



It's hard being a human being.

It's especially hard being a human being during a pandemic.

And it's unimaginably hard being a Black or Brown human being during this pandemic. Not only are people of color over-represented among those stricken with COVID-19, they are visibly and graphically in the middle of another pandemic: a 400-year-old ongoing affliction of legitimized, systemic, institutionally supported social and economic repression and the violence that enforces it.

The rage in the streets is about despair and denial. The despair of Black and Brown people. The denial of White people. I want us to remember George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and others who have lost their lives and recognize everything this says about the way this country has been historically organized to ensure the defeat of people of color. I want us to acknowledge the incredible pain and sheer exhaustion that our Black and Brown brothers and sisters are experiencing. I want us to join hands in support of the peaceful protests across this country. And then I want each of us to recommit to working together to turn this around.

This is the battle ARC was created to fight. To say companies shouldn't be political is, in my opinion, a misinterpretation of reality. Everything is political. We must commit to looking at the water in which we swim to uncover the depths of racism we haven't yet been able to see. When we root out denial, we can begin to stamp out despair.

Only then will we fully realize what it is to be human.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Hileman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

*CEO and Founder, American Reading Company*

