



# LIFE MAGAZINES

MONTHLY A5 LOCAL LIFESTYLE MAGAZINES

## BOOK REVIEW - **Freakonomics** by **Steven D. Levitt & Stephen J. Dubner**

**L**evitt is the Economist and Dubner the writer; for this unusual style of book I am glad we have both. Economics and data have never struck me as being the basis of a good read; put a talented writer in the equation, however, and you then have something quite interesting.

When I think of economics, I immediately think of reams of statistics and extremely dull trends in micro and macro financial climates. I do not think of Drug Dealers living with their Moms or Schoolteachers and Sumo Wrestlers! This book is something we haven't seen before. It takes a dry subject and injects a serious amount of life into it. Levitt gives us schoolteachers and sumo wrestlers cheating to optimise their own incentives, parenting and all of its good intentions, organisations exploiting their access to information at the expense of others and an in-depth explanation of the economics of a drug-gang. Arguably the most controversial topic in the book is Where have all the Criminals gone? explaining how the drop in crime in the 90s directly correlates with the legalisation of abortions in 1973.

Concluding with the epilogue, Two paths to Harvard he reminds us that economics may not be able to absolutely explain everything and is quite random at times. He states, 'This book indeed has no unifying theme, but it does ask you to think.' He has broken down a somewhat unapproachable topic into a novel way of understanding the world a little better. He acknowledges that the content is quite controversial in parts, but then so is the world, and he is simply trying to encourage us to stop ignoring it.

It is original in style and thoroughly entertaining. I am not sure how coincidental all of the economic facts that he uses to support his arguments are, but he uses them imaginatively and cleverly making this book eye-opening and enjoyable to read.

**Carrie Cartwright-Owen**