmart and Walmart managers. However, I wanted to let you know that I have experienced or witnessed retaliation in my store. Many other members of OUR Walmart report the same.” As a result, Walmart officials conducted 19 individual “open door” meetings with OUR Walmart members to hear their concerns.


116 “I was victimized”: “Pittsburg Woman Back at Work After Star Turn at U.S. Supreme Court,” East Bay Times, April 21, 2011. “David versus Goliath”: Featherstone, 5.

116 Supreme Court found: Walmart Stores Inc. v. Dukes et al., Supreme Court of the United States, No. 10-277; “Justices Curb Class Actions,” Wall Street Journal, June 21, 2011; “Opinion Analysis: Wal-Mart’s Two Messages,” SCOTUSblog, June 20, 2011. The court also ruled, in a separate but related 9–0 decision, that the women could not bring a claim for backpay as a remedy for discrimination under the legal theory their lawyers had introduced.


117 “As the majority”: This and the Ruiz quote are from “Updated Walmart Statements Regarding Supreme Court Ruling in Dukes Case,” corporate news release, June 20, 2011.

117 5 to 15 percent less: This statistic and the quotes from the female employees’ declarations are from “Wal-Mart v. Dukes—Why...”

118 “Few bad apples”: Interview with Oliver by the author. Also see “More HR in Store at Wal-Mart: A Q&A with Sue Oliver,” Workforce.com, Aug. 15, 2006.

118 Familiar refrain: For instance, when Walmart settled a slew of wage-and-hour cases in 2008, the company’s general counsel said, “Many of these lawsuits were filed years ago, and the allegations are not representative of the company we are today.”


120 Strikes spread: “Walmart’s First-Ever Retail Worker Strike Spreads to 12 Cities,” Huffington Post, Oct. 9, 2012; “Wal-Mart
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120 Only about 100: National Labor Relations Board decision, Walmart Stores Inc. and the Organization United for Respect at Walmart (OUR Walmart), 16-CA-096240, Jan. 21, 2016.


121 “Taking a Stand”: As seen in OUR Walmart’s “Black Friday 2012” report. “Media tsunami”: Interview with Iny by the author.


Colby Harris: Details on his experience are drawn from “Walmart Strikes Spread to More States,” Salon, Oct. 9, 2012; Some Wal-Mart Workers Walk Out in Lead-Up to Black Friday,” Los Angeles Times, Nov. 16, 2012. Regarding Walmart’s complaint, also see “Protests Backed by Union Get Wal-Mart’s Attention,” New York Times, Nov. 18, 2012. The complaint: The UFCW eventually agreed to a 60-day cooling-off period, in which neither it nor OUR Walmart would hold any strikes or demonstrations, in order to settle the company’s unlawful picketing charges with the National Labor Relations Board. See
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123 Survey conducted: “Walmart U.S. Segmentation Overview,” April 2013. A copy was provided by the company to the author.

123 Based on: Reich and Bearman, 41–42. “Do not experience”: Reich and Bearman, 46.

123 “A great company”: Interview with Hale by the author. “Been good to me”: Interview with Lopez by the author.

123 Only about 24,000: “Walmart U.S. Segmentation Overview,” April 2013. A copy was provided by the company to the author.

124 Nathaniel Williams: Details on Williams's life and work history, and all of his quotes, are from an interview with him by the
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author; the Voices of Walmart Oral History Project, Columbia University; Reich and Bearman, 1–3.

125 “Helped position”: “Man Who Helped Image of Wal-Mart Steps Down,” New York Times, March 8, 2013. As Dach’s departure was announced in March, he said he would stay on at Walmart until June.


126 “Hold them up”: Interview with Gavin by the author. Also see “Michelle Obama Partners with Walmart for Healthy Eating,” NPR, Jan. 20, 2011.

126 “While we know”: “Remarks by the President on American Energy,” White House Office of the Press Secretary, May 9, 2014.

126 Union supporters: All quotes in this paragraph are from “Obama’s Wal-Mart Stop Prompts Labor Backlash,” Los Angeles Times, May 9, 2014. Also see “Obama’s Choice of Walmart Draws Fire,” USA Today, May 9, 2014; “Once a Walmart


127 Buses had left: National Labor Relations Board decision, Walmart Stores Inc. and the Organization United for Respect at Walmart (OUR Walmart), 16-CA-096240, Jan. 21, 2016.


