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# OPINION

# Beloved Lies about America

### The racism is there for everyone to see

White supremacists love their narratives of America. They spoon feed it to their children and force feed it to people of color.

When Francis Scott Key penned the lyrics for "The Star-Spangled Banner" in 1814, stating that America was the "land of the free and home of the brave," he crafted a stirring image of goodness and virtue. Who wouldn't love and admire such a homeland?

But these high-minded sentiments were written by a racist and proponent of chattel slavery for Black Americans. Most disturbingly, the third verse of this song that would become America's national anthem proposed a particularly horrible fate for the once enslaved African Americans who were then fighting



By Oscar H. Blayton

for the British in the War of 1812: "No refuge could save the hireling and slave. From the terror or flight, or the gloom of the graves."

These words were a clear call to

slaughter people of color who dared to challenge the authority of white Americans.

America was never the land of the free. Just ask the descendants of the multitudes of the enslaved who had every manner of inhumane abuses handed to them. Or just ask the families of innocent and unarmed Black and brown men and women who have been gunned down in great numbers across America by police in recent years. This is the factual history that is woven into our culture, and this is the reality with which we live every day.

But now, there is a movement afoot by white supremacists to gaslight not only Americans of color, but the entire world that these injustices do not exist, and never did exist.

One particularly blatant example was the political maneuver by Virginia's Republican Gov.-elect Glenn Youngkin when he claimed that he would ban Toni

Morrison's book "Beloved" from Virginia's public schools. This attack by Youngkin on a book, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1988 and was written by the 1993 winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, was clearly intended to be a loud dog whistle to the white supremacists whose votes he was courting. Youngkin's campaign dug up a controversy from more than eight years ago to successfully whip his supporters into a frenzy of grievance politics that would drive them to the polls.

The truth of this matter is that while the pretext for attacking Toni Morrison's book was its explicit references to sexual activity, it was not the sex that sent white supremacists into a rage, but the agonizingly embarrassing description of how enslaved Black people were treated in "the land of the free and the home of the brave."

There are too many currents in "Beloved" to give a full account of the book here. But the core of the story's horror is based upon a true account of the actions of an escaped slave, Margaret Garner. Rather than allow her children to be returned to the abomination of slavery by slave catchers who had tracked them down, Garner attempted to kill them all, but succeeded only in killing her 2-year-old daughter.

All of Garner's children had been fathered by white men, including her owner's brother, who had raped her during her years of enslavement. This revelation in "Beloved" rips the flesh from the mythical America of goodness and virtue. White fragility cannot abide a book that so unsparingly brings this type of evil to light with such glaring intensity. It pains the worshipers of the false god of white supremacy to see that its feet are made of clay.

Another attempt to keep the fiction of

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