



## WHY IS THIS BOOK WORTH OUR TIME? – WHY THIS BOOK MATTERS!

#1 – This book is a painful journey through racial violence in recent years, and earlier years, in our country.

#2 – This book is filled with genuine human pain at these stories of violence.

#3 – This book reveals that we still have so very far to go...



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# American Whitelash

A Changing Nation and the Cost of Progress

Wesley Lowery

New York: Mariner Books: HarperCollins Publishers. 2023

## *What is the point?*

When it looks like America is getting closer to equality and equity, there is a whitelash; in words, and in violent deeds. This has been a repeating pattern throughout our history.

## QUOTES AND EXCERPTS FROM THE BOOK – THE “BEST OF” RANDY’S HIGHLIGHTED PASSAGES:

1. *There is no Negro problem in America. The problem of race in America, insofar as that problem is related to packets of melanin in men’s skins, is a white problem. The depth and intensity of the race problem in America is, in part, a result of a 100-year flight from that unpalatable truth. – Lerone Bennett Jr., Ebony magazine, August 1965 -- pg. 1*
2. To revisit the evening of Barack Obama’s election is to venture into a world that feels foreign now. ... Also present at Grant Park was Oprah Winfrey. “It feels like America did the right thing,” she remarked in an interview with a CNN reporter. “It feels like there’s a shift in consciousness.” pg. 4
3. **Change, the president-elect insisted, had come—a promise that left his lips 389 years after the first Africans had arrived, in chains, in the land that would become the British colonies... ..Dred Scott, an enslaved man attempting to sue for his freedom, had no standing to bring a suit because in the eyes of the law he was property and not a person... ..Obama launched his audacious campaign for the White House—in the name of “common hopes and common dreams.” pg. 4**



4. "Obama appealed to a belief in innocence -- in particular white innocence -- that ascribed the country's historical errors more to misunderstanding . . . than to any deliberate malevolence or widespread racism. This appeal attracted people because it allowed them to feel that America was good." pg. 5
5. The first of these was a nativist movement of white Americans that questioned the validity of the president's citizenship, his Christian faith, and his fidelity to America itself. ...who preached a politics of racial agitation: fear of immigrants and Muslims, contempt for black public figures and elected officials, and rebellion against government attempts to address racial inequalities. ...This movement wielded inflammatory rhetoric to appeal to the real fear held by many Americans, of varying political affiliations, that the country had irreversibly changed in ways that left them unheard and underserved, exposed and vulnerable. pg. 5
6. **And violence and economic calamity in Central and South America sent waves of migrants to the southern U.S. border, underscoring a decades-long failure in Washington to come up with and enforce a coherent immigration policy. pg. 6**
7. Even as they occupied a nation structured, from its inception, to advantage people who looked like them, the post-Obama era saw white Americans become convinced, in the aggregate, that they were the targets of antiwhite bigotry and being systematically discriminated against. pg. 7
8. Both study groups agreed that racism against black people had decreased, but white people believed that it had declined faster and more significantly than black respondents did. pg. 7
9. Republicans had mobilized in response to Obama's election, vowing to make him a "one-term president" and working across the country to implement the most sweeping set of voting restrictions the nation had seen since the Jim Crow era. pg. 8
10. ...the rise of the Tea Party movement... ...studies and polling have consistently shown that it was made up of white voters more likely to hold racially prejudiced views than the white population at large and who adopted among their chief slogans the need to "take our country back." pg. 9
11. **"What we expected of the Obama administration was beyond what the framework of the presidency allowed." pg. 10**
12. "Trump put an unapologetic voice to white fear," journalist Roland Martin and Leah Lakins write in their book *White Fear: How the Browning of America Is Making White Folks Lose Their Minds*, defining white fear as "the unwillingness to share power and resources and allow for the redefinition of America's morals, values, and principles." ...Trump received nearly sixty-three million votes in 2016, cast overwhelmingly by white Americans, including millions of Obama-to-Trump voters, most of them white. ..."Racial conservatives and those with the most punitive immigration views are moving right and were the most likely to switch to Trump in 2016," concluded the authors of a study of such voters. pg. 12
13. There is no question that a number of factors contributed to the Trump victory, in addition to the racial dynamics: the decades-long demonization of his Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton; misogyny toward her historic candidacy; tactical errors committed by her campaign; and an electorate sincerely opposed to her proposals and policies... pg. 12
14. **"The people alleged by authorities to have taken the law into their hands on Jan. 6 typically hail from places where nonwhite populations are growing fastest," wrote CPOST director Robert A. Pape. pg. 14**
15. The months and years to come would see the growth of the extreme and potent political movement witnessed on January 6, determined to restrict voting access for groups of voters they considered likely Democrats and to punish elected officials who dared to play a role in certifying Donald Trump's 2020 defeat. To date, this conspiratorial movement remains among the most powerful and mobilized forces within American politics. pg. 14
16. **That same night, a pack of white teenagers drove around Staten Island, New York, with a metal pipe and a stolen police baton, beating up black strangers while chanting "Obama." pg. 15**

