



## THE INHOSPITALITY OF SODOM

by **Eddie Young**  
Publisher

For most of us, hospitality brings to mind the welcoming in or entertainment of family and friends. Or we think of the hospitality industry – hospitals, hotels, restaurants, etc. But what did it look like in the early days of our shared humanity? If we examine some of our oldest records, specifically the ancient Hebrew narratives referred to as the Old Testament, we see that it was far more than having friends over or care and provisions offered from a facility with dollar signs attached.

According to those who spoke on behalf of the god whom these writings credit with creating the heavens and earth and everything within, showing hospitality was intentional, engaging, and not an option. This god, according to these writings, I will argue, destroyed an entire town for their inhospitality.

***intentional, engaging,  
and not an option***

During the 2nd millennium B.C.E., several peoples had come to settle in the Fertile Crescent from virtually all directions. Canaan was indeed “the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites.” Exodus 3.17

Throughout the documents of the 2nd millennium are numerous references to the ‘apiru’ or the ‘habiru’ – an inconspicuous people scattered through Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Syria, Canaan, and Egypt. The term referred to a social stratum of people who lacked citizenship in the established nations of the Near East. The ‘habiru’ were wanderers or outsiders living on the fringes of society. This term is most likely the same as the term ‘biri’ in the ‘biri’ or Hebrew text (the Old Testament). Not that all ‘ibri’ are descendants of Abraham, later to be known as Israelites, but that Abraham and his descendants were identified with this larger body of ‘gypsies.’ Genesis 14.13.

Abraham and his family of nomads were regarded as sojourners in the midst of the established peoples of Canaan. These sojourners, or ‘gerim’, were defenseless and often their very lives depended upon the hospitality of the established host. And when these nomads became established, they were instructed to love and care for those who had no place to call home.

Leviticus 19.33-34

<sup>33</sup> When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. <sup>34</sup> The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord, your God.

Remember, these were not societies with an embedded mindset that introduces razor wire at the borders, and separating children from their families. Rather, there was an element of shared trust initiated over the table fellowship between a host and their guest because there was always the potential for the roles to be reversed.

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Gerard Hoet 1728

## KATU and THE STRUGGLE TO EXIST

by **Jason Galvas**

It began, as movements often do, with a piece of information. A flier started circulating around the tenants of Tanglewood this summer. A new management company has purchased the building, they were called Rand, and the price of rent was most definitely going up. As the flier circulated it jumped from physical to digital, subreddits were created, Facebook groups started, and within a few weeks The Laundry Room meeting, 30 tenants packed into a slightly flooded, and August heated, tiny laundry room, took place to discuss what to do. From this meeting, the Knoxville Area Tenants Union would be organized.

The mission of Knoxville Area Tenants Union or KATU as they are better known. Is to unify the voices of Rand residents and Knoxville tenants to advocate, voice policy, and ensure betterment of our community. They believe that housing is a human right, not a commodity, and that basic needs are morally neutral. Their stated goals are to establish fair negotiations with Rand. Advocate to organize within high-density residential complexes for tenants’ rights and affordable housing. And lastly, to give voice to the need for a local housing emergency budget.

***“They doubled the rent and...  
... they have started evicting people.”***

I was lucky enough to sit down with Lilith Sweeney, who is on the steering committee for KATU, to find out how this burgeoning group is progressing. As I inquired about their first steps I was unfortunately met with a tale not unfamiliar to anyone in the community that is paying attention to the housing issue.

“We cannot get them (Rand) to even come to the table.” Lilith said. “They doubled the rent and will not negotiate on the price. Instead, they have started evicting people.”

What KATU instantly ran up against was a faceless and uncaring corporation. Not getting anything from the management company, the group turned to the city of Knoxville itself for help. The city’s response?



“They told us to call 211.” Says Lilith.

“So we did. We talked to anyone and everyone who picked up the phone. We recorded our conversations, because everyone we spoke with did not have any resources to help, and we wanted to document that.”

Having exhausted the suggestions by the city, KATU turned to more activist activities. They have held two vigils to bring attention to the plight of the residents of the properties. They have held a rally to force the management company to speak with them. Lastly, they have begun attending and speaking at City Council meetings.

This activism has not been in vain. Just recently the city has formed the Office of Housing Stability. This is a good first step but Lilith says it does not go nearly far enough.

“The Office of Housing Stability offers expanded access to counsel and eviction court through Legal Aid of East Tennessee which covers 80% at the poverty threshold.” But Lilith encourages everyone to apply regardless of their income.

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# EDITORIAL

SXC



by Eddie Young  
Publisher

## We Can't Walk In Thier Shoes



*Change*

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The Street-XChange operates as a 501c3 non-profit corporation

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Irrespective of one's feelings about Christmas, its message this time of year is almost inescapable – even the air we breathe contains the sounds of its carols and it sets me thinking of the seemingly subtle yet significant difference between this concept of a God walking among humanity and entering into humanity. It is a message that fills our senses: we see it, smell it, taste it, and we may not believe it, but we hear it. Whether or not you believe the principle behind the message is divine, it is a principle that, at the least, wisdom tells us to apply to everything – you treat the cause, not just the symptoms.

Occasionally I read of someone who temporarily steps out of his or her life of relative comfort to purposefully experience homelessness. Usually, this is done with the noble intent of both gaining a personal appreciation for what those experiencing homelessness have to endure on a daily basis and raising public awareness of the issue itself. I recall reading about a pastor and his youth director in Norman, Oklahoma tacking a ten-day trip into homelessness for these two reasons. It takes courage to pull this off, and there are not many of us who would willingly invite the discomfort and danger of living on the streets into our lives, and their account speaks to this. They describe the difficulties of finding a place to sleep for the night, the unsettling glares from those in the community that they have entered as strangers, and although three meals a day were easy to come by, there was no mention of one of the often-overlooked aspects of homelessness – there's no such thing as asking, "What do you want for dinner tonight?" or a New Year's resolution to begin a nutritionally healthier diet – you get what you get.

But the simulation ends there. We can experience the bad food, the uncomfortable sleeping arrangements, the uncertainty and fear of returning to jail, the lack of money, the frigid cold and unbearable heat, the lack of adequate clothing, and the constant fatigue- but the one thing we cannot simulate, nor experience is the hopelessness of life without a home.

This is the aspect of homelessness that we cannot share through a temporary excursion nor soothe through our charities. We can't reverse someone out of homelessness with food and clothing any more than we can cure an illness with painkillers or rekindle a pilot light by heating up the radiators.

