

CONTENTS

AN EXPLANATORY NOTE XIII

In which we admit to lying in our previous book.

INTRODUCTION: PUTTING THE FREAK IN ECONOMICS 1

In which the global financial meltdown is entirely ignored in favor of more engaging topics.

The perils of walking drunk . . . The unlikely savior of Indian women . . . Drowning in horse manure . . . What is “freakonomics,” anyway? . . . Toothless sharks and bloodthirsty elephants . . . Things you always thought you knew but didn’t.

CHAPTER 1

HOW IS A STREET PROSTITUTE LIKE A DEPARTMENT-STORE SANTA? 19

In which we explore the various costs of being a woman.

Meet LaSheena, a part-time prostitute... One million dead "witches"... The many ways in which females are punished for being born female... Even Radcliffe women pay the price... Title IX creates jobs for women; men take them... 1 of every 50 women a prostitute... The booming sex trade in old-time Chicago... A survey like no other... The erosion of prostitute pay... Why did oral sex get so cheap?... Pimps versus Realtors... Why cops love prostitutes... Where did all the schoolteachers go?... What really accounts for the male-female wage gap?... Do men love money the way women love kids?... Can a sex change boost your salary?... Meet Allie, the happy prostitute; why aren't there more women like her?

CHAPTER 2

WHY SHOULD SUICIDE BOMBERS BUY LIFE INSURANCE? 57

In which we discuss compelling aspects of birth and death, though primarily death.

The worst month to have a baby... The natal roulette affects horses too... Why Albert Aab will outshine Albert Zyzmor... The birthdate bulge... Where does talent come from?... Some families produce baseball players; others produce terrorists... Why terrorism is so cheap and easy... The trickle-down effects of September 11... The man who fixes hospitals... Why the newest ERs are already obsolete... How can you tell a good doctor from a bad

one? . . . "Bitten by a client at work" . . . Why you want your ER doc to be a woman . . . A variety of ways to postpone death . . . Why is chemotherapy so widely used when it so rarely works? . . . "We're still getting our butts kicked by cancer" . . . War: not as dangerous as you think? . . . How to catch a terrorist.

CHAPTER 3

UNBELIEVABLE STORIES ABOUT APATHY AND ALTRUISM97

In which people are revealed to be less good than previously thought, but also less bad.

Why did 38 people watch Kitty Genovese be murdered? . . . With neighbors like these . . . What caused the 1960s crime explosion? . . . How the ACLU encourages crime . . . Leave It to Beaver: not as innocent as you think . . . The roots of altruism, pure and impure . . . Who visits retirement homes? . . . Natural disasters and slow news days . . . Economists make like Galileo and hit the lab . . . The brilliant simplicity of the Dictator game . . . People are so generous! . . . Thank goodness for "donorcycles" . . . The great Iranian kidney experiment . . . From driving a truck to the ivory tower . . . Why don't real people behave like people in the lab? . . . The dirty rotten truth about altruism . . . Scarecrows work on people too . . . Kitty Genovese revisited.

CHAPTER 4

THE FIX IS IN—AND IT'S CHEAP AND SIMPLE 133

In which big, seemingly intractable problems are solved in surprising ways.

The dangers of childbirth . . . Ignatz Semmelweis to the rescue . . . How the Endangered Species Act endangered species . . . Creative ways to keep from paying for your trash . . . Forceps hoarding . . . The famine that wasn't . . . Three hundred thousand dead whales . . . The mysteries of polio . . . What really prevented your heart attack? . . . The killer car . . . The strange story of Robert McNamara . . . Let's drop some skulls down the stairwell! . . . Hurray for seat belts . . . What's wrong with riding shotgun? . . . How much good do car seats do? . . . Crash-test dummies tell no lies . . . Why hurricanes kill, and what can be done about it.

CHAPTER 5

WHAT DO AL GORE AND MOUNT PINATUBO HAVE IN COMMON?..... 165

In which we take a cool, hard look at global warming.

Let's melt the ice cap! . . . What's worse: car exhaust or cow farts? . . . If you love the earth, eat more kangaroo . . . It all comes down to negative externalities . . . The Club versus LoJack . . . Mount Pinatubo teaches a lesson . . . The obscenely smart, somewhat twisted gentlemen of Intellectual Ventures . . . Assassinating mosquitoes . . . "Sir, I am every kind of scientist!" . . . An inconvenient truthiness . . . What climate models miss . . . Is carbon dioxide the wrong villain? . . . "Big-ass volcanoes" and climate change . . .

How to cool the earth . . . The “garden hose to the sky” . . . Reasons to hate geoengineering . . . Jumping the repugnance barrier . . . “Soggy mirrors” and the puffy-cloud solution . . . Why behavior change is so hard . . . Dirty hands and deadly doctors . . . Foreskins are falling.

EPILOGUE

MONKEYS ARE PEOPLE TOO.....211

In which it is revealed that—aw, hell, you have to read it to believe it.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 217

NOTES 221

INDEX 257