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128 Rose to speak: A video of Sparks addressing the annual meeting can be found at youtube.com/watch?v=Y1_HzzUM7Gc. Also see “As Walton Family Solidifies Majority, Wal-Mart Workers Promise Dissent for Fair Pay,” Forbes, June 13, 2013; “Wal-Mart Yearly Meeting Follows a Narrow Script,” New York Times, June 7, 2013; “Walmart Activism Is Effecting Change at World’s Largest Retailer, Organizers Say,” Huffington Post, June 7, 2013. Sparks had risen to introduce a shareholder resolution calling for Walmart executives to “retain a significant percentage of shares acquired through equity compensation programs until reaching normal retirement age or terminating employment with the company.” The goal was “to better link executive compensation with long-term performance.” The resolution, which the company opposed, was defeated.


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132 **“Self-inflicted wounds”**: “Wal-Mart’s Slowness to Stock Shelves Worsens, Sales Slump,” *Bloomberg*, Feb. 28, 2013. **Shelves were bare**: “Hey Walmart, It’s Hard to Make Sales When Store Shelves Are Empty,” *Time*, March 27, 2013; “The Trouble Lurking on Walmart’s Empty Shelves,” *Time*, April 9, 2013. **Had an average**: “Walmart Strains to Keep Aisles Stocked Fresh,” *New York Times*, April 3, 2013. In what was also seen by some as a cost-cutting move, Walmart began hiring more temp workers in 2013. The company said that this was to ensure its stores were staffed properly and not to save money. In any case, some longtime employees, who were hoping to get more hours themselves, were put off by the development. See “Wal-Mart’s Everyday Hiring Strategy: Add More Temps,” *Reuters*, June 12, 2013. One former HR executive pointed out to the author that some of the drop in the number of employees per store reflected automation and process improvements, as well as the addition of smaller-format Neighborhood Markets—not just cost-cutting. **“Pull people”**: Voices of Walmart Oral History Project, Columbia University.

132 **“Make it fair”**: Voices of Walmart Oral History Project, Columbia University. **200 percent**: Interview with Jacqui Canney, who joined Walmart in August 2015 as executive vice president in charge of human resources, by the author. **75 percent**: This was according to the consulting firm Hay Group. See “Retail’s Turnover a Plus for Economy but Challenge for Stores,” *CNBC*, Sept. 23, 2014.

133 **“Had joined Walmart”**: “Wal-Mart Appoints William Simon as Executive Vice President of Professional Services,” corporate news release, March 1, 2006. Simon came into the company as executive vice president of Walmart’s specialty division, overseeing its
pharmacy, optical, tire and lube express, and photo and connection center divisions. He became chief operating officer of Walmart’s US operations in 2007 and CEO of Walmart US in 2010.


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135 “Change our employee reputation”: Interview with Kersey by the author.
136 “Pressure building”: Interview with Ruiz by the author.
137 “Everywhere I traveled”: Interview with Ormanidou by the author.
138 Would venture: All details on Canton’s experience, as well as his quotes, are from an interview with him by the author.
139 “Segmentation study”: All details are from “Walmart U.S. Segmentation Overview,” April 2013. A copy was provided by the company to the author.
140 “The big aha”: Interview with Oliver by the author.
140 “The only thing”: This and the other quotes in this chapter by Gottman are from an interview with him by the author.

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144 “Dad would chuckle”: All the details on McMillon’s early life, as well as all of the quotes by him in this chapter, are from an interview with him by the author, unless otherwise specified. Also see “Doug McMillon: The Southern Charmer Taking
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146 “McMillon, you’re not very smart”: As recounted by McMillon in an interview with the author.


148 “They had a deal”: As recounted by McMillon in an interview with the author.

148 “Before you leave town”: As recounted by McMillon in an interview with the author.

149 “You can do it”: As recounted by McMillon in an interview with the author.


151 “All well and good”: As recounted by McMillon in an interview with the author.


153 “Flat-screen TVs”: Interview with Harris by the author.

153 “Would call you when”: Interview with Lafley by the author.


154 “One of the greatest”: Walton, 169. “You can’t just keep doing”: Walton, 249.

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155 “Drive diaper prices”: Stone, 299.

156 “Over-infatuated”: At the same time, it is undeniable that Walmart has put a special emphasis on battling Amazon. See “Walmart Is Betting on a Secret Initiative Called ‘Project Glass’ in the War Against Amazon. See the Full Presentation Outlining Its Plan,” *Business Insider*, March 10, 2021. Also see “A ‘Grass Roots’ Campaign to Take Down Amazon Is Funded by Amazon’s Biggest Rivals,” *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 20, 2019.


