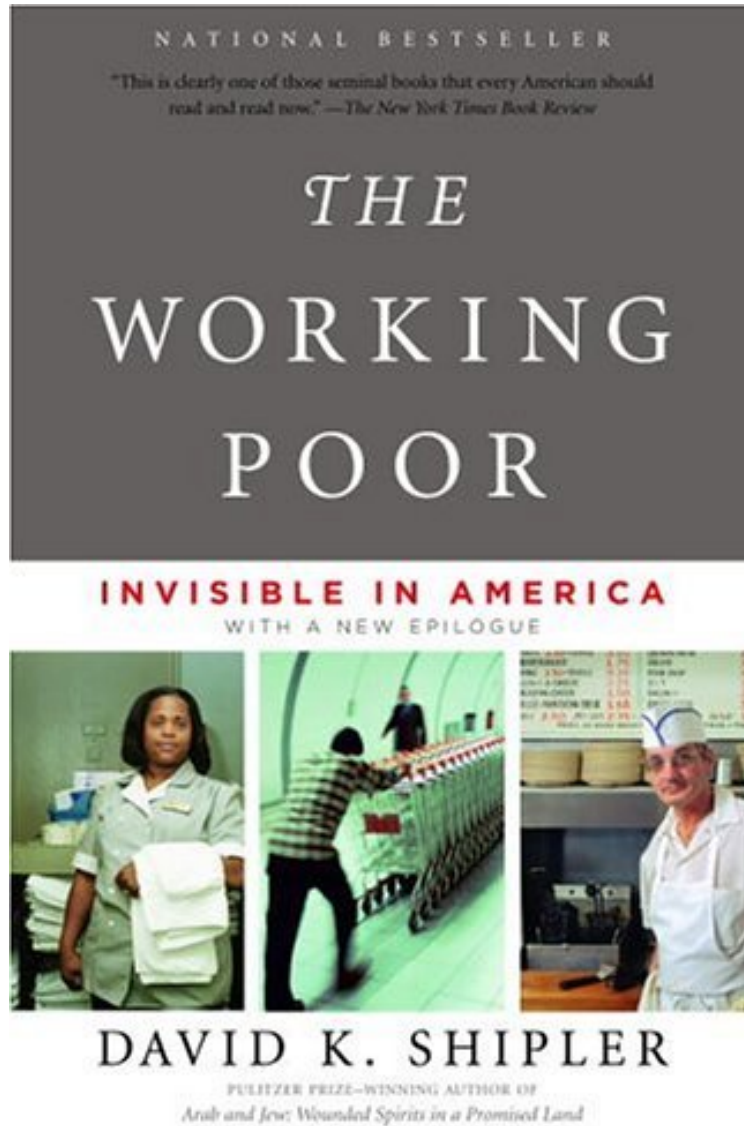


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The Working Poor: Invisible in America

David K. Shipler

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David K. Shipler : The Working Poor: Invisible in America before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Working Poor: Invisible in America:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. An eye-opening book By Sal Nudo "The Working Poor" by David Shipler is not an easy read. Densely written, it covers the lives of many poor people living in the U.S., struggling to subsist. The book's title is apt, because in many cases people in poverty truly do work. They work hard in their menial jobs where they often aren't promoted; they work hard to escape brutal pasts; in short, lots of them work hard to keep their lives together. Shipler conveys in a stark way how common social issues can lead to poverty and how various

