

'Tammy's Story, People Like Us' Transcript

Matt

I am embarrassed about living here. The trash in the yard and all, it's all messed up. My Mom likes the place. I like the place a little bit too. I don't like all my friends to know where I live at. Cause they're like a class up from us.

Tammy

This is my living room. He does clean house when I'm at work. He try to help out and everything. But things I don't like him to move things where I can't find them.

Matt

I don't like to introduce my mom to a lot of people because I don't like them to see her image, what she looks like. She doesn't fix herself up. And, that's more or less what people look at. Their appearance, not how they act.

Tammy

And this here is my kitchen. It might not look like much but it's something. And you can see that I don't have a furnace which I would like to have one.

Narrator

Tammy Crabtree and her four children cling to the bottom rung of the social ladder in their small Ohio town. But even down here, they are not ready to be counted out, just yet.

Matt

All this junk and stuff, I don't know where to put it in. And my mom and nobody will tell me where to put it so I just throw it all there in that big pile.

Younger Son

This is all junk. We got it going down that top of the bank. And junk going there. Clothes, burnt things. It's messed up.

Narrator

Why don't you clean it up?

Younger Son

I'm lazy. I like to sit, being a couch potato. That's all I know.

Matt

My mom, she won't lift a hand either. I get on her all the time and she says all you can do is move and stuff. I don't want to move either straighten up and doing all you can at home. That is all me and my mom does.

Tammy

I was on welfare eighteen years and now I work at Burger King and I'm trying to make a living and make it only for the kids. It ain't my fault because I'm poor. I grew up poor. My dad worked hard, he worked 27-years as a county engineer trying to make a living for twenty-two kids. And, it ain't easy. I was proud of my dad. He would be proud of me now, for just trying.

Kids, I'm going to work. See you after a while.

I walk to work 10.5 miles because I don't have a car. Don't have a license. Even when I'm walking to work or something, someone would holler, "Hey trashy bitch. What are you doing?" I'm just walking to work.

All I want for this whole life is to be happy. But, right now, I'm not because the way people treat me. The way my own kids treat me. My friends think that I should stay at home, take care of my kids, and draw welfare. I said no, that ain't me. I'm hoping to go to college and be a school teacher. That's been my goal since the time I was 5- years old up until now.

Matt

I'm embarrassed by my mom because she wears that Burger King outfit every day.

Tammy

No, I don't.

Matt

I have never seen her go to a really nice restaurant and wear not that Burger King outfit. It's either the shirt or the pants or it's both. She wears it constantly. It's different outfits but the same damn outfits. Sorry, I know I shouldn't have used that word.

Tammy

My son thinks he's high class. He thinks he's better than me, better than his brother.

Matt

This is my brother. He dresses like this and I don't like how he dresses. It's why I don't hang out with him; I don't talk about him or anything. People will say he's my brother and I'm like, "No, no." But, when he dresses better and stuff, I'll walk around with him. Me and my friend over here, me and Josh, the only way we walk around with him is if he starts looking good and we help him dress good. We'll comb his hair, make him look better.

Tammy

Matt thinks he's different class. He's in the same class I'm in but he's just trying to prove to his friends that he's in their class. But, I know different.

Matt

Over here, I got like 30-40 awards. I've got presidential awards, school athlete awards.

Narrator

Would you like to be like your brother?

Younger Brother

Yah.

Narrator

What is it about your brother that you would like to be?

Younger Brother

Popular.

Matt

I'm going to go to college for like lawyer you've got to go for four to six years. But, I'm going to go for the four basic things. Architectural design only takes two years of college so I might go down here to Shawnee or Hocking College. Somewhere around the area to get school. I know I ain't no Harvard material or anything like that.

Tammy

There's my car. I got short wiring somewhere because I can't use my lights. Not any tires. I've been trying to get someone to fix it where I can get on the road. I just desperately need to get things going. To get my kids going. They just run to their friends now. I don't know what else to do.