As noble and useful as these excursions among the homeless can be, they can also perpetuate the unfortunate conclusion that homelessness is the sum of the experience rather than the result of causes that although we may not be able to share, we can and must address. For example, too many families in East Tennessee have to choose between paying rent or buying food. The fear of living at the threshold (literally), of losing your home cannot be simulated. Not everyone has safety nets - friend, family or a savings account to come to the rescue. And then the hand-wringing anxiety of knowing that this could be it.

Recovery from homelessness as a result of inadequate income and/or affordable housing can be extremely difficult. The circumstances that led to one's inadequate income are not likely to be enhanced by your new address being the local mission- and are compounded daily by the deterioration of one's will and determination through the entanglement in hopelessness and despair. This cannot be simulated, but it is reality and represents one of the root causes of homelessness that must be addressed.

We assign our deepest feelings and our most profound thoughts to song.

I hear the choral voices reach the crescendo, O night divine, and am moved to reflect on the deep, deep significance that these words hold for those of the Christian faith – the night in which God entered the hopelessness of humanity through the birth of Jesus. Addressing the human predicament at the root cause, and redeeming the hope for peace on earth and goodwill towards men.

*you get  
what  
you get*

### OUR PURPOSE

is to:

- \* Raise the community's awareness to the Issue of homelessness - local, regional, national and global.
- \* To illuminate the person within the stranger on the street.
- \* To help shape opinion on homelessness issues through education and with a sensitivity towards the lives behind the issue.
- \* To provide the means by which the voice of the homeless community can be heard.
- \* To help open doors to opportunities for economic and social advancement.
- \* To present ways in which the community at large can engage and participate in the efforts to eliminate the snares of homelessness.
- \* To inform the reader on how the world around us affects those without homes.

is not to:

- \* Exploit the homeless for gain.
- \* To provide a platform for political endorsement of a specific person and/or party. We will provide a platform for political endorsement of ideas, postures, positions, and strategies.
- \* To provide a platform for pointless debate and/or attention-seeking belligerence.
- \* To be used as a vehicle for hate.

### ADVERTISING RATES

#### COLOR AD RATES, *Front and Back Cover*

| VARIETY                 | 1 ISSUE  | 3 ISSUES | 6 ISSUES | 12 ISSUES |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Front Cover Banner      | \$100.00 | \$200.00 | \$350.00 | \$600.00  |
| Front Cover 4x6         | \$50.00  | \$100.00 | \$200.00 | \$350.00  |
| Back Cover Half Page    | \$150.00 | \$300.00 | \$500.00 | \$900.00  |
| Back Cover Quarter Page | \$75.00  | \$150.00 | \$250.00 | \$450.00  |
| Back Cover 4x6 inch     | \$25.00  | \$50.00  | \$100.00 | \$225.00  |

#### B&W AD RATES, *Inside Pages*

| VARIETY         | 1 ISSUE  | 3 ISSUES | 6 ISSUES | 12 ISSUES |
|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Half Page       | \$100.00 | \$200.00 | \$350.00 | \$500.00  |
| Quarter Page    | \$50.00  | \$100.00 | \$175.00 | \$250.00  |
| Inside Banner   | \$25.00  | \$50.00  | \$100.00 | \$200.00  |
| Inside 4x6 inch | \$25.00  | \$50.00  | \$100.00 | \$225.00  |

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### How It Works



1/4 to printing

Your vendor receives 20 'start up' papers when the issue is released. They then contribute back to the Street-XChange 25¢ per subsequent paper to fund our printing cost.

3/4 to your vendor

Our suggested donation is \$1 per paper. Whatever you choose to give, (however generous you are led to be) goes directly into your vendor's pocket. *The Street-XChange does not make a profit off of your donations.*

## THE INHOSPITALITY OF SODOM *continued*

SXC

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We even see a strand of this running through the 23rd Psalm. It is indeed, perhaps among other things, a hymn of hospitality, (for You are with me) with metaphors of dependence upon Yahweh for the three essentials – food, drink and protection. He sets a table, and the Psalmist is assured shelter in the House of Yahweh for days without end.

Over time, Israel adopted a ‘don’t call me, I’ll call you’ approach to Yahweh. They never hesitated to call out to Him in their time of need, but refused to welcome His inconvenient call through strangers in times of comfort. The time would come however, when Yahweh will come again, and this time through another homeless stranger. **He will be very inconvenient.** This stranger, Jesus of Nazareth, would organize the poor and oppressed and send them out with a message of good news, and a warning: *“If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet. I assure you that on the Judgment Day, God will show more mercy to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah than to the people of that town!”* Matthew 10.14-15. Jesus’ warning, however, loses its relevance to Sodom if we are to adopt the popular and anti-gay soothing theory that Sodom’s great sin was homosexuality.

In order to assert that the sin of Sodom was homosexuality, one has to clear some significant hurdles. It is striking, for example, that although Sodom is mentioned in about two dozen different places in the Bible (other than Genesis 19 where the story is first told), in none of these places is homosexuality associated with the Sodomites. When Ezekiel says, “Look! This was the guilt of your sister Sodom...” unless he was uninformed or lying, what follows must be accepted as his god’s diagnosis.

### **And as a result, they committed homosexual acts**

Ezekiel 16:49-50 New American Standard: <sup>49</sup>“Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy. <sup>50</sup>Thus they were haughty and committed abominations before Me. Therefore I removed them when I saw it.”

There is no mention of any type of sexual sins. As far as the ‘abominations’, the translation begins the statement with ‘Thus they’, or in other words, ‘As a result, they...’ which indicates the abominations are related to the sins just listed. One wouldn’t say, “The sins of that city were high taxes, no public transportation, terrible roads, and a losing football team, and as a result, they committed homosexual acts.” At the very least, these abominations are coupled with their ‘haughtiness’ or ‘arrogance.’

The story itself has significant hurdles to clear, in addition to a problematic preface. How is it that the god who’s eyes are in every place, observing both the evil and the good (Proverbs 15:3), and looks to the ends of the earth, and sees everything under the heavens (Job 28:24), needs to send a couple of angels dressed in flesh to investigate a situation that had to be brought to his attention?

The story seems to hinge on the interaction between all the men in town and Lot standing at the door. And the claim that the great sin of Sodom was homosexual acts, zeros in on this crowd of men calling out to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them.” It is incorrect to assume that the word, יָדָע – ‘to know’ is referring to a physical engagement. Out of 943 occurrences in the Old Testament, the word indicates such a sense only 10 times. In the current context, it is far more logical to understand that these men wanted to know *who these strangers were.* How likely would it have been for every single male, both young and old in this town, to have been gay and so desperate as to immediately come running for Lot’s guests all at once. And even if the term is to be understood in a sexual sense, surely the abomination would not be having sex with the same gender as much as the assault of a brutal gang-rape.

