

# I AM NOBODY

(a play with a lot of music)

by  
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The play takes place in America over the course of a week or so in a number of locations including:

A Cleanroom  
A Bar  
A Smartcar  
A Farmhouse  
A Field of Barley  
A Roadside  
The Mojave Desert  
A Cave

The cast of characters, in order of appearance, are:

NAOMI	20s, a waitress. Also a singer/ songwriter. Unhappy with the state of her spiritual well-being.
LUCAS	20s, a technician at a silicon computer chip plant. Also a visionary, wants to save the world.
NATHANIAL	20s, an ion injection specialist. Also lost, but he doesn't know it, yet.
MR. CHARLES	50s, Lucas and Nathaniel's boss, also a true believer in the status quo.
MIRIAM	50s, Naomi's mother. Also a farmer, close to the Earth - maybe too close.
BOY TODDLER	3-ish, a seemingly trusting child, played by whoever plays Mr. Charles
GIRL TODDLER	3-ish, a seemingly untrusting child, played by whoever plays Miriam

Song list, in show order:

	TITLE	SUNG BY:	Sc./Pg.
1	<i>This Modern World</i>	Naomi	1/1
2	<i>Corporate Theme</i>	Mr. Charles & Nathaniel	2/10
3	<i>You Can Run</i>	Naomi	2/14
4	<i>Kill The BenChip</i>	Lucas	3/18
5	<i>I Know It's Wrong</i>	Naomi	3/21
6	<i>Unrequited</i>	Nathaniel & Naomi	4/26
7	<i>Corporate Theme Reprise</i>	Mr. Charles	5/28
8	<i>Take Me Back</i>	Lucas	5/30
9	<i>Fudge of the Land</i>	Miriam & Nathaniel	7/42
10	<i>The Ballad of Jimmy Samuel</i>	Naomi	8/52
11	<i>Oh, Moon!</i>	Nathaniel & Toddlers	10/58
12	<i>Let's End The World</i>	Lucas & Nathaniel	11/62
13	<i>I Know It's Wrong Reprise</i>	Nathaniel	11/65
14	<i>Anthropocene</i>	Mr. Charles & Co.	12/67
15	<i>There Is A Balm</i>	Naomi & Co.	12/74

I AM NOBODYScene 1

(A young woman, NAOMI, peers at her phone, strumming a guitar, trying to figure out a song. Settling on something, she plays and sings.)

NAOMI

IN OLDEN DAYS WE USED TO  
ROAM ACROSS THE GREAT SAVANNAH  
EATING ALL THE NUTS AND BERRIES  
WE COULD FIND TO STAY ALIVE.

(She makes a note on her phone. She's using it, apparently, to write the song. She continues.)

NAOMI

THEN, LATER ON, WE TRAVELLED  
OUT FROM EASTERN AFRICA AND  
ONTO EV'RY CONTINENT WHERE  
WE, IN TIME, WOULD LEARN TO THRIVE.

(Somewhat satisfied, she fiddles with her phone some more, presses a button, and we hear a fully orchestrated, albeit electronic underscoring for the tune. She plays and sings along.)

NAOMI

THEN CAME ON AGRICULTURE,  
URBAN GROWTH WITH POPULATIONS  
BIG ENOUGH FOR SCIENTIFIC  
KNOWLEDGE TO ACCUMULATE.

THEN CAME ON ALL THE OTHER  
THINGS WE RECOGNIZE AS BEING  
PART OF THIS CONTEMPORARY  
LIFE WE HAVE TO NAVIGATE.

THIS MODERN WORLD IS  
TEARING ME APART, STILL  
I COULD NOT SURVIVE IN  
ANY OTHER TIME OR PLACE!

THIS MODERN WORLD HAS  
HELD ME LIKE A PRISONER.  
HOW DO I FREE MYSELF FROM  
THIS MODERN WORLD'S EMBRACE?

(The underscoring continues as Naomi exits. Elsewhere, LUCAS and NATHANIAL enter wearing "cleanroom" outfits consisting of white coveralls, hairnets, shoe coverings, gloves, and masks. They push a rolling cart piled high with special trays. Lucas looks at his phone as they push. We hear the voice of MR. CHARLES coming from...somewhere.)

MR. CHARLES(O.S.)

Son?

(The men stop, unable to locate the voice.)

MR. CHARLES(O.S.)

Son!

(Now they see the voice is coming from a window high above them that overlooks the room.)

MR. CHARLES(O.S.)

No cellphones in the cleanroom, son. You know that.

