

Editorial: We Can't Shy Away

HeartBeat EIC Team

Racism is a deeply rooted issue that has affected every institution in this country. The deaths of unarmed black men and women such as George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, as well as the effects that COVID-19 has had on the black community, have most recently demonstrated that racism is an urgent concern in our country. As Sacred Heart students, we are obligated to act based on a social awareness of the problems surrounding us. We cannot be silent during this time because indifference is what has allowed these systems of oppression to thrive. The conversation about race is often viewed on a global scale, but it also needs to be addressed in our communities, schools, and families. In order to have a meaningful impact on our communities, we need to actually take the steps that will create necessary change. Racism is an issue that we all need to work together to actively combat. It is clear that the system we all live in is not only broken, but constructed in a way that oppresses people of color and rewards those in positions of privilege and power. The racial injustices that continue to permeate our country have an unquestionable effect on all of us— this is a fact that cannot be refuted.

At this moment, we are called to discuss and act on a major divide that is disproportionately affecting the black community. The five goals that have structured our high school education require us to do so. At their core, Sacred Heart's goals and criteria strongly condemn hateful acts like systemic racism and violence against people of color while encouraging advocacy and ally-

ship. It's important to note that the goals push us to first educate ourselves about racism and then employ our knowledge for change. Goal 3 states that Sacred Heart "educates to a critical consciousness that leads its total community to analyze and reflect on the values of society and to act for justice." We must enact social change in order to build a community that is rooted in inclusion and justice. Police brutality and systemic racism can only be eradicated when people are aware of these injustices. And as we seek to build a community that is in line with Christian values, we are called to restructure the way that we have approached racism in our classrooms.

As we look forward to the upcoming school year and the ways in which students can connect with one another in classrooms and media outlets, we need to avoid shying away from topics that are deemed "sensitive" and "charged," like race. We urge the school community to come together to have these conversations about race, because change starts with education. In order to educate the whole child we cannot avoid talking about race because, as Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat said, "education must be concerned not only with studies, but also with whatever may be required for the right ordering of life and requirements of cultivated society."

Our school is a predominantly white institution and we need to be mindful about how we approach the topic, but uncomfortable discussions do not give us an excuse to opt out of the conversation completely. We need to ask ourselves if our school is truly committed

to diversity, building an inclusive community that welcomes students of color, and creating safe spaces. Are traditions and norms at Sacred Heart implicitly racist or exclusive?

Explicit and implicit racism are different—we see both blatant racism and microaggressions in our country and in our communities. We need to be able to recognize the way in which the system excludes and dehumanizes people of color, and we need to reflect and acknowledge how our bias is guiding our decisions, both big and small. We need to ask ourselves if we are being bystanders or upstanders when we see something racist happening. For example, not correcting a friend if they say something that can be perceived as racist. We as a community have to be committed to creating change on a large scale, while also recognizing the way in which systemic racism and exclusion affects our own school. While no one at our school is explicitly racist or holds bigoted views, we are unconscious participants in a system that is racist. With strength and education comes the realization of our privilege and the first steps to lessening the gap.

We hope that this issue will allow us to understand the urgency of a tangible response to such a vast issue. The HeartBeat team has felt the need to create this digest because we believe in the importance of the Black Lives Matter movement that calls us to have a school wide conversation about race, equity, and justice now. Let's work together to make sure that these topics are addressed and that we act to support future generations of historically marginalized groups.

The History of the Black Lives Matter Movement

Kiran Seeff '23

The day is November 22, 2014. A 12-year-old boy is playing outside with a replica toy gun. Two police officers arrive on the scene after being called to respond to a loitering black youth who appears to be armed and dangerous. That call ends with the 12-year-old boy being shot twice and dying the following day. His name was Tamir Rice, and his life was one of many tragic losses that fueled the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement.

BLM's roots started with a hashtag from Alicia Garza in 2013, who was later joined by Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi, in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman, the man responsible for the death of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin. On February 26, 2012, Zimmerman (a neighborhood watch captain at Twin Lakes Gated Community) placed a phone call to 911, claiming that a suspicious person had entered the neighborhood. The dispatcher proceeded to instruct Zimmerman not to exit his vehicle, and to wait for the police to arrive. However, Zimmerman ignored the instruction and approached Martin. Shots were fired shortly afterwards. Zimmerman was found not guilty of charges of second-degree murder and manslaughter, and the US Justice Department declared that no civil rights charges would be brought against him.