And why, if this were the case, would Lot think that offering his daughters to a town full of gay men, appease them? And surely forcing your daughters out into the square to be gang-raped by a town full of men, gay or not, would win the abomination contest.

And at the end of the day, if we are to circumvent logic, Ezekiel makes it clear that homosexual (likely life-ending), gang-rape is so less a sin than being arrogant and unconcerned about the poor and needy, that it’s not even worth putting on the list.

This argument isn’t intended to resolve the question of how/if the Bible addresses homosexuality, but rather to take the story of Sodom off that witness stand, and redirect it towards the likelihood that this god destroyed an entire town for their inhospitality and lack of concern for the poor and needy. And this would make complete sense when one reads the warnings from Jesus of Nazareth. His ‘squad’, coming into these homes and towns, would be the poor, needy and ‘sinners’ that were routinely dismissed by those living in comfort.

Neither is this argument intended to instruct. Regardless of one’s opinions on biblical texts - actual god-inspired writings, or just people grasping hold of an imaginative hope and purpose, no one should be rendered under their authority unless by choice.

The hope is that it will dilute the argument of those who insist on using this narrative to prove and push their religious convictions into codified law for everyone. But it is also intended to bring forward the history of how our shared humanity from 4 millennia away, have embraced and emphasized the moral rightness of caring through hospitality for the alien, the poor and needy. Those with nowhere to go.



## KNOXVILLE AREA TENANTS UNION *continued*

So why is rent rising, in fact doubling, here in Knoxville so fast? Lilith informed me that it is a complex issue that has quite a few interconnected factors. One is the University of Tennessee.

“They (the university) keep accepting more and more students and have no plan on where they are supposed to live.” Lilith says. “And that drives up the rental prices in the immediate campus area.”

Lilith tells me that another factor is that the housing availability in Knoxville sits at a steady 3%, in other cities of our size that number is closer to 10%. “With that low of an availability rate there really is no competition and companies can choose what to charge.” Which brings Lilith to the last piece of the rent puzzle. “Some of it is just price gouging and greed.”

Moving forward into the new year I ask Lilith about what KATU is hoping to accomplish. The answer is quick and to the point.

“We want all evictions to stop. Our maintenance requests to be handled in a timely manner, at least up to the state minimum standards. No more than a 10% increase in yearly rent. And a 60 day notice with an option to quit if the rent does increase.”

Lilith continues “If nothing is done, we are going to lose up to 2/3 of our current tenants and they are going to be quickly replaced by new tenants of a different demographic that may not be as receptive to being part of this organization.”



Finally Lilith emphasizes that “We will continue to put pressure on Rand to meet with us and listen to our demands. And we will be working to expand KATU citywide, because housing is a human right.”

As we look to ourselves, we need to ask what we want Knoxville, our little ‘Scruffy City’, to actually be. What is the price of admission to exist here? Is this a place that welcomes everyone regardless of their circumstances and actively works to lift them up? Or are we a city where if you have the means, then by all means you are welcome here?

The Knoxville Area Tenants Union believes it is the first one. In fact, they believe it is the only sustainable way forward and will work tirelessly to make that a reality.

# VOICES

SXC

## A TALE OF TWO TOMMYS

*The person being interviewed requested the use of a fictitious name for fear of further retribution*

Tommy wishes people were willing to look past his history, his record and his mistakes to see the honest man he wants to be today.

“I am who I used to be, I’m not who I was. There’s two different categories there. If people ever saw Tommy what he used to be, they would really know how to hate somebody. But if you don’t know me, don’t judge me. Get to know me before you judge me,” he says.

What is there to know? He was born in Michigan, the oldest of 5 children, and moved around with his parents who now live in Roane County. When Tommy was 18, he caught a charge of running drugs and weapons when he was found with 20 kilograms of cocaine, 10 kilograms of heroin and three cases of weapons.

“Possession of cocaine and heroin for resell, and possession of guns for resell. In other words, I was a runner for bigger people,” he says.

With bail set at \$2.7 million, he spent a year in jail before he was sent to prison where he stayed for 26 years.

“Whenever I got out, I thought that it was more or less gonna be easy,” he said. “I was out five months maybe and I learnt that when you look at somebody they can automatically tell where you’ve been by how you dress and by how you talk.”

“Whenever I got out, I thought that it was more or less gonna be easy,” he said.

When his relationship with his common-law wife dissolved seven years later, he began drifting. Ultimately, he came to Knoxville after hearing about the homeless missions here. He soon moved into an apartment and pays for it on his own. Because of his criminal record, he is not eligible for section 8 housing and many other types of assistance. Tommy does receive SSI, but the entire amount of his check goes toward paying rent on his one bedroom apartment.

“I can’t get section 8 because I’m an ex-felon. I can’t get assisted living because I’m an ex-felon. And I have seen people who lie about it to get in. But no, that’s not me. I’m not gonna lie to you,” he says.

What does life look like for a man who’s spent more time behind bars than free, for a man who admits to killing two men in an act of self defense? Despite the challenges he faces because of his convictions, he still wants to make an honest living instead of resorting to panhandling, selling drugs, or prostitution. His pride and dignity are some of the only things that can’t be taken from him.

“Like this person was telling me the other day ‘If you can’t make money, can’t do it right, why don’t you go do it illegally?’ No, you go ahead, I’ll catch up with you later. ‘Why don’t you go to prostitution?’ No, go ahead. See you later. I’ll starve to death first,” he said. Starving may not be too far off for Tommy. His doctor says he is malnourished.

The fact that people write him off as stupid, ignorant, or unworthy is troubling to Tommy. He feels that society still acts like he owes something despite the fact that he served his time and continues to reflect on his past. He is frustrated by the label society has assigned him, a label and a stigma that he says keeps him from making an honest living.

“Let me live my life, let me prove to you that I know how to make a living. I’ll tell the world out there that I wasn’t raised to come in here and ask people for other peoples’ food. Let me make my own living. I’m not wishing to break the law for a fast buck. I’m not out here selling drugs. I’m not out here pushing drugs to little kids to make a fast buck. I want to make an honest buck.”

Like so many others, Tommy doesn’t want to be defined by the mistakes he’s made in the past. He says that if he were to be able to do it all over, he’d make better decisions, but he can’t, so he’s working hard to turn the page and start a new chapter. His success will be significantly determined by those who have the power to open doors for him. But that will be determined by their considering him worthy.