156 “Take great ideas”: Among these was to expand the number of third-party sellers at Walmart.com. See “Walmart’s Online Store Isn’t Profitable. Now It’s Borrowing from Amazon’s Playbook,” CNN Business, May 4, 2021.

156 “In his grill”: Interview with Harris by the author.

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158 Simon was leaving: “Head of Wal-Mart’s U.S. Division Leaving,” Wall Street Journal, July 24, 2014. In China: Foran had recently been put in charge of Walmart’s Asian operations.

158 Matter of time: This is the way the company itself presented things. See “Wal-Mart U.S. CEO Bill Simon Steps Down,” USA Today, July 24, 2014. In that article, Walmart spokesman David Tovar said that Simon “is leaving on good terms” and added, “When someone else gets (the job) out of two candidates, it’s not unexpected when the other person leaves to go do


159 “Couldn’t actually get into”: All quotes by McKenna in this chapter are from an interview with her by the author.

159 One analyst report: This was from Wolfe Research. See “Walmart Memo Orders Stores to Improve Grocery Performance,” New York Times, Nov. 11, 2014. “Was seven steps”: All quotes by Carithers in this chapter are from an interview with him by the author.

160 Under EDLP: You can hear McMillon explain the philosophy of everyday low prices at vimeo.com/342112322/89e38f8d95. Also see “This Walmart Exec Is Betting His Career on the Success of ‘EDLP,’” Business Insider, June 4, 2012.

161 “Skeptical about”: Interview with Gottman by the author. “Even within my team”: Interview with Canton by the author.

162 “That highly of them”: All quotes by McLaughlin in this chapter, unless otherwise noted, are from an interview with her by the author.

163 “We were thinking”: Interview with Gehrki by the author.

164 “They would always”: Interview with Auguste by the author.
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164 "Dollar to dollar": All quotes by Agnew in this chapter are from an interview with her by the author.

164 "We need you": As recounted by Agnew.

165 "You have to think about": Interview with Conway by the author. "A combination of": “Build Ladders and Raise the Floor: Workforce Strategies Supporting Mobility and Stability for Low-Income Workers” by Steven Dawson of PHI-Quality Care Through Quality Jobs and Maureen Conway of the Aspen Institute, April 2014.

166 Since 2006: See “Wal-Mart Names Claudia Kennedy to Employment Practices Advisory Panel,” corporate news release, May 9, 2006. Kennedy was a retired lieutenant general in the US Army. The other members of the panel were Dennis Archer, the former mayor of Detroit and Michigan Supreme Court judge, and former Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund Vice President Vilma Martinez. National Council of La Raza: The organization is now known as UnidosUS. “They were helping”: Interview with Kersey by the author.

166 “But you have agency”: As recounted by Kamasaki in an interview with the author. "A very simple issue": “Remarks by the President on Raising the Minimum Wage,” White House Office of the Press Secretary, April 30, 2014. Also see “President Barack Obama’s State of the Union Address,” Office of the Press Secretary, Jan. 28, 2014. “My frame was”: Interview with Herman by the author.

167 “She specifically said”: Interview with McMillon by the author.


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Moreton, 248. **Inclusive workplace**: See Walmart’s 2021 report, “Better Together: Culture, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.” Notably, McMillon joined other CEOs in urging the veto of a so-called religious freedom bill in Arkansas. Opponents said the measure would give legal cover to those who decided not to provide services to LGBTQ people if they thought doing so would “substantially burden” their religious freedom. McMillon said the law “threatens to undermine the spirit of inclusion present throughout the state of Arkansas and does not reflect the values we proudly uphold.” **“Like to be known”:** “Live Life with the End in Mind,” Workmatters, Sept. 1, 2016. **“God is good”:** As noted in “With His TikTok Pursuit, Walmart CEO Seeks to Revamp Retailer Again,” *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 28, 2020.

168 **“Sister Barbara kept us”:** Interview with Oliver by the author.

168 **Who earned so little:** This scene is as recounted in interviews with Mika and Aires by the author.

169 **“She’s a force”:** Interview with Weber by the author. **“Kind of strong”:** Interview with Rauscher by the author.

169 **“Upped their ante”:** Interview with Aires by the author.

169 **“Doesn’t have a kneejerk”:** Interview with Schilling by the author. **“Pushed him hard”:** Interview with Finn by the author.

170 **“What are you doing”:** Interview with Sherman by the author.


