

The Other Slavery, the Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America, by Andres Resendez.

White Americans participate in and witness social and racial injustices every day. It plays on mass, social and the main stream media: Internet, TV, radio, and the movies.

Yet most of us, White Americans refuse to recognize it.

It does not impact our life.

It is not relevant to us.

We rinse and we repeat.

Why do most Americans have little interest in dismantling a system that benefits so few at the expense of so many?

The Other Slavery, the Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America, by Andres Resendez, was a recommended read through Candid Conversations, an arm of 4 Corners Yoga Wellness. It's a social justice book club facilitated by Lisa Leung-Tat and was started around the time of George Floyd's murder, as a commitment in learning about the very issues that continue to harm. The group has read over a dozen books, watched several movies, read articles, and continue to do a deep dive not just in understanding but in being agents of change.

The Other Slavery was a difficult book to read for a host of reasons. The part that still haunts me is how little Americans, particularly, White Americans, know about the deadly

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history of the Native and Black American experience. The book shook me to my core, and gave me new purpose and courage to continue as a change agent, in the pursuit of racial, social justice and healing. We need it now more than ever.

White Americans benefit most from white-washing, a cultural construct, and racial prejudice we are taught from childhood.

‘White-washing is to alter (something) in a way that favors, features, or caters to white people: such as to portray (the past) in a way that increases the prominence, relevance, or impact of white people and minimizes or misrepresents that of nonwhite people.’

White-washing acts as an invisible security blanket that forms a safety net, with a connection to rights, access and belonging to all white spaces. Ironically those who hold the most social and political power are also the ones that grip on to fear that Black and Brown people are coming to take it away. There is a reason little is done on immigration reform in this country. It motivates a primal anxiety of the other and has been a political wedge for centuries to the present.

Case in point, the current failure of immigration reform and 2024 Republican Presidential candidate, Nicki Haley. She recently stated, the U.S is not and has never been a racist country. This mythology blankets white Americans in a comfort of decency with a lingering threat its all going to be taken away by the deluge of immigrants and the non-white class. Niki Haley’s lived experience has no bearing or connection to Black,

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Native, and indigenous Americans. Ms. Haley continues to perpetuate the white-washing: rinse and repeat.

The United States political and economic systems were created based on a social caste system and racial construct that one race is superior to all others. For hundreds of years, multi-generations of Black, Native and Indigenous Americans gave birth to a country with their very lives, families, and legacy. It is with the sweat and millions of tragic, senseless deaths that made the country, the United States of America.

The economic infrastructure that fueled the building of the United States was chattel slavery. Its foundation based on a false social and racial construct, Black and Ingenious peoples were not human. Mexican and European slave-traffickers and slave holders treated Black and indigenous people worse than animals, codified by social and political power, justified by laws, Black and indigenous people worked for nothing. The inhumanity of Chattel slavery evolved into what we now know as American capitalism that continues with the exploitation of BIPOC:

“An economic and political system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit.”

Flawed from its origins, capitalism, its purpose was clear, hold on to white economic, political, and social power at all cost. Based on the premise of scarcity, providing little to

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no access to social, political, economic, justice and power, the goal was for institutions to protect the white class. For centuries, It was paved in the name of Black codes, Jim Crow laws, stop and frisk, three strikes, and mass incarceration. Killing with sanction and impunity. Did you know?

“Black people, who account for 13 percent of the U.S. population, accounted for 27 percent of those fatally shot and [killed](#) by police in 2021, according to Mapping Police Violence, a nonprofit group that tracks police shootings.”

The systems are deliberate. The objective is to deny access to liberty, justice and prosperity that includes necessities such as living with clean air, water, safe communities, and good schools. Society has us believe it is be based on human behaviors, characteristics, and traits, rather than on system(s) that are in place to protect the social construct of white supremacy.

In my high school American history classes, we discussed state rights and glossed over the devastation and impact of slavery that continues today. The century old slave-trade corridors of the south west and throughout the United States, is now used for human, sex trafficking and drug smuggling. The economics and social brutality of slavery, the way humans were bought, sold, and mortgaged was documented through bills of sales, along with property, harvest crops, and farm animals. Native and Black Americans did not have the same human rights written in the U.S. Constitution. The founding fathers’

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and authors of the U.S. Constitution were all white, male, slave holders. The opening aspiration of the U.S. Constitution:

“We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the Blessings of liberty for ourselves and our prosperity, do ordain and establish this Constitution of the United States of America.”