“I AM CONVINCED THAT IMPRISONMENT IS A WAY OF PRETENDING TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF CRIME. IT DOES NOTHING FOR THE VICTIMS OF CRIME, BUT PERPETUATES THE IDEA OF RETRIBUTION, THUS MAINTAINING THE ENDLESS CYCLE OF VIOLENCE IN OUR CULTURE. IT IS A CRUEL AND USELESS SUBSTITUTE FOR THE ELIMINATION OF THOSE CONDITIONS—POVERTY, UNEMPLOYMENT, HOMELESSNESS, DESPERATION, RACISM, GREED—WHICH ARE AT THE ROOT OF MOST PUNISHED CRIME. THE CRIMES OF THE RICH AND POWERFUL GO MOSTLY UNPUNISHED.

IT MUST SURELY BE A TRIBUTE TO THE RESILIENCE OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT THAT EVEN A SMALL NUMBER OF THOSE MEN AND WOMEN IN THE HELL OF THE PRISON SYSTEM SURVIVE IT AND HOLD ON TO THEIR HUMANITY.”

- Howard Zinn, You Can’t Be Neutral on a Moving Train: A Personal History of Our Times

# LOCAL

SXC

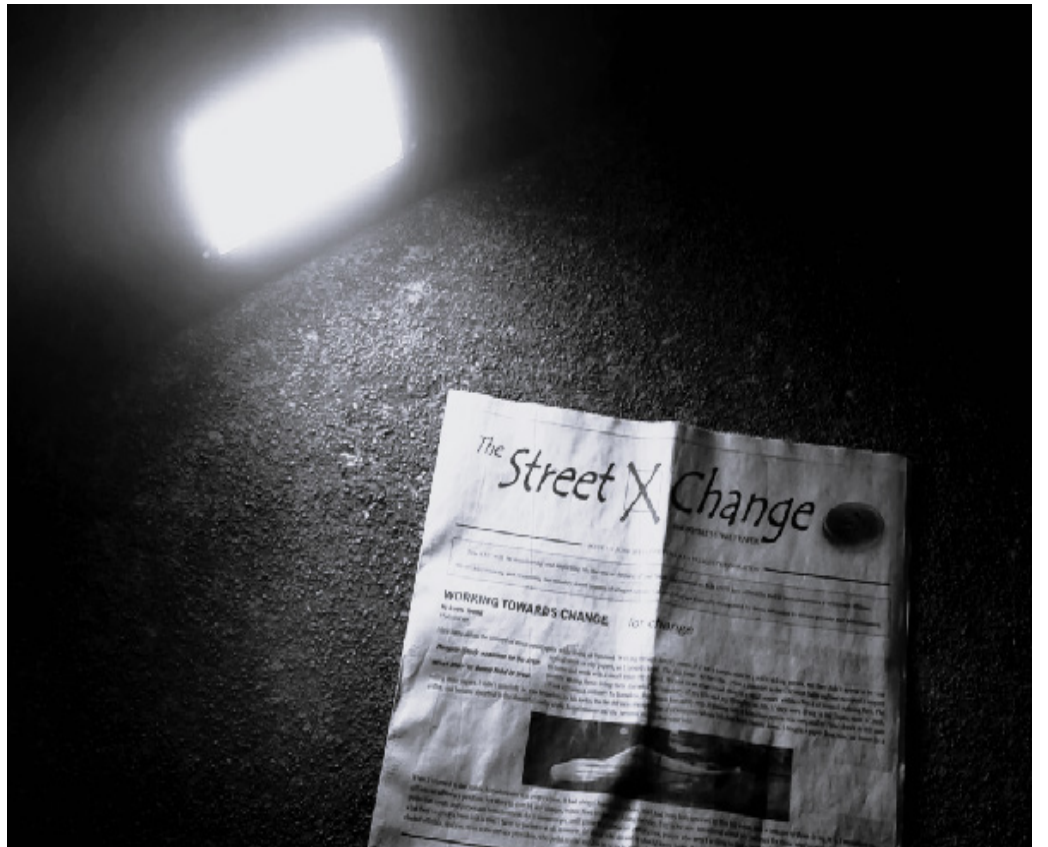


## CHANNEL 10 NEWS SPOTLIGHTS THE STREET-XCHANGE AND OUR MISSION

Chris Salvemini and Jillian Taylor of WBIR gave our Street Paper and our mission an incredible spotlight last month, and we can't thank them enough. It's particularly encouraging when those bringing well-needed exposure to our work 'get it.'

As a result of their coverage, we have had a spiked increase in people across the city wanting to know how they can help and/or get involved with the production of the paper. Our method of distribution can limit our live exposure to the City Center and the Cumberland Ave district. Not only raising awareness that we exist, but the station presented a platform for the live discussion of our purpose and mission.

You can find Chris and Jillian's coverage of our work on the WBIR website. Just search 'Street-XChange.'



## THE KNOXVILLE COMMUNITY DASHBOARD ON HOMELESSNESS

### Why Housing Data?

According to *Homelessness is a Housing Problem*, which we can't recommend highly enough, the reason some cities have more homelessness than others *isn't about individual vulnerabilities*. Cities with higher levels of homelessness don't generally have higher rates of drug use or mental illness, and most communities with higher poverty rates actually have lower levels of homelessness. Instead, when comparing one city to another, *the root causes of homelessness almost always come down to housing*. In particular, as a rule, U.S. cities are more likely to have high rates of homelessness when their inhabitants face two things: *higher rent and fewer available rentals*.

We look at those factors here. *Median rent* compares monthly rental costs between Knoxville, Tennessee, and the United States. Likewise, occupancy rates highlight how "tight" the Knoxville market is compared with state and national trends: the higher the rate, the fewer rental units are available to those in search of housing. It's a salient fact: *Knoxville saw the greatest rent growth in the country in 2022*.