17. "It was as if my very presence in the White House had triggered a deep-seated panic, a sense that the natural order had been disrupted," Obama himself conceded in the first of his presidential memoirs. pg. 16
18. **David Duke, for decades one of the nation's5 most prominent white supremacists and founder of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, an offshoot of the nation's most notorious terror group, predicted that Obama's election would bring about a "dramatic increase" in the movement's membership, and at least two prominent white supremacist organizations—Stormfront and the Council of Conservative Citizens—saw their websites crash due to the flood of online traffic that came their way following Obama's victory. pg. 17**
19. White Americans are increasingly viewing the world through the lens of racial identity. pg. 18
20. **A political discourse that results in lots of white people running Internet searches for statistics about crime and immigration will, inevitably, land many of those people on white supremacist hate sites, which deliberately set themselves up as search-engine-friendly repositories of such information. pg. 18**
21. Dylan Roof had become convinced, through further online "research," that white people in America and Europe had been imperiled by racial minorities and migrants; that white people were biologically superior to black people; and that the future of the white race was threatened by race mixing, which he believed was being encouraged by a global Jewish conspiracy. "By no means should we wait any longer to take drastic action," he declared. pg. 20
22. **In September 2020, FBI director Christopher Wray testified to Congress that, in recent years, the most lethal threat to the American people had been posed by domestic terror attacks, the largest portion of which were committed by white supremacists. pg. 21**
23. It is worth acknowledging that most of the mainstream political and media figures who traffic in the types of talking points welcomed by white supremacists are likely not doing so knowingly, and they have argued that it is important to be able to advocate openly for things like more restrictive immigration policies or strict law-and-order policing without being accused of racism. pg. 21
24. The story begins with a society structured atop a strict racial caste system, in which both the indigenous populations and the enslaved black people who'd been imported to our shores were considered legally and societally subhuman. pg. 23
25. The first of these was the Civil War, the end of chattel slavery, and the period of Reconstruction that followed, which resulted in black Americans at last being recognized as fully human, if still not fully equal under the law. ...The second was the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, often referred to as a Second Reconstruction in which black Americans won another major change to the foundation of American society, now recognized not just as human but as citizens entitled to equal rights and protections under the law. ...to label our current time as a Third Reconstruction. ...Instead, what we are living through may be a prolonged period of white supremacist backlash. pg. 24
26. the advent of multiracial democracy through the Second Reconstruction and the perceived browning of America through immigration has forced today's white supremacists to accept as a premise that they're "losing." ...Today's white supremacist movement is revolutionary—its explicit aim being to overthrow our maturing multiracial democracy. pg. 25
27. **For journalists, the hours, and then days, after violent incidents of whitelash bring an uncomfortable routine. We alert the public first to the tragedy. We identify and memorialize the victims. We highlight tales of heroism and heartbreak. And then we set out to answer why. ...What compels a white teen to walk into a historic black church and gun down worshippers whose heads are bowed in prayer? What drives a white supremacist to attack a Muslim woman commuting home on a city bus? What prompts a gunman to drive miles from his home to open fire on Hispanic migrants? There is an obvious futility to the search... pg. 26**

