



# Kevin F. Adler

Author, *When We Walk By*

Founder-in-Residence, Miracle Messages















**Relational poverty  
is poverty.**









Miracle Message sender (the homeless person)

Full Name (include middle name if applicable)

Your answer

Date of Birth / Age

Your answer

Current Location

e.g., Portland, Maine


Your answer







the new

ST. ANTHONY'S

SAN FRANCISCO


YouTube





Analytics


Video Manager

 We detected your video may be shaky. Would you like us to stabilize it?

Preview


X

Homeless man from Oxnard hasn't seen his family in 30 years, records video 1

 Miracle Messages

Channel settings

4,363




Kevin F. Adler

March 30 at 1:28pm · San Francisco, CA

Hi Oxnard,

I'm the founder of [Homeless POV](#), which helps homeless people record video messages to their dearly missed loved ones using smart phones and social media (called [#miraclemessages](#)).

Last Thursday, I recorded a short video message from a 57-year old man from Oxnard, Johnny Dwyer, who has been on and off the streets in SF for years. Johnny wanted to send a [#miraclemessage](#) to his family, who lives in (or previously lived in) Oxnard or went to Channel Islands HS (... [See More](#)





Homeless man from Oxnard hasn't seen his family in 30 years, records video to them [#miraclemessages](#)

"This is Johnny Dwyer from Oxnard, looking for my family." [#miraclemessages](#) - Johnny Dwyer, a homeless man from Oxnard now living in San Francisco, hasn't se...

YOUTUBE.COM


Unlike · Comment · Share


 You and **63 others** like this.



Angie Manuyag


It's wonderful that you are doing this Kevin I'll share on my FB


March 30 at 1:46pm · [Unlike](#) ·  4



Judy Jensen Estrada


How inspirational. Some of them may be the 'last' message for the families. How important those are!


March 30 at 4:54pm · [Unlike](#) ·  5



Dawna Pasmant

Shared on my page. I live in Oxnard..

March 30 at 5:17pm · [Unlike](#) ·  4




Sylvana Lea

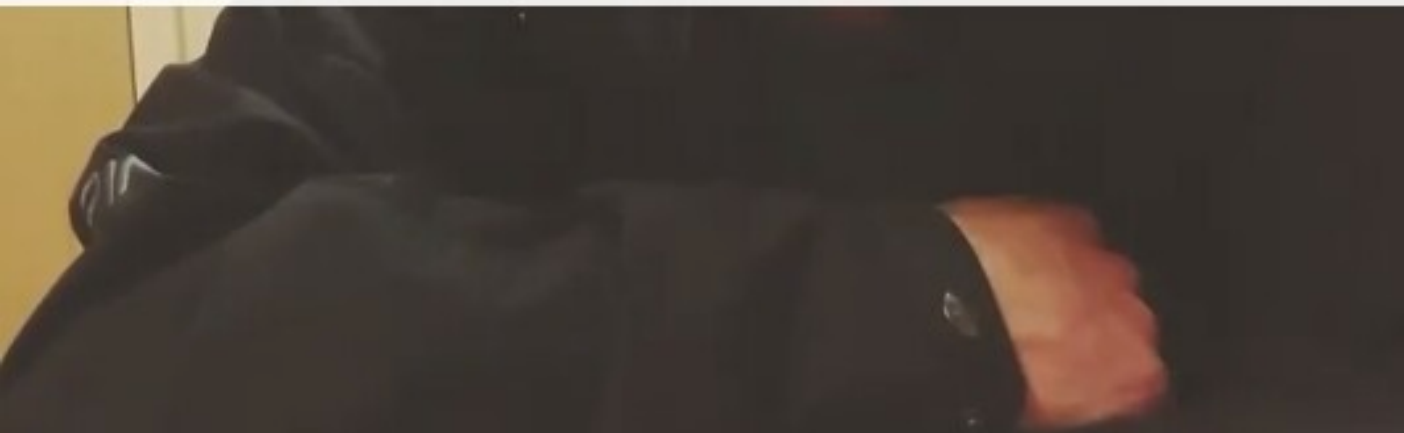
Sharing!  
Don't give up sir!... [See More](#)

March 30 at 7:15pm · [Like](#)



 VIDEO


**homelesspov** 6d




♥ [thrivethisday](#), [artlifting](#), [spitnews](#), [crazyveedub](#), [travelingb2000](#)


**homelesspov** [#miraclemessages](#) Johnny Dwyer has been on and off the streets for 30 years and hopes to reconnect with family in Oxnard.



**crazyveedub** This is my uncle!! How can I get in contact with him? I've notified my mom and aunt and sent this to others in my family. Thank you so much for this♥




 1


 1

 1





YouTube

 Add a public comment...

Top comments ▾



**Miracle Messages** 1 year ago  
Hoping for a positive outcome for Johnny. Please share! [#miraclemessages](#)  
Reply •  



**RockingVids 2774** 11 months ago  
Omg this is my bff's uncle! She is going to see him this weekend! Thank you for uploading this!  
Reply • 1  




**Leslie Mikesell** 1 year ago  
Thank you Kevin!!! Been looking for my brother for almost 30 years!! Bill dwyer  
Reply • 1    
[View all 3 replies](#) ▾



**Leslie Mikesell** 1 year ago  
Idk bris. Go to the page where video was upoaded  
Reply • 1  



**Leslie Mikesell** 1 year ago  
[+Bristal Waldera](#) Kevin aldar  
Reply •  



**Justin Ogle** 1 year ago  
I can't wait to see your reaction that your family has responded to your video. Best Wishes and God Bless!  
Reply • 1  















**Everyone is  
someone's  
somebody.**



**Miracle  
Messages**





**We meet people where they are at, and partner widely.**



# We use technology for good.



# 1-800-MISS-YOU

1-800-647-7968

We can help you reconnect  
with a family member or friend.