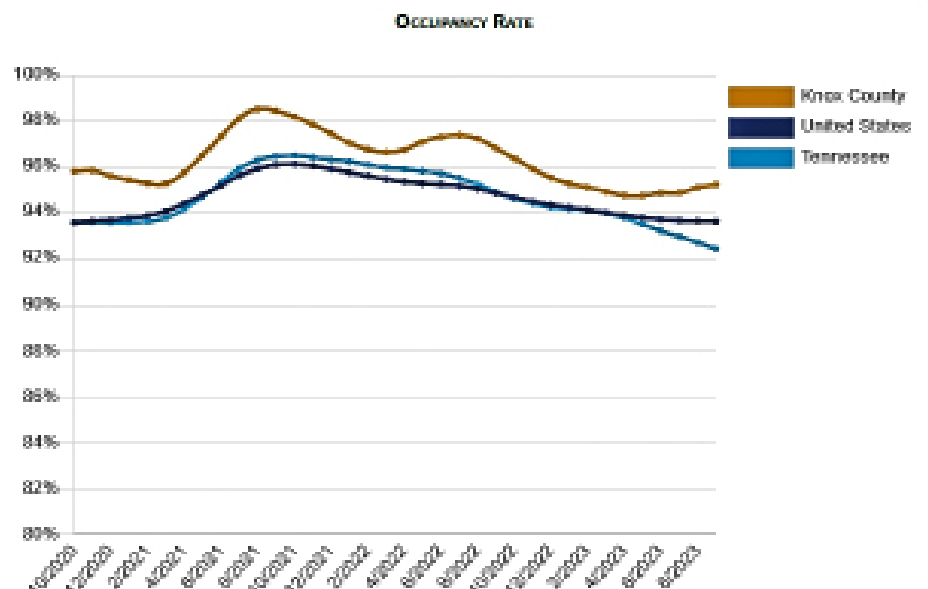
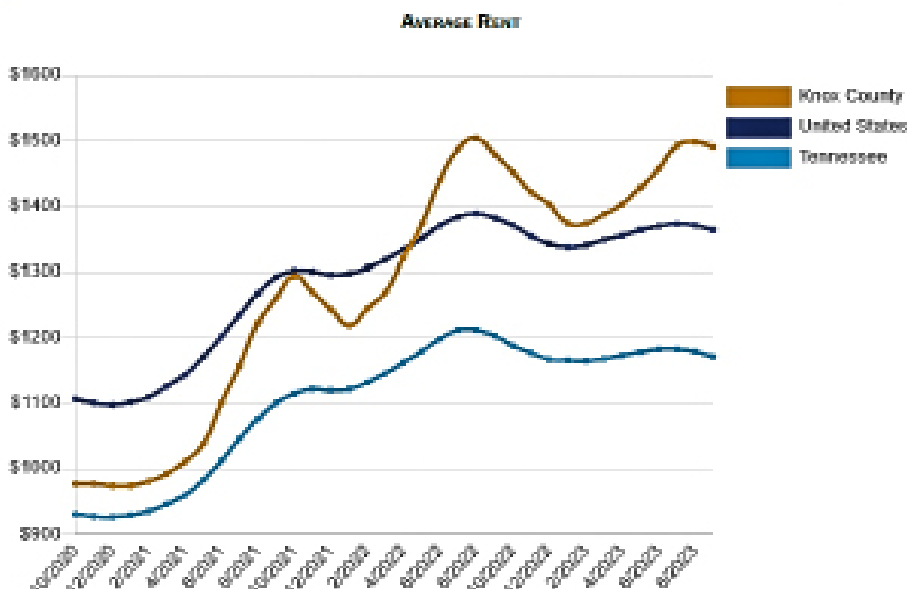
#### Knoxville saw the greatest rent growth in the country in 2022

As we speak, the City of Knoxville and Knox County, along with local nonprofits and private developers, are actively working to *increase housing stock* in our community. In our view, such developments can't come soon enough. We at KnoxHMIS humbly ask all Knox readers to remember this urgent need for affordable housing – and for all types of housing – when new development is considered in your own neighborhoods. We'll vow to do the same.

Please stay tuned for far more thorough and compelling housing data through the *City of Knoxville's forthcoming Evictions Dashboard*. We'll share a link here when that's live. *Many thanks to Carter Hall at the City and Hancen Sale at East Tennessee Realtors* for their insights on housing data.

Average Knox County rent has spiked since 2020

The occupancy rate for Knox County housing has dropped since its peak in 2021, but remains above the national average.



Source: <https://www.apartmentlist.com/research/category/data-rent-estimates>

To read more visit the Knoxville HMIS Community Dashboard on Homelessness <https://knoxhmis.sworpswebapp.sworps.utk.edu/dashboard>

# ARREST REPORTS

SXC

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

by **Eddie Young**

I often hear or read about the unsafe conditions of homeless camps and usually within the context of arguments made with the intent of validating their disbursement. But just like every other aspect of life, the only significant difference between conduct in a homeless camp and a split-level in the suburbs is public visibility.

Domestic Assault, with only rare and narrowly defined exceptions, refers to violence against one within the same house (domu), or household.

From June to November of **kidnapping and/or** this year, there have been 518 arrests made for Domestic Assault in  
Knox Co. This is an average **interference with 911 calls** of right at 3 a day and over a thousand per year. While keeping in  
mind that these are arrests and not convictions, this is still a staggering number.

What is also alarming are the number of assaults coupled with kidnapping and/or interference with 911 calls. Assuming that the attacker is successful with these horrid tactics on occasion, and/or has struck fear into the heart of the victim(s), many will go unreported.

However, no is ever going to suggest that we start breaking up subdivisions in West Knoxville because of their unsafe conditions. At the end of the day, as disturbing as it is, the potential for violence lies both among those with homes, and those without.



## ARREST REPORTS

by **Eddie Young**

There are certain crimes that are committed by people who are experiencing severe poverty and homelessness. We codify our collective values, or more accurately, the values of those we elect, into laws. We penalize those who act outside of those values, and rarely are we excused because of the reasons for the action, especially those who are without privilege and regarded as having no societal value. These aren't the ones who dodged a school suspension because the football team needs them for the big game.

There are times however, when the risk of being penalized pales in comparison to the need of getting through to the next day, week, or month. And one finds themselves in the position of having to betray their own morals to do what has to be done. These aren't crimes of greed and violence, as you can see, these are crimes that would (typically), not be committed if one were living an economically comfortable life. If you have a home, there'd be no need to risk sleeping under a bridge. If you had money to buy food, there'd be no need to sneak something off the shelf. If you had four walls to discretely enjoy your alcohol, you'd be far less likely to be arrested for public intox. And as the data confirms, substance use and abuse is not the cause of homelessness as much as the result of one trying to cope with the hopelessness and despair of it. Our intention in providing this data is to highlight the charges for actions that a person experiencing the despair that accompanies radical poverty and homelessness (the absence of life-sustaining needs), will at times circumvent their ethics to commit.

These actions (crimes), do not de- many of us who wouldn't give in to pended upon it. How many of us com- to work on time depends upon it. We erous set of standards to ourselves. wear the potential of bringing serious our way.

**These aren't crimes of  
greed  
or violence**

fine the character of an individual. There's not these actions if making it through the day de- mit crimes on the interstate because making it don't want to admit that we apply a more gen- However, sleeping under an overpass doesn't harm to an innocent driver trying to get out of

This data however, will include some of these alleged 'crimes' that will have been committed in the company of others that align with actions driven by greed and violence. It's difficult to isolate them fairly, so the data will present a slightly higher total than if they could be.

