

Tent city film shockingly 'normal'

Dennis Coday | Aug. 10, 2009 NCR Today

There's a video on *The New York Times* web site called "[Scraping By: Portraits of Life during the Great Recession](#) [1]," by filmmaker Stewart Thorndike.

The four minute video introduces viewers to residents of a tent city (for the homeless and unemployed) on the grounds of St Jude's Catholic Church in Redmond, Wash. What I found startling was that the video has such a "normal" tone to it. Watch it and see if I am calling this right.

You can read more background about the film project at the Seattle news web site Crosscut.com in a story titled "[Inside a Tent City near Microsoft](#) [2]." The story too takes a "normal" tone:

Thorndike shot the film in early August on a sunny day, so the encampment looks attractive in its bright, leafy surroundings. Nobody's shivering in wet sneakers and bedraggled parka. The blue tents are airy and translucent, the washroom looks pristine, and a space adventure DVD fills a small screen above bookshelves in a tent large enough for community gatherings. Rain will turn the grassy paths between the tents to mud, as happened in the field south of Seattle that Nickelsville occupied after its move from a U-District church parking lot. But for now a TC4 resident can sit outside his home, wrinkling his brow at the sun as he ponders his jobless state.

King County has three organized tent cities: TC3, TC4, and Nickelsville. (TCs 1 and 2 opened late in the 1990s without legal status and were eventually shut down.) These encampments are resident-run. Before moving in, each person undergoes background checks, agrees to obey strict community rules, and commits to sharing in responsibilities that include security, general management, and cleanup.

Source URL (retrieved on 06/29/2017 - 02:29): <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/tent-city-film-shockingly-normal>

Links:

[1] <http://video.nytimes.com/video/playlist/opinion/op-ed/1194833176718/index.html#1247463860996>

[2] <http://crosscut.com/2009/08/10/social-services/19159/>