(Lucas, tormented, and with great difficulty, puts his phone away. The men exit as Naomi returns to sing more of her song to us.)

NAOMI

IN MODERN TIMES WE LIVE WITH  
SUPERNATURAL CONTRAPTIONS  
HEAVEN-SENT TO MAKE OUR LIVES AS  
EASY AS A LIFE CAN BE.

BUT WHAT IF ALL THIS LIVING  
WE EXPERIENCE WAS NEVER  
MEANT TO BE SO LUSH AND LAZY?  
NOT THAT WE ARE TROUBLE-FREE.

I'M TALKING RELATIVELY  
TO WHAT LIFE WAS LIKE FOR MOST OF  
HUMAN HISTORY UNTIL A-  
'BOUT A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

COULD ALL THIS EASY LIVING  
BE THE SOURCE OF ALL OUR TROUBLES?  
IS IT TIME TO END MODERNI-  
TY IS WHAT I'D LIKE TO KNOW.

NAOMI (Cont'd.)

THIS MODERN WORLD IS  
TEARING YOU APART. STILL,  
COULD YOU EVEN COPE IN  
ANY OTHER CIRCUMSTANCE?!

THIS MODERN WORLD MAY  
HOLD YOU LIKE A PRISONER.  
BUT IF YOU HAD THE CHANCE TO RUN,  
WOULD YOU TAKE ON THAT CHANCE!

(Naomi exits as the men re-enter. Lucas is still  
looking at his phone, but now with his mask off.)

MR. CHARLES (O.S.)

Son!

LUCAS

(Furious)

We make cellphones, Mr. Charles! Seems like, as long as  
we're making cellphones, we ought to be able to use them!

MR. CHARLES (O.S.)

We manufacture highly specialized, silicon micro-chips FOR  
cellphones! Using your phone in the cleanroom, not to  
mention removing your mask, is forbidden!

(Lucas tries, but fails, to pocket the phone.  
Anguished, he runs off. Nathaniel, still  
completely covered, runs after his co-worker.  
Naomi enters to continue the song.)

NAOMI

WE'VE ALL CAPITULATED  
TO MONSTEROUS MACHINES  
THAT HYPNOTIZE OUR MINDS  
WITH TINY SCREENS!

(As Naomi sings, Lucas and Nathaniel, now both  
hoodless, carry a table covered with empty beer  
bottles and two chairs. By the end of the song,  
they are customers at a table in a bar, after  
work, listening to Naomi.)

NAOMI

THIS MODERN WORLD WILL PASS A-  
'WAY AND SOMETHING ELSE WILL TAKE IT'S

NAOMI (Cont'd.)

PLACE AND EV'RY THING WE KNOW A-  
'BOUT TODAY WILL BE LONG GONE.

THERE WON'T BE SOCIAL MEDIA  
OR PHONES OR INTERNET OR-  
LET'S JUST SAY THIS MODERN WORLD WILL  
GIVE AWAY TO SOME NEW DAWN.

AND WILL THAT NEW TOMORROW  
LOOK AS STRANGE AS THIS TODAY MUST  
LOOK TO PEOPLE OF THE PAST?  
NOT THAT THEY'D EVER SEE TODAY.

I GUESS THE THING I'M SAYING  
IS IF IT IS POSSIBLE TO  
MAKE THE FUTURE BETTER THAN TO-  
DAY THEN WE SHOULD FIND A WAY.

(Though he can only guess at the lyrics,  
Nathanial sings along as best he can.)

NAOMI & NATHANIAL

THIS MODERN WORLD IS  
TEARING US APART, STILL  
WE COULD NOT SURVIVE IN  
ANY OTHER PLACE OR TIME!

THIS MODERN WORLD HAS  
HELD US LIKE A PRISONER.  
BUT WE ARE BOTH THE VICTIMS AND  
THE CULPRITS OF THIS CRIME.

(Naomi bows to her tiny audience. Nathanial,  
smitten, claps with great enthusiasm. Lucas  
remains silent.)

NATHANIAL

Well. That was - that was really something, you creating  
all those instrumentals on your phone, or whatever.

NAOMI

Thank you.

NATHANIAL

Thank YOU! For letting us join in!

NAOMI

You're welcome.

NATHANIAL

Or, for not stopping us from joining in. We don't get the chance to sing too much where we work. I mean, we sing a little, corporate anthems and stuff, but nothing good.

NAOMI

You guys are from the plant?

