**Living Inside the Box *Video transcript***

From the transcript of “[Living Inside the Box](http://www.sciencefriday.com/video/05/03/2013/living-inside-the-box.html),” filmed and produced by Flora Lichtman, May 3, 2013

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| **Michelle:** This house is made of 5 shipping containers. |
| **David:** And we’re right over here *[points to position in a tabletop model of shipping container house].* We went to work in the morning, and there was no building, and you came home for lunch and it was there. |
| **Michele and David:** This is our home! |
| **Michele:** Well we bought the land in 2005, and we were so happy. |
| **David:** We’re the happy people who bought the land that has been sitting for 60 years.  **masonry**: stone or brick construction |
| **Michele:** Yeah, that old rat-infested lot. Our site was 20 feet and we wanted to do something very conventional but we just couldn’t afford it. So I’m an architect, I did the drawings, and I sent only the ***masonry*** envelope out to bid and it came in at $300,000. We figured it out in shipping containers: each of these shipping containers costs from $1500-$2500. The riggers, the people who take shipping containers and swing them through the air and place them in NYC, I mean they were about $20,000 per day. So this envelope ended up costing us like $50,000 as supposed to $350,000, and that was enough so that we could leverage the tiny little bit of money we had to start to do the project and also to persuade banks to start giving us a loan. |
| ***Interviewer:*** *How did banks respond?* |
| **Michele:** Not well. |
| **David**: Nope. |
| **Michele:** See, don’t get us started; it was very very painful. We thought we were doing the right thing—we were trying to build our house so that we could support ourselves. You know, the whole American dream thing, and here we were, we couldn’t get a loan, the department of buildings stopped us for 10 months, and it was just such a low period in our lives. Thank goodness our marriage survived. So it was four years, and we moved in in 2012. We didn’t even know that we were the first shipping-container house in NYC. We were shocked!  You know, they pack these things full of goods on these huge container boats. Each of them carries at least 60,000 pounds, and they can be hooked together with these big things so they’re virtually earthquake-proof. Since the containers can hold so much weight, we are exploring what we can grow on our roof decks.  So all these windows, they’re all recycled, or we found them on the street kind of thing. |
| **David**: People would say, “What size of window are you looking for?” “So what sized window you got?” Then we cut the hole for the window. |
| **Michele:** The floors are concrete, so then we laid packs of hot water, so that’s our heating system. It’s like a giant concrete radiator on every floor. |
| **David**: It was a great idea leaving like 2 inches of the wall when we cut it out so that that was the dam for the concrete, and it produced this beautiful effect. (*To Michele*) It was one of your best ideas. |
| **Michele:** David really likes the sound of the rain and the snow. |
| **David**: The hail is great; it sounds like “tink tink tink tink tink tink”. |
| **Michele:** But there are a lot of people who just walk by on the street and just say “great building.” |
| **David**: Or they’ll just stand outside kind of mesmerized until you say, “You know, I gotta go talk to this person—they’re just staring. And then they’re like, “I think I can do this.” I mean, that’s the nice thing—a lot of people say, “I look at your house, and I want to do it.” |