“A vicious cycle”: “Retailer Revelations: Why America’s Struggling Middle Class Has Businesses Scared,” Center for American Progress, Oct. 2014. *Gave prominence to*: In 2015, ICCR cited the Center for American Progress report in a shareholder resolution that called for the Walmart board to initiate a review of the company’s executive compensation policies. Similar resolutions were submitted to McDonald’s, Target, Dollar General, Gap, and others.


“That burger joint”: As recounted by McMillon in an interview with the author.

“Much more ambitious”: Interview with Gehrki by the author.

“Five-dimensional chess”: Interview with Bartlett by the author.

$8.25 an hour: From an interview with McMillon by the author.


“Already peaked”: Interview with Oliver by the author. “Jim was very passionate”: Interview with Wolf by the author.

“He’d come home”: This quote and all other details in this paragraph on Cash’s childhood are from “Boston Celtics Co-Owner and Business Leader James Cash on Breaking Barriers,” *Sarasota Magazine*, Dec. 22, 2020; “Much More Than an Athlete,” *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, May 9, 1993.

“Really quite negative”: This, and all of the remaining quotes in this chapter by Cash, is from an interview with him by the author.

“I would have thought”: Interview with Archer by the author.


“Putting employees first”: Heskett, Sasser, and Schlesinger, The Service Profit Chain, 329. “Dangerously close”: Heskett, Sasser, and Schlesinger, 143. They wrote this about Nordstrom, explaining, “Nordstrom does whatever it can to encourage” relationships that lead to customer satisfaction—“most importantly rewarding results by paying salespeople a substantial commission on sales as opposed to a salary dangerously close to minimum wages. As a result, successful Nordstrom salespeople are among the highest paid anywhere in retailing.” “We can predict”: Heskett, Sasser, and Schlesinger, 146.


“Given everything”: Interview with Wolf by the author.

“Take the operational issues”: Interview with Reinemund by the author.

He told Oliver: Interview with Oliver by the author. “Needed to yield”: Interview with Culpepper by the author. Hopped in the car: Interview with Oliver by the author.

“Kept thinking about her”: Interview with Kersey by the author.

Walmart would increase: The details are spelled out in “Walmart to Increase Wages for Current U.S. Workers to $10 an Hour or

179 “Strategically important”: Interview with Bartlett by the author.

181 “Never been more proud”: The text of the email was read by Kristin Oliver as part of her remarks at the 2015 National Opportunity Summit. See youtube.com/watch?v=K3jenS8D4bQ.

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183 **“Maybe we didn’t give you”**: All quotes and details on Walmart’s strategy from the analysts’ meeting are from the transcript of Walmart’s 22nd Annual Meeting for the Investment Community, Thomson Reuters Street Events, Oct. 14, 2015. A **4 percent rise**: “Wal-Mart CEO Speaks Out to Cramer: This Was Coming,” CNBC, Oct. 14, 2015.


185 **“Burned the boats”:** As recounted by Canney in an interview with the author.

185 **Screaming at him:** As recounted by Bartlett in an interview with the author.


186 **“Pocket change”:** “Wal-Mart Pay Hike Raises Hopes of Workers and Shoppers,” Los Angeles Times, Feb. 19, 2015. **Less than $26,000:** Walmart said that the move to $10 an hour would, coupled with other changes, raise its average full-time pay to $13.38. (See “More Than One Million Walmart Associates to Receive Pay Increase in 2016,” corporate news release, Jan. 20, 2016.) Full-time employees worked an average of 37 hours a week, according to the company. That pencils out to $25,743 a year.

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188 **Lost his teaching position:** Whitfield, Scott Nearing: Apostle of American Radicalism, 25. **Cost at least:** Nearing, Poverty and Riches, 114. **“The chief cause”:** Nearing, 190.


Wages erode: Zieger, 7. Who were surveyed: Zieger, 8.


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On the lower end: These figures are for those in the 25th percentile of US income distribution.


“Explains almost everything”: Wartzman, “We Were Shocked.”