## Miracle Messages Referral Form (side 1 of 2)



We are a service that helps people experiencing homelessness reconnect with their loved ones.

- Use this form to begin a search to locate and try to reconnect with a loved one.
- Questions? Please call 1-800-MISS-YOU, or email [hello@miraclemessages.org](mailto:hello@miraclemessages.org).

### STEP 1: ABOUT THE CLIENT

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please include middle names and confirm spellings!

Age or D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_

➤ Client must be 18 or older

Hometown: \_\_\_\_\_

Current City \_\_\_\_\_

Years on-and-off the streets: \_\_\_\_\_

How to reach again:\* \_\_\_\_\_

### STEP 2: ABOUT THE LOVED ONE

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please include middle names and confirm spellings!

Age or D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_

➤ Loved one must be 18 or older

Relationship to Client: \_\_\_\_\_

(please avoid partners/ex-partners)

Maiden/Former/ Nicknames: \_\_\_\_\_

Last known locations: \_\_\_\_\_

Length of time disconnected: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please include a way that we can reach the client again. It's essential for us to be able to follow up on the case.





**We treat each person as someone's son or daughter.**





# 1,000+ reunions

increased well-being, stable housing



**Miracle  
Messages**



# Find Them

**1,000 families and counting...**  
**with over 130 of these “needle  
in a haystack” reunions**

***“I miss you so very much. I send messages to you on Facebook. I want you to know that I love you no matter what.”***

*“Please tell Garrett that the family loves him. Please tell him that he can live with me or stay for a short while, whatever he decides.”*

*“Dad, it’s Abby. I have been looking for you forever. Please let me know you are alive or safe. I wonder all the time if you passed away.”*

*“We miss you so much. We worry everyday. Please let us know that you are alive.”*



Relational poverty is  
poverty. But what if family is  
not part of the solution?





# 250K+ minutes

less lonely, navigate systems, better health



**Miracle  
Messages**





# **\$50k initial pilot**

\$500/month direct cash transfers for six months  
nominated by their friends; no strings attached



**Miracle  
Messages**





WINNER OF THE 2017 PULITZER PRIZE FOR BREAKING NEWS REPORTING

# EAST BAY TIMES

Bay Area  
NewsGroup

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Volume 100, Issue 72

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2021

24/7 COVERAGE: EASTBAYTIMES.COM • \$2.00

'IT'S LIKE REDISCOVERING THE LIFE I USED TO HAVE'

## 'Basic income' experiment: \$500 a month — and hope



DAVID GUGARD — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elizabeth Softky, 64, poses for a portrait at her apartment in Redwood City on Friday. Softky spent more than a year living in a homeless shelter and then a temporary hotel after a cancer diagnosis stopped her from working.

### 'Miracle Money' program targets homeless people living in the Bay Area

By Marisa Kendall  
mkendall@bayareanewsgroup.com

Kevin Adler never thought \$500 a month would be enough to lift someone out of homelessness in the notoriously expensive Bay Area.

He launched his six-month "basic income" experiment to help unhoused participants pay for things like food and unexpected bills. But for 64-year-old Elizabeth Softky, it did much more. The no-strings-attached payments al-

said. "It's like rediscovering the life I used to have. My books, my china, my pots and pans ... just things that tell me I'm me."

Adler's "Miracle Money" pilot launched in February to give \$500 a month to 12 unhoused people throughout the Bay Area, and two people who were renting low-income single rooms. The program — one of the first in the U.S. to target homeless people for a guaranteed income, according to Adler — has improved the lives of several participants. Six, including Softky, have secured stable housing. Nine reported feeling less stressed about money.

It's been a success "beyond our wildest expectations," said Adler, CEO of nonprofit Miracle Messages, which raised the money to fund the program.

**Enthusiasm  
for basic or  
"guaranteed  
income"  
programs,  
which  
provide  
regular  
payments to  
low-income  
groups, is**

# 66%

of unhoused recipients secured stable housing  
as a direct result of \$500 a month for 6 months