And how many are 'simply' defaulting to the only economies available to them? Those pushed or abandoned beyond the margins of the 'mainstream' are left to survive through ways and means that only compound their dilemma. Along with fines and court fees that one has to pay (without the money from the job they applied for but weren't hired because they didn't pass the background criminal check), comes the deterioration of self-worth and motivation to even try anymore. Besides the potential for 11 months and 29 days behind bars, a class A misdemeanor can cost you up to \$2500.00 (not including court costs).

Included in class A misdemeanor offenses are shoplifting, obstructing a passageway (why one wouldn't just be asked to 'please move out of the way' rather than being arrested is beyond me), resist stop and search (most people without a home will have to carry their belongings in a backpack which makes them vulnerable to being searched even if there is no apparent reason to), prostitution and simple possession. And regarding arrests for simple possession, I can assure you that these aren't university students and young professionals.

When codifying our values into law, we sometimes reveal that creating a society where everyone is able to flourish isn't among them. It's much more satisfying to talk ourselves into believing that if one is poor, they have only themselves to blame. Until it happens to us. Then we're a victim of circumstance.

These alleged crimes represent 37.1% of all arrests recorded for the 3rd quarter of 2023, We've also included the data for those whom, if convicted, will have lost their right to vote.

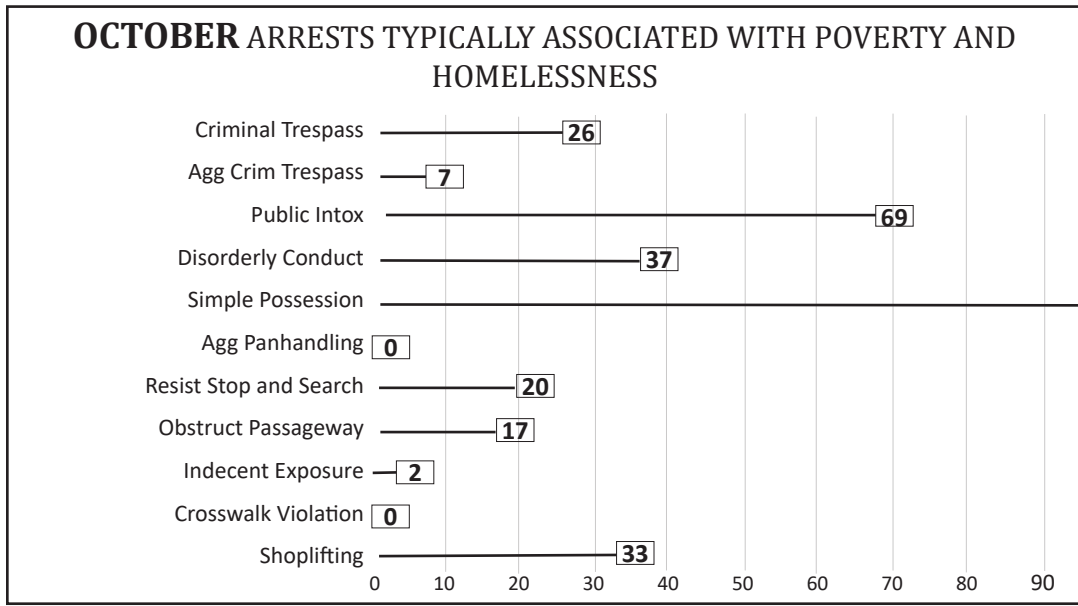
According to the 2023 census, the population of Knox County is 492,993. If the number per month for the last quarter of 2022 is a sustainable average for a given year, then (upon conviction), 292 people lose their right to vote per month, and 3,508 per year (this is without the influencing data for repeat offenses). Whereas these numbers aren't static, nor is the population of Knox County, they do provide an estimate approachable to the facts. The deciding margin in Knox County's 2022 Mayoral election was 5,888.

*How long before one who's lost the right to participate in a society they've been expelled from, decides they have no vested reason to play by its rules?*