problems within poor families affect each other negatively, like dominoes falling down. A woman who is sexually abused as a child may have a habit of picking bad men later in life or getting pregnant as a teenager, which leads to monetary problems in adulthood. Hardened men with rough, criminal pasts may have difficulty getting hired for jobs and experience low self-esteem. A lady who suffers through a lifetime of poverty forgoes dental work, leading to a mouth with no teeth, hindering her chances of getting promoted at work. Then there are the babies and kids who are severely malnourished because food is a more flexible expense -- these hardships just scratch the surface of Shipler's book. Shipler reveals that poverty is prevalent across ethnicities. Some of these people have made foolish decisions in life that have resulted in bad outcomes. Sometimes, however, social policies are out of whack or companies fleece the poor, leading to further degradation. Shipler shows how those who don't have money problems can be condescending, unforgiving and cruel, though he also writes about people who extend helping hands. Luckily, the author doesn't lionize the poor or overly criticize the powers that be. He simply tells one dismal story after another, presenting hidden lives in a matter-of-fact way that resonates. I found Chapter 9, "Dreams," to be interesting. It talks about bright-eyed poor kids in less than ideal schools. One of the teachers, labeled in the book as "Mrs. C," relates how the students under her tutelage were constantly late, not motivated and rowdy in class due to never getting attention at home. They received poor grades because of these issues, possibly depriving themselves of decent futures in already difficult circumstances. Parents who fail to help their children with homework or who don't convey the importance of education hinder the prospects of their offspring, according to Shipler. Oftentimes these parents had miserable experiences when attending school themselves. Teachers interviewed in the book discuss how they are rudely treated by certain parents and students alike -- one said she feared for her life. Conversely, many parents fail to communicate with teachers at all, skipping parent-teacher conferences no matter how poorly their son or daughter may be doing academically or behaviorally. In students' defense, many poor ones are malnourished and must deal with issues at home that would make learning at school very hard. Shipler found some teachers in low-income schools who were subpar, simply not good at relating information to students. Others covered material too fast, leaving many students in the class befuddled and blank. The last few chapters have stories of help, hope and success. The formula for achievement is given, though the author admits it's often elusive: a close family with two wage earners; self-confidence and the ability to find and hold a job; and strength when things go off course. Shipler says a major issue like poverty should be attacked all at once, not piecemeal. Figuring it out will take lots of sacrifice, political will and a willingness to redistribute money. He encourages poor people to vote, saying it would make a huge difference in who is elected and by what margins, but he knows many at this income level are disinterested in and disillusioned by politics. This book was written in 2004, so it would be interesting to know how much of the policy discussed within it has changed, and whether poverty in the U.S. has increased or decreased in succeeding years. It's obviously not a feel-good book, but it definitely makes you think about helping those in need. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Everyone should read this book!!! By Gina_DT This book was "recommended reading" for my Teaching In A Diverse Society course at Palomar College. The book arrived in perfect condition, so the price just added to my list of pro's, making it a STEAL! Even if you aren't in college I truly recommend this book to everyone. It taught me valuable life lessons about how often we take things for granted. It tells some inspiring stories that you'll never forget. Even if you open up the book in the middle, you'll still be able to follow along and immediately be hooked. Shipping was also quick and easy. I'll definitely be buying from this seller again! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. It is books like these that we need to see to bring the ... By Elizabeth W Phenomenal look into the lives of "forgotten Americans." This is captivating, eye-opening and makes one re-evaluate their own troubles. It is books like these that we need to see to bring the voices of the underserved to the forefront. Capitalism requires that we keep these people at the bottom, but this book looks directly into their eyes. Each voice is unique and each story is compelling and captivating. I read this book as part of a vocational counseling course, but would highly recommend it to anyone.

From the author of the Pulitzer Prizewinning *Arab and Jew*, an intimate portrait unfolds of working American families struggling against insurmountable odds to escape poverty. As David K. Shipler makes clear in this powerful, humane study, the invisible poor are engaged in the activity most respected in American ideology: hard, honest work. But their version of the American Dream is a nightmare: low-paying, dead-end jobs; the profound failure of government to improve upon decaying housing, health care, and education; the failure of families to break the patterns of child abuse and substance abuse. Shipler exposes the interlocking problems by taking us into the sorrowful, infuriating, courageous lives of the poor: white and black, Asian and Latino, citizens and immigrants. We encounter them every day, for they do jobs essential to the American economy. This impassioned book not only dissects the problems, but makes pointed, informed recommendations for change. It is a book that stands to make a difference.