## Miracle Messages



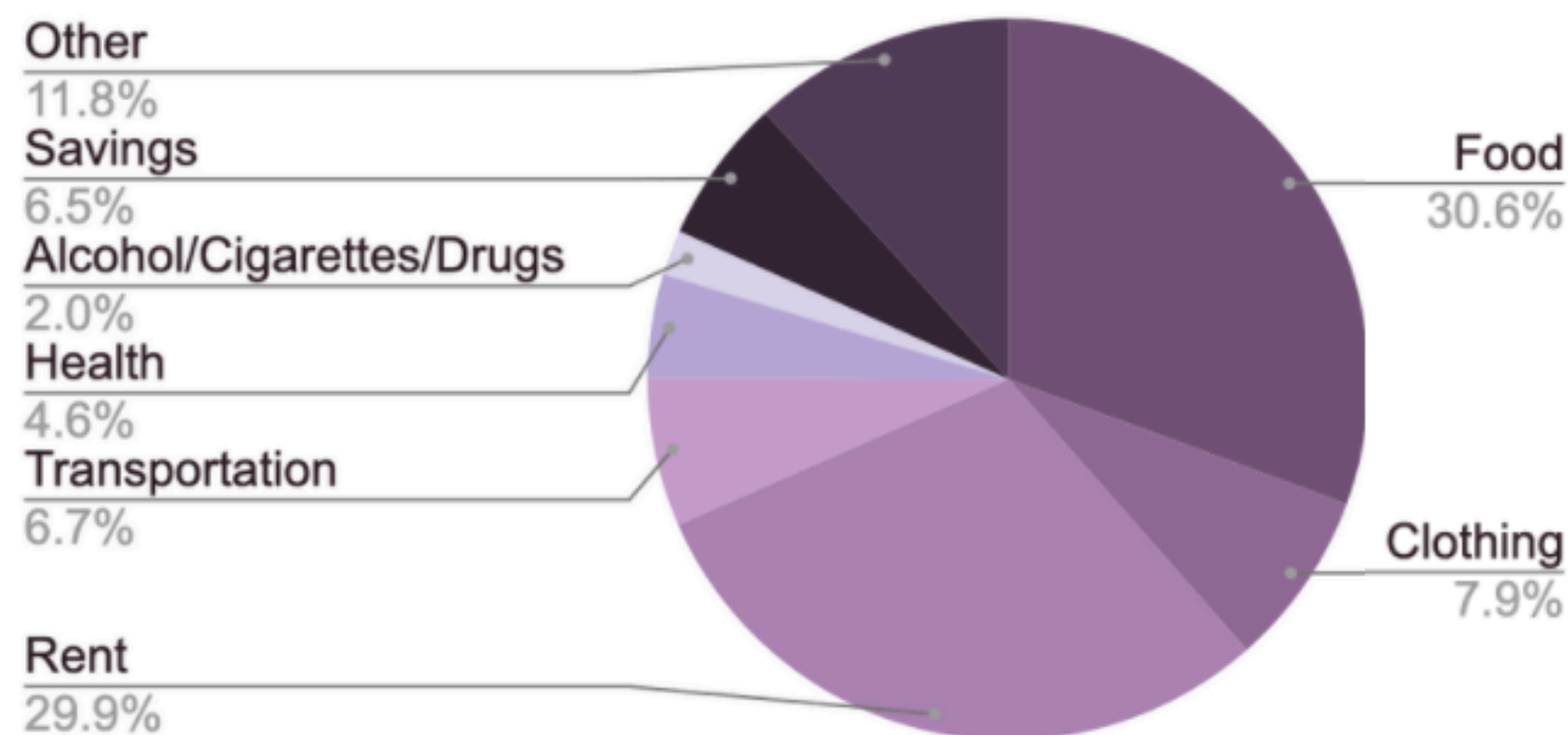
# Results Highlights



## Spending Patterns

- Most funds went towards food (30.6%) and rent (29.9%)
- Only 2% of funds were used towards the alcohol, cigarettes, or drug category (no increase from baseline)
- The next largest category was “other” (11.8%). Recipients spent money on things that we did not predict and were very specific to that individuals’ needs - **including donating**

% of Total Funds Spent on Each Category



“I didn’t do it for you, I did it for myself to once again feel the dignity of being able to support the causes that I believe in.”  
– Miracle Money Recipient



# Miracle Money: California

A basic income for our unhoused neighbors, as part of a **\$2.1 million randomized control trial.**







## Reunion services

1,000+ reunions



## Phone buddies

250K+ minutes



## Direct cash

\$2.1M RCT



"A compelling story of rediscovering our own humanity—and a roadmap for how we can make large-scale changes that improve everyone's way of life."  
—ANDREW YANG

"A compelling story of rediscovering our own humanity—and a roadmap for how we can make large-scale changes that improve everyone's way of life."  
—ANDREW YANG, entrepreneur and former 2020 presidential candidate

