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# Itrsqo;s All for Sale: The Control of Global Resources

*James Ridgeway*

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## **It's All for Sale**

THE CONTROL OF GLOBAL RESOURCES



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**James Ridgeway : Itrsqo;s All for Sale: The Control of Global Resources** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Itrsqo;s All for Sale: The Control of Global Resources:

9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Why hasn't anyone else reviewed this?By Kasem M. KharsaI can't believe I'm the first person to review this book?! I think any social entrepreneur/activist would benefit from this summary of how our surroundings, and even our bodies, are being commiditized. The most disturbing statistic in the book for me was how there are more people in slavery today than at any other time in human history?! I think a book like this compliments 'The World is Flat' very well. There is a dark underbelly to globalization that can be remedied by socially conscious captilism. (...)

Five companies dominate the U.S. petroleum industry. Five control the worldwide trade in grain. Two have a corner on the private market for drinking water. In terms of actual dollars, trade in heroin, cocaine, and tobacco ranks alongside that in grain or metals. There are more slaves in the world today than ever before. Resource by resource, *It's All for Sale* uncovers and discloses who owns, buys, and sells what. Some resources—such as fuel, metals, fertilizers, drugs, fibers, food, forests, and flowers—have, for better or worse, long been thought of as commodities. Others—including fresh water, human beings, the sky, the oceans, and life itself (in the form of genetic codes)—are more startling to think of as products with price tags, but, as James Ridgeway shows, they are treated as such on a massive scale in lucrative markets around the world. Revealing the surprisingly small number of companies that control many of the basic commodities we use in everyday life, *It's All for Sale* confirms in specific detail that globalization has been accompanied by an extraordinary concentration of ownership. At the same time, it is about much more than what company has cornered the market in corn or diamonds. Corporations and captains of industry, wars and swindles, oppressors and the oppressed, empires and colonies, military might and commercial power, economic boom and bust—all these come alive in Ridgeway's canny and arresting reporting about the global scramble for power and profit. *It's All for Sale* is an invaluable source for researchers, activists, and all those concerned with globalization, corporate power, and the exploitation of individuals and the environment.

From Publishers Weekly: Purportedly an alarming account of the "commoditization of natural resources and of life itself," this volume is actually something tamer—a comprehensive guide to the world's major commodities, from diamonds and human beings to the skies and oceans. Ridgeway, a staff writer for the *Village Voice*, professes horror that a small number of corporations would ever seek to form cartels and exploit the fundamental necessities of life (even though he notes in his introduction and elsewhere that this has always been the case) and observes that things are getting worse. Maybe. It is disturbing to read that, after World War I, America and Britain created a joint venture known as the Iraq Petroleum Company and that "with modernized industry Iraq could produce quantities of oil sufficient to rival Saudi Arabia." Still, Ridgeway doesn't balance his accounts of cartels and exploitation with an examination of the economic forces that drive commoditization, the advantages of economic development for developing countries or the process of economic evolution. Worse, Ridgeway discusses only problems, not solutions. The book is organized commodity by commodity. Ridgeway gives a brief, and sometimes fascinating, description of the usefulness and history of each substance, its exploitation by the few and its inevitable depletion. But he stops short of suggesting any wise or fair methods of allocating resources, and this omission seems to suggest that corrupt markets are inevitable. Perhaps Ridgeway's largest failing is his tacit suggestion that commoditization is necessarily evil. Things have an economic as well as a spiritual existence, and the recognition of their market value is a useful, and necessary, first step in determining their true price. Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "James Ridgeway is one of our most astute and bold social critics, and in this book he puts his sharp pen to use in making us aware of how so many things in the world, including human beings themselves, are being turned into something for profit. It is a needed wake-up call, and I hope it will startle us into resisting the commodification of our world."—Howard Zinn, author of *A People's History of the United States*