

Shipler, David E., THE WORKING POOR, INVISIBLE IN AMERICA,

The author describes the lives of Americans across the country who are struggling to earn a living. He describes his conversations with individuals. He also was able to update the reader with stories about particular individuals with whom he kept in touch over a span of several years. The book reads like a novel. Many of the persons who he interviewed made personal decisions that impacted their ability to get out of poverty. Through his stories, the reader can learn how individual employers have assisted their employees so that they can attain a better economic position. Further he talks about individual community members and friends who have supported individuals who are struggling to survive. He also writes about the particular plight of immigrants who are living in poverty while working full time and how many immigrants move to different regions of the country in order to secure a better standard of living. Many of those working poor are single women and the author found from his interviews that a large percentage of these women had been sexually abused at some point in their lives. He also talks about unique issues faced by black men who have a criminal history. Some of the stories include people who face housing and health crisis. The author helps the reader see how easily those working poor find themselves in a crisis.

The author suggests that something could be done to improve the outcomes for many living in poverty. He believes more has to be done to improve the education for everyone. He points out that dropping out of school is a common thread for those living in poverty. He also advocates for better child care for those who are working and better job training to prepare individuals to compete for and attain better paying jobs. The author speaks about what our country can do to improve our society by saying, "To appraise a society; examine its ability to be self-correcting. When grievous wrongs are done or endemic suffering exposed, when injustice is discovered or opportunity denied, watch the institutions of government and business and charity. Their response is an index of a nation's health and of a people's strength."