# When We Walk By

FORGOTTEN HUMANITY,  
BROKEN SYSTEMS, AND THE ROLE  
WE CAN EACH PLAY IN ENDING  
HOMELESSNESS IN AMERICA

Kevin F. Adler and Donald W. Burnes

WITH AMANDA BANH AND ANDRIJANA BILBIJA





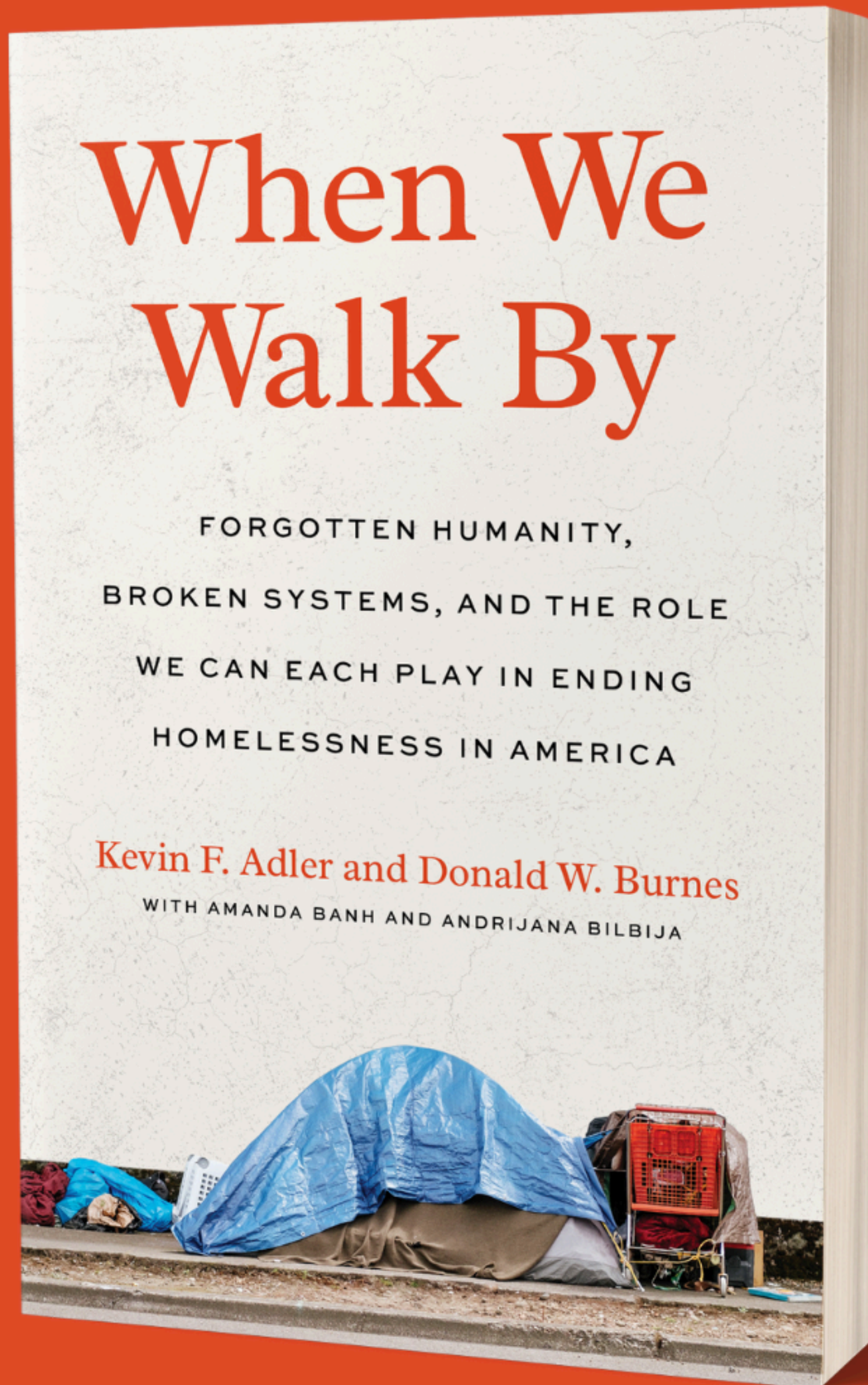


Proximity is recognizing the power you have to make a difference in the lives of the people around you, and at the very least wrapping your arms around them and affirming their humanity and their dignity.

**BRYAN STEVENSON**

*Founder and Executive Director of the  
Equal Justice Initiative / Keynote Speaker*





## Part I: Humanity

- Relational Poverty
- Stigma, Stereotypes, and Shame
- Exclusion
- Paternalism
- Individualism



# Relational poverty

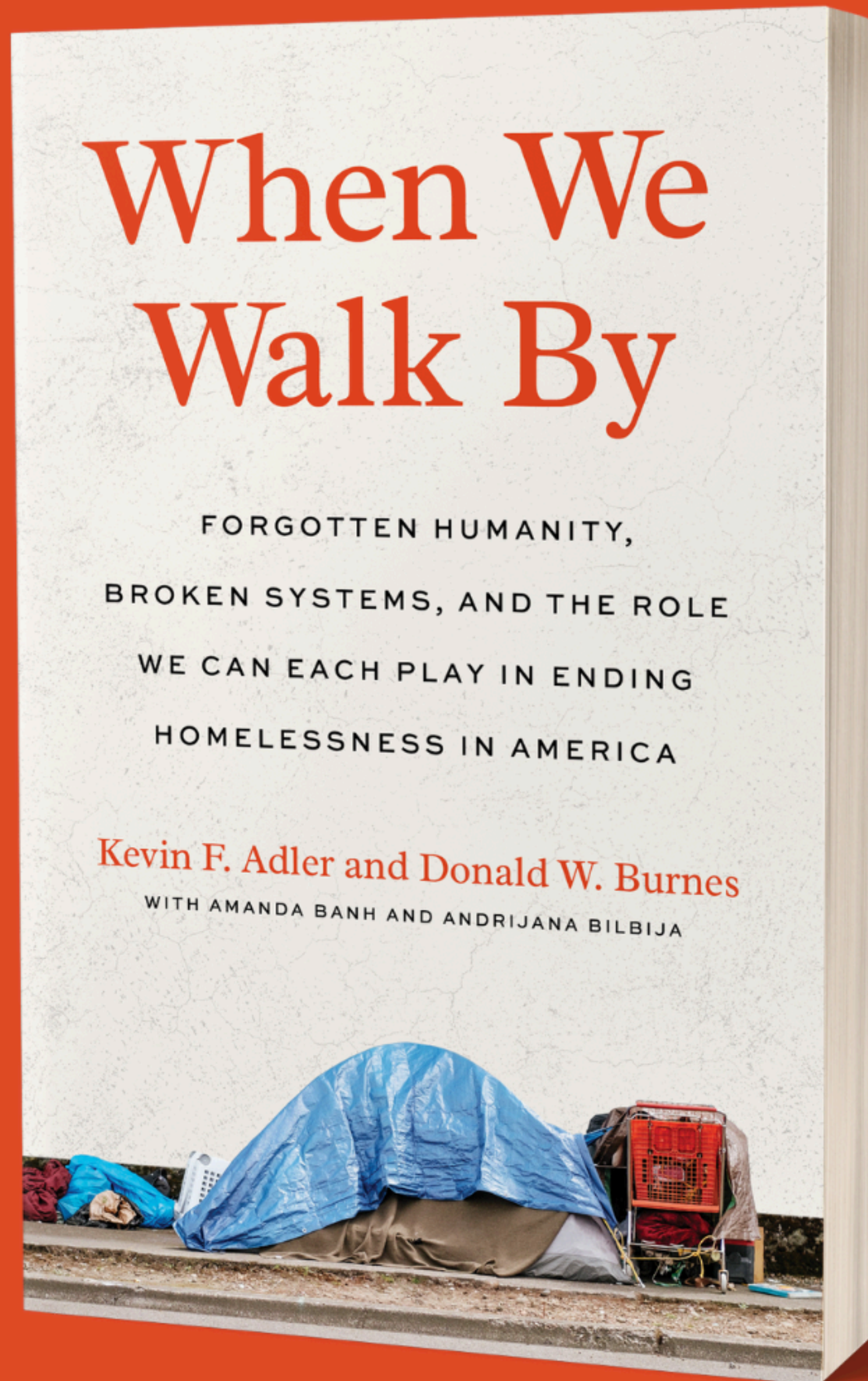
is           a cause of homelessness          .