28. “By ending a system of racial preferences among immigrants, the law reversed a decades-long decline in immigration levels and opened the door to Asian, Latin American, African, and Middle Eastern immigration at a scale never before seen—changes that are so evident now that they seem to have been inevitable.” pg. 32
29. **The decades that followed these changes would see the number of immigrants as a proportion of the population increase to levels on par with those in the decades between the Civil War and World War I, when Italians and Jews were arriving en masse. ...While immigrants accounted for just 4.8 percent<sup>1</sup> of the country’s population in 1970, in 2018 they made up 13.7 percent, or 44.8 million people—the highest total in the nation’s history. pg. 33**
30. There were fewer than one million Latino immigrants in the United States in 1960, but by 2010, that number would soar to nineteen million. ...First came a flow of Mexicans and Cubans. Then Colombians and Argentinians, Dominicans and Salvadorians. Guatemalans, Peruvians, and Ecuadorians like the Luceros. pg. 33
31. On May 1, 2006, both documented and undocumented immigrants across the country staged “Day Without an Immigrant,” during which instead of working, they took to the streets again. pg. 35
32. On the political Right, the idea that those who had entered the country illegally—and thus broken the law—would be granted “amnesty” and allowed to become citizens deeply offended conservative law-and-order sensibilities. ...“The American people are not against immigration. They are worried about a system that is lawless, unprincipled, and, indeed, makes a mockery of law. ...We should not give those who violate our laws to get here every single right we give the people who wait in line and come lawfully.” pg. 3
33. **“Amnesty” and “border security” remained two of the most mobilizing issues among the Republican Party’s majority white electoral base—with partisan conservative media eagerly fanning the flames. pg. 36**
34. Chief among those sounding the alarm was Lou Dobbs, a prime-time CNN news anchor who was then one of the most powerful media voices in the country. ...Dobbs would claim falsely that the borders were “demonstrably wide open.” pg. 36
35. **In one television segment, which raised alarms that undocumented immigrants were carrying diseases into the United States, one of Dobbs’s correspondents asserted that in the past three years the country had seen seven thousand cases of leprosy—up from nine hundred cases over the last forty years. “Incredible,” Dobbs responded. That was not true. The report being cited actually showed that there had been seven thousand leprosy cases over the previous thirty years, and that it was unclear what, if any, connection such cases had to undocumented immigrants. ...Dobbs responded by declaring, “If we reported it, it’s a fact.” pg. 37**
36. (In 2010 Dobbs would find a new home on the conservative Fox News Channel, where he continued to champion the racist “birther” conspiracy theory, which suggested baselessly that Barack Obama was not born in the United States and therefore was ineligible to serve as president.) ...Similar rhetoric was a mainstay of conservative talk radio. “We’ve now traded liberty for perversity,” Rush Limbaugh proclaimed. “America is being erased, in the sense that the distinct American culture is being erased because we don’t have the guts to stand up for it like we did in the past when it came to massive numbers of immigrants.” ...Bill O’Reilly, then its popular evening opinion host, used his program to highlight crimes allegedly committed by undocumented immigrants. Pat Buchanan, *State of Emergency: The Third World Invasion and Conquest of America*, which warned ominously, “This is an invasion, the greatest invasion in history.” ...“It was at a time when the people who were most afraid of immigrants lived in communities with very few immigrants or where immigrants were just arriving.” -- As Mirta Ojito documents in her book *Hunting Season: Immigration and Murder in an All-American Town*, white outrage at the Latino arrivals soon took over politics and policy in parts of Long Island, where historically white communities had seen an influx of Latino immigrants. pg. 38
37. Sometimes these groups would jump unsuspecting Latino men on the street—“beaner hopping,” they called it. pg. 39
38. The question of who, exactly, is entitled to live here has defined much of American history since the colonists excised the Native populations from their land and successfully earned their independence by defeating Britain in the Revolutionary War. pg. 42