Hovering between: See “Bring the Households Back In: The Effect of Poverty on the Mobility of Low-Wage Workers to Better Wages” by Michael Schulz, Washington Center for Equitable Growth, 2021. Some researchers, using different measures, come up with higher figures. For instance, if you define “low-paid” by using the mean hourly wage (rather than the median) for full-time, prime-age workers, their share of the labor force rises from about 39% to 45% between 1979 and 2017. See “Declining Job Quality in the United States: Explanations and Evidence” by David R. Howell and Arne L. Kalleberg, *The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, 2019. Also see the US Private Sector Job Quality Index at jobqualityindex.com. The index divides all categories of jobs in the US into high- and low-quality by calculating the mean weekly income (hourly wages multiplied by hours worked) of all production and nonsupervisory jobs and then calculates the number of such jobs that are above or below that mean. An index reading of 100 would indicate an even distribution between high- and low-quality jobs. Readings below 100 indicate a greater concentration in lower-quality (below the mean) positions, and a reading above 100 would indicate a greater concentration in high-quality (above the mean) positions. According to this measure, there was roughly an even number of low-quality and high-quality jobs in 1990 (53% low versus 47% high). But since then, 63% of the jobs created in the United States have been low-quality. 20 times larger: Gross domestic product was $1.09 trillion in the third quarter of 1970; it was $23.20 trillion in the third quarter of 2021. 40 times larger: According to the Federal Reserve, household net worth—assets minus liabilities—was
$3.75 trillion in the third quarter of 1970; it was $145 trillion in the third quarter of 2021. “So much more wealth”: Interview with Schultz by the author.


195 **Largely to blame:** See “Income Volatility: Why It Destabilizes Working Families and How Philanthropy Can Make a Difference,” Asset Funders Network, 2017; “Unpredictable Work Hours and Volatile Incomes Are Long-Term Risks for American Workers” by Katherine Guyot and Richard V. Reeves, Brookings Institution, Aug. 18, 2020. **Past 15 years:** Walmart was an early adopter in 2007. “Other employers soon followed suit,” note Heather Boushey and Bridget Ansel in “Working by the Hour: The Economic Consequences of Unpredictable Scheduling Practices,” Washington Center for Equitable Growth, Sept. 2016. **Presumably brings:** While certain efficiencies are clearly achieved through “just-in-time scheduling,” studies have actually found that more stability for workers can lead to better business outcomes. See “Stable Scheduling Increases Productivity and Sales” by Joan C. Williams, Susan J. Lambert, Saravanan Kesavan, Peter J. Fugiel, Lori Ann Ospina,
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195 **Survey data:** “Hard Times: Routine Schedule Unpredictability and Material Hardship Among Service Sector Workers” by Daniel Schneider and Kristen Harknett, Social Forces, June 2021. Also see “It’s About Time: How Work Schedule Instability Matters for Workers, Families, and Racial Inequality,” Shift Project, Oct. 2019. **Last-minute changes:** Two-thirds of respondents reported such a change in the prior month. **Canceled outright:** Of the respondents, 15% reported having a canceled shift in the prior month. **A second job:** As of 2018, 7.8% of US workers held a second job, up from 6.8% in 1996. See “Using Administrative Data, Census Bureau Can Now Track the Rise in Multiple Jobholders” by Keith A. Bailey and James R. Spletzer, Census Bureau, Feb. 3, 2021.

195 **Has about doubled:** The civilian labor force went from 85.6 million in Dec. 1970 to 162.3 million in Dec. 2021; before the pandemic, in Feb. 2020, it was 164.6 million. **Between 30 million and 50 million:** The 30 million represents 25% of prime-age workers, or 32.5 million people (out of about 130 million) who are between 25 and 64 years old. Using a more expansive approach to counting low-paid workers, researchers at the Brookings Institution have found that 53 million Americans ages 18 to 64—44% of all workers—earn low hourly wages. They defined low-paid as those earning less than two-thirds median wages for full-time/full-year male workers. They also accounted for variation in the cost of living across the country. The average of the national threshold across their five years of data, in 2016 real dollars, was $16.03, with the adjusted
thresholds ranging from $12.54 in Beckley, West Virginia, to $20.02 in San Jose, California. See “Meet the Low-Wage Workforce” by Martha Ross and Nicole Bateman, Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings, Nov. 2019. “When’s the last time”: Guendelsberger, *On the Clock*, 7.

“Had just run across”: Harrington, 185.


