

# PROFILED

a film by Kathleen Foster

## Discussion Guide

*PROFILED* knits the stories of the families and supporters of black and Latino youth murdered by the police into a powerful indictment of racial profiling and police brutality, and places them within the context of the roots of racism in the U.S.

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# 01. About the Discussion Guide

This Discussion Guide was developed as a tool for organizations, community groups, and educators who want to use *PROFILED* to stimulate discussion and involvement of their audiences at community events and in the classroom. Its aim, like that of the film, is to encourage discussion on the critical issues of race and racism in the U.S. today. It also serves as a call to action, encouraging viewers to join with others in multiracial unity to fight racism.

| The Guide includes questions to be asked before the screening to encourage viewers to reflect on what they know or may not know about police killings and racial profiling.

| The Guide suggests questions to discuss after the screening with the aim of stimulating further reflection on the connections between racial profiling, race, and racism.

| The Guide contains excerpts from historical and contemporary readings on race and racism that instructors or facilitators may use to help audience members expand and build on their knowledge of the issues.

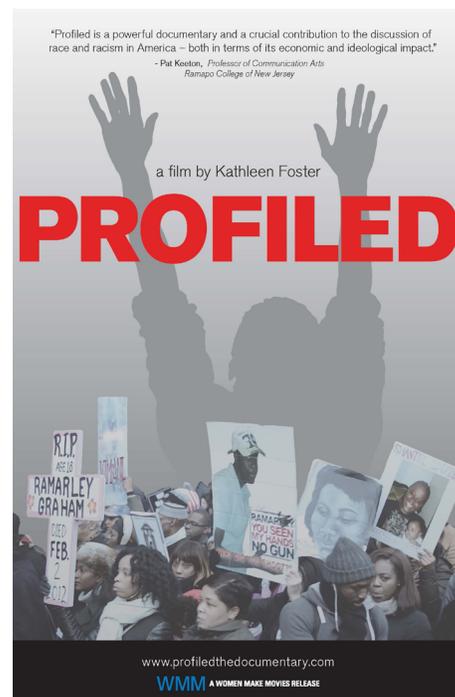
| The Guide also provides resource materials, including books, articles, films, and Internet links that explore the themes raised by the film.

| For those wanting to get involved, the Guide provides links to organizations that are engaged in struggles for racial, social, and economic justice.

# 02. About the Film

*PROFILED* knits the stories of mothers of black and Latino youth murdered by the New York Police Department (NYPD) into a powerful indictment of racial profiling and police brutality, and places them within the historical context of racism in the U.S. Some of the victims—Eric Garner, Michael Brown—are now familiar the world over. Others, like Shantel Davis and Kimani Gray, are remembered mostly by family and friends in their New York neighborhoods.

*PROFILED* bears witness to the racist violence that remains an everyday reality for black and Latino people in this country, ranging from the routine harassment of minority students in an affluent Brooklyn neighborhood to the killings and protests in Staten Island, New York, and Ferguson, Missouri. Moving interviews with victims' family members are juxtaposed with sharply etched analyses by evolutionary biologist Joseph L. Graves, Jr. (*The Race Myth*) who debunks claims of genetic differences based on race, and civil rights lawyer, Chauniqua D. Young, who was part of the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) legal team that filed the successful federal class action lawsuit against the NYPD's discriminatory stop-and-frisk policies. *PROFILED* gives viewers a window on one of the burning issues of our time.



## 03. Filmmaker's Statement

Since *PROFILED* was released in July 2016, the violence has continued. According to the *Washington Post's* "Fatal Force" database, the police have killed 862 people so far this year (as of November 14, 2017). A disproportionate number of these victims have been black and Latino men.

Fifty years after the Civil Rights Act that outlawed racial segregation, vast racial disparities still exist between white Americans and Americans of color, especially African Americans and Latinos. Changes in both the criminal justice system and social welfare programs have led us to a society closely resembling the racially segregated society of the past. As Michelle Alexander writes in her book *The New Jim Crow*, "**We have not ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it.**"

In *PROFILED*, viewers witness the growth of a grassroots movement as the families of victims of police shootings and their supporters lead a struggle for justice and an end to police violence and racial profiling. They organize community vigils, educational events, protests and legal challenges.

At *PROFILED's* many screenings at colleges, community centers, museums, and film festivals around the country, audiences have been inspired by the strength and courage of the families and friends of victims. The film has generated thought-provoking discussions about the roots and consequences of racial discrimination in the U.S., especially in the law enforcement system. Multiracial audiences have been motivated to find ways to work for change.

The audience response to *PROFILED* has inspired this Guide. The aim is to continue to bring communities together, and to facilitate discussions and organizing efforts around the issues the film explores.

## 04. Questions Before Viewing

Video footage of Eric Garner being killed in a police chokehold, and protests like the one in Ferguson, Missouri, after the death of Michael Brown, brought the issue of police killings and racial profiling to national attention. Numerous deaths since then, and lack of accountability for the shootings—like the acquittal in September 2017 of a former police officer in the killing of Anthony Lamar Smith in Saint Louis, Missouri—reveal that the issues are not going away.

- A.** What are some of the instances of police killings you remember from media coverage?
- B.** How were these events covered? Who were the main voices telling the story—news reporters, political leaders, police officials, or family members of victims?
- C.** What images and words were most frequent, especially in repeated coverage?
- D.** How were the victims characterized? The police?
- E.** Do you know people who have been racially profiled or have you ever been profiled by the police?

A full discussion guide is available.

To purchase the film, visit:

<http://www.wmm.com/filmcatalog/pages/c942.shtml>.