NATHANIAL

Yeah. I'm an ion injection specialist, highly trained, well paid. And Lucas - - Lucas does a lot of things.

NAOMI

Right.

LUCAS

What did you mean by - - "Culprits"?

NATHANIAL

Lucas-

LUCAS

In your song. You called us culprits.

NATHANIAL

Don't get all crazy.

LUCAS

I'm not getting crazy! You were singing, so maybe you didn't hear! But in her song, she called us culprits!

NATHANIAL

Sorry about my friend.

LUCAS

Don't do that.

NATHANIAL

He got reprimanded at work today.

LUCAS

Don't apologize for me! You want to sing?! Fine! But that doesn't give you the right to down-talk me, or make me look like some kind of weird-o who doesn't understand the meaning of a song! SHE CALLED US CULPRITS!

NATHANIAL

(Gently)  
Could we get another round, please?

(Naomi exits.)

LUCAS

She called us culprits. As in culpable. As in guilty.

NATHANIAL

Lucas, listen, you've been very emotional, lately. Very on edge. Picking fights, breaking protocol, staring at your phone - like, a LOT. Today was a bad day, but that's why we're here, to let loose a little, cool down, and maybe feel like normal human beings for an hour or two.

LUCAS

You think we're not normal?

NATHANIAL

No. I mean, yes, I think we're normal. I just think we work at a very abnormal, on-edge sort of place.

LUCAS

I don't think we're normal. I don't think anyone is normal I don't think these times are normal. And I'll tell you what else: I think she's right. We are guilty.

(Naomi returns and places the beers on the table.)

NATHANIAL

Thanks.

NAOMI

I'm sorry if my music upset your friend.

NATHANIAL

Hey, listen, you don't have to apologize for your music.

NAOMI

I hear voices.

NATHANIAL

Oh. You do?

NAOMI

They speak to me. I write down what they say and then set those words to music. It's a kind of gift, I suppose, one I was hoping to parlay into a lucrative career as a singer-songwriter. But it's also a curse. The voices get me into trouble. Not just with making music, but with all the things the voices tell me to do. Anyway - - I'm sorry.

NATHANIAL

And I'm sorry. About the trouble.

NAOMI

My boss lets me play when it's slow. But if she thought I was upsetting the customers, or hindering drink sales, she wouldn't let me play. So - I apologize. If I upset you.

NATHANIAL

Okay, first of all, that's amazing, that you hear voices. I don't hear voices. How about you, Lucas, do you hear voices?

LUCAS

Yes.

NATHANIAL

Right. And- You do?

LUCAS

They give me no peace.

NATHANIAL

Right. And second of all-

LUCAS

But my voices don't come from the inside, from my soul, or whatever. They come from my phone.

NATHANIAL

Maybe we should just go.

LUCAS

And not only from my phone, but from my computer and tablet and TV and radio and print-ads and billboards, but mostly from my phone. They give me no peace!

NAOMI

Mine neither.

LUCAS

But we need peace, don't we? Whether our voices come from within, from the soul, or from the tormented, technological Mind of Modernity, we can't live without peace. Can we?

NAOMI

No.

LUCAS

Maybe we could find peace if only we silenced the maddening hum of these gadgets. And maybe the hum only deafens us to deeper, darker voices that would torment us all the more if only we allowed ourselves to hear them!

NAOMI

That's been my experience.

LUCAS

But I say no - NO!! The machines MUST be muted! I say the hypnotized billions MUST be awakened from the false dream of Modernity! They must be awakened - - to themselves!

(Nathanial begins guiding Lucas toward the door.)

NATHANIAL

We're going to go.

LUCAS

And I'll tell you what-  
(Shaking Nathanial off)  
TAKE YOUR GODDAMN HANDS OFFA ME!

NATHANIAL

Okay. Just - - take it easy.

LUCAS

I'll tell you what else. We are culprits. Me. Him. We help manufacture silicon micro-chips for cellphones! The monstrous machines you mention?! We help make them! So we must be the ones to UN-make them! Nathanial, as my friend, my only friend, I am reaching out to you: Come with me.

NATHANIAL

Come with you?

LUCAS

Or let me come with you. You have a car, I don't. Let's take your car on a journey - to end Modernity.

NATHANIAL

Miss- I'm sorry, I don't even know your name.

NAOMI

Naomi.

NATHANIAL

Naomi. Thank you for serving us, and for sharing your music with us tonight.

NAOMI

You're welcome.

NATHANIAL

And please allow me to apologize for my friend.

LUCAS

(Dangerously)

I thought I told you to not apologize for me.

