

We need a title

Do we?

Maybe not. This is me being lazy

Well, at least you didn't name your business after a racist farm

Fola, is this the title?

Yup. I've been thinking alot about the pyramids.

What about them?

Pyramids were built on slave labor

What kind of plantations?

This collection consists of recreations of actual signs seen in Houston, in Texas, in 2020. They are not artifacts from a bygone era. Neither are they relics found in the back of an antique store, forgotten and left to ruin. These are actual signs in present day use that serve the precise function of attracting clientele for their respective businesses. In this case, a catering company, a block of apartments and a family-owned furniture company.

Oh fo sho. So was The Coliseum

Sugar and Cotton

Do the atrocities blur out the farther we are away from them?

Everyone loves to look at feats of architecture and land but nobody wants to think of how it became that way, or who had to lose in the process.

The absurdity of these examples is only made clearer when parallel parked with another site of untold crimes to humanity in the annals of our shared history: The Nazi concentration camps. Now imagine if in 2020, it is deemed fit and evidence of an astute business mind to name a business Auschwitz catering services or Concentration Camp High Rises. Surely this would incite deep outrage from all quarters. But somehow, the use of 'plantation' to peddle businesses doesn't strike the same chord for the obvious and not-so-obvious reasons.

Is this what is happening with "Plantation"?

Branding and brand names and by extension, signs and signage serve the purpose of being signifiers; shorthand used to transmit quickly what a business does and, where they can, a set of usually positive values a business embodies. For that reason, we know that the use of plantation in these examples aren't nods to the slavery and other atrocities that were committed on these vast expanses of land.

Call a spade a spade, dammit

People have romantic notions of slavery and the Antebellum South. Where can we include this idea of opulence in this description?

Rather, they speak to a recasting of plantations as sites of genteel, even luxurious living, a positioning that takes on an added layer of irony with the apartment complex which has more in common with Section 8 housing than it does with luxury condos.

Is the trajectory of information inevitably then misinformation?

Oooh. Good question

BUT THEY DID!

I don't disagree. I'm just saying

This recasting isn't particularly unique to the use of plantation here. American history and history of the American south specifically is replete with examples of this sort of revisionism. And while this recasting isn't totally untrue -white slave masters did enjoy the trappings of living in the big house along with their families- what has been played a blind eye to is the subjugation that went on to uphold that lifestyle for a privileged few.

Slave owners/masters or overseers? Should we change the language because people can't own people. I need to do research but I've heard people use different language..

Always written from the gaze of the victorious. There is a Chinua Achebe quote to that effect.

Misinformation here stems from a choice to omit and to overlook, to gloss over and to garnish over time, to hyperfocus on certain points while blurring out others. It speaks to a separate history told to uphold a distorted view to a point that it is deemed totally okay to associate one's present day business and livelihood to plantations of yore without obvious repercussions. These signs are at best harmless to the clueless and at worst strategic dog whistles to the equally misinformed that buy wholeheartedly into these particular retelling and reframing of history.

I'm still trying to figure out how to answer information v. Misinformation question. I think information becomes misinformation once the misinformation becomes beneficial

Lemme find it.

"Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter."  
- Chinua Achebe

You know that definition of history as lies generally agreed upon

Or that history is written by the murderers