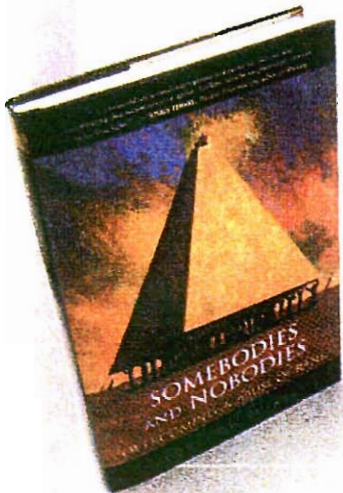


FAST COMPANY

Next ' Stuff of the Month

BOOK | I'M A SOMEBODY—GET ME OUT OF HERE!

Everybody wants to be somebody—even if it's only for 15 minutes. That's not just the American Dream: It has become an inalienable right (not to mention the prevailing logic of prime-time TV). The problem is, almost every rise is accompanied by a humiliating fall. The most illustrious Somebody is made to feel like a Nobody at some point. And here's the twist: In a world where everybody is striving to be Somebody, Nobodies might have the edge. That's the intriguing argument that Robert W. Fuller, former president of Oberlin College (and a self-described "former Somebody"), makes in his bold new book, ***Somebodies and Nobodies: Overcoming the Abuse of Rank*** (New Society Publishers).



Like a Betty Friedan for the 21st century, Fuller sets out to debunk the "Somebody mystique." The problem is that whether we idolize J. Lo or J. Welch, our hero worship doesn't get us any closer to success in our own lives. What's more, Fuller argues, it obscures the true definition of greatness: In order really to be Somebody (who's famous for more than being famous), you have to continue to grow, to venture into the unknown, to learn from others who are more expert than you. In other words, you have to be willing to be a Nobody again (and again). **Polly LaBarre**