

**WE HAVE A LOT TO SAY THESE DAYS ABOUT THE ECONOMY IN AMERICA.....**



**→ → BUT WHAT ABOUT THE 33%?**

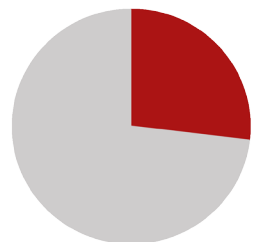
**1 IN 3 PEOPLE LIVING IN THE U.S. ARE POOR. WHY AREN'T WE TALKING ABOUT POVERTY?**

**→ → STORIES ABOUT POVERTY DON'T SELL. AND PEOPLE FACING POVERTY HAVE LITTLE TIME AND RESOURCES TO TELL THEIR STORIES ON SOCIAL MEDIA.**

**THE PROBLEM WITH NO STORY IS THAT MANY PEOPLE GET THE WRONG STORY:**

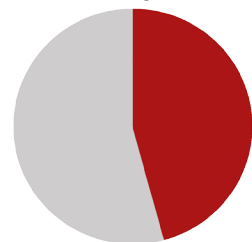
**ATTITUDES OF AMERICANS TOWARDS THE POOR**

*"People are poor because they are lazy."*



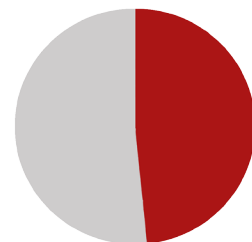
**27%**

*"If we give poor people more assistance they would take advantage of it."*



**47%**

*"A good work ethic is all you need to escape poverty."*



**49%**

Source: Perceptions of Poverty, The Salvation Army's Report to America (2012)Aa

**WE NEED A MORE HONEST PICTURE OF WHO WE ARE AS A COUNTRY AND WHERE WE ARE HEADING.**

**LONG STORY SHORT CROWDSOURCES STORIES AND SOLUTIONS FROM HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE IN THE U.S. FIGHTING TO RISE INTO THE MIDDLE CLASS.**

Drawing from an archive of hundreds of video diaries made by very low income California residents, Long Story Short tells a collective story of poverty in America, narrated, defined, and analyzed entirely from within, offering a fresh perspective on one of the most challenging social issues our country faces.

We live in an age of realtime public testimony, where many participate in building an ever-expanding digital archive containing our reflections, images, and opinions. But participation depends on access, and visibility depends on public affirmation. Most of Long Story Short's subjects have never before shared their views and stories in public, let alone on video. Yet this is a population that needs to be a part of our national dialogue.

Long Story Short compiles a missing inventory of video diaries in which people describe, reflect on, and analyze poverty's effects on their lives, families, and communities, as well as on their choices and opportunities. Its aim is to challenge pervasive misperceptions and stereotypes about who is in poverty and why, and to tell the story of economic struggle in America that is missing from the media and absent online.

Only this story is different: instead of a single narrator, there are hundreds, whose life stories are woven together to create a rich, composite narrative. Voices are layered, people speak in sync, and dozens of speakers appear

simultaneously, suggest scale and multiplicity; for every narrator, there could be numerous others. Each individual offers a unique, partial perspective. Together, they form a complex collective voice, revealing links and connections, including repeated narrative tropes, turns of phrases, and life trajectories. Together, they depict many of poverty's narratives as deeply shared. The story is told by people not usually in the public eye—the homeless, former gang members, ex-cons, high school drop-outs, the long time unemployed, along with the new poor, those once in or on their way to the middle class.

The narrations—shot with webcams—are placed within a contemporary vernacular of social media. In an era of over-produced, digitally enhanced images, the work finds beauty and paradox in the digital DIY image with its clumsy imperfections and traces of the human. The casual set-up shortens our distance to speaker, who could be addressing us on Skype, on Facetime, on Facebook. Yet these are some of the same digital, high tech tools that helped usher in hardships for many low-skilled workers in the first place. Here these tools amplify the voices of those economically left behind.

Long Story Short is told from a perspective Americans don't often get to hear—explanations, understandings, and self-definitions of people in America struggling to rise into the middle class. Rich personalities, striking overlaps in multiple stories, and intimate narrations lure viewers in. ■