39. “Americans have been wary of almost every group of foreigners that has come to the United States: German immigrants in the eighteenth century; Irish and Chinese in the nineteenth century; Italians, Jews, Japanese, and Mexicans in the twentieth century; and Muslims today.” She goes on to say, “History shows that xenophobia has been a constant and defining feature of American life,” adding, “Even as Americans have realized that the threats allegedly posed by immigrants were, in hindsight, unjustified, they have allowed xenophobia to become an American tradition.” pg. 43
40. “The ancient world would have laughed at such a distinction. The Middle Ages regarded skin color with mild curiosity...” pg. 46
41. What Kendi shows in *Stamped* is the extent to which racist ideas—specifically antiblack racist ideas such as the belief in black subhumanity, intellectual inferiority, or inclination to violence—sprout not due to bigotry but rather as convenient tools to explain away an already unjust status quo or in the pursuit of public policy that would further that inequality. ...“Time and again, powerful and brilliant men and women have produced racist ideas in order to justify the racist policies of their era, in order to redirect the blame for their era’s racial disparities away from those policies and onto black people.” pg. 47
42. Theodore Roosevelt—then a member of the U.S. Civil Service Commission and later the New York City police commissioner, assistant secretary of the U.S. Navy, governor of New York, vice president, and then two-term president of the United States—reflected the bigotry and callousness felt toward the Italian lynching victims by many Americans. ...“Personally I think it rather a good thing, and said so.” ...The Italian government, outraged at the killings, broke off diplomatic relations with the United States. pg. 52
43. This cycle would continue, an ugly song stuck on repeat, for the next 125 years. Pick any immigrant group, and its members can recount—often with not only historical examples but also contemporary anecdotes—episodes of ostracism, discrimination, and violence that its people have faced upon arriving in the United States. pg. 53
44. Hundreds of white men stalked the streets of Watsonville, California, for five days in January 1930, attacking Filipino men who they believed had come to steal their jobs and their women. ...Thirteen years later, white U.S. Navy sailors tore through downtown Los Angeles for ten days attacking Mexican Americans in what became known as the “Zoot Suit Riots.” pg. 54
45. ***The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration***. ...“From the moment the emigrants set foot in the North and West, they were blamed for the troubles of the cities they fled to.” pg. 55
46. The Negro in Chicago, a 1922 report commissioned following the riot, concluded, “The relation of whites and Negroes in the United States is our most grave and perplexing domestic problem.” pg. 56
47. On the way there, they’d pulled over on the side of the road to attack an intoxicated Hispanic man they’d spotted walking with his bike—punching and kicking him, calling him names, and snatching his baseball cap as a trophy. ...After a while, they decided to get back to violence. One of the boys suggested they leave the park and go “fuck up some Mexicans.” pg. 58
48. Criminologists and researchers who study racial violence believe the perpetrators of hate crimes, both race based and otherwise, generally fit one of three archetypes: thrill seekers, such as teenagers who paint swastikas on lockers or carve epithets into trees in order to bask in the glory of having done something edgy; reactive attackers, who lash out suddenly at perceived enemies such as immigrants or LGBTQ people; and mission-oriented attackers, the avowed ideologues who carry out calculated attacks in order to send a specific message or in pursuit of specific political ends. The third group is unquestionably the most sinister: pg. 59