NATHANIAL

(Stepping cautiously toward Lucas)

We've had a little too much to drink, apparently, prompted by a little too much edginess at work. So what I'm thinking is it's probably time to just get you-

(With one sudden roundhouse, Lucas punches Nathaniel in the face. Nathaniel collapses, unconscious.)

LUCAS

I won't tell you again. I won't apologize - or allow anyone else to apologize - for the things I have done, or I am about to do. This world IS tearing us apart. So now it's time to tear this world apart.

(Blackout.)

SCENE 2

(The next day. Nathaniel stands center stage, battered and disoriented. Mr. Charles speaks to Nathaniel from his perch above the cleanroom floor. Underscoring for what will be a rousing, corporate anthem plays in the background.)

MR. CHARLES

Let us sing.

NATHANIAL

Yes, sir.

(The music swells, the men sing.)

MR. CHARLES & NATHANIAL

WE SERVE THE FUTURE CONSCIENTIOUSLY!  
WE VENTURE FORWARD UNPRETENTIOUSLY!  
WE STRIVE EACH DAY TO MAKE TOMORROW MORE  
THAN WHAT IT WAS THE DAY BEFORE!

OUR HEARTS ARE FREE OF ANY DOUBT OR GLOOM!  
OUR MINDS ARE CLEANER THAN THE CLEANEST ROOM!  
FOR THIS, WE OFFER NO APOLOGY!  
WE'RE FRANKLIN TECHNOLOGY -  
WE'RE FRANKLIN TECHNOLOGY!

DOWN WITH THE ANTI-FUTURISTS!  
DOWN WITH THEIR BACKWARD VIEWS!  
"WE MUST ADVANCE!" MANKIND INSISTS!  
AND ADVANCEMENT IS WHAT WE CHOOSE!

HAVE FAITH THAT SCIENTISTS WILL SHOW THE WAY!  
ACCEPT THAT INDUSTRY WILL WIN THE DAY!  
LET ALL EMBRACE THIS IDEAOLGY!  
WE'RE FRANKLIN TECHNOLOGY!  
WE'RE FRANKLIN TECHNOLOGY -  
GOOD TECHNOLOGY!

NATHANIAL

I should scrub down, sir.

MR. CHARLES

We're not going to worry about that right now.

NATHANIAL

But - - this is the cleanroom.

MR. CHARLES

Lucas didn't report to work this morning. My understanding is you were with him last night.

NATHANIAL

Yes, sir. We went to a bar.

MR. CHARLES

He's gone missing. Not just from work, but from his home and other assorted places he is known to frequent.

NATHANIAL

The last I saw him, he was hitting me in the face. I woke up on the barroom floor and I - I ran here directly.

MR. CHARLES

Ran?

NATHANIAL

I couldn't find my car. Or my wallet. So I ran.

MR. CHARLES

Our latest batch of computer chips has gone missing as well. The BenChip-9000.

NATHANIAL

Oh. Oh, dear.

MR. CHARLES

We have security camera footage showing a man in full clean suit entering the cleanroom late last night, then exiting with the batch. We also have footage of a car entering and exiting the company lot. *Your* car.

NATHANIAL

My car? Wait - - Lucas stole my car?!

MR. CHARLES

Did you know about Lucas's plans to steal chips?

NATHANIAL

No! I mean, he was saying some crazy stuff, but-

MR. CHARLES

What kind of stuff?

NATHANIAL

Something about wanting to end Modernity.

MR. CHARLES

You heard Lucas say he wanted to end Modernity, and you let him come here and make off with incredibly potent, albeit still experimental computer technology?

NATHANIAL

I didn't think he was serious! I can't believe Lucas stole my car!

MR. CHARLES

I want you to find him.

NATHANIAL

Sir?

MR. CHARLES

You and he are friends. I want you to "case" his home, his favorite cafés, all the places I don't know about. Find out what you can and call me the moment you learn anything.

NATHANIAL

Shouldn't we be contacting the police?

MR. CHARLES

No! No police.

NATHANIAL

Sir?

MR. CHARLES

As Plant Manager, I presided over the worst security breach in corporate history. But you, arguably, were his accomplice, and if not accomplice, an accessory after the fact.

NATHANIAL

I was not an accomplice OR an accessory!

MR. CHARLES.

We have footage of your car entering and exiting the company lot late last night! We have a man - presumably Lucas, possibly you - entering the plant and making off with the chips! You say you spent the night on a barroom floor?! You say Lucas "stole" your car?!

