



Video Recording and Its Affect on Homeless Communities

By Nicole Arcieri

Almost everyone is able to access the world at their fingertips as the use of smartphones has significantly risen in the past decade. Cell phone camera quality has also greatly improved, giving users the opportunity to snap photos and record videos wherever they go. This phenomenon, although it has its positives, can negatively impact the homeless community. Individuals that are homeless may not want videos or pictures of them to be on somebody's device or posted to the Web. While consent can be given, it seems unlikely that someone who thinks it is appropriate to record their encounter with a person who is homeless would ask for consent prior to creating such content.

If you are active on social media, you have probably seen people recording themselves surprising a person that is homeless with food, money, clothes, etc. While the act in itself may be generous, it is ultimately negated when a person who is homeless that is in a video like this did not give the person recording consent to do so, or to post this type of encounter online for that matter. While consent can be given prior to the start of a

recording such as this, it seems as though the surprise reaction videos that have surfaced on the Web were not prefaced with a conversation regarding consent.

While it is never okay to record or photograph anyone without their consent, especially a person who is homeless who already faces vulnerabilities and obstacles in their everyday lives, some good has undoubtedly come of this trend. Some creators on TikTok, a video and music sharing app, have been able to raise money for people that are homeless. The user @isiahgarzaintl was following the life of one individual in particular, Robin. This user had been recording videos of their interactions with Robin and discovered that she had been homeless for 10 years. Their videos went viral and soon enough, viewers ended up donating enough money to the GoFundMe that the user created that they were able to get her a fully furnished apartment.

Many of us have had the chance to connect with individuals across the globe. We are able to hear the stories of people who are thousands of miles away. The impact that technology has had on society is immense. For Robin, it turned out to be life-changing. However, when engaging with individuals that are homeless, we must always remember to treat them with respect and dignity, and that means making sure that we get consent before posting something in regard to their lives. It may even be beneficial to put the cameras away and simply have a conversation with someone who is homeless. After all, members of the homeless community are human, too. Engaging in conversations and listening to people that are homeless is one of the best ways in which we can truly connect with the homeless community and appropriately address their needs.