

Blackmon, Douglas A. (2008). *Slavery by another name: the re-enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*. London: Icon.

As I separate factual U.S. history from myth, I am confronted with a depth, tolerance, and embrace of white racial violence that I hadn't learned in school. White racial violence, sanctioned by state laws, fed the engines of our modern day corporations.

This book begins where Edward Baptist's book ends – at the civil war – with the passage of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Constitutional Amendments that granted equality, rights, and representation to formerly enslaved people. Blackmon describes in horrific detail, the undermining of these rights in order to effectively establish new ways of enslaving black people. Bargaining away federal oversight of the new Constitutional amendments, Southern states created a strong states' rights movement and passed laws known as Black Codes. These codes became the mechanism for terrorizing black citizens, and forcing them to labor in convict leasing programs.

Essentially, Black people were re-enslaved. Convict leasing built the great American railways, worked the mines that fed the US steel industry, and built the timber and turpentine industries. Nearly all black men who were arrested in the late 19th and early 20th century were "leased" by state and county governments to private corporations. This is the story of four million slaves freed in 1863 and the violent and terrorizing oppression imposed on tens of millions of their descendants. Southern laws were written to criminalize black life so that the supply of convict labor was regularly replenished. Outside of prison, the system of sharecropping ensured that black farmers were constantly in debt to white landowners – and always at risk of imprisonment.

The legacy of the states' rights movements haunts our political landscape today and ensures that white supremacy continues.

This book lays bare the legacy of racial violence that continues to haunt our national

character. The fears, anxieties, and rage as well as the denial of this violence are internalized in our psyches and play out in our interpersonal relationships. We definitely experience the residue of this historical trauma in therapeutic and social groups.

Christine Schmidt, LCSW, CGP