Fast forward to July 17, 2014 in New York City. A police officer has put Eric Garner in a chokehold, after suspecting him of selling untaxed cigarettes on the streets of Staten Island. His last words, identical to those of George Floyd, were "I can't breathe." This death initially

sparked a 2,500 person protest on Staten Island. However, other protests followed, which helped to popularize the Black Lives Matter movement. Later that year, another protest occurred in Washington DC as a response to a grand jury's decision not to indict Daniel Pantaleo, the officer who killed Garner.

Just a month after the death of Eric Garner in August 2014, a black 18-year-old named Michael Brown was shot six times by a police officer in the suburb of Ferguson, Missouri. After having been shot, his body was left on the street for hours. In response to Brown's death, residents of Ferguson held protests, facing tear gas, rubber bullets, and a state of emergency. One major result was that attention to the BLM movement increased. These protests took place in an area where 90 percent of citations, 93 percent of arrests, 85 percent of car stops, and approximately 90 percent of documented uses of force occurred within Ferguson's African American population. The black community composed only 67 percent of the total population in that area.

A year later in August 2015, a group of activists including DeRay McKessen, Brittney Packnet, and Sam Sinyangwe launched Campaign Zero, a 10-policy solution detailing how the United States Department of Justice and Police Departments can protect members of the black community. Originally, Campaign Zero was created as an alternate solution to inflicting police brutality. The main page of their website reads: "We can live in a world where the police don't kill people, by limiting police interventions,

improving community interactions, and ensuring accountability." BLM became an umbrella term for this new wave of black civil rights activism that includes many different people and organizations, such as Campaign Zero.

Since the deaths of Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, and the release of Campaign Zero, countless deaths have occurred as a result of racial biases, but few are reported. Those whose deaths have been reported include: Laquan McDonald, John Crawford, Sandra Bland, Freddie Gray, Walter Scott, Deborah Danner, Alton Sterling, Philando Castille, Terrence Crutcher, Antwon Rose, Atatiana Jefferson, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd. The BLM movement has existed since 2013 in an effort to stop people from being robbed of a mother, a father, a brother, a sister, a life, a feeling of security in their own neighborhood, or a future. America's black community continues to fight and develop policies and creative solutions so that boys and girls like Tamir or Trayvon will have a chance at a future.

Sources and places where you can find more info:

- <https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/>
- <https://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/black-lives-matter-from-hashtag-to-movement>
- <https://www.cnn.com/2013/06/05/us/trayvon-martin-shooting-fast-facts/index.html>
- <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2019/08/20/eric-garner-timeline-chokehold-death-daniel-pantaleo-fired/2059708001/>
- <https://www.joincampaignzero.org/#vision>

America's Bias

Timothy Meneses '21

Black lives matter. On Tuesday, May 26, one day after his death, I watched George Floyd helplessly die on the ground. No one in America should have to go through an experience like what George underwent. With the momentum that we have built, it is our duty to stand by our black brothers and sisters in this troubling time and enact change. At this time, backing up the Black Lives Matter movement requires more support than others because of the generations of oppression and silenced voices that have gone unheard and without change.

Black lives matter. Our country has a deeply rooted problem of systemic racism where those with privilege benefit from the system. You might be wondering why I am so involved with the Black Lives Matter movement and have further felt compelled enough to write about it. As a Filipino-American, I am categorized as a "model minority," meaning us Asians carry positive stereotypes such as being intelligent, or wealthy. While these are just generalizations that may not apply to everyone within the Asian community, American society tells African-Americans and other minorities to follow the Asian "example." I have to be aware and notice that I will never experience life the same as an African-American would and recognize the privilege that has come with my ethnicity. Since learning about Ahmaud Arbery's death, I have started reflecting and asking myself how different my life would be if I were black. How much more anxious would I be on a day to day basis? How many looks would I get on my daily runs in my predominantly white neighborhood? Questions like these have led to me visualizing a glimpse of some daily struggles in the African-American community, but I can

never fully understand. I encourage you to check your privilege, if any, and how your life has been influenced as a result of it.

