



# Death by Leisure: A Cautionary Tale

*Chris Ayres*

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## Death by Leisure: A Cautionary Tale Chris Ayres

The hilariously intrepid young author of *War Reporting for Cowards* returns from Iraq only to dive head-first into another absurd, terrifying world: the American leisure class. Like Hunter Thompson crossed with one of David Brooks's bobos in paradise, Ayres embeds himself in LA's "liesuretocracy": an over-the-top world of caviar facials, billionaire charity balls, souped-up SUVs, and monster home loans . . . not to mention \$1,000-a-night brothels and million-dollar poker tournaments. Ayres's highly leveraged lifestyle lands him a surreal night with a supermodel, a date at Michael Jackson's birthday party in Neverland Ranch (Ayres bribes the organizers five grand to get in), and a wife courtesy of Craigslist. But disaster is never far away. In the book's brutal final section, Ayres is forced to confront the excesses of his generation at a scene of apocalyptic destruction: the Katrina-ravaged South. Told with a blend of offbeat irreverence, genuine pathos, and incisive social commentary, *Death by Leisure* is a savage and darkly humorous odyssey that taps directly into the contemporary psyche.

## Death by Leisure: A Cautionary Tale Details

Date : Published February 15th 2009 by Atlantic Monthly Press (first published July 10th 2008)

ISBN : 9780871139641

Author : Chris Ayres

Format : Hardcover 288 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Autobiography, Memoir, Humor, Biography Memoir

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## From Reader Review Death by Leisure: A Cautionary Tale for online ebook

### Ashley says

A pretty quick read that follows the author as he moves to LA from back-of-the-woods English town. This is a few years before the housing crisis of 2007, so he - predictably - goes hogwild with credit cards, personal loans, and a ridiculous ARM loan on "the perfect bachelor pad". He also leases a Range Rover.

This book actually reminds EXACTLY of "Save Karyn" but from a guy's POV. Except whereas Karyn was saved by her website and then got a book deal, Ayres went straight for the book deal about 9 days he spent in Iraq as a war reporter. When the call from his agent came that the book was sold and he was getting an advance to write it, he was actually in Vegas and had just spent a very unsuccessful night trying to win enough money to buy a Tiffany engagement ring.

I found Ayres' story a little annoying - he's the poster child for what caused the bubble. He's ego is huge and throughout the book he overcommits to things he can't possibly pull off (see: tickets to VIP Oscar party, tickets to some other exclusive event, moving a gargantuan sofa, and oh yeah, a huge unconventional mortgage!). At least he admits to his tendency to overexaggerate and over-promise. Annoyingly, he pulls through on everything at the last minute, including avoiding bankruptcy, which was always a month away. As a result, it's hard to feel any sympathy for him since he got a 2nd book deal out of it.

Overall, not a huge fan. The writing was fun but the main character just strike a chord with me. I'm just glad I didn't buy the book. At least my money isn't going to support his (I'm sure) leisurely lifestyle. :)

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### Brendan Suszynski says

While well written and full of ridiculous analogies and self deprecating humor, it was fairly preachy about it's subject matter. Ayres' Pre-Recession misadventures as a Hollywood Reporter and his playful nihilism toward how American Excess is harming the environment make for enjoyable reads, but it's not like he's saying things that haven't been said on these issues, hence the three stars.

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### Stefani says

This book was quite funny in parts, but large stretches made me zone out (mostly the authors musings on environmental downfall and the impending apocalypse). I would rate this a 4 and 1/2 for humor alone but the other parts really dragged it down.

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### Jim says

I think this guy is up there with P.J. O'Rourke with his insight into what the current world is like and with very funny and insightful views that describe the world as it is even though those realities aren't always easy to see in the here and now.

### Ashley says

I picked this up because I really enjoyed the laugh-aloud tale of Ayres' "War Reporting for Cowards". But his sophomore "Death by Leisure" was lacking. While amusing and a quick read, "Death by Leisure" -- upon some Googling of the topics the author brought up -- was more of a rehash of Ayres' columns strung together under the umbrella of environmental and economical references. I liked it as a quick read, and could relate, having known some of the LA culture as well as the realities of being a writer/reporter, but ultimately this only gets two stars, as I'd likely not recommend it.