Going to food banks: “From Paycheck to Pantry: Hunger in Working America,” Oxfam America and Feeding America, 2014. The report is based on a survey conducted with more than 60,000 clients randomly sampled at 12,500 food programs across the Feeding America network. It found, specifically, that 34% of all client households had a member that had been employed in the four weeks prior to the survey. More than half of client households had a member with a paying job in the previous 12 months. Able to cover: “America 2002 in Charts: An Economic Opportunity Snapshot,” McKinsey & Co., Dec. 2021. Also see “What a $400 Emergency Expense Tells Us About the Economy” by Michael Grover, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, June 11, 2021; “A Breakdown of What Living Paycheck to Paycheck Looks Like,” *Washington Post*, Aug. 17,
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2020. The Post article notes, “There are millions of Americans living paycheck to paycheck in this country, as many surveys have shown. According to Nielsen data, the American Payroll Association, CareerBuilder, and the National Endowment for Financial Education, somewhere between 50% and 78% of employees earn just enough money to pay their bills each month. Should they miss a paycheck, some of those bills would go unpaid.” Those in shelters: “Learning About Homelessness Using Linked Survey and Administrative Data” by Bruce Meyer, Angela Wyse, Alexa Grunwaldt, Carla Medalia, and Derek Wu, Becker Friedman Institute for Economics at the University of Chicago, June 2021. Also see Kristof and WuDunn, Tightrope, 161. “Comes to poverty”: “Americans Want to Believe Jobs Are the Solution to Poverty. They’re Not.” by Matthew Desmond, New York Times Magazine, Sept. 11, 2018.

In 29 states: “Out of Reach 2021,” National Low Income Housing Coalition. Its estimates are based on the hourly wage a full-time worker must earn to afford a modest rental home at the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development’s “fair market rent” without spending more than 30% of his or her income on housing costs, the accepted standard of affordability.


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200 “More humane system”: “If This Pandemic Has Taught Us Anything, It’s That Workers Are Essential,” Los Angeles Times, Sept. 7, 2020.

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This trend continued in 2022 with notable—arguably even historic—organizing wins at Amazon, Starbucks, Trader Joe’s, Apple, REI, and other companies. But it remained to be seen whether, as the Century Foundation put it, this promising moment would turn into a lasting movement. **An upswing:** “U.S. Workers Have Been Striking in Startling Numbers. Will That Continue?,” *Washington Post*, Nov. 11, 2021; “Union Activity Increased in 2021, While Membership Continued to Decline,” USAFacts, Feb. 3, 2022. **Went down:** It declined from 6.3% in 2020 to 6.1% in 2021. Also see “Major Strike Activity Increased in 2021 but Remains Below Pre-Pandemic Levels” by Margaret Poydock, Ihna Mangundayao, Celine McNicholas, and John Schmitt, Economic Policy Institute, Feb. 2022.

205 **Said in 1950:** “Memorandum on General Motors Profits,” United Auto Workers records, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University. Also quoted in Wartzman, 95–96.

205 **Having latched on to:** See Wartzman, 265–270; Rosenfeld, 120–124.


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207 “If you were a CEO”: “The Tricky Role of the CEO in a New Era of Social Responsibility” by Rick Wartzman, Wall Street Journal, Dec. 12, 2019.


Health-Care Giant as $69 Billion Merger with Aetna Officially Closes,” CNBC, Nov. 28, 2018.


210 **She has heard:** Bach’s insights and quotes are from an email to the author.


211 **2020 analysis:** “Reach for the STARS: The Potential of America’s Hidden Talent Pool,” Opportunity@Work and Accenture,
March 2020. **Government data:** This was information drawn from the Occupational Information Network, or O*Net, database.


212 **Retail industry productivity:** Reich and Bearman, 100–101. Jared Bernstein, before he joined President Biden’s Council of Economic Advisors, ran an analysis for the author that showed the same results. Bernstein cautioned that there are limits to this kind of data-crunching at the sector (versus the aggregate economy) level. But the results left no doubt that “there’s a hefty productivity–wage gap here,” he said.


214 **$17.06 an hour:** The company provided this figure to the author in June 2022. **Two-thirds full-timers:** The company reported in its 2022 annual report that about 69% of its 1.6 million hourly workers were full-timers. Also see “Emphasizing Opportunity, Walmart Moves More Associates to Full Time,” corporate news release, April 14, 2021. **I love when**: From the comments for “What Will Going to Mostly Full-Time Staff Mean for Walmart’s Stores?,” RetailWire, April 15, 2021.

214 **After a campaign:** “Walmart Employees Deliver Petition with 70,000 Signatures for Expanded Family Leave,” KNWA, June
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215 “You had a lot”: Interview with Holler by the author.

