A STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY

Cinema and Media Studies
Black Camera, An International Film Journal
Black Film Center/Archive
Center for Documentary Research and Practice
Film History: An International Journal

As educators, we affirm the principle that protest is a human right and patriotic act, not to be abridged or denied but upheld and protected by law enforcement and government.

As the COVID-19 pandemic devastates the nation and disproportionately destroys Black lives, anti-democratic practices by law enforcement and governmental entities are ascendant.

The brutal murder of George Floyd by the police in Minneapolis has once again turned the attention of the world to the long and tragic history of white supremacy and racial violence in the United States. This history of violence is distinguished by "slave patrols" and "Black Codes" that have institutionalized white privilege and regulated racial norms. We stand in solidarity and in mourning with Black families and communities of color across the country.

We call for transparent investigation and justice in the racial murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor in Kentucky, and for an end to discriminatory public and corporate policies that sustain disparities in wealth, education, employment, healthcare, housing, among foundational sectors in society.

We affirm the constitutional right of American citizens to protest nonviolently and to seek redress for state-sanctioned inhumane policing practices and domestic terrorism against Black, Brown, Latinx, Asian, and Indigenous peoples.

We object to the militarization of law enforcement against protestors who courageously exercise their constitutional right to "peaceably assemble" so as to "petition the Government for a redress of grievances." We condemn Donald Trump’s outrageous utterance and insult, declaring Black, Brown, and White people protesting the murder of Floyd “thugs” and “terrorists” and Defense Secretary Mark Esper’s incendiary call to “dominate the battlespace” against protesters.
We denounce the targeting and harassing by law enforcement of journalists and other media professionals reporting on protests nationwide.

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As educators at Indiana University, we call for inclusive and moral public policies that renew our collective commitment to education as an active and transformational practice of teaching, research, and civic engagement.

For us, teaching is more than knowledge production: it is a consequential intervention in the project of world-making. We train new generations of scholar/teachers to challenge received and prevailing assumptions upon which race and racism are founded.

We are committed to an expansive view and project of media literacy that demystifies the social world and the disinformation that shape public opinion and distort perceptions of Black lives and communities, as it does for gender, ethnic, sexual, and religious identities. We seek to enable understanding of a political class and its media enablers who propagate ideologies that legitimize racial inequalities and social divisions in society.

Specifically, we call on the Office of Diversity to fulfill its mandate and redouble its efforts to promote, nurture and defend diversity, equity and inclusion on the IU Bloomington campus.

We endorse the recent statement by the Society for Cinema and Media Studies condemning “police violence and acts of hatred against African Americans,” and we support the work of its Antiracism, Equity, and Diversity Task Force, among other initiatives.

We call upon the Dean and the Media School administration to address the underrepresentation of Black and Brown people among support staff, administrators, and faculty ranks in the School; to diversify the membership of its [external] Advisory Board; and to develop and support initiatives to identify, recruit, and admit greater numbers of students of color for graduate studies.

We call on the Bloomington Faculty Council, as the representative body of the faculty, to condemn racial violence and all manner of white privilege on the IU campus. In addition, the BFC should collaborate with the relevant offices on campus to confront the culture that enables these twin scourges among us.

Finally, we invite faculty in the Media School and other units on the IU campus to collaborate, advocate for, and develop actionable initiatives that address and redress the above concerns.

As educators, we actively engage in the struggle for racial justice, equality, and accountability.