NATHANIAL

He DID steal my car, and he drove it here, and did all that other stuff!

MR. CHARLES

I'm willing to give you the benefit of the doubt - for now. But law enforcement?! No, I don't think EITHER of us want the police involved, not as long as we have at least the possibility of resolving this situation - - in house!

NATHANIAL

But - I don't know anything about finding missing persons!

(Mr. Charles throws a key fob down to Nathaniel.)

MR. CHARLES

There's the fob. Take it.

NATHANIAL

The fob?

MR. CHARLES

KEY-fob, for my car - the *Mercedes EQ Smart Twelve Hundred*. Small, experimental, and as powerful as the BenChip-9000.

NATHANIAL

You want me to take your smartcar?

MR. CHARLES

Twelve-hundred miles to the "gallon" when fully charged. Use it to find Lucas, then return it to me - *with* Lucas. Because if you don't? There's an excellent chance we'll both be going to jail - and I mean for a very long time.

NATHANIAL

You can't be serious.

(Elsewhere, Naomi appears playing a driving rhythm on her guitar that underscores the scene.)

MR. CHARLES

Oh, I've never been more serious in my entire life. You failed to take Lucas seriously last night. I urge you NOT to make the same mistake with me today. Good luck.

(Nathaniel and Mr. Charles exit. Naomi sings.)

NAOMI

YOU CAN RUN FROM CROCODILES WHO MAY CRAWL OUT FROM THE NILE.  
YOU CAN KEEP YOUR DISTANCE FROM A DOG WHO PROVES TO BE HOSTILE.  
IF YOUR STROKE IS STONG ENOUGH YOU NEEDN'T FEAR THE BARRACUDA  
OR THE SHARKS WHO TEND TO SWIM WITHIN THE WATERS OF BERMUDA  
IF YOU'RE AGILE, YOU CAN LEAVE A HERD OF HIPPOS FAR BEHIND.  
BUT THE THING YOU CAN'T OUT RUN ARE THE VOICES IN YOUR MIND.

(Naomi plays. Nathaniel enters and distributes photos of Lucas to the audience.)

NATHANIAL

Hi, I'm looking for a friend - a co-worker, really - his name is Lucas. I don't know his last name, believe it or not, but he looks like this. Stole a bunch of stuff. Hit me in the face. Possible savior complex.

(Naomi sings as Nathaniel distributes copies of the photo among the audience members.)

NAOMI

YOU CAN CALM YOUR INNER DEMONS BY CONSUMING DRINK OR DRUGS  
OR BY LIVING WITH A LOVER WHO WILL COMFORT YOU WITH HUGS.  
YOU CAN CAPTIVATE YOUR CONSCIENCENESS BY STUDYING AT SCHOOL,  
BUT YOUR VOICES WILL OUT-CAPTIVATE YOUR SCHOOLING, AS A RULE.  
YOU CAN TRY, BUT YOU WILL FAIL, SO BE PREPARED TO BE RESIGNED  
TO THE CLEAR AND CONSTANT CALL OF THE VOICES IN YOUR MIND.

(Nathaniel exits. As Naomi sings, Mr. Charles appears in his perch, on his phone.)

MR. CHARLES

You are to find him, Nathaniel! Find him - and them! Use the *Smart Twelve-hundred* to find the *BenChip-9000*! Failure! Is not! AN OPTION!

(Mr. Charles disappears. Naomi sings as Nathaniel re-enters with the table. By the end of the song, we're back in the bar.)

NAOMI

YOU CAN RUN LIKE ITS AN EXISTENTIAL MISSION,  
TO PROTECT YOUR MORTAL SOUL FROM WRECK AND RUIN!  
YOU CAN PLAY A DIFFERENT MUSIC COMPOSITION!  
BUT THE VOICES IN YOU MIND WILL SING THEIR TUNE!

LOOK AROUND AND YOU WILL SEE A WORLD OF ENERGY AND ACTION  
THAT PROVIDES FOR ALL HUMANITY DIVERSION AND DISTRACTION.  
WE MAKE MOVIES AND COMPUTER GAMES AND STUFF THAT  
ENTERTAINS,  
BUT THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL TURMOIL WITHIN US STILL REMAINS.  
WE CAN SOAK UP EV'RY VIDEO AND TV SHOW COMBINED,  
WE WILL STILL BE OVERWHELMED BY THE VOICES IN OUR MIND.  
I'M COMPLETELY OVERWHELMED BY THE VOICES IN MY MIND.

(And we segue into...)