Black lives matter. I hate that I have more privileges than others solely because of the way my race is portrayed within our nation. The guilt and frustration that I feel when I see other people of color struggle is one that has called me to action and vocalize myself for those whose voices have never been heard. I stand by the black community because I share the experience of being a minority in America and carry stereotypes that have ultimately defined some of the ways I have lived my life. In this way, I am empathetic with the black community and other groups of color and am calling for more from others.

Black lives matter. This social issue is not just pertinent to the black community but for everyone. If you have watched George's video, you have experienced some amount of horror and fear, enough to make you want to do something about it. I am disgusted that some police officers manipulate their authority and power for vice. Police brutality highlights just one branch of many in our nation's systemic roots of racism, upon which this country was founded. Even if the problem of police brutality was completely resolved, African-Americans still face other racial injustices as a result of our country's roots, such as concentrated poverty in black communities, the perpetuating wage gap due to racism, a lack of access to higher levels of education like Sacred Heart which are predominantly white institutions (PWI), and many more injustices.

Black lives matter. Yes, all lives and blue lives matter and it would be pessimistic to think that they did not. However, at this specific moment in

time, it is imperative that we demonstrate support to our black brothers and sisters. Because of their race, the black community is already put at a disadvantage and it would be ignorant not to acknowledge the cruel injustices that they encounter. George Floyd's death is one of many that has added on to the already absurd amount of systemic trauma that the African-American community has faced. It is essential the black community knows that many people are sending their love and praise as this is a pressing humanitarian issue.

Black lives matter. If you did not take anything away from this article, I ask you to have respectful conversations about these uncomfortable topics of racism in our country with anyone who has expertise in this field. Through these discussions, you will gain clarity, learn about unique perspectives, and express your emotions caused by these circumstances. In my experience, by reaching out, the pain and anxiety that I felt have eased, but will not be fully tamed until there is substantial justice and change. With the valuable resources of technology and social media, there is no excuse not to take action. While this will inevitably be very uncomfortable for many, it is in these uncomfortable conversations that we can grow the most and learn to be better for the future, which will create a more harmonious society and hopefully prevent scenarios like what has happened to George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and many others. The empathy that we can acquire through open dialogue will drive our understanding and care for one another as human beings.

Instagram Activism: Why We Do it and What It Does

Ilaria Freccia '22

One of the most common ways that information and news, especially for our generation, is spread and received is through social media. Whether it is a repost of a tree, promising to donate a dollar for every like, or a thread of phone numbers and emails for offices and representatives to contact, many have seen Instagram activism of some sort during a crisis. However, one of the problems with it is that people use it as an excuse for real action. Performative activism is when people post on their stories and put up the image of engagement in the movement, when in reality, they take no action and are uninformed about the issues causing it. Currently we are in the middle of a global outcry against racial injustice which has translated to social media with a flood of posts by peers and celebrities demanding change. But even now, as protests are still happening and injustices are still occurring, I have noticed a decrease in posts and stories, and an increase in regular pictures as people slowly begin to move on with their lives.

Posting in solidarity and about resources to use to make a change is helpful, especially in times of so much uncertainty. However, it is also important to follow through on those resources and use them off social media to make a physical contribution or change. Just posting is helpful for other people, but if you aren't going to take action in addition, what is the point? This is the problem that prompted the #blackouttuesday movement. As a show of solidarity, millions of people posted a black square on their feed on Tuesday, June 2.

However, the plan backfired and it quickly went from a useful idea to amplify black voices to a controversial trend that overwhelmed the app's algorithm, blocking valuable information and resources. This is a prime example of performative activism where people took advantage of a trend to show their support of the movement, but not actually make change or share how to.