# Relational poverty

is a consequence of homelessness.

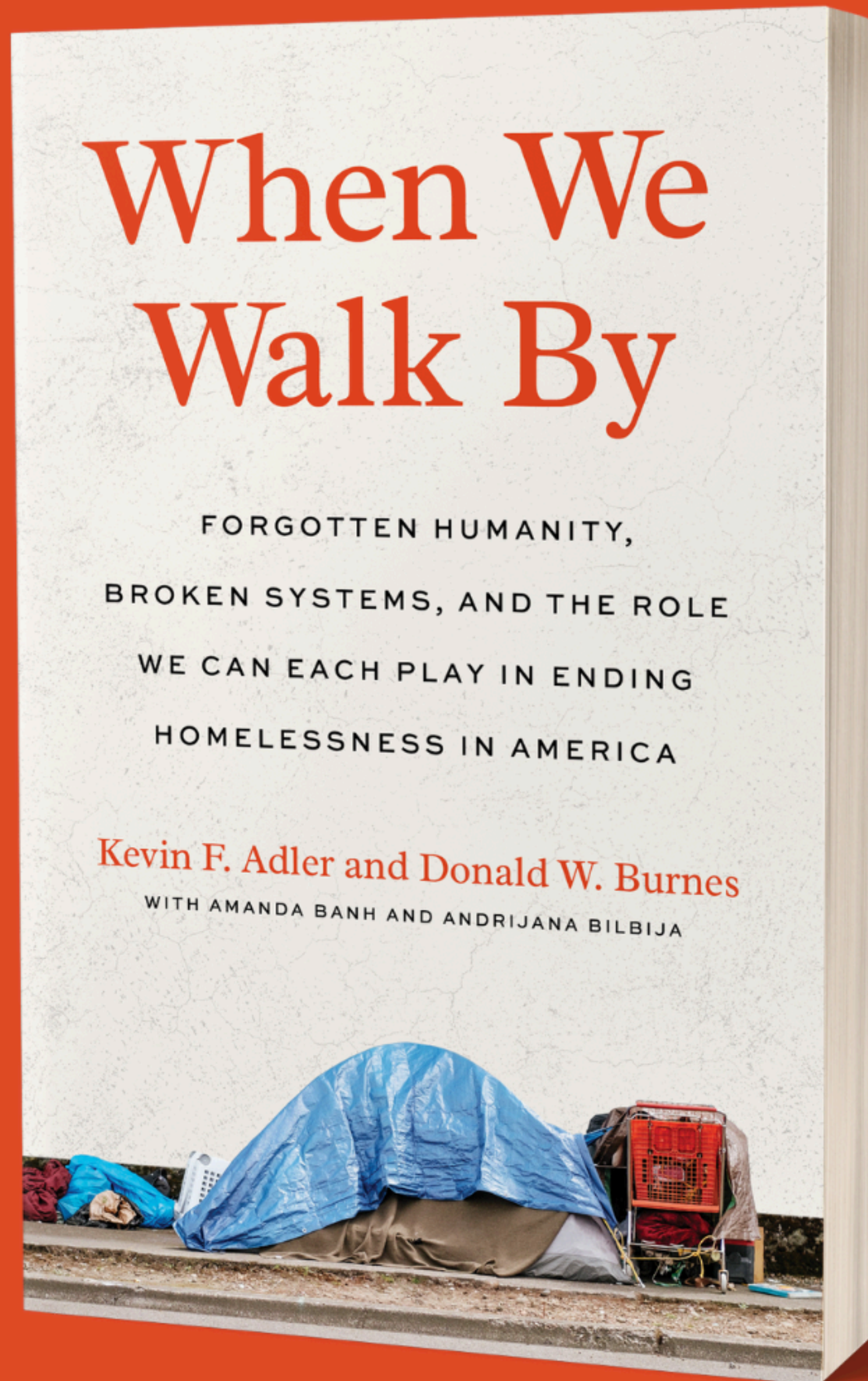




## Part II: Systems

- Housing
- Work, Wages, Wealth
- Health Care
- Mental and Behavioral Health
- Criminal Justice
- Youth Development





For youth who age out of foster care, 36% will experience homelessness by the age of 26 years old.

For Black youth, this figure is 60%.



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50% of unhoused adults first experienced youth homelessness.

For the chronically homeless, this % is even higher.



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“45% of adults experiencing homelessness have at least one job, and another 40% cannot work as a result of disability.”



