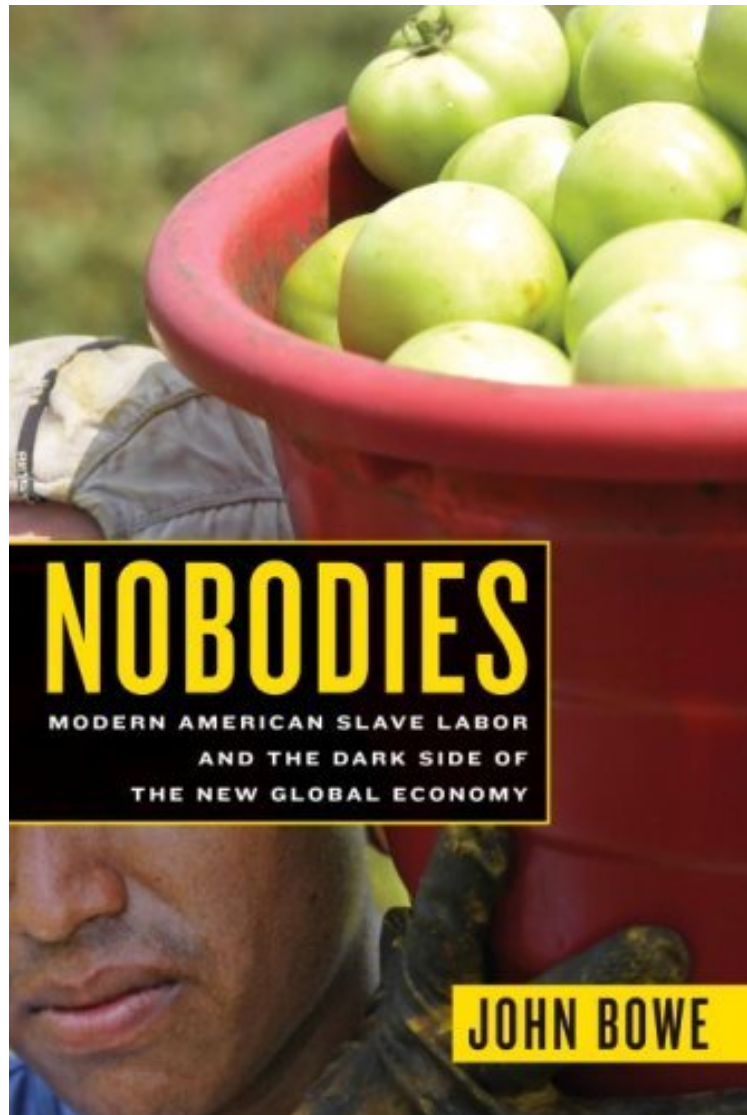


(Mobile book) Nobodies: Modern American Slave Labor and the Dark Side of the New Global Economy

Nobodies: Modern American Slave Labor and the Dark Side of the New Global Economy

John Bowe

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John Bowe : Nobodies: Modern American Slave Labor and the Dark Side of the New Global Economy before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Nobodies: Modern American Slave Labor and the Dark Side of the New Global Economy:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This is an easy, interesting read about migrant laborers. By Grego_The author makes this an easy and interesting book to read. It is a short read, and is fairly compelling and riveting in the typical NY journalistic documentary/suspense style. What makes it so great is that these are true stories!

The lives of these people and the conditions they endure are thoroughly documented. It is a rare candid glimpse into the lives of migrant workers, and compromised illegal immigrants. One thing that is obvious is that reporting on these topics is fairly dangerous, and the reader wonders if an independent author might have enjoyed the success of this expose' if they didn't have the backing of a large institution like the NY Times, (and all of the "risk management" they would provide a writer.) We are treated once again to the publishers generosity, and prowess in sizing up their quarry. Most of the players come out a (teeny, tiny) little better in the end, well marginally better anyway, and it doesn't feel fake or fuzzy. More like relief that everyone involved didn't end up missing. I like reading documentaries like this because it proves that consumer programs designed to improve others lives can make a positive difference. If we try to make the lives of our poorer neighbors better, we can succeed to some degree. Conversely try to pinch pennies often times pinches (or worse) real people and their families, and in the end we often ended up hurting ourselves. Thanks John and Co.!

10 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great insight into modern day labor issues
By Kirsten Koll
Great insight into modern day labor issues that you don't usually think about. Surprising that it happens in the U.S. Also a great reminder of our purchasing power as consumers and how we vote with the products we buy, and how the "power" of companies or individuals needs to be regulated or audited.