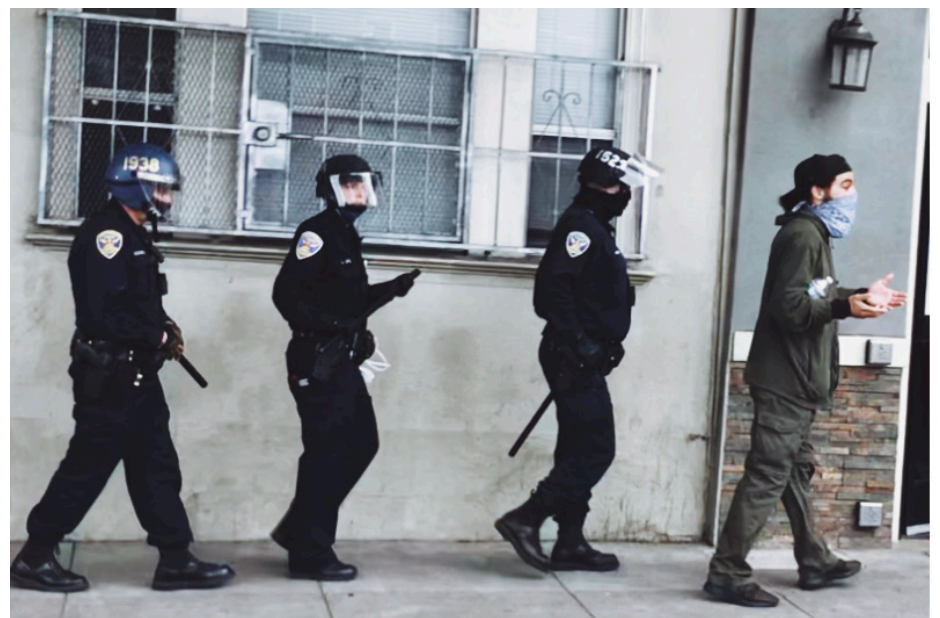
Instagram can be a very judgemental platform, where people filter their lives to reveal a tailored image of themselves. And in the same way, it can be very challenging and confusing about what to do in times of major outcry like the one we are in now. It can be hard to post, imagining that other people will judge you for your opinions, or that you will accidentally offend someone by not doing enough or supporting the wrong cause. It can be even harder not to post, thinking that people will assume you don't support the cause. Everyone responds differently to such situations. Some people take public action, going to marches, posting on Instagram, and donating, while others do all the same things but more privately, like informing themselves and participating locally. I believe that the most important thing you can post, if you are going to, is easily accessible information. This could be the date and time of protests, petitions to sign, or emails to send. The chains that people post on their stories tagging friends to show their support seem insincere to me. There is no valuable information that can be gained from them, and they clog up places where useful information could be found. Often,

I have found that the people who participate in these trends are posting without understanding the real meaning of the movement. This might be because they are afraid of what others will think if they do not physically show that they are supportive of the movement, or more commonly, they might feel overwhelmed by the amount of information they are seeing in a short period of time and don't know where to start supporting the movement. There is an immense value in Instagram activism as a platform for solidarity and information, but it is important not to judge others for their use of it or lack of use. We must also take advantage of platforms that give us the ability to easily and efficiently take action from home if marching and protesting is not a possibility.

In times of fear, questioning, and change, the best thing that you can do on Instagram and in real life is to show your solidarity towards black people and people of color by fighting alongside them for change, standing up and supporting them, reaching out to show your support, and most importantly, working to change unconscious biases you might have. No matter what you believe or who you support, ignore any fears you might have about judgement from others and think about your privilege and how you can and will contribute to this historic movement. As the posts start to diminish and people move on with their lives, keep on fighting and speaking out, because racism won't disappear overnight and it's a fight that is worth our time and energy to continue.

Photography Spotlight: Black Lives Matter Protests

Hope Angotti '21 & Charlie Kanelopoulos '21



Systemic Racism: A Brief History and What We Can Learn

Jonathan Martínez '21

Before you start reading, I want to address something: don't feel guilty about this. This is not any of our faults but rather of the systems that were placed. Take this time to educate yourselves on these issues. Throughout the course of these past weeks, we have seen the term systemic racism continue to show up in the news, social media, protests, and other platforms for sharing information. In plain words, systemic racism is defined as a form of racism expressed in the practice of social and political institutions.