# When We Walk By

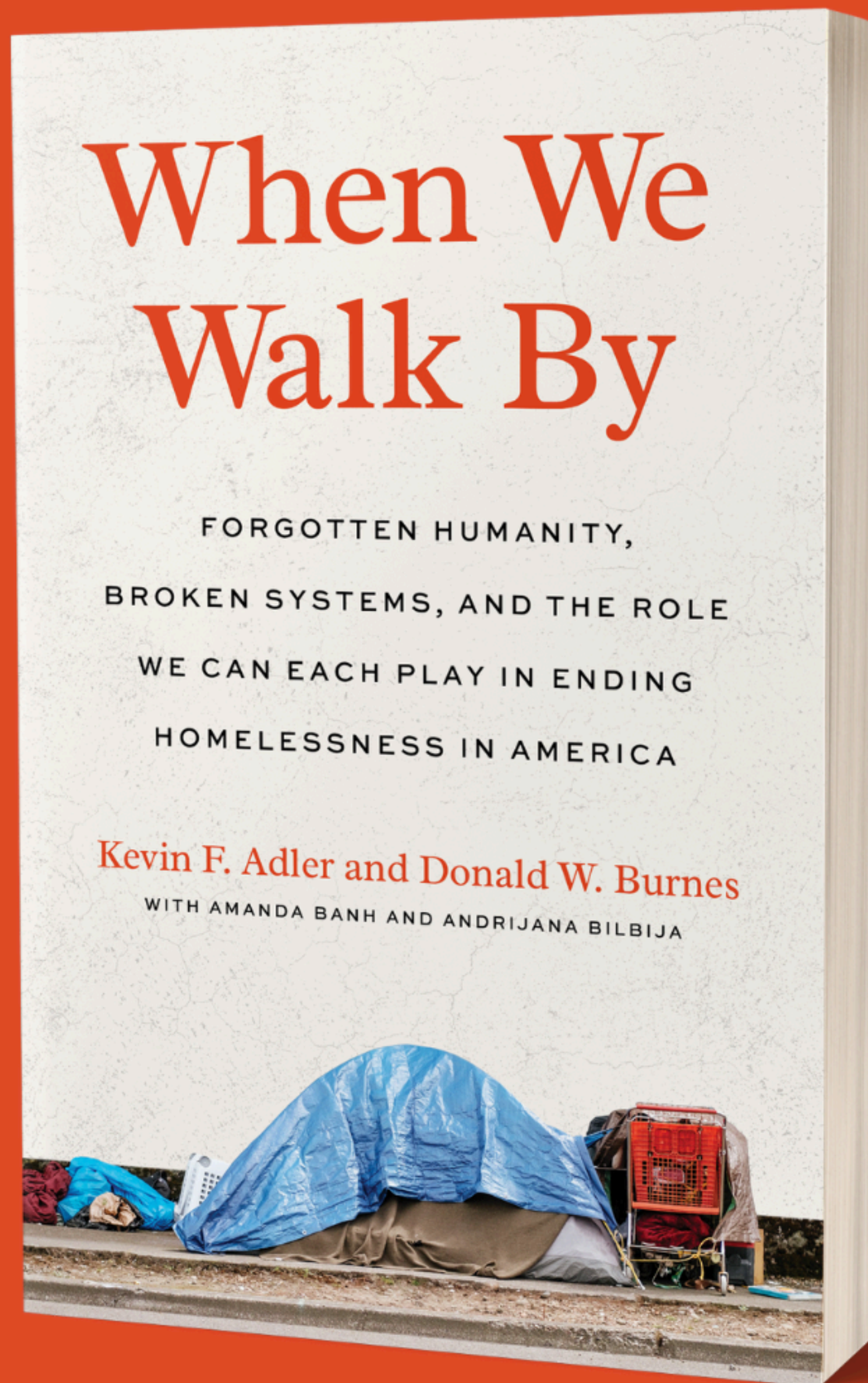
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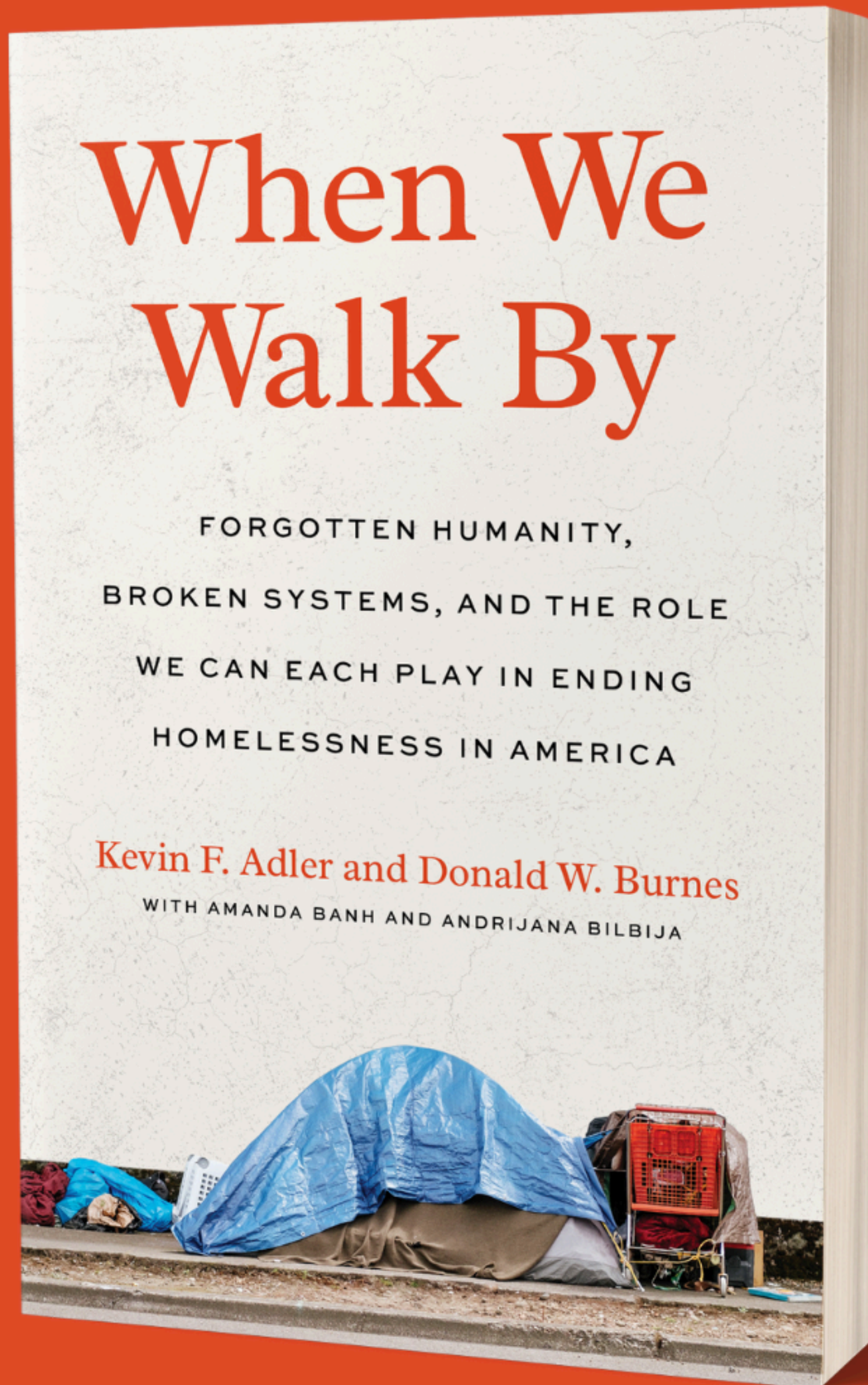
"There is not a single county among the over 3,000 counties in the United States where someone working full-time and earning the federal minimum wage can afford a two-bedroom apartment at the so-called 'fair market rent.'"





