



# Nine-tenths of the Law: Property and Resistance in the United States

*Hannah Dobbz*

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"Millions of foreclosed homes and abandoned buildings on one hand; millions of Americans desperate for decent shelter on the other. Hannah Dobbz makes the necessary addition of resources and needs in a book that is both a brilliant history of squatting in the USA and a template for the next stage of the Occupy movement.--Mike Davis, author of *Planet of Slums* and *Buda's Wagon*

How does "property" fit into designs for an equitable society? *Nine-tenths of the Law* examines the history of squatting and property struggles in the United States, from colonialism to twentieth century urban squatting and the foreclosure crisis of the late 2000s, and how such resistance movements shape the law. Stories from our most hard-hit American cities show that property is truly in crisis:

- One in five homes in Buffalo, NY, are abandoned.
- Our national housing vacancy rate is 14 percent. If we gave a house to every homeless person in the United States two-thirds of that stock would remain empty. In May of 2011, one in every 103 homes in Nevada was in foreclosure.

*Nine-tenths of the Law* expands our understanding of property law and highlights recent tactics like creative squatting ventures and the use of adverse possession to claim title to vacant homes. Hannah Dobbz unveils the tangled relationship Americans have always had in creating and sustaining healthy communities.

**Hannah Dobbz** is a writer, editor, filmmaker, and former squatter. In 2007 she produced a film about squatters in the Bay Area called *Shelter*. The film has screened widely at universities, bookstores, and community spaces, including the 2009 Three Rivers Film Festival in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

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