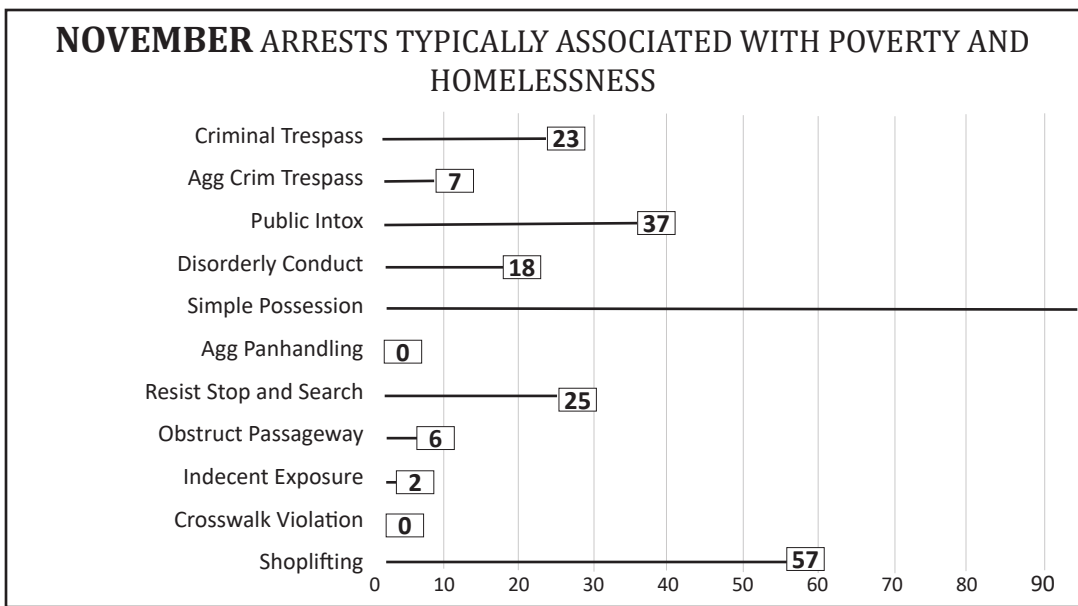
# ARREST REPORTS



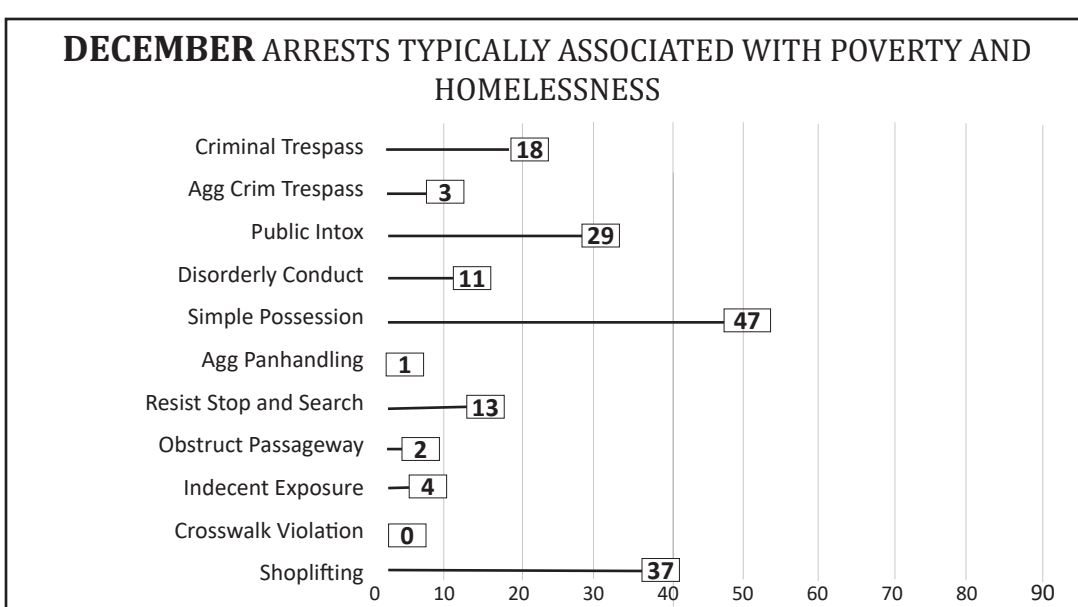
ARRESTS FOR THE 4th QUARTER OF 2023 THAT ARE TYPICALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THOSE LIVING IN POVERTY AND HOMELESSNESS  
December data runs only through the 14th



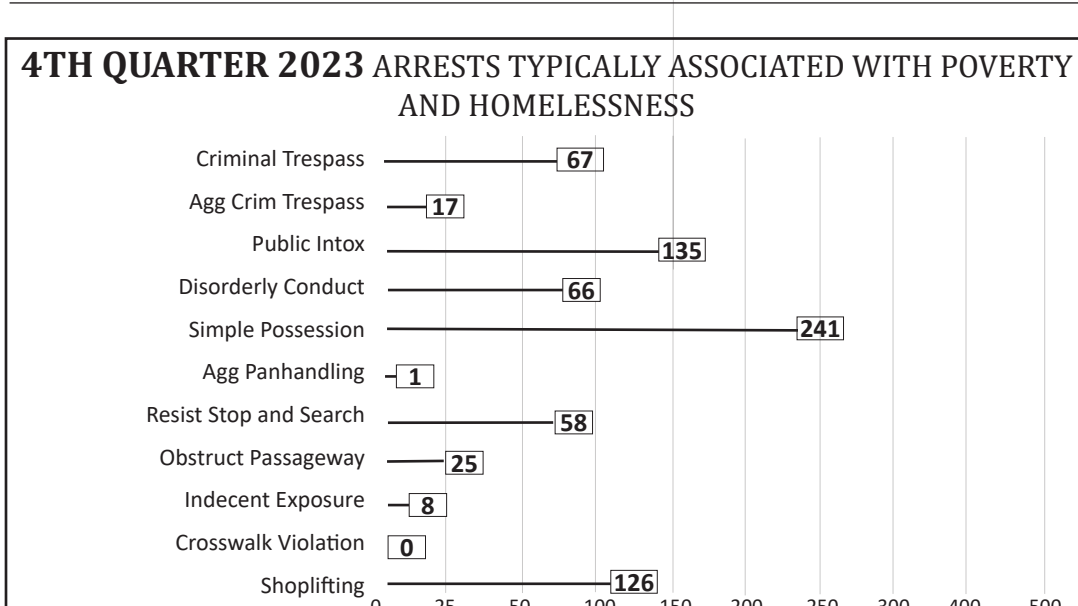
|  |  |                                 |
|--|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>TOTAL ARRESTS: 758</b>                                    | <b>TOTAL ARRESTS: 268</b><br><i>Typically Associated with Poverty and Homelessness</i> | <b>PERCENT OF TOTAL: % 35.4</b> |
| <small>IF CONVICTED HAVE LOST THE RIGHT TO VOTE: 324</small> | <small>IMMIGRATION DETAINED: 22</small>  |                                 |



|  |  |                                 |
|--|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>TOTAL ARRESTS: 875</b>                                    | <b>TOTAL ARRESTS: 207</b><br><i>Typically Associated with Poverty and Homelessness</i> | <b>PERCENT OF TOTAL: % 23.7</b> |
| <small>IF CONVICTED HAVE LOST THE RIGHT TO VOTE: 396</small> | <small>IMMIGRATION DETAINED: 31</small>  |                                 |



|  |  |                                 |
|--|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>TOTAL ARRESTS: 521</b>                                    | <b>TOTAL ARRESTS: 155</b><br><i>Typically Associated with Poverty and Homelessness</i> | <b>PERCENT OF TOTAL: % 29.8</b> |
| <small>IF CONVICTED HAVE LOST THE RIGHT TO VOTE: 217</small> | <small>IMMIGRATION DETAINED: 19</small>  |                                 |



|  |  |                                 |
|--|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>TOTAL ARRESTS: 2154</b>                                   | <b>TOTAL ARRESTS: 630</b><br><i>Typically Associated with Poverty and Homelessness</i> | <b>PERCENT OF TOTAL: % 29.3</b> |
| <small>IF CONVICTED HAVE LOST THE RIGHT TO VOTE: 937</small> | <small>IMMIGRATION DETAINED: 72</small>  |                                 |

This data has been collected from the Knox County 24-hour arrest report. The site provides this information with the following disclaimer:

*The Knox County Sheriff's Office provides this information as a service to the public for the convenience and safety of the general public. While every effort has been made to endeavor to confirm that this information is true and complete, it should not be relied upon for any type of legal action, and Knox County does not make any warranty, either expressed or implied, as to the accuracy, timeliness, or the completeness of any information obtained through the use of this service.*

This is a record of arrests, not convictions. In consideration of the numbers recorded as having potentially lost their rights to vote, the number is subject to being lower in light of when we are in doubt, we do not assign the alleged crime as a felony.

The Knox County website is checked once per day, so there is also the possibility of reports entering and expiring between those times.