“All the time, people would tell me: ‘Get a job.’ I just cried, I just cried. A couple of times, I would actually sit there and say: ‘**You know what? I do have a job. We’re just down on our luck right now.**’ [...] They would just walk away.” -Lainie (page 106, WWWB)





## Part III: Solutions

- Fixing Broken Systems
- Healing Our Humanity



**1 in 2**



**~40%**

Source: various, including <https://www.federalreserve.gov/consumerscommunities/shed.htm>




**So why aren't more  
people experiencing  
homelessness?**





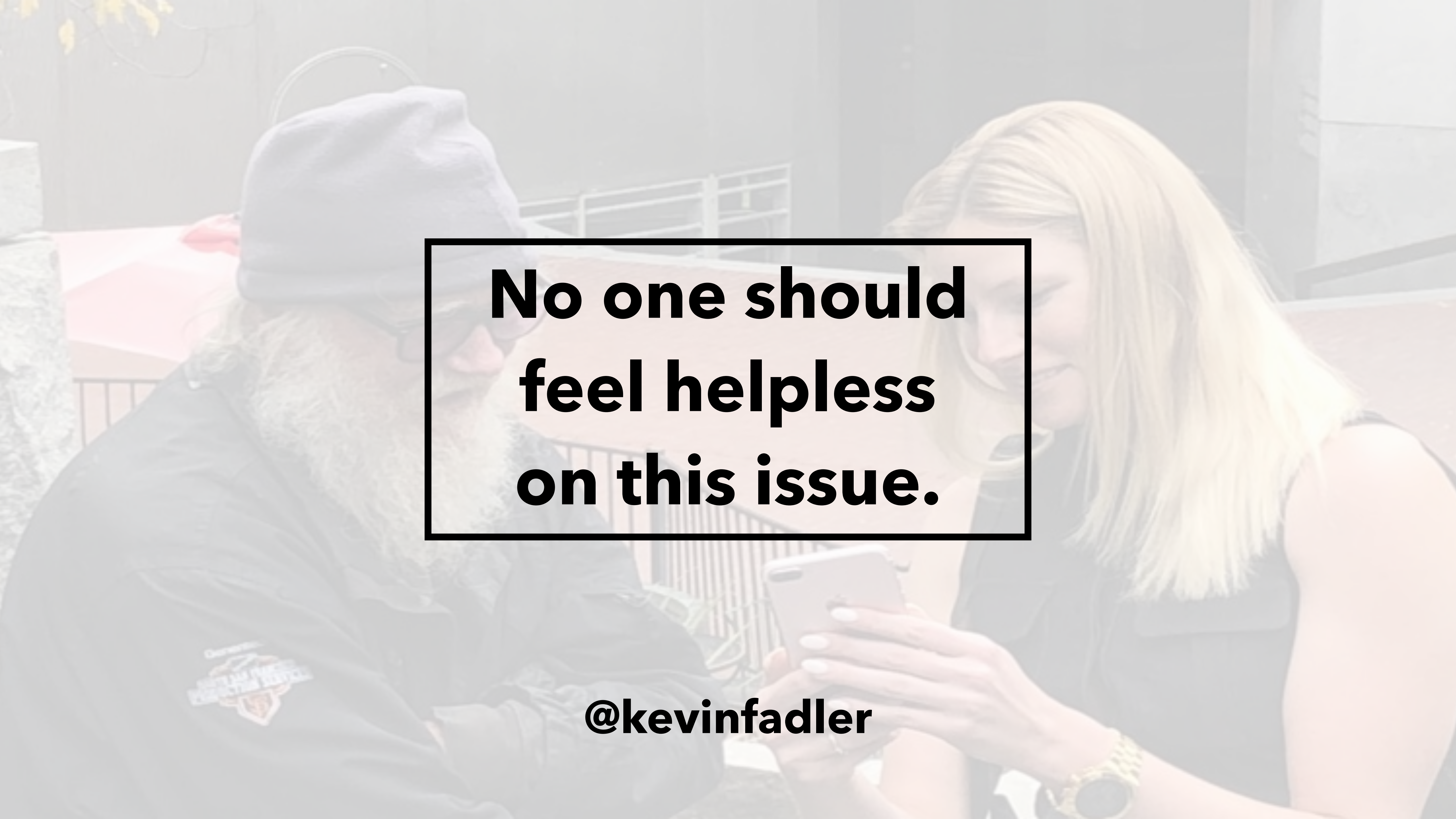


A background image showing a man with a long white beard and a black cap looking at a smartphone held by a woman with blonde hair. The man is wearing a dark