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*The Rush for Black Diamonds, Volume One:  
From John Locke to Thomas Jefferson—The Transatlantic Slave Trade  
to Chattel Slavery in the UK and the US*

by Dr. George Walters-Sleyon

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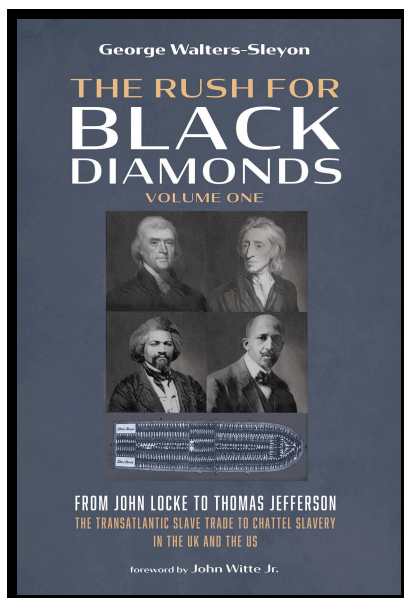
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## New Title from Dr. George Walters-Sleyon

### *The Rush for Black Diamonds, Volume One: From John Locke to Thomas Jefferson—The Transatlantic Slave Trade to Chattel Slavery in the UK and the US*

*The Rush for Black Diamonds, Volume One* is the first of two volumes. It explores the Transatlantic slave trade and its mutation into chattel slavery. Volume One focuses on the involvement of two prominent Enlightenment

philosophers as the architects of the political, legal, economic, and philosophical justifications for the human trade in the United Kingdom and the United States: John Locke (1632–1704), a British philosopher and “Father of Liberalism”; and Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826), the third president of the United States. Both men, Locke and Jefferson, were also slave traders and slave masters. Referring to *Lockean Slavery* and *Jeffersonian Slavery*, *The Rush for Black Diamonds, Volume One* contends that Locke and Jefferson are responsible for the justification and sustainability of chattel slavery and its post-slavery racial perceptions and marginalization of Black people in the West. Used as a metaphor, *Black Diamonds* captures the exploration of Western nations’ rush for Black people across the Atlantic Ocean to be used as economic units and chattel property. With impunity, it was the most disruptive act of human institutions, cultures, and socioeconomic and political stability, with substantial financial, social, political, and racial implications for centuries in human history.



**Dr. George Walters-Sleyon** earned his PhD from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland/UK, where he studied Comparative Criminal Justice/Criminology, Practical Theology, and Ethics. He has a Master of Divinity (M.Div.); and S.T.M. from Boston University in Philosophy, Social Ethics, and Religion/Theology. He has earned a teaching certificate as an Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (AFHEA) of the United Kingdom. George is a McDonald Distinguished Fellow at Emory University’s Center for the Study of Law and Religion and an Associate Fellow at the Scottish Center for Crime and Justice Research in Glasgow/Scotland. He teaches Applied Ethics, Introduction to Philosophy, and World Religions at Bunker Hill Community College and other universities in Boston. He is the author of several articles and books including: *Locked Up and Locked Down: Multitude Lingers in Limbo Revised Edition* (2017); *Nuggets from the Night: An Anthology of Poetic Expressions* (2020); *Prison Chaplains on the Beat in US and UK Prisons* (2021); and *God in the Name of God Jesus Christ* (2022). George is also an ordained elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He lives in Boston with his family and is available for speaking engagements.



## Interview with Dr. George Walters-Sleyon

### **What is the book about?**

The transatlantic slave trade and its mutation into chattel slavery.

### **What were the major organizing factors associated with the transatlantic slave trade?**

Economic interests, political control, and racial control.

### **Is there intellectual justification for the transatlantic slave trade?**

Yes, the Enlightenment philosophers of Europe and the United States.

### **Who were the main philosophers you point to in the initial phase of the slave trade?**

John Locke and Thomas Jefferson.

### **Would you refer to them as the intellectual architects of the transatlantic slave trade and its mutation into chattel slavery?**

Yes.

### **How are you establishing the claim that Locke and Jefferson were some of the most prominent intellectual architects of the slave trade and its mutation into chattel slavery?**

What they have written and their philosophical arguments regarding the slave trade and Black humanity. Furthermore, by looking at their economic activities and political claims. Both men were slave traders and slave masters.

### **What is unique about this book?**

Its focus on the role of Western philosophers as the intellectual architects for the perpetuation of the slave trade, its mutation into chattel slavery, and the emergence of the concept of race/racism, and white supremacy as germane to one's identity as a human being.

