

Joni and Derek Metcalf on the Coronavirus, Racism, and Homelessness in the United States

Audio Transcript

James Deutsch: How do you think the coronavirus is impacting people who are out on the street?

Joni: They can't get food. There's nowhere for them to go to the bathroom. If the restaurants are open, like McDonald's, you can't even get in to use the restroom.

Derek: Everything's locked up.

Joni: A homeless person is a human being just like everybody else is. Say, "Good morning, how are you? Are you okay?" People don't know what people's circumstances are. I am disabled. I can't work. So I come out and do what I have to do, to try to survive, to get what I need in my home. But there shouldn't be— In the United States, there shouldn't be nobody out here on the street, at all.

Derek: Some people are displaced because their family doesn't want them anymore. They don't want them around. "They're not worth anything." *Everybody's worth something!* Everybody's worth something. And that was another part that— My family couldn't accept the fact that I was married to Joni. Didn't want me around, didn't want her around. That's the racism part of it right there. Hatred. Racism. I'm sick of it. I'm not big enough to take care of all of it. I can address it just by speaking as I am right now. But we got a problem worldwide.

Derek: So to be homeless, and to see the things that some people who have never experienced homelessness, or just see it and just pass it by as though it's nothing and everything, but to see it—by living it and experiencing it—is another devastating virus as far as I'm concerned.