49. **The days and weeks following a racially motivated hate attack often involve public performances of shock—How could this happen? And how could it happen here?—particularly from those eager to believe that their hometown or community is incapable of harboring the kind of racial hatred that can turn homicidal. Young knew better.** pg. 64
50. But the American definition of whiteness has expanded and contracted over time. The enemies of the white supremacist are not just those who appear dark skinned, but rather anyone whose presence and procreation threatens a society predicated upon Anglo-protestant dominance. pg. 68
51. Two other contributing factors were the lynching in Atlanta of a Jewish businessman named Leo Frank, who had been falsely accused of rape and murder, and the resulting media spectacle; and automobile magnate Henry Ford's promoting anti-Semitic propaganda in the newspaper he'd purchased: the Dearborn Independent. Ninety-two consecutive issues carried a series of articles claiming that a vast Jewish conspiracy was tainting the United States. pg. 69
52. If the aim of the original Klan was the economic subjugation and political disenfranchisement of the newly emancipated black Americans, the second Klan was even more ambitious and expansive in its objectives. pg. 70
53. "By blaming immigrants and non-Protestants for stealing jobs and government from 'true' Americans... pg. 71
54. The need to "save" the white race from colored outsiders has been a chief ideological underpinning... pg. 72
55. "On November 8, 2008, the hunt was on. Seven teenagers, one of which was the defendant, Jeffrey Conroy, wilding, roaming the streets of Patchogue for one purpose and one purpose only: to find a Hispanic person to randomly and physically attack. The defendant and his friends were not in Patchogue looking to meet up with other friends, they were not in Patchogue looking to go to a party. They were in Patchogue for one reason and one reason only: looking for blood, specifically Mexican blood, a sport that the defendant callously called 'Mexican-hopping.' That was the plan for the night . . . this plan, as well as each and every choice that the defendant made and each and every action that the defendant took, caused the death of Marcelo Lucero." pg. 75
56. Martin Luther King was executed by a firing squad that numbered in the millions. ...Millions of bigots, subtle and obvious, put it in his hand and assured him he was doing the right thing." pg. 80
57. Nearly everyone condemns racial violence unequivocally, but few seem to agree on a thornier question: To what extent is the gun in the hand of those who stoked the hatred as much as it is he who pulled the trigger? pg. 80
58. History shows clearly how demonization of immigrants prompts violence toward these new arrivals—and how white supremacist groups have, nearly from their inception, manipulated the fear of immigrants and outsiders to strengthen their ranks. pg. 87
59. To study white supremacists is to examine a collection of broken people who see their own hardships and traumas as evidence that they are the world's victims. pg. 92
60. Yet, by every available count, just a sliver of them carry out acts of violence each year. The violent extremists, he explains, have destabilizing personal factors such as traumatic childhoods, exposure to radicalizing forces such as white supremacist websites and organizations, and the means to actually carry out their violent fantasies. pg. 93
61. Most prominent was the one etched in thick black ink on his left shoulder: a black cross in a circle, one of the most popular neo-Nazi symbols, and a large "14"—a reference to the "14 words" creed that has for decades been sworn to by white supremacists across the country: "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children." pg. 107