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### Marilyn says

This is a must read book for everyone who is wondering what the hell happened to the economy in the past 2 years. As Pogo once said, "We have met the enemy and he is us". The recent crisis in Europe will make its way to China--this is a "Domino Theory" that is a real threat--and the people who are overusing and overbuying will have to get a clue.

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### Arapahoe Libraries says

Chris Ayres wanted everything now: a million-dollar home, a super-hot girlfriend, a credit-card-enabled life of leisure, a cushy job. He moved from a sheep-raising village in England to LA, where indeed he could get everything now. Be prepared to laugh out loud!

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### Paul says

Ok let's cut the shit. I don't like Chris Ayres and I don't like people like Chris Ayres -- and it sounds like L.A. is crawling with them. That said, Chris Ayres is one hell of a funny guy. Whining, self-deprecating, unabashedly materialistic, and hopeless with the women... I mean, the guy sells his furniture on craigs list as a ploy to get women to talk to him??? Would I take the guy's phone call? No fucking way. Did I think I'd finish a semi-autobiography by the guy? Not on your life. But I did... and parts of it (the middle of the book especially) I couldn't put down. Yeah, the last 20 or so pages are WAY too preachy for me (hence four stars), but nonetheless this is a genuinely funny read -- made all the more so because it's so fucking true.

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### Jill says

A fun and frivolous read. We pogo-sticked around the made-up life of an English correspondent outcast to Hollywood, sorry LA, to cover celebrities and silliness. No better man for the job than Chris, who seemed to be the poster boy for silliness. Silly choices, silly reasoning, silly clothing choices.

*Death by Leisure* isn't an accurate title for this book. If we're keeping it short and quippy then perhaps *Consumerism and childishness* or perhaps *Shopping and stupidity*. I wouldn't call anything Chris did *leisure*

although he didn't seem to do much working -- his non-working time was so convoluted and twisted up in the need to impress, it seemed like harder work than the actual work.

Although this is giving this book too much weight. It's fairy floss. And the man is funny. There were paragraphs in this book that made me laugh so hard, I shook the bed and woke my husband. He has a damn funny turn of phrase.

But write a cohesive story linking various plotlines and characters together, with interesting dialogue and unexpected turn of events? Nah. It really is a pogo-stick of a ride. We hop here, we bounce there, we lurch to the side, we bound back at a 37 degree angle. It's vaguely coherent, but not a gripping plotline.

This is what I'd call a good "stake out" book. If you were on a stake out somewhere, where your attention needed to be half on something else but you had a bit of spare brain space for something light and frivolous that you could easily put down and pick up again and it wouldn't matter if you missed chunks or forgot who Lisa was or remembered that Jake had recently left his wife or whatever it was - this is the book for you. It not only does not require, but is probably better experienced, if it isn't focused on too much.

So read in your peripheral vision, enjoy those fabulous funny phrases, and let it all flow around you as flotsam - soon to be forgotten.

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### **Marianne Wassmer says**

A very funny look at greed in Los Angeles right before the "bubble" burst. You should condemn the author for his excess, though you can't, because it's too much fun. Not great literature, but fun to read.

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### **Keith says**

This book should be required reading. I'm not kidding. If you want to understand why the economy (and the weather for that matter) is so ridiculously horrible, you should read this book. I barely understood why the housing market collapsed until I read this book. Hilarious and yet disturbing, Chris Ayres delivers another homerun. And if you haven't read War Reporting For Cowards (also by Ayres) yet, check it out, definitely worth your time and money.

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### **Michael Heath-Caldwell says**

Scathing critique of the Los Angeles life style from a British refugee vantage point. Non-glamorous person invades California at the height of the housing bubble in 2007 and manages to get a foothold on the bandwagon of cheap money and crazy real estate - moments before it all crashes.

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### **Michael says**

Great storytelling from an English reporter diving into life in L.A., and about overconsumption and the breakdown of our economy and environment, though you often feel that Ayres doesn't do enough in the way

of practicing what he preaches, or...learns.

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### **Michael says**

Well written, but lacking in substance. Reading this book was like eating popcorn. You don't actually enjoy it, but you keep eating it anyway.

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### **Maya says**

This is a fun and funny book about Ayres experience living in LA leading up to and into the housing collapse. He does a great job making fun of himself which is a good quality. And you can stop to examine your own ridiculous excesses and follies when you know his are at least as bad. It's not earth-shattering but it is fun to read.

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