This covenant does not apply to all people. From the start, it was written to codify and protect the interests of the white class at all costs. The Civil War did not start over state rights but rather a call to hold the Federal legislation that freed slavery including involuntary servitude across the entire United States. The Civil War was fought to establish

“ the Union on an equal footing with the original States, with or without involuntary servitude, as such Constitution of the State may provide **which may hereafter be acquired by the United States involuntary servitude is prohibited, except for crime...**”

“The civil war started at Fort Sumter, Charleston South Carolina between the United States and confederate states in April 1861. The federal government under the direction of Abraham Lincoln refused to let the southern state succeed and called for volunteers from North states to join the federal government to cease an insurrection.

“ARTICLE XIII SECTION 1. In all the present territory of the United States, North of the parallel of thirty-six degrees and thirty minutes of North latitude, involuntary servitude, except in punishment of crime, is prohibited. In all the present territory South of that line, involuntary servitude, as it now exists, shall remain and shall not be changed; nor shall

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any law be passed by Congress or the Territorial Legislature to hinder or prevent the taking of persons held to service or labor from any of the States of this Union to said territory, nor to impair the rights arising from said relation; nor shall said rights be in any manner affected by any preexisting law of Mexico; but the same shall be subject to judicial cognizance in the federal courts, according to the remedies and the practice of the common law. When any territory North or South of said line, within such boundary as Congress may prescribe, shall contain a population equal to that required for a member of Congress, it shall, if its form of government be republican, be admitted into the Union on an equal footing with the original States, with or without involuntary servitude, as such Constitution of the State may provide which may hereafter be acquired by the United States involuntary servitude is prohibited, except for crime, North of the latitude of 36 deg. and 30 min.; but shall not be prohibited by Congress or any Territorial Legislature South of said line.”

Abolitionists fought to amend the 1865 US Constitution 13th amendment and the Civil Rights Act of 1866 to stop and prevent involuntary servitude. It was not extended to Native Americans, and all women, and children. In 1884, Elk vs. Wilkson, the all-white, male Supreme Court, denied voting rights for all Native Americans. Not until 1924 with the Indian Citizenship Act, the rights of citizens were bestowed on Native Americans.

How utterly ironic is that!

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The Native American experience documented in this book was not the stories you and I were presented with in school, fed in the media, written in history books, re told by politicians, friends, and family. It was believed that many Native American tribes were wiped out by pandemics brought on by Europeans and South Americans. Disease was spread across the nation. It was done so by ruthless, brutal slave traders who traveled across the south west corridor with Native and Black Americans for sale for the back-breaking work of mining silver and gold.

Learning to unlearn and relearn has been a slow shedding, much like peeling the skin from an onion. It's removing decades of white-washing, that stopped people from finding out the true facts. The more I read and research, the more I weep with how little I know. The more the white-washing fades, the more I began to see and understand that historically and to the present day, the laws and systems are in place purposely, and deliberately to protect the white upper class at the expense of working-White poor and BIPOC.

White fear churns an American system that benefit few at the expense of so many. Most Americans are suffering under these economic policies, social and political systems. America is quaking and we are all off balance. We are facing our history, and in doing so we are facing ourselves and it is not pretty. This year 2024 is about choice.

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Are we a country of fear and pain or one of hope and healing? Do we value scarcity or do we manifest abundance? Do we stay silent about racial and social inequities, and division? Or do we begin to dismantle systems of hate and division and begin to stitch cultural connections, intersectionality and understanding. Do we stand with our tribal divisions or do we pursue respect and solidarity for our differences? Americans, and especially White Americans, do we hold on to the past, the myths, the white-washing, the fear, and pain or do we burst through the cracks to find the treasure of what makes American great, our collective diversity.

What resonated with you as you read this review? Did you feel your body tense up at any point? Did you feel a sense to push away from the notion that the country has dark secrets? Has rinse and repeat been working for you? Do you want to understand and are open to new stories? Are you concerned about the plight of people who do not look like you? During your day how many people do you interact with that do not look like you? Do you have diversity in your social circles? Diversity is the cornerstone of our existence let us make it part of a collective American lived experience.