



CSLS SPEAKER SERIES
Monday, April 15, 2019

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**“Res Nullius Loquitur:
Black Life and the Problem of Self-Evidence”**

This paper examines a rhetoric of self-evidence underwriting the current public critique of racial profiling and police violence captured by audio-visual recording devices and disseminated across news and social media outlets. Analyzing this rhetoric allows us to think more deeply about why, despite a certain ubiquity of evidence of historical and institutionalized racism in policing available to us, the civil rights gains of the mid-twentieth century continue to be administratively weakened and made seemingly obsolete. In this talk, I hope to demonstrate how the rhetorical demand that the law submit to the self-evident nature of audio-visual recordings of racial profiling and police violence, like that of Sandra Bland’s 2015 arrest, produces its own structure of blindness and deafness. This presumption of a form of evidence so obvious it negates further evidence or inquiry occludes and distorts the fact that this evidence, upon closer examination, effaces the “self”, an *ipsa*, on behalf of which such evidence is thought to speak. This effacement, an *ex nihilo*, is formally, if bizarrely, encoded into the very audio-visual, legal and philosophic discourses circling around each eery recording.

PLACE Selznick Seminar Room, 2240 Piedmont Avenue
TIME 12:45 – 2:00pm. Coffee and water provided. Bag lunches welcome.
INFO <https://www.law.berkeley.edu/centers/center-for-the-study-of-law-society/>
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