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Riveting, Gifted Reporting, Deeply Depressing, Call to Arms
By Robert David STEELE Vivas
This is a spectacular piece of work with many gifted turns of phrase. The author has done his homework, and melds economic facts and philosophical reflections in a worthy manner. The author opens with a challenge: how should a free people respond to slavery, i.e. should they knowingly buy products and services that are rooted in slavery? I ordered this book on the strength of the author's appearance on CSPAN BookTV, and this is one of those instances where I think that listening to him talk about the book first is hugely beneficial to appreciating the book. The author, in person (on CSPAN), is funny, intelligent, informative, a really excellent presenter of facts in a coherent manner. Supreme Court Justice Brandeis is cited in this book: "You can have great concentration of wealth in the hands of a few or you can have democracy. You can't have both." While the author documents slavery, at least 27 million world-wide (not counting the prison-slave population) with 800 million not enslaved but utterly poor going hungry each day, 33 million of them in the USA, his book is a socio-economic ideo-cultural treatise on "whither globalization." His bottom line is clear: if we allow slave labor and sweatshop conditions to undercut each of our homeland industries, we are toast. The author does something quite special with this book. I am deeply impressed. Since the 1970's I have understood the conflict between multinational corporations and governments, the trade-offs between profits and social value, but it is only recently that my reading has brought forth the sharp battle that will define the 21st Century: the battle between Collective Intelligence (one for all, all for one) and Corruption at all levels of government and business. The meme "true cost" is the ideological battle line. Also known as the triple bottom line (economic, social, and environmental), it is my view that the ability of my generation to promulgate True Cost information in the next ten years is going to determine what kind of future our children have. The author provides numbers, and I am gripped by the 40 cents paid to the slave laborer for a bucket of tomatos, versus the \$12.00 plus paid to the farmer or "organizer/enforcer." The author is eloquent in describing how slave wages have not risen in thirty years, while all else has.... This book is deep, richly textured, a tremendously informative and socially-valuable offering. Here are a few highlights that stayed with me: 1) US Census statistics are so "delusional and deceptive" that Wall Street investors no longer use them--they commission their own studies. 2) The conditions of slavery and poverty and abuse are so deeply entrenched, and imposed on individual held in isolation from society and the rule of law--when the law is willing to be enforced--that they might as well be on another planet, a slave planet. 3) FBI Special Agents get very high marks for being able to master law enforcement in an illegal immigration environment, but the author speaks of "institutional malfeasance" in how often the FBI transfers people. I have long felt that we need to turn government inside out--we need to mass Latin American specialists across government, military, law enforcement, etc, and we need to start putting people into 10 year tours. 4) It is clear we need a "white hat" side of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), I envision something in which all information they might collect in investigating human rights and other labor violations is firewalled from illigal immigrant status. 5) 911 operators are virtually helpless in responding to foreign language calls. I have been saying for years that we need to have an international implementation using Telanguage.com. 6) The author surprises me with his optimism, his expectation that we can achieve a profound change in attitude across our population, completely boycotting all products and services whose "true cost" include slave labor. I want to end this laudatory review by pointing readers toward the World Index of Social and Environmental Responsibility, the Interra Project, the World Cafe, and the Earth Intelligence Network. Below I list a few other books that support this one. The first book documented the commoditization of human labor as the beginning of commercialized evil. The rest are increasingly positive about all of us coming together to overcome power and information asymmetries. "Put enough eyes on it, no bug is invisible. That's us: intelligence officers to the poor and the disenfranchised, who in being lifted from slavery, will create infinite revolutionary wealth. We can do this. The Manufacture Of Evil: Ethics, Evolution, and the Industrial System
The Working Poor: Invisible in America
Nickel and Dimed On (Not) Getting By in America
The Case Against Wal-Mart
Off the Books: The Underground Economy of the Urban Poor
The Power of the Powerless: Citizens Against the State in Central-Eastern Europe
A Power Governments Cannot Suppress
The Tao of

