VIDEO SPEECH

FOR

LARRY GOLDSMITH

**“I’M MAD AS HELL AND I’M NOT GONNA TAKE IT ANY MORE!!!”** Those words were uttered forty years ago, in 1976, in a famous scene from a pivotal movie called “Network.” The fury demonstrated in that quote had to do with the character acting out of rage and frustration at the condition of the world… a world that was seeing the increasing proliferation of violence, desperation, and manipulation by the media. Forty years have passed and we haven’t learned anything. We’re forced to be more connected, have more advanced educations, be more available, amenable, “excusable,” but in truth the more things seem to change, the more they remain stuck in divisiveness, hate, and disparity. It’s been over **FIFTY** years since the Civil Rights movement and peace movements and yet we as a nation, as **ONE** community, can’t seem to embrace our **HUMANITY**. The more we connect, it seems like the more we hate. **IT HAS TO STOP**.

The events of the past few weeks have sickened all of us. Maybe that’s the one thing we have in common… but now is not the time to make light of any of this. Now is the time to **FIND THE LIGHT** and shine it on the truth of the situation. Racism exists and it’s time to uncover the truth, confront the reality, and come together as a community and as a society to **STOP IT** once and for all.

In my life I am fortunate to work and exist most of the time in an environment in which I do not confront racism on a daily basis but that doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist. Just because I am… thank God, **NOT PERSONALLY** in the line of fire- literally and figuratively, does not mean that I don’t feel THAT **PAIN**… IN MY OWN **GUT** every time one of my black brothers is profiled, stopped, threatened, and treated differently than someone else would be in the same situation.

During the darkest hours of World War II, Winston Churchill said, “We have nothing to fear but fear itself.” Is that what is going on here? Is all of this senseless violence borne of fear? Is violence the bi-product of ignorance? Is violence and over reaction caused by ignorance, intolerance, and impatience? What’s the root cause of a man, sitting in a car, speaking calmly and obeying a command to show his documents as requested, who then gets senselessly shot and killed at close range? What was the police officer thinking? I think we have to be very honest and realize that his problem… this problem… is **OUR PROBLEM**. Is fear at the root of racism? If it is, then we have to address the issue here and now and we have to take a stand… a stand to UNITE humanity. The **buck and the bullet must stop with us**. WE WILL NOT TOLERATE RACISM. WE WILL NOT TOLERATE VIOLENCE AGAINST ANYONE. AND WE WILL NOT ALLOW FEAR TO FORCE US TO BE LESS THAN WHO WE ARE.

But as we all continue to reel from and mourn the events of the recent past, we must also take responsibility for healing ourselves and those directly affected by violence. I have a nine-year-old son who means the world to me. My greatest purpose in life is to see him grow up… in a world in which he knows he counts…. a world in which he has a clear and profound experience that his existence on earth is a blessing to him and to those around him… to see him **MATTER** and accept responsibility to be a dignified, viable, and compassionate adult in a world in which he understands and experiences appreciation, respect, and understanding for **ALL** people in this world.

We must come together and take a pledge…. a pledge to live a life of respect and tolerance. I know it’s hard to think about it now but we must begin the process. We must go through the steps of mourning and then we must rebuild our selves, our souls and our communities in such a way that there is absolutely no doubt that all lives are worthy and ALL LIVES MATTER. We must teach our children and remind our adult friends and family that ignorance will no longer be tolerated and that dignity will prevail. We must develop the tools of self-respect and we must make sure they are practiced and implemented in every aspect of our lives. We see that hatred and violence do not work… well actually it does work in one way… it wakes us up and shakes us to our core. Violence and racism force us to realize that **THIS IS NOT** the way to go forth in this world.

I know one thing…. human beings are one in the same. Whether we’re blonde or black, fat or old, female or male, we are made of the same stuff. Our blood is the same. Our organs are the same. Our chemical make up is the same. It’s time to stop choosing whether to place a value or a bounty on top of a person’s “body bag” …. In the end, that’s all we are… on the outside. Ultimately each one of us is a soul and each one of us deserves equal respect while forging our way in the world.

Please join together in creating a universal dialogue that will heal and unite. It’s our only hope for the future.

Thank you.