



Clyde W. Ford uses the lives of individual Black men and women as a lens to explore the role they have played in creating American institutions of power and wealth—in agriculture, politics, jurisprudence, law enforcement, culture, medicine, financial services, and many other fields—while not being allowed to fully participate or share in the rewards. Today, activists have taken the struggle for racial equity and justice to the streets. *Of Blood and Sweat* goes back through time to excavate the roots of this struggle, from pre-colonial Africa through post-Civil War America. As Ford reveals, in tracing the history of almost any major American institution of power and wealth you'll find it was created by Black Americans, or created to control them. Painstakingly researched and documented, *Of Blood and Sweat* is a compelling look at the past that holds broad implications for present-day calls for racial equity, racial justice, and the abolishment of systemic racism, and offers invaluable insight into our understanding of Black history and the story of America.

“Ford’s overlap of past and present, narrative and commentary is masterful, and makes this volume all the more valuable to those readers wise enough to allow the past to inform the future. *Of Blood and Sweat* is a myth-busting work of genius

that will stand as the last word on this vital subject for a long time to come.” —Elizabeth Dowling Taylor, *New York Times* bestselling author of *A Slave in the White House*

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Novelist and psychotherapist Ford (*Think Black*) unearths in this fascinating history the inextricable links between America’s “systems of power” and the horrors of slavery. From the arrival of enslaved Africans in 17th-century Virginia to the end of Reconstruction in 1877, Ford reveals how “Black lives created White wealth and power,” and how African Americans have been met with “outright betrayal and brutality” when they asked for their fair share. He details how the slave trade spurred shipbuilding and other technological advancements, and notes that the modern-day stock and insurance markets were developed in Amsterdam, London, and other European capitals with ties to the slave trade. Ford also explains how enslaved laborers were essential to the tobacco and cotton industries in the U.S. and helped build the first railways in the South, and details how land redistributed to freed Blacks during the Civil War was returned to former slaveholders after President Lincoln’s assassination. Throughout, Ford weaves in stories of resistance, noting, for instance, that a Black ship captain “helped foment the largest slave rebellion in South Carolina history”; explains complex financial instruments in lucid terms; and paints vivid scenes of Black life in the U.S. The result is an essential reckoning with the roots of the racial wealth gap in America. — *Publisher’s Weekly*

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Humanities scholar Ford looks at the myriad—and uncompensated—contributions African Americans have made to the economies and cultures of the U.S. and beyond. The author opens with a little-known court case from Colonial Virginia wherein an indentured Black man sued not just for release from his expired contract, but also for “freedom dues.” Perhaps surprisingly, the court ruled in his favor, voicing “a belief that power and wealth created from the labor of others entitled those who helped create that power and wealth to their fair share.” Unfortunately, the enslaved far outnumbered the indentured and were accorded no such entitlement. As Ford observes, the slave trade by its very nature had ripple effects that enriched societies such as early modern Holland, whose banks financed shipbuilding. For their part, the enslaved afforded not just labor, building such infrastructure as the water system that still fuels Washington, D.C., and, of course, the entire agricultural economy of the American South. Their lack of liberty afforded their owners freedom: If not for the labor of the enslaved, the White farmers of the Colonial South could never have mounted a revolution against Britain—a revolution that helped shore up slavery. Ford writes of the lives of the first enslaved people to arrive in British North America, turning up little-known episodes and figures in American history—e.g., the multiracial Melungeon people of Appalachia and the celebration among Black residents of upstate New York of Emancipation Day: not June 19, Juneteenth, but instead Aug. 1, when slavery was outlawed in the British Empire in 1834, “freeing some 800,000 men and women in the West Indies, South Africa, and Canada.” The book teems with ideas, sometimes in an onrushing embarrassment of riches, and often repeats the inarguable idea that as makers of much of the modern world’s wealth, Black people continue to deserve a share. – *Kirkus Reviews*

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**Clyde W. Ford** was born in NYC. He's the author of thirteen works of fiction and non-fiction. He's also a psychotherapist, an accomplished mythologist, and a sought-after public speaker. In 2006, Ford received the Zora Neale Hurston/Richard Wright Award in African American fiction. In 2019, he was named a finalist for the Hurston/Wright Award in African American nonfiction. In 2021, Clyde received the prestigious Washington Center for the Book award for *Think Black*, his memoir about his father, the first Black software engineer in America. Clyde also won the Nautilus Book Award in Social Justice, and was named a finalist for the Goddard-Russo Prize in Social Justice for *Think Black*. Clyde was honored as a "Literary Lion" by the King County Library System in 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2019. He was voted "Best Writer of Bellingham, Washington" in 2006 and 2007 by readers of the Cascadia Weekly and he received the 2007 Bellingham, Washington Mayor's Arts Award in Literature. Ford is currently a speaker for Humanities Washington, an affiliate of the NEA, where he presents a program entitled, "Technology, Race and Social Justice," around the state. He is also the Director of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Publishing Project at HarperCollins. Clyde has participated in hundreds of media interviews and has appeared on the Oprah Winfrey Show, New Dimensions Radio, and National Public Radio. He lives in Bellingham, Washington where he enjoyed walking in the mountains and cruising the waters of the Pacific Northwest.