In regard to the assignment of a misdemeanor or felony, those that are not assigned on the Knox County website (with their disclaimer in mind), are assigned according to the information provided in the State codes. In the case that the level of an offense is still not clear, we assign the report, "No Record."

There are of course, reports where someone has been arrested for multiple alleged crimes. For example, a person could be reported as having committed a range of violent offenses, but were also found to be in "simple possession."

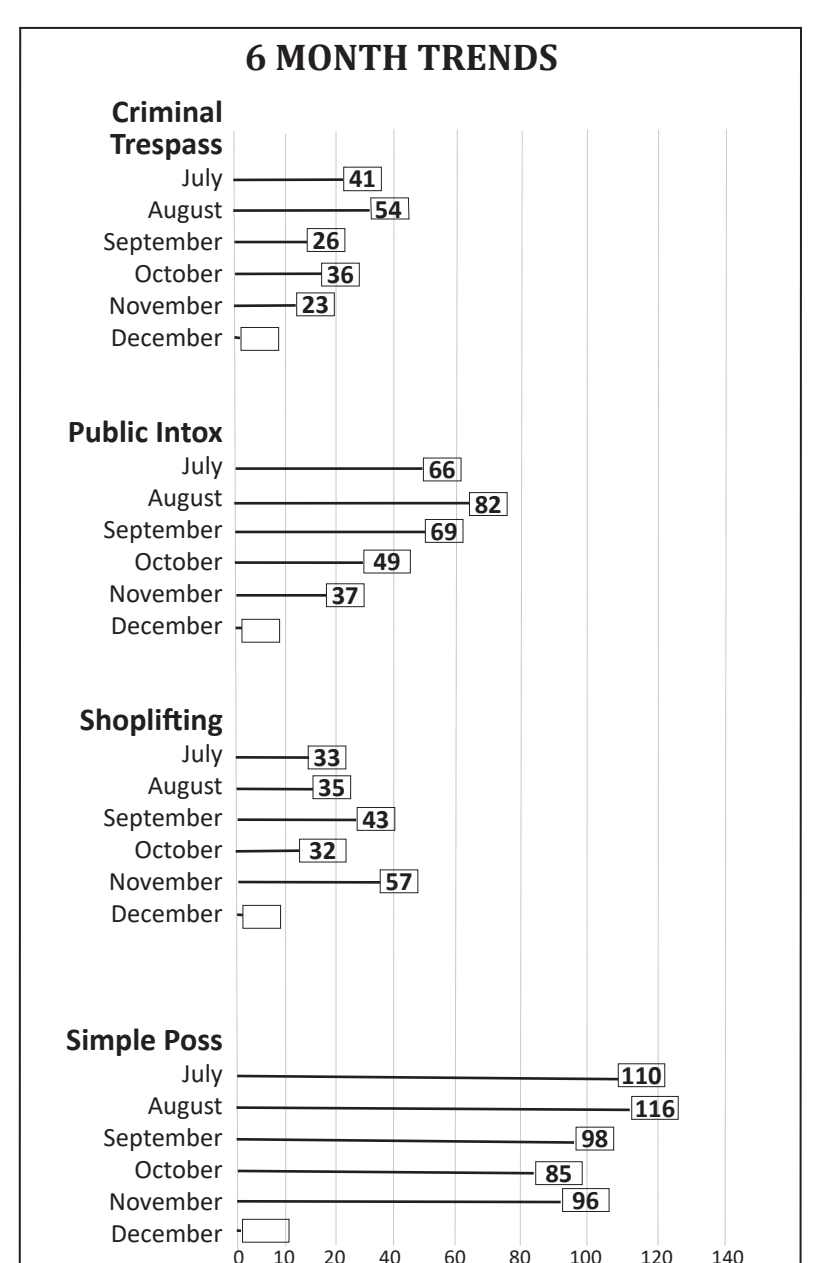
And to be clear, these reports are not presented to bring criticism upon local law enforcement. Nor should they, in light of KCPD's disclaimer, be reviewed with a precision of accuracy, and we are presenting the data accordingly. Obviously, people within the homeless community are easy targets, but I won't personally assess an officer's or department's motives without evidence. Our purpose is to highlight the level of despair among those who've been arrested, and to argue on behalf of their motives.

In addition to the Knox County Sheriff's reports, we also pull data from the UTPD 60-day crime log.

From their website:

*Crimes included on the crime log are those that occurred on campus, in or on non-campus buildings or property, public property within the campus or immediately adjacent and accessible from the campus, and reports of crimes that occurred within UTPD's patrol jurisdiction.*

*Additionally, A CSA Report is not a report to the police department. CSA reports are documented incidents of Clery crimes occurring on Clery geography that were reported to a CSA in order to track crime statistics and provide safety information to the community. Since these reports are not official reports to campus police, UTPD is unable to conduct an investigation. The Clery Coordinator typically has limited information on these incidents.*



*"Wars of nations are fought to change maps. But wars of poverty are fought to map change."*

Muhammad Ali

# EXPRESSION

SXC

warning: strong language



## ALL THESE BROKEN PIECES

by Q.E.R.

You've destroyed almost every essence of who I am/was. You broke me piece by piece until there was almost nothing left to salvage; and for what? Did it make you feel powerful? Did it give you a sense of purpose? Did you just want to have something of "your own" to control and put in a little box with no windows?

WHAT THE FUCK DO YOU WANT FROM ME?!

I tried to be your motherfucking person! You took advantage of my vulnerability just so you could "be seen" or be a "better person", and for WHAT?! All I was seeking was to be loved by another human being and form a connection, that I wasn't ever able to achieve in my broken, twisted, miserable, fucked up "home".

You know what you've done, but admitting it to yourself would destroy your reputation. You'll never stop blaming me for the damage you've caused, because who better to blame than the person who you abused and assaulted for 3 years. All these broken pieces are like shards of a broken mirror, as I stare into the funhouse mirror that is the hell you put me through. There's no way out of this mirror maze, there's no going back, only in vicious circles, getting stabbed by trauma in every corner.

This is YOUR fault! You chose to do this and now I'm living with it and I'm dying inside.

Shake

# Art by Q.E.R.



The **Street X Change**    
KNOXVILLE STREET PAPER

**ARE YOU ON THE SAME PAGE? WE COULD USE YOUR HELP**

Contact Eddie Young [eddie@street-xchange.org](mailto:eddie@street-xchange.org)

**BRING IT...** Contributing writers,  
Photography, Editing, and Layout

No experience needed. Bring an open mind, a thirst for justice, and a conviction that we can still change the world