The first slaves, 20 to be specific, arrived in 1619 in Jamestown, Virginia and more slaves were brought to America and other parts of the world through the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Slavery ended up being placed into our U.S. Constitution, as Article I, Section 2, Clause 3 declares that any person who was not free would be counted as three-fifths of a free individual for the purposes of determining congressional representation. This would be known as the Three-Fifths

clause. For the next 200 years, America would use free labor from slaves to grow cotton, tobacco, and other crops. After the Civil War, the 13th Amendment was ratified in 1865, which states "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction." Although the 13th amendment declared slavery illegal, there is one key clause within this amendment, "except as a punishment for crime." This loophole means that someone could become a slave if they were to be arrested. This led to the Black Codes, laws passed in 1865 and 1866, which gave ex-slaves rights such as marriage and the right to own property, but made it illegal to carry firearms, and have voting rights amongst other things. The Black Codes required ex-slaves to be in labor contracts, because the south relied on their field labor for crops and economic growth and the South was going through the era

of Reconstruction. During this time, Blacks were arrested for minor crimes such as loitering or vagrancy, thus forcing them to do labor. This forced labor trapped the black community for many years after slaves became illegal. However, after Reconstruction ended, most of these laws were reenacted into Jim Crow laws.

By the late 19th century, Jim Crow laws had passed, legalizing racial segregation in the south. To add on to that, the ruling in the Supreme Court case *Plessy v Ferguson* (1896) allowed for black and whites to be segregated because the court ruled that separate was still equal. The treatment and conditions that the Black Americans had to face were not equal, but this was one of the ways racism was made legal. It was not until *Brown v Board of Education* (1954) that *Plessy v Ferguson* was overruled, stating that separate was not actually equal. Although *Brown v Board* was an important step within the legal system, the fight for racial equality under the law

was not over. Jim Crow laws were still in place until the 1950s, and some states had Jim Crow laws in place for many years after that. Alabama did not legalize interracial marriage until the year 2000, over 30 years after it was legalized in the US. African Americans were still segregated from white people and did not have the same rights. Black Americans would be denied service at restaurants, in schools, and even had to pass literacy tests and pay to vote. In the fight for Civil Rights, leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Rosa Park, John Lewis, Ella Baker, Medgar Evers, amongst others, led peaceful protests but were still being jailed for their civil disobedience. Due to the movement, the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were passed, which legally ended segregation in public places yet systemic racism continued.

In the late 1960's President Nixon was elected with a platform of declaring a war on drugs, specifically crack cocaine. However, it was under Reagan's administration where we saw a real escalation of the war on drugs, which was when the crack epidemic hit in the 80's. Congress established mandatory sentencing penalties for crack cocaine which were harsher than those of powdered cocaine, although they are the same drug. This had a major impact as people of color were being targeted as the main criminals, and anyone could go to jail for very low possessions of marijuana or cocaine. To put this into perspective, a black person would get the same amount of time in prison for 1 ounce of crack cocaine than for 100 ounces of powder cocaine, which was much more prevalent in black communities

than white. The war on drugs wiped out African American communities, as they were the demographic that was getting targeted the most. The Center for American Progress showed data that Black Americans are nearly six times more likely to be incarcerated for drug-related offenses than their white counterparts, despite equal substance usage rates. They also state that almost 80 percent of people serving time for a federal drug offense are black or latino. Plus, in the 1970s and 1980s, the media often portrayed Black Americans as criminals in the news. Instead of dealing with drugs as a health issue, the government dealt with it in a way that criminalized and marginalized people of color and in the end, the war on drugs has cost the United States an estimated \$1 trillion. This is a lot of money that could have been spent on better mental and physical health services, safer schools, and investing in communities of color.

The prison population in 1970 was 357,292. The prison population today is around 2.3 million. Although the imprisonment rate has been decreasing over the past few years, it has been really small, as the prison rate has dropped roughly 1 percent over the past decade. Although black males make up 6.5% of the U.S. population, they make up 40.2% of the prison population. Black men are almost 6 times more likely to be imprisoned than a white man. Black Americans are imprisoned at higher rates and this also affects other parts of their lives after their incarceration. In most states once you get convicted of a felony, you lose the rights to vote, employment in certain fields, serving on a jury, and benefit pro-

grams.

Systemic racism and oppression has been a part of America's story since the beginning, and it has not disappeared today. It has had a major impact on how our country and society works. The systemic maltreatment of people of color continues to be an issue that needs to be addressed to be able to create a more equitable society.

