

Slavery by Another Name: A True American Story

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*Adaptation of the New York Times Best Seller and Pulitzer Prize-winning book
by Douglas A. Blackmon*



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Logline: A shocking true story of a black farmer kidnapped and sold into slavery, forty years after the Civil War. His only way to get justice is to convince the prejudiced U.S. Attorney of Alabama to fight the slavery-addicted society and bring the first white man to trial for peonage.

Synopsis: At the turn of the 20th century, in a rural Alabama still shadowed by the Civil War, a black farmer, JON DAVIS, is snatched from the bedside of his dying wife and sold to a barbaric plantation owner. When President Roosevelt orders an investigation into allegations of slavery, the U.S. Attorney of Alabama, WARREN REESE, must swallow his own distaste for the black community to do his job and secure his campaign for governor. While Reese investigates, Davis lives the horrors first hand. The rebirth of slavery is far worse than anything Davis' ancestors experienced. The plantation owners are ruthless, stubborn and always a step ahead of the law. Davis must stop accepting this horrific treatment as "fate" for his people and stand up to the system enslaving him. Faced with the impossible odds of fighting a slavery-addicted society, Reese must push past his own deep-rooted prejudices, join forces with Davis, and find the courage to do the right thing. Together, Reese and Davis organize a dramatic rescue of the remaining hidden slaves, but gaining their freedom has unexpected costs. Will those costs keep Davis and other blacks from testifying? Even if they testify, can Reese get these plantation owners to trial and convince a jury of their peers that the only way of life they've ever known is illegal? Reese will have to face his biggest opponent in a courtroom yet: Prejudice.

The characters are vast and rich, with many layers, sure to attract an ensemble of A-list actors.

Douglas, former senior national correspondent of The Wall Street Journal, spent eight years sorting through files in the dusty courthouse basements throughout the south, finding mountains of evidence that slavery existed for seven decades after the Civil War. His groundbreaking historical exposé, Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II, has since been on the New York Times Best Sellers list, been reprinted more than a dozen times, won the 2009 Pulitzer Prize, and is now required reading in many universities across the country. A documentary based on the book will appear on PBS in 2012 and is competing at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival.

Jeanne is a regular contributor for Script Magazine and Write On Online and a co-founder and moderator of Twitter's screenwriter chat, Scriptchat – which brings thousands of writers together to learn from each other and from industry professionals. She also teaches webinars for the Writers Store on the business and craft of screenwriting. Her passion for this project is limitless and what finally won Douglas over in choosing her as his partner in bringing this horrible blemish on our nation's history to a broader audience.

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