62. Much is made about the radicalization process of violent extremists: the traumas and dramas of life that made a given person susceptible to hate; the ways in which he was exposed to poisonous ideology; and then the crisis—the breaking point—that prompted the radical to carry out his chosen act of violence. Yet I've found, more often than not, when interviewing people who have devoted their professional lives to understanding perpetrators of racial violence, that they often share a similar, if diametrically opposite, radicalization process. They can identify the very moment their eyes were opened—when they first realized they'd never again look away from the evil they now saw. pg. 108
63. For nearly thirty years, terrorism experts have warned, with increasing levels of alarm, about the growing threat of white supremacist terrorists. And yet for nearly thirty years, the federal government has largely looked in the other direction. pg. 118
64. Both McVeigh and coconspirator Terry Nichols, who was imprisoned for life due to his involvement in the Oklahoma City bombing, “had connections with an extremist militia group called the Wolverine Watchmen”—the same group whose members would be arrested in 2020 and charged with hatching a plot to kill Michigan governor Gretchen Whitmer. pg. 120
65. Among the deadliest attackers are so-called lone wolves, who've coordinated their violence with no one but themselves. “They're almost impossible to prevent,” she continued. “You don't have a group, so you don't have any communications to intercept. You don't have any opportunity to infiltrate, you don't have somebody who is a member of the group who feels like they've gone too far and tips you off.” pg. 133
66. And the resulting film, *Fruitvale Station*, an intimate portrait of Oscar's final day, was an immediate hit upon its release in 2013. The years to follow would see the rise of what is widely known as the Black Lives Matter movement (referred to, by activists, as the Movement for Black Lives), a societal and political force that has upended American institutions and continues to press for fundamental changes to the criminal legal system. ...Yet this movement for justice, itself a response to the white supremacy still embedded in our nation's structures and systems, would soon prompt yet another round of American backlash. pg. 175
67. The Jackson statue, Schmidt explained to me, sent a message to the black people of Charlottesville as they approached the courthouse. It was a reminder, carved in stone for everyone to see, that they were second-class citizens. On the day we spoke, Schmidt told me, seventy-five Confederate monuments still sat in front of courthouses in the state of Virginia. pg. 207
68. Donald Trump: “We condemn in the strongest possible terms this egregious display of hatred, bigotry, and violence,” he began. Then he ad-libbed “on many sides, on many sides.” It was typical Trump, if confounding, even to many Republicans. There were not “many sides” to be condemned in Charlottesville. Just one side. The white supremacists. ...the president managed to make things worse, defending some of the white supremacists and seemingly taking up their cause. “I think there is blame on both sides,” he said, repeating himself. “You had a group on one side that was bad. You had a group on the other side that was also very violent. Nobody wants to say that. I'll say it right now. I've condemned neo-Nazis. I've condemned many different groups,” he said. “Not all of those people were neo-Nazis, believe me. Not all of those people were white supremacists, by any stretch. Many of those people were there to protest the taking down of the statue of Robert E. Lee. So this week, it is Robert E. Lee. I noticed that Stonewall Jackson is coming down. I wonder, is it George Washington next week? And is it Thomas Jefferson the week after? You know, you really do have to ask yourself, where does it stop?” pg. 236
69. When a racist kills a black person, is the murder itself necessarily racist? pg.
70. Black Americans, immigrants, and refugees continue to shape our culture, society, and democracy, demanding not just equality under law but also equity of outcome. pg. 237
71. And as long as there are elements within our mainstream politics and media willing to cynically play to those fears—unwilling to call racism and bigotry by their rightful names—we can expect additional bursts of white racial violence, the horrific calling card of our era of American Whitelash. pg. 237

# American Whitelash

## A Changing Nation and the Cost of Progress

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New York: Mariner Books: HarperCollins Publishers. 2023

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### THE MOST IMPORTANT QUOTES – (THE “THESIS” QUOTES).

**Tom Brokaw deemed Obama’s election a “profoundly important passage out of the deep shadows of our racist past that began with that first slave offloaded on a ship.” ...So, what the hell happened? Because it’s clear, with the benefit of even a decade of historical hindsight, that the election of a black president did not usher us from the shadows of our racist past; rather it led us down a perilous path and into a decade and a half (and counting) of explicit racial thrashing.**

*As election night 2016 gave way to the Trump administration, I kept returning to that idea: the concept of a whitelash.*

*The pages that follow are an exploration of the horror that our era has wrought and an attempt to place a decade of American carnage into the context of American history; a mixture of reporting and observation that leans heavily on the expertise of others and a rich body of historical, journalistic, and sociological work already in existence on these topics.*

*Four took place during the Obama presidency: the murder of Marcelo Lucero on Long Island; a mass shooting at a Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin; an anti-Semitic attack in Overland Park, Kansas; and a white supremacist attack on Black Lives Matter protesters in Minneapolis. Two more incidents—the racist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, and the murder of Richard Collins III in Maryland—happened during the first half of the Trump presidency. ...My aim is to examine and explain the proud, avowed white supremacists we see in our streets—defined as those who believe in the genetic and societal superiority of the “white race.”*

**Yet the Lucero murder and Conroy conviction underscore another reality of hatred in America and white America’s difficulties grappling with it: even the teenager who tattoos a swastika on himself, murders an immigrant, and is convicted of a hate crime insists he is not a racist. Then what is a racist, if not someone who commits a violent act of racism?**

*It’s essential to note that this white replacement theory—the central tenet of the U.S. white supremacist movement—is as false today as it is historically and scientifically baseless. There is no biologically distinctive white race to be eliminated.*

*The most pressing question of this era may be how to balance the rights of Americans—even American racists—to free speech and free expression with the government’s sacred responsibility to ensure the safety and security of the rest of society.*