**You reference W. E. B. Du Bois, and Frederick Douglass a lot in the book. Why?**

Why? Their works demonstrate a concise process of deconstructing the ideological, socio-political, and cultural foundations of the slave trade, its mutation into chattel slavery, and the hegemonic structure of White supremacy as an absolute form of human control. Du Bois and Douglass were intentionally meticulous in documenting the attempt to normalize the inhumanity of the slave trade and chattel slavery. Furthermore, I reference them to demonstrate their attempt to deconstruct the prevailing notions that Black people are inherently inferior and should therefore be perpetually and indeterminately enslaved and treated as second-class human beings as Locke and Jefferson assert.

**You talk about slave breeding in the book, can you explain that?**

Yes, slave breeding was the practice of increasing and replenishing the slave population on the slave plantation. It was also associated with the domestic slave market in which the intentional breeding of black babies was normative, to be sold and nothing else. Douglass laments this practice in his famous 4th of July Speech.

**What is the major takeaway from this book for readers?**

That the present climate of race and racism, and the popularity of White supremacist claims against Black humanity cannot be isolated from the eras of the transatlantic slave trade and chattel slavery against Black humanity in the West. They are intricately related.

## An Excerpt from *The Rush for Black Diamonds, Volume One*

Both volumes also contend that the transatlantic slave trade, chattel slavery, colonialism, and penal slavery would not have been successful without the injection of the Enlightenment fathers' philosophical justifications for race-based theories, racism, and the assertion of White supremacy against non-Europeans and especially the humanity Black Africans as justification for their enslavement, colonial control, and reduction to chattel property. As a demonstration of the association of the Enlightenment era with the success of the human trade and its subsequent residues of overt and covert racial treatments of Black people, *The Rush for Black Diamonds, Volume One and Volume Two* explore the writings of John Locke, Thomas Jefferson, David Hume, G. W. F. Hegel, and Immanuel Kant, with reference to other philosophers including Voltaire and Joseph Arthur de Gobineau. Finally, Volume One and Volume Two further assert that the economic, technical, and philosophical achievements as well as the success of the Industrial Revolution, from the 1760s in Britain to the 1830s across the rest of Europe and the United States, were predicated on the success of the transatlantic slave trade, chattel enslavement of Black people, and colonialism. For the United States, the concept and continuity of white supremacy existed well after the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 as penal slavery: the American Black Codes era, the Jim Crow era, the era of the Convict Lease System, and mass Black incarceration.

*The Rush for Black Diamonds, Volume One* explores the immediate historical emergence of the transatlantic slave trade by the Dutch, Spain, Portugal, Britain (England, Wales, and Scotland), and subsequently the United States. This volume provides data on the innumerable Black Africans that Europeans and White Americans first hauled and dragged out of Africa and later bred for slave markets in order to sustain their existing and future slave plantations. Included in this volume are demonstrations of the involvement of the British parliaments, its laws, the British monarchy, the American colonies prior to the Declaration of Independence and afterward, the United States Congress, its legal system and law enforcement institutions to legally, religiously, and socio-politically perpetuate the claims that Black people are humanly and intellectually inferior to Whites and therefore should be indeterminately perceived and treated as economic units, second-class human beings, and discriminated against on the basis of alleged racial inferiority in Europe and the United States.

With emphasis on the Enlightenment era's association with the success of the slave trade, chattel slavery, colonialism, and penal slavery, *The Rush for Black Diamonds, Volume One* begins with W. E. B. Du Bois's analysis of the slave trade. It then demonstrates the involvement of two prominent Enlightenment philosophers as intellectual architects of the political, legal, economic, and philosophical justifications for the human trade in the United Kingdom and the United States—John Locke (1632–1704), a British philosopher and “Father of Liberalism”; and Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826), the third president of the United States, 2<sup>nd</sup> introduction governor of Virginia, author of the Declaration of Independence, and a prominent Founding Father of the United States. By exploring what I refer to as Lockean slavery and Jeffersonian slavery, this volume reminds readers that Locke and Jefferson were also slave traders and slave masters. The present Western worldview and racial treatment of people of African descent cannot be disassociated from the economic, political, philosophical, and sociocultural claims and practices of Locke, Jefferson, and the Enlightenment pioneers of the West.

**Praise for *The Rush for Black Diamonds, Volume One***

“In *The Rush for Black Diamonds*, George Walters-Sleyon anatomizes the legal and philosophical alibis that enabled slavery. In so doing, he casts new light on this crucial story, with scholarship, verve, and a passion for justice.”

—Richard Sparks, professor of criminology, University of Edinburgh

“In *The Rush for Black Diamonds*, the Rev. Dr. Walters-Sleyon presents a compelling narrative that connects several durable and decisive threads within America’s philosophical, economic, and legal foundations to the persistence of white supremacy. An important and timely read.”

—Whittney Barth, executive director,  
Center for the Study of Law and Religion, Emory University

