This is a story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody.

There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done. (author unknown)

Edmund Burke penned the words, “When bad men combine, the good must associate; else they will fall one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle.” This has been traditionally paraphrased as, “It takes for evil to prevail is for good people to say nothing.”

Excerpts from 10 Ways to Fight Hate on Campus, Southern Poverty Law Center, Montgomery Alabama, 2004.

• Every year more than half a million college students are targets of bias-driven slurs or physical assaults.
• Every day at least one hate crime occurs on a college campus.
• Every minute someone in college sees or hears racist, sexist, homophobic or otherwise biased words or images.

Example: At the UNC Greensboro, two men beat a 19-year-old Lebanese student while yelling, “Go home terrorist!”

Example: At the University of Virginia, an African American-Korean woman running for student government president is beaten by a man who tells her, “No one wants a nigger to be president.”

Example: At WSU Pullman, someone scrawls swastikas on Black History Month displays. Less than one week later someone scrawls anti-Semitic graffiti on a residence hall wall.

Example: At WSU Pullman, in a USAF ROTC Cadet Diversity training, the facilitator asks, “Do you have a racial problem here on campus?” The cadets answer with a resounding, “No we don’t have a nigger to be president.”

Example: At WSU Pullman, someone scrawls anti-Semitic graffiti on a residence hall wall.

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The graffiti caused some distress and the facilitator rethink his scripted group ice-breaker exercise. Deviating from his script, he opened the session with nation's military future military leaders by rhetorically asking, “Isn’t it odd? Isn’t it odd you say there is no racial problem at your school, yet there is hateful graffiti on the wall of your restroom?” In short, the students didn’t see it as a “problem.” And why? Some answered, “Because there are not many here.” They merely interpreted the graffiti as a personal expression of a student’s feeling about Blacks. It was difficult to gauge, however, it appeared the 100 future military men, white, military men, had subscribed to the explanation or rationalization the graffiti did not reflect a racial problem; it did not necessarily raise any flags of consciousness. Putting the graffiti into another context, had it been something to the effect of “USAF Sucks—Navy Rules” a USAF ROTC cadet would have certainly countered with equally, if not more offensive graffiti, possibly creating a more egregious slur to trump the first. In other words, the USAF-Phobic graffiti would have triggered a response, a reaction from one who closely identifies with or has some sort of affinity for the USAF, casting that person into a crisis over a social dilemma needing immediate attention and response.

Returning to the hateful “go home” graffiti at WSU, its unknown how long it had been there, but why had it not been addressed? Cynically, I agree with the cadets. For them, it was not a problem, a social dilemma or moral crisis. For a majority of those who may have seen it, it was not personal, and simply put, they are not Black; hence, not offended. The message did not apply to them and subsequently nobody was moved to action.

Looking at the examples, are you one to recognize the social dilemma and address it as a moral crisis? Do you do everything something, anything or nothing? Take a moment to reflect on the parable at the top of the page, are you Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, or Nobody?

Whether or not hate speech, graffiti, or a bias motivated physical attack personally affects you; we never want to see “Nobody” do anything.

How is this story about you? Student, faculty or staff, victim, witness or perpetrator, hate adversely affects Everybody in this campus community. Nobody escapes unharmed. When there is a bias motivated incident we want to see Everybody show up. We want Somebody and Anybody to do something.

When one voices concern on behalf of a victim of a bias motivated incident, we have a choice to be Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, or Nobody. Who do you aspire to be?