*When a twenty-one-year-old white supremacist named Dylann Storm Roof massacred nine black parishioners at the historic Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, in June 2015, he did so for the explicit purpose of inciting a race war.*

*“The trigger for white rage, inevitably, is black advancement,” writes historian Carol Anderson in **White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide**, in which she chronicles the rejection by a significant portion of the white populace of the civil rights advancements and victories of the Second Reconstruction. “White rage doesn’t have to wear sheets, burn crosses, or take to the streets. . . . It can look like white flight and private schools and city ordinances and neighborhood watches.”*

**America’s racial history breaks less cleanly into a series of distinct, succeeding time periods than it does into a singular, never-ending tug-of-war between diametrically opposed forces.**



## SOME OF THE KEY CONTENT AND IDEAS FROM THE BOOK

- **What is racism?**
  - Ibram X. Kendi defines a “racist idea” as any idea that assumes one racial group is innately inferior or innately superior to another racial group.
- **The problem, in the minds of (many) white people, is...**
  - **whites are being replaced...**
    - Within a year of Trump’s election, armed throngs of neo-Nazis marched through the streets of Charlottesville, Virginia, chanting, “The Jews will not replace us!”
    - (yes, they are...) -- ...an August 2008 report<sup>4</sup> from the U.S. Census Bureau concluding that by 2050, racial minorities would constitute a majority of the American population.
    - “white replacement”—a conspiracy theory that takes several forms but generally argues that through interracial marriage and immigration, the white population is purposefully (by the Jews) being driven to extinction.
    - “For a number of whites, these monumental social and political trends—including an erosion of whites’ majority status and the election of America’s first black president—have signaled a challenge to the absoluteness of whites’ dominance,” writes political scientist Ashley E. Jardina in her 2019 book **White Identity Politics**...
    - In the years after Obama’s election, Americans of all stripes watched as racist political rhetoric demonizing black Americans, immigrants, and Jewish people gave way to murder in Charleston, in El Paso, in Charlottesville, in Pittsburgh, and in Buffalo. In all cases, the perpetrators quoted the same words and talking points about diversity, immigration, and the changing complexion of the nation.
  - **Black people are racist against white people...**
    - The white people acknowledged antiblack bias in America, but said they believed the country was also afflicted with antiwhite bias and that it was the more prevalent form of racial prejudice.
    - By the end of the Obama presidency, another poll found that 55 percent of white Americans believed the country discriminated against them racially.
- **Yet...The progressives were disappointed in Obama.**
  - A rising generation of immigration activists demanded that Obama halt deportations and create a legal pathway to citizenship for at least some of the millions of undocumented migrants living in the United States.
  - Frustrations with the limitations of a black president<sup>5</sup> prompted a new era in the American civil rights movement...
  - And for the young black men and women who had turned out in droves to cast their first-ever votes for Barack Obama, the backlash to his presidency and the constraints on his rule only heightened the urgency.
  - **The achievement of what had been until very recently an unimaginable political accomplishment—the election of a black president—had provided permission for black Americans to demand even bigger victories.**
- **And...then...Black Lives Matter happened...**
  - “Black Lives Matter,” argued for structural and systemic changes to create a country in which the outstanding invoice from centuries of explicit inequity would finally be paid through aggressive measures to rid our society of the discrimination baked into our systems and institutions, as well as government intervention to remedy inequities that persist even after equality under the law has been established and literal reparations granted to communities and people systematically harmed.
- **So many deaths of Black people, and other people of color (other minorities; ethnic; religious)**
  - The killings of Trayvon Martin (by a neighborhood watchman) and Oscar Grant, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, and Tamir Rice (by police officers) sent scores of black demonstrators into the streets to demand accountability and a reconsideration of the institution of American policing.
  - Meanwhile, each new death, each trending hashtag, each new episode exemplifying racial inequity and injustice—a water crisis in the predominantly black city of Flint, Michigan; a young white supremacist gunning down nine black worshipers in a South Carolina church; the backlash to NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick and other professional football players protesting police violence by silently taking a knee during the pre-kickoff singing of the national anthem—provided a fresh reminder not of the black presidency’s promise but of its limitations.
- **And...then...inevitably... (again, and again, throughout our history), the whitelash...**
  - As a young, black protest movement pushed the political establishment to consider more drastic action on racial inequity, the white backlash to a black presidency and the changing nation grew in size, strength, and intensity.
  - “Trump put an unapologetic voice to white fear,” journalist Roland Martin and Leah Lakins write in their book *White Fear: How the Browning of America Is Making White Folks Lose Their Minds*, defining white fear as “the unwillingness to share power and resources and allow for the redefinition of America’s morals, values, and principles.”