215 The company replaced: Not long after Walmart introduced its two-step pay raise in 2015, it decided against making the increase to $10 an hour contingent on completion of Pathways training, as originally planned. The concern was that some workers were missing out on the raise simply because they couldn’t schedule a training or for some other reason that made it unfair not to give them the bump in pay. Around the same time, the company started to focus on the academies model, which was first developed in Britain by Judith McKenna. 2.4 million: Figure provided by the company to the author in April 2022. Also see “Walmart Launches One Global Walmart Academy to Help 2.3 Million Associates Build and Grow Their Careers,” corporate news release, June 2, 2022. “Caps and gowns”: “At Walmart Academy, Training Better Managers. But with a Better Future?,” *New York Times*, Aug. 8, 2017. For free: “Walmart to Pay 100% of College Tuition and Books for Associates,” corporate news release, July 27, 2021. Building on: See “Study Shows the Benefits of Walmart Education Effort,” Lumina Foundation, Sept. 2021. The Lumina study found that some 30,000 Walmart workers were actively enrolled in the $1-a-day program, Live Better U, through April 30, 2021. That, of course, is only about 2% of the company’s frontline workforce. Over three years, 336 people had
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earned a bachelor’s degree and 50 an associate’s degree. In addition, some 2,400 had completed their high school studies, 2,519 had finished a college pathways program, and 1,805 certificates were earned in subject areas such as tech and health. Also see “How to Get Rich Sending Low-Income Workers to College,” Bloomberg, Dec. 14, 2021.


216 “Famous and infamous”: Ton, 7.


217 Become truck drivers: “Walmart Dangles $110,000 Starting Pay to Lure Truck Drivers,” Wall Street Journal, April 7, 2022. Pharmacy technicians: In addition to raising the average wage for Walmart and Sam’s Club pharmacy technicians to more than $20 an hour, the company said it would offer these 36,000 workers more frequent and automatic pay increases as part of a new “progressive wage model.” See “Walmart Raises Wages of Pharmacy Workers in Tight Labor Market,” CNBC, June 16, 2022. “We want people”: Interview with Furner by the author. Also see “Accelerating Associate Opportunity Through Growth,
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218 “We’re making progress”: Interview with Furner by the author.

218 “An inch into”: Interview with Murphy by the author.

219 Less than $29,000: This is based on Walmart’s average wage of $17.06, as reported by the company in June 2022, at the average number of hours worked per week by 1.1 million full-time employees (36 hours) and 495,380 part-time employees (23 hours), as shared with the author. That comes out to $28,361 a year. Under $32,000: At an average of 36 hours, a full-timer’s annual pay comes to $31,936.

219 Being “underinsured”: The lowest annual deductible in any of Walmart’s employee health plans in 2022 is for a single individual enrolled in its Contribution Plan: $1,750. That would be 6.2% of someone’s gross pay if they make $28,361. The Commonwealth Fund says that someone is considered underinsured when their
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deductible constitutes 5% or more of household income. Notably, even an average full-time worker would be underinsured using this threshold. **Were on Medicaid**: “Millions of Full-Time Workers Rely on Federal Health Care and Food Assistance Programs,” General Accounting Office, Oct. 2020.

219 **“If not for the employment access”:** “Walmart and McDonald’s Have the Most Workers on Food Stamps and Medicaid, New Study Shows,” *Washington Post*, Nov. 18, 2020.

220 **“What does one do”:** Interview with Bland by the author.


220 **Hundreds of thousands:** “Walmart’s Pay-Advance App Even Used by 200,000 Employees,” *American Banker*, July 19, 2018. The company stopped reporting how many employees use the app, but by all accounts, the number has only gone up over the past four years. In early 2022, it was announced that Hazel, an independent fintech launched in partnership with Walmart and Ribbit Capital, was acquiring Even. **“It sounds like”:** “Walmart Will Let Its 1.4 Million Workers Take Their Pay Before Payday,” *New York Times*, Dec. 13, 2017.

Split off from: The parting was not friendly. A new UFCW president, Marc Parrone, questioned the amount of money that had been devoted to the Walmart campaign without gaining any new members for the union. Those running the campaign, then known as OUR Walmart, had their funding cut off. See “The Union Behind the Biggest Campaign Against Walmart in History May Be Throwing in the Towel. Why?,” In These Times, Aug. 11, 2015; “Wal-Mart Worker Group Splits in Two; Both Sides Vow to Continue Wage Fight,” Reuters, Sept. 16, 2015; “Who Really Works for the Walmart Worker?,” BuzzFeed, Sept. 18, 2015. The OUR Walmart team regrouped and came up with innovative ways to connect and empower workers. See “American Workers Try to Organize—One Click at a Time” by Rick Wartzman, Fortune, Feb. 16, 2016. In 2019, OUR Walmart changed its name to United for Respect. In addition to continuing to speak out against Walmart, the group has broadened its scope to also take on Amazon, PetSmart, Toys “R” Us, and others. “Associates don’t need”: “Walmart Aims to Empower Workers with Own Devices, New App,” ABC News, June 3, 2021.

