

Open Letter By A Homeless Man In Response To Justin Timberlake's Open Letter After The Video Made For Justin's Wedding By A Friend Became Public.

Dear Mr. Timberlake,

Recently you issued an open letter after what you described as a “distasteful” and “unsavory” video made for your wedding by a friend became public. That video appeared to mock the homeless. I am not only one of those homeless, I am the nameless man the video first features offering you and Jessica well-wishes. But I have a name. On the Los Angeles streets where I have lived off and on for 6 to 7 years, I am known as “Eddie.”

While I sincerely appreciate the fact that you issued an open letter to your “family, friends, and fans,” your letter never addresses those that it hurt most directly: the people in the video, myself included, and the homeless more broadly. The purpose of your letter appears to be, in your words, “to clarify my thoughts and feelings on what has been a very upsetting portrayal of the people closest to me and myself.” You do not once mention or seem to consider the effect the video might have on either its subjects -- who are the butt of its joke -- or the homeless in general; in fact, the word “homeless” never appears in your letter.

What I take from your letter, and its focus on the harm to yourself, your friends and your fans, is that you have a good heart, but do not really understand the situation I face or that faced by the thousands living on the streets of Los Angeles and around the country. The video and your letter both treat the homeless as somehow unworthy of equal consideration; they are punch-lines, not people (in the case of the video) or invisible and beneath notice (in the case of your letter).

I did not ask and could not have expected to be pushed into the spotlight at the time I agreed to be in your wedding video. When your friends approached me that morning to say a few words on camera to a couple I did not know, all I asked for in return was a bowl of soup. They gave me 40 dollars but did not tell me that I would be portrayed in such a humiliating manner in the video simply because I was homeless. Later, I appeared on TMZ and explained that I was looking for a job, which I still want and have not found. But now, because of these events, I feel I need to respond to your letter -- both for myself and, in a way, for the homeless community.

My response is simply that although I have lost my home and a job, I have not lost my human dignity. And there are many like me. Mr. Timberlake, if, as you have said in your letter, you truly “hold yourself accountable” for the video, I invite you to contact my attorney, Gloria Allred, in order to arrange a time and place to meet with me very soon, so you can understand my situation, and so that we can talk about this situation involving so many others who are homeless. I would like to take you on a tour of skid row and other places where we the homeless live and talk with you about what you can do to help us.

Finally, I would like to say that when I appeared in the wedding video to wish you well, I did not know who you were. I do now. And so I can truly wish you and Jessica Biel all the happiness that you and Ms. Biel wish for, in your marriage, and for this holiday season.

God Bless all of us, great and small.

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