- *The result of it all, though, was that after the eight years in which America had its first black president, a coalition of aggrieved white Americans elevated a white racial demagogue to the Oval Office. Speaking on CNN on the night of Trump’s election, activist Van Jones declared, “We’ve talked about everything but race tonight. We’ve talked about income, we’ve talked about class. We’ve talked about region. This was a whitelash. It was a whitelash against a changing country. It was a whitelash against a black president.”*
- *It is clear that the election of a black president did not herald a new era of American racial harmony. **One of the men would later tell police that they were angry that Obama’s election meant “blacks and Puerto Ricans would now have more rights than whites.”***
- *Each step toward a more racially just society, each step toward triumph gained by the anti-racist side of the struggle, each periodic collection against the unfulfilled pledges of the American promissory note, in turn, sparks a backlash—a pullback on the rope—from the unjust system’s beneficiaries and boosters.*
- *The citizenry, convinced that these immigrants present a unique threat to their way of life, lashes out violently. This is the American Whitelash.*
- **Whitelash and violence go hand in hand...**
  - *For decades, the hopes of the American white supremacist movement—a collection of avowedly racist individuals and groups who, broadly, believe in biological distinctions between different races and ethnicities and generally advocate racial segregation—had been reliant on this type of violence: individual acts of terror that they hoped would spike racial tensions, lead to both copycat and revenge attacks, and ultimately lead to a race war that would result in the formation of a white-only nation.*
- **Gordon Allport:**
  - *In his classic 1954 book *The Nature of Prejudice*, social psychologist Gordon Allport charts the progression of negative actions associated with prejudice: (1) antilocution (voicing those prejudices), (2) avoiding those against whom one is prejudiced, (3) actively discriminating against the group, (4) physical attacks, and (5) attempts at extermination. ....they create the conditions that breed violence. ...“It was Hitler’s antilocution that led Germans to avoid their Jewish neighbors and erstwhile friends. This preparation made it easier to enact the Nuremberg Laws of discrimination, which, in turn, made the subsequent burning of synagogues and street attacks upon Jews seem natural. The final step in the macabre progression was the ovens at Auschwitz.” When it comes to prejudice, “Violence is always an outgrowth of milder states of mind,” Allport writes. “Most barking does not lead to biting, yet there is never a bite without previous barking.”*
- **Some key readings – these two especially, among others....**
  - Ta-Nehisi Coates: *The Case for Reparations* (2014 – *The Atlantic*)
  - **The 1619 Project** by Nikole Hannah-Jones (2019, *The New York Times*; then in a book)
- **The Book:**
  - *Part I: White Grievance -- Chapters 1 2 3*
  - *Part II: In Defense of American Whiteness -- Chapters 4 5 6 7 8 9*
  - *Part III: White Radicalization – Chapters 10 11 12 13 14 15*
  - *Part IV: An American Nazi’s Final Bark -- Chapters 16 17 18 19 20*
  - *Part V: A Movement Rises -- Chapters 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31*
  - *Epilogue*

## SOME LESSONS AND TAKEAWAYS

- #1 – Racism is everywhere-present.
- #2 – This racism leads to many acts of violence; even death.
- #3 – In our modern world, especially with the internet, it is possible for people to be a “part” of a white nationalist, racist group, and still act as a lone wolf.
- #4 – Our government really does need to take white nationalism threats seriously; very seriously.
- #5 – Since progress towards equality and equity creates a whitelash – almost certainly – then we must be ever vigilant.

## American Whitelash

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*Synopses prepared and presented by Randy Mayeux*