“Sense of disrespect”: Reich and Bearman, 150.

Used an open mic: You can see a video of McGrath’s PA announcement at youtube.com/watch?v=93FBTM6LXX0. She was not the first to quit this way. Another Walmart worker, Shana Blackwell, had done something similar in Oct. 2020. See “The Great Escape,” The American Prospect, Nov. 29, 2021.

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222 Stayed in Walmart’s ear: Interview with Margaret Weber of the Baslian Fathers of Toronto by the author. Specifically, ICCR was pushing for Walmart to raise wages to at least $15 an hour. “Our wages reflect”: In April 2021, for example, Walmart’s Kathleen McLaughlin told an industry gathering: “Our starting wages and our average wages simply reflect what is the local market average for that type of job in that format.” See “Walmart’s Sustainability Pitch to Wall Street,” Women’s Wear Daily, April 6, 2021. “A circular argument”: Interview with Omens by the author. Also see Rosenfeld, 190–191. JUST ranked Walmart: For details, go to justcapital.com/companies/walmart-inc.

223 “More as a cost”: Interview with Polman by the author.

224 “Beats the bold”: Interview with Goonan by the author.


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225 **In the spring:** The story of how Living Wage for US was formed, the quotes from Murray, and all of the living wage data from the organization are adopted from “Are You Being Paid Enough to Live On? New Tool Aims to Answer That Question,” by Rick Wartzman, *Capital & Main*, Nov. 15, 2021.

226 **Certifies those:** A key feature of For US is the way it credits employers for forms of compensation besides wages, including health coverage, a retirement plan, and childcare and transportation benefits. All of that goes into evaluating whether a company qualifies to be certified by For US as a “leading” living-wage employer. A company can attain a lower-tier certification by paying all of its workers at least $15 to $18 an hour, depending on where it has operations, and then increasing remuneration every year by inflation plus 3% until a family living wage is paid to everyone.

227 **Widely accepted methodology:** See Anker and Anker, *Living Wages Around the World*. It states on page 31: “There is a broad consensus that living wage is a family concept. A worker should be able to support a family on a living wage.” **Mostly adults:** See “Why the U.S. Needs a $15 Minimum Wage,” Economic Policy Institute, Jan. 2021. It notes that 51% of workers who would benefit from a rise in the minimum wage to $15 an hour are adults between the ages of 25 and 54; only one in 10 is a teenager.

227 **Other such frameworks:** The most well-known is the MIT Living Wage Calculator. The Economic Policy Institute’s Family Budget Calculator is also a widely used tool.
227 **Rose appreciably:** “Real Wages Are Increasing for Those in the Bottom Half of the Income Distribution” by Joana Duran-Franch and Mike Konczal, Roosevelt Institute, Nov. 17, 2021. Also helping to lift wages have been the dozens of states, cities, and counties that have increased their own minimum wages—though few are at $15 an hour yet. See “Raises from Coast to Coast in 2022” by Yannet Lathrop, National Employment Law Project, Dec. 2021; “Raising Minimum Wages in 20 States and Localities Help Protect Workers and Families Against Higher Prices” by Sebastian Martinez Hickey and David Cooper, Economic Policy Institute, July 11, 2022.


228 **Adjusted upward:** Some would index the minimum wage to inflation. But indexing it to the median wage would, in the words of the Economic Policy Institute, “ensure that low-wage workers share in broad improvements in US living standards and would prevent future growth in inequality between low- and middle-wage workers.” See “Raising the Federal Minimum Wage to $15 by 2024 Would Lift Pay for Nearly 40 Million Workers” by David Cooper, Economic Policy Institute, Feb. 2019. Also see “Bolstering the Bottom by Indexing the Minimum Wage to the Median Wage” by Ben Zipperer, Washington Center for Equitable Growth, June 2015. **Earned Income Tax Credit:** “The EITC and Minimum Wage Work Together to
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228 “More than sufficient”: This is from Roosevelt’s “New Nationalism” speech, delivered in 1910. “Bare subsistence level”: This is from FDR’s June 1933 statement on the National Industrial Recovery Act.


229 “It can’t be”: Interview with Murray by the author.