This is just one of the many different topics regarding systemic racism. I know this is a lot of information. If you want to get a better and more descriptive description of mass incarceration and how its history can be traced all the way back to slavery, I strongly suggest you to check out the documentary called '13th', which is available on Netflix. Plus, there are many more movies, documentaries, and shows on Netflix such as "LA 92", "When They See Us", and many more. Some great books to read include "Between the World and Me", "Mindful or Race: Transforming Racism from the Inside Out", and many more books all available on Amazon. In addition, this is not just an African American issue, but an American issue, as this also impacts Whites, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans and many more people. Prison reform is not a Democratic or Republican issue, liberal or conservative issue, but an American issue. We ourselves may not have the answers to these problems or will be able to change this whole problem ourselves, but we can become more aware of the issues at hand and fight for change and justice.

The Need for Solidarity

Tiffany Sanchez '21

This country is broken, and that is truly tragic and upsetting. We have failed our black brothers and sisters for far too long, and we cannot seem to stop ignoring and fighting against their pain and pleads. That needs to end now.

For many, especially for the black community, these past few weeks have been overwhelming, chaotic, and despairing. We have witnessed the unjust death of George Floyd at the hands of four Minneapolis police officers as well as the turmoil that has erupted since then, as protests have turned into inspiring yet demanding riots across all 50 states. The black community and allies are demanding an end to police brutality, racism, injustice, inequality, and discrimination; they are demanding that law enforcement be finally held accountable for years of failing to protect and serve all citizens of the US. Despite the worldwide support that the protests and the Black Lives Matter movement have received, there are people who continue to question the reasons and motives that drive the distraught protestors.

For example, the contradictory rallying cry "ACAB," meaning "All cops are bastards," has received a lot of backlash, causing further division and anger in the country. Some argue that "not all cops are bad" and have even transformed the acronym to "All cops are brave." They believe it is important to publicize good cop behavior in order to prevent further violence, division, and hatred. This has fueled others to fire back that the saying does not actually mean all cops are bad, but instead, according to Independent, that "every single police officer is complicit in a system that actively devalues the lives of people of color."

Black cops are not given a free pass on this issue either. They "ignore, and thus perpetuate, racial violence to protect themselves and their income." This opinion is that all cops are willingly and knowingly serving a racist system that was created to uphold the disappointing white supremacist ideal, thus the reason people collectively call them "bastards."

Likewise, a response to the cry and hashtag "Black Lives Matter" has been contradicted and challenged by the slogan "All Lives Matter." Once again, protesters' chants have been deemed exclusionary, irrational, and confrontational. But according to Bazaar, anyone "who has kept any type of pulse on civil rights and the black human condition in the United States since the transatlantic slave trade would understand the need to emphasize the protection of black bodies." The BLM hashtag was never meant to suggest that other lives did not matter, but that as a nation, we need to prioritize our aid, attention, and support towards our black community, which constantly fears being criminalized and hunted by the men and women who swore to protect them. According to Bazaar, black people "are twice as likely to be killed by a police officer while unarmed, compared to a white individual" and a 2015 study shows that "African-Americans died at the hands of police at a rate of 7.2 per million, while whites were killed at a rate of 2.9 per million." Why, then, are people arguing that "all lives matter" if clearly they do not? When has America rightly served, protected, and prioritized the black community when they did not have to actively protest and fight for their rights?

These unnecessary debates do not add or develop the discussion in any meaningful way. All they do is dismiss and derail other people's lived experiences and the real focus of the protests: the need to abolish and reform America's racist foundation meant to function in a manner that only highlights and protects whiteness. It is fair to say everyone has a right to voice their opinion, even if it comes out as an opposition to the BLM movement, but that does not mean we cannot push ourselves to use that right wisely.

This is not about political correctness, but the urgent need to accept that these cases about bad policing are not an issue of a few bad apples, but evidence of "a tree that is rotting from the inside out, spreading its poison," according to Independent. It is about the need for the white community to stop gaslighting the black community because it does not make the issues at hand any less true if they ignore or contradict the rally calls for their own comfort. It is about the need to realize and accept the privileges you have, and that you will never understand the black experience. These comments and unwillingness to accept the truth are what keep this nation divided, not the rally calls of the protesters, as people decide to remain complicit and protect the groups of people this country was built to solely protect. It is about the need to fight with the black community instead of against them. It is about learning how to talk less, listen more, and be a better ally. This is a basic need for solidarity, sympathy, and love. It's as simple as that.