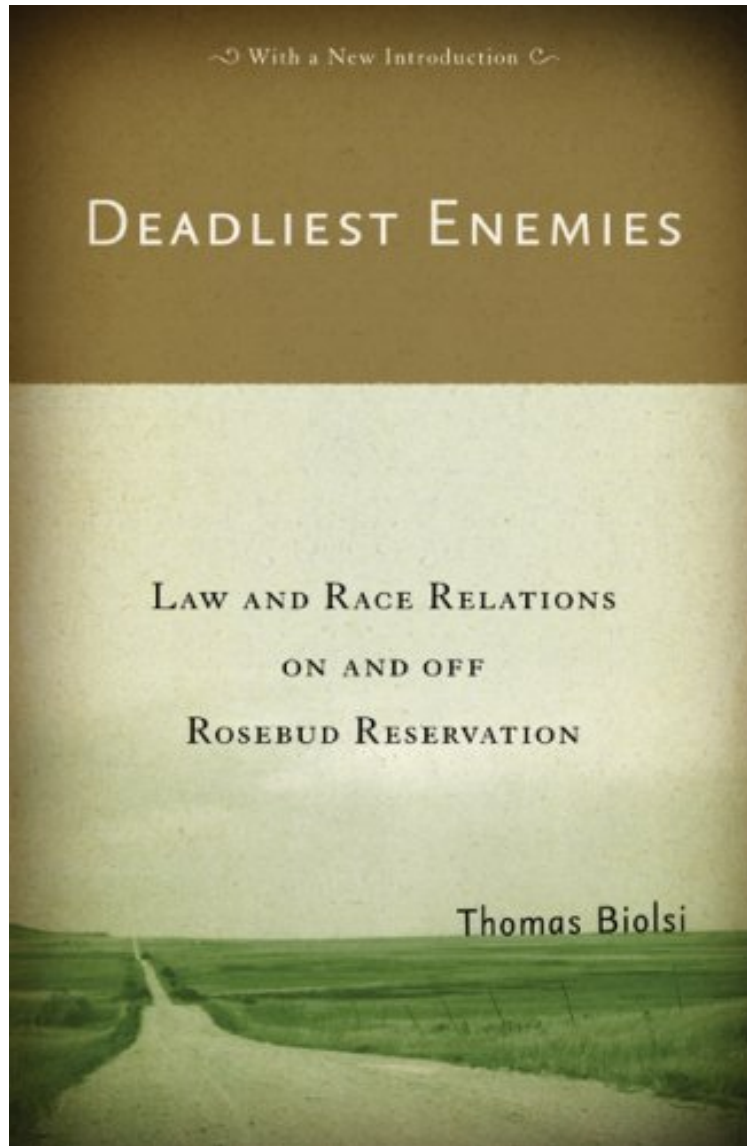


(Ebook pdf) Deadliest Enemies: Law and Race Relations on and off Rosebud Reservation

Deadliest Enemies: Law and Race Relations on and off Rosebud Reservation

Thomas Biolsi

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Thomas Biolsi : Deadliest Enemies: Law and Race Relations on and off Rosebud Reservation before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Deadliest Enemies: Law and Race Relations on and off Rosebud Reservation:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. No Cakewalk!By TrudenI read this for my North American Indians

and Contemporary Issues class. The book is very in depth and stays true to its focus of the Rosebud Reservation and conflicts between the Rosebud Sioux Tribe and Non-Indian South Dakota residents. However, the issues it covers transcend the citizens of South Dakota to become relevant to anyone who has ever been on or near an American Indian Reservation or who is interested in the conflict between Tribal and U.S. Civil rights. One thing about this book is that Biolsi is very careful to explain everything fully. You won't have to look up anything to understand it. Very Interesting, although certainly not light reading!

10 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars
By Fawn Tadios
Great work
4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Powerful study of the legal construction of race
By Anthropologist at large
This book excels in several ways, simultaneously. First, it is a great study of how race can be socially constructