



Summer 2006

It's All for Sale, by James Ridgeway

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Recommended Citation

Iris Augusten, *It's All for Sale*, by James Ridgeway, 46 Nat. Resources J. 834 (2006).
Available at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nrj/vol46/iss3/11>

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legislation aimed at silencing activism. Certain politicians and lobbyists representing prominent animal-based industries use instances of militant activism to advance their own causes and silence the opposition; the fact that these groups employ violent means makes it much easier for their legislation to be passed. Coining terms such as “eco-terrorism” and referring to animal rights activists as one of America’s greatest domestic terror threats gained popular acceptance not because society is indifferent to the plight of animals or the environment, but as a reaction to the fear militants had engendered. In turn, the media coverage, which focuses on these few extremists while largely ignoring the actions of peaceful activists, creates a false portrayal of the animal rights movement. Therefore, the rank and file, who turn to these corporate monoliths for information, derive a negative impression of all animal activists making it exceedingly difficult for both groups to engage in peaceful debate.

So what can be done to clear the good name of animal advocates around the world? Hall, like Gandhi, argues that we must separate ourselves from all forms of violence. What animal advocates seek is to relieve animals of human-induced suffering; it is a movement that aspires for peace on all levels. To achieve this goal, animal advocates must transcend the avenger role and become harbingers of peace. Instead of demonizing those who do not ascribe to the animal rights movement, advocates must maintain nonviolent resistance that focuses on advancing a moral and ethical argument. Moreover, animal advocacy should seek to break down notions of social hierarchy and create “the most comprehensive peace movement ever known.” If there are no longer any lines drawn between race, sex, gender, religion, and class, modern civilization must also recognize that there cannot be a division between humans and non-human animals. Thus, by relinquishing our dominion over animals and granting them autonomy, we will be helping to free ourselves of socially prescribed systems of inequity.

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It's All for Sale. By James Ridgeway. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004. Pp. 209. \$18.95 paperback.

Consider these facts and implications that are at the heart of investigative reporter James Ridgeway’s *It’s All for Sale*: By 2025, at least 3.5 billion people will face water scarcity. From one to five million Bangladeshis will die from arsenic poisoning from the water they drink. Water is not the only resource that is becoming increasingly scarce and therefore progressively more expensive. Every resource comes at a price, whether that price is measured in dollars and cents or environmental

degradation. More often than not, both are implicated. In the coming years, sustaining an increasing population with fewer and fewer resources will be the central focus of governments, scientists, and citizens around the world.

Not only are resources becoming increasingly scarce, they are also largely unmanaged by governments and are controlled primarily by the private sector. Because the commodification of resources has gone largely unchecked by world political powers, a small number of companies represent somewhat of a monopoly on global resource control. For example: one U.S. timber company owns more land than any other private landowner in the world. These companies regulate not only supply and demand, but also the environmental cost of resource use.

In a time of intense political debate over the scarcity of resources, namely oil, Ridgeway allows facts to speak for themselves. For example, in 2002 the U.S. Geologic Service reported that 22 antibiotics and other prescription drugs, veterinary drugs, hormones, steroids, and fire retardants were found in 48 percent of 139 streams in 30 states. Facts like this throughout the book expose the dire circumstances in which we have come to live due to the lack of regulations that would protect us from our utter dependence on resources. On page after page, Ridgeway presents staggering figures that explain the current state of affairs concerning global resource use and management.

The story of modern history, Ridgeway argues, is the story of dependence on resources. The corporate exploitation of this dependency is the focus of *It's all for Sale*. Ridgeway explains each resource's place in the history of human development, leading to current dependence and exploitation. Ridgeway aptly employs cause and effect to chart the development of the commodification of resources to be sold on the world market. Although resources such as coal and oil have long been seen as commodities, human necessities such as water are becoming increasingly scarce and therefore valuable.

Ridgeway ties resource dependence to war, hunger, environmental degradation, exploitation, and peace, educating the reader about the historical significance of human resource dependence. Without providing commentary, Ridgeway allows history and facts to speak for themselves and gives the reader a powerful view of the centrality of resource dependence throughout the world, including the use of resources as political tools. For example: the United States used chrome trade sanctions to drive the end of apartheid in South Africa.

Ridgeway dedicates one chapter to each resource, which is hardly sufficient to explore each resource's important nuances. In fact, an exploration of each resource could very easily command an entire book. However, this technique allows Ridgeway to explore resource

dependence very generally, providing an overview that lends itself to a broad understanding of human dependence on resources and the consequences of that dependence. While this is hardly an in-depth look at resource commodification, the book provides an excellent background and general overview of resource dependence in the world today.

Although the book's focus is on the commodification of resources, Ridgeway's reader can't help but receive instruction on world history. And that is Ridgeway's point—the history of resources as commodities is the history of the world. Additionally, the book's educational value with respect to political, environmental, and social science is significant. The book provides an ideal foundation for activists and interested citizens alike.

Ridgeway uses a common sense and readable style to communicate his thesis. Surprisingly, although the book is highly factual, it reads as a novel and flows well from discussions of historical background to current financial and foreign policy. Not only is the book informative, it is also enjoyable.

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JD Expected May 2007
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