Most Americans would be shocked to discover that slavery still exists in the United States. Yet most of us buy goods made by people who aren't paid for their labor; people who are trapped financially, and often physically. In *Nobodies*, award-winning journalist John Bowe exposes the outsourcing, corporate chicanery, immigration fraud, and sleights of hand that allow forced labor to continue in the United States while the rest of us notice nothing but the everyday low price at the checkout counter. Based on thorough and often dangerous research, exclusive interviews, and eyewitness accounts, *Nobodies* takes you inside three illegal workplaces where employees are virtually or literally enslaved. In the fields of Immokalee, Florida, underpaid (and often unpaid) illegal immigrants pick the produce all of us consume, connected by a chain of subcontractors and divisions to such companies as PepsiCo and Tropicana. At the top of the chain are stockholders and politicians; at the bottom is a father of six, one of whose children suffers from leukemia, who entered America only to become the unpaid employee of a labor contractor nicknamed "El Diablor" for his cruelty. In Tulsa, Oklahoma, the John Pickle Company reaped profits for years making pressure tanks used by oil refineries and power plants. Feeling squeezed by foreign competition and government regulations, JPC partnered with an Indian and Kuwaiti firm to import workers from India. Under the guise of a "training program," fifty-three workers, including college-educated Uday Ludbe, came to the United States, only to have their documents confiscated and to find themselves confined to a factory building. Pickle laid off Americans and paid the Indians three dollars an hour. Saipan, a U.S. commonwealth in the Western Pacific where the author lived for three years, has long been exempted from American immigration controls, tariffs, and federal income tax; a status quo assiduously protected by lobbyist Jack Abramoff and Congressman Tom DeLay. There, garment magnates—selling to clothing giants like the Gap and Target—live in luxury while thousands of foreign factory workers, 90 percent of them female, work sixty-hour weeks for \$3.05 an hour and spend weekends trying to trade sex for green cards. The garments they make are allowed to be labeled MADE IN AMERICA. *Nobodies* is a vivid and powerful work of investigative reporting, but it is also a lively examination of the eternal struggle for power between free people and unfree people. Against the American landscape of shopping mall, outlet stores, and Happy Meals, Bowe reveals how humankind's darker urges remain alive and well, lingering in the background of every transaction and how understanding them may lead to overcoming them. From the Hardcover edition.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . In this eye-opening look at the contemporary American scourge of labor abuse and outright slavery, journalist and author Bowe (*Gig: Americans Talk About their Jobs*) visits locations in Florida, Oklahoma and the U.S.-owned Pacific island of Saipan, where slavery cases have been brought to light as recently as 2006. There, he talks to affected workers, providing many moving and appalling first-hand accounts. In Immokalee, Florida, migrant Latino tomato and orange pickers are barely paid, kept in decrepit conditions and intimidated, violently, to keep quiet about it. A welding factory in Tulsa, Oklahoma imported workers from India who were forced to pay exorbitant "recruiting fees" and live in squalid barracks with tightly controlled access to the outside world. Considering the tiny island capital of Saipan, Bowe explores how its culture, isolation and American ties made it so favorable an environment for exploitative garment manufacturers and corrupt politicians; alongside the factories sprouted karaoke bars, strip joints and hotels where politicians were entertained by now-imprisoned lobbyist Jack Abramoff. The detailed chapter gives readers a lasting image of the island, touted a "miracle of economic development," as a vulnerable, truly suffering community, where poverty rates have climbed as high as 35 percent. Bowe's deeply researched, well-written treatise on the very real problem of modern American slavery deserves the attention of anyone living, working and consuming in America. Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist The very human impulse to get ahead in life even at the expense of others' suffering encourages and tolerates the slave labor that provides more products at lower prices, argues Bowe. Traveling from Florida to Saipan, Bowe chronicles the connection between American consumerism and modern global slave labor. Instead of chains, modern slavery uses coercion in the form of threats of deportation, beatings, harm to families back home, or even death. Bowe focuses on three cases: a labor contractor named El Diablo, who held Mexican illegals in involuntary servitude, working in Florida orange groves, while ruling with terror and murder; a Tulsa, Oklahoma, man, owner of a steel-cutting plant, who contracted with an Indian-born American to recruit Indian laborers, who were overworked, underpaid, housed in squalor, and threatened with deportation if they resisted; and the U.S. commonwealth of Saipan, which recruits foreign workers, who are abused and exploited while working in sweatshops for U.S. clothing manufacturers. Bowe concludes with a scathing look at the desire for creature comforts and the American notion of freedom. Bush, Vanessa About the Author John Bowe has contributed to *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *GQ*, *The American Prospect*, *National Public Radio*'s *This American Life*, *McSweeney's*, and others. He is the co-editor of *Gig: Americans Talk About Their Jobs*, one of *Harvard Business Review*'s best books of 2000, and co-screenwriter of the film *Basquiat*. In 2004, he received the J. Anthony Lukas Work-in-Progress Award, the Sydney Hillman Award for journalists, writers, and public figures who pursue

social justice and public policy for the common good, and the Richard J. Margolis Award, dedicated to journalism that combines social concern and humor. He lives in Manhattan.