jacket with a patch that says "Orange County Sheriff's Department". The woman is wearing a black top and a gold watch. The image is faded and has a black border around the text.

**No one should  
go through  
homelessness  
alone.**

**@kevinfadler**

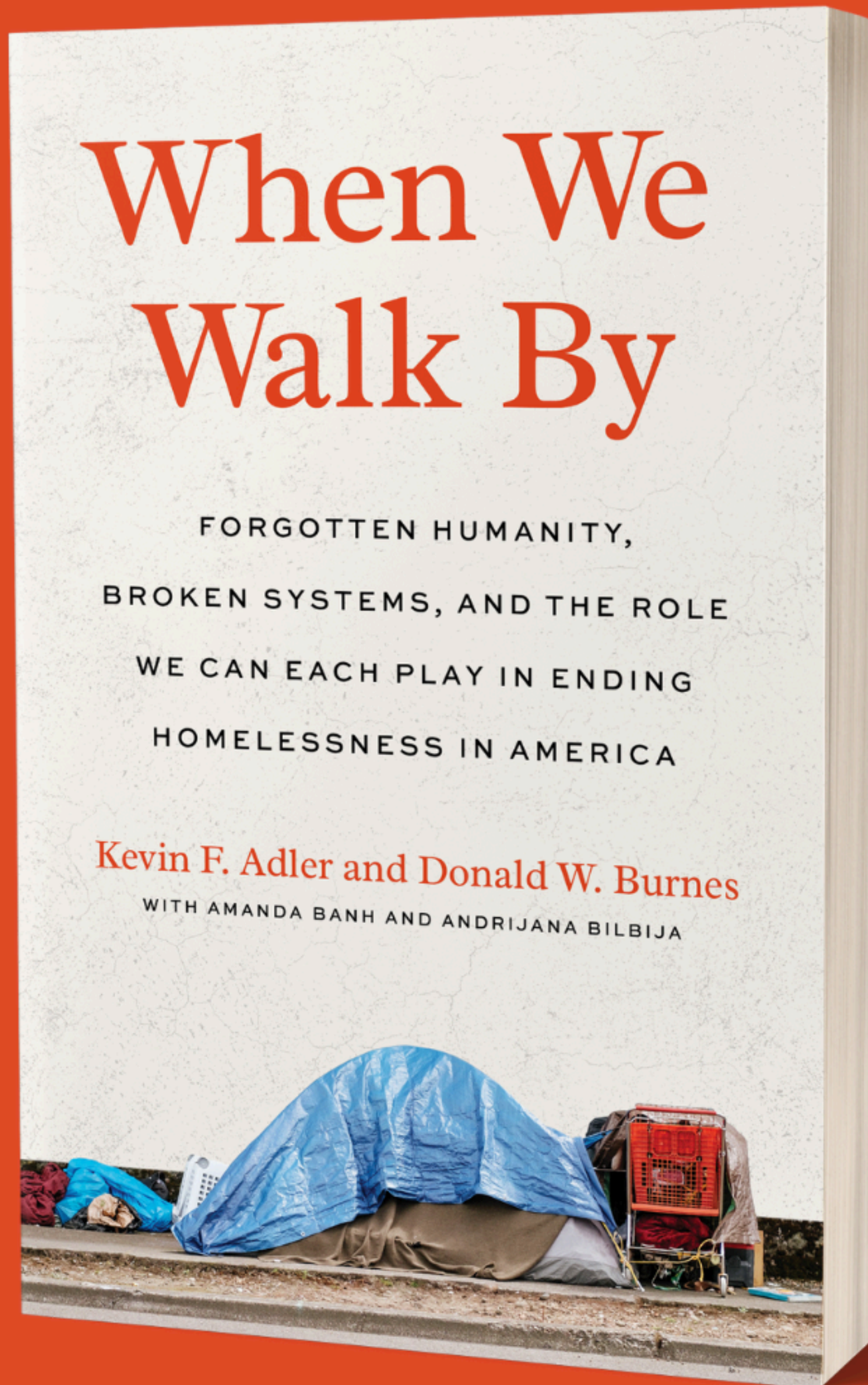


A man with a long white beard and a black cap is looking at a smartphone held by a blonde woman. The man is wearing a black jacket with a Harley-Davidson logo. The woman is wearing a black top and a gold watch. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a railing and some foliage.

**No one should  
feel helpless  
on this issue.**

**@kevinfadler**





**@kevinfadler**

**kevin@miraclemessages.org**





**Thank you!**

