Marc Lamont Hill, the author of “Nobody,” explores the life of minorities and the vulnerable while addressing three important values: community, individual worth, and discovery. He touches on sensitive topics, such as the unjust treatment of these people for political and economic gain by prominent groups of people, which include police departments, institutions, and government officials. Hill was not afraid to touch on the issues that minorities and the vulnerable are facing almost every day, from racism to the neglect of their basic rights.

I was five years old when I experienced domestic violence. I remember hearing screaming and crying throughout the house and it terrified me. I ended up having to live in the foster care system in Arizona. When I was seven, my grandmother took me out of the foster care system. At this point I lived in Buffalo, New York, where I had to start a new life and meet new people. Fortunately, I had a community: foster care, brothers, sisters, and a grandmother to lead me in the right direction. The government was part of my community and successfully took me away from the violence, but for victims presented in the book such as Eric Garner, Michael Brown and Walter Scott, the government brought violence. They were all unarmed black men who were heinously and brutally shot. One of the main contributing factors in their death was because they were black. When Michael Brown was left on the street after he had been killed, I
realized that he was denied his basic right of human decency. He was, as Hill put it, “Disposable.” They were all human beings who were thrown aside without consideration of their well-being.

Hill shows his discovery of the unjust treatment of people simply by writing this touching book, which in turn showed me in depth that everyone’s situation is complex and should not be simplified. He writes, “To understand the complexity of oppression, we must avoid simple solutions and singular answers.” He means we must get to the root of an issue, explore it, and not take the easy way out because that is not fully solving an issue.

In some instances, political figures, business leaders, and law enforcers may seek the easy way out because they do not want anything to get in the way of their economic gain. Since the law is a “mere social construction, an artifact of our social, economic, political, and cultural conditions,” everything else revolves around these conditions, which leaves out the real meaningful group — human beings.

Another situation in the book that showed people being neglected was when Flint residents were told it was OK to keep drinking from the Flint River even though there were reports of it containing contaminants. “When capital grows faster than the economy, private interest reigns over the general.” Children’s IQ’s were decreased, people got sick and were poisoned just because the government wanted to save money, didn’t care about the people, and didn’t take action. Hill brought a clear understanding of how the economy works, which tells me that people have to work twice as hard if they want to see a significant change in the way they are treated by the government.

There is hope, though. Hill shares with the readers that, “All around the country, people are engaging in profound acts of civil disobedience” and resistance movements. This is surely
community coming together to demand change with the way law enforcement handles situations. He also shares that people are contributing to the Black Lives Matter movement and using social media to bring attention to the issues that stir racial tension in our country.

I experienced an intellectual journey from reading this book. Community, discovery, and individual worth are values that political leaders, everyday people, and I can follow in order to change the way people are treated. When people assert that they are somebody, “They offer hope that another world is indeed possible, that empires eventually fall, and that freedom is closer than we think.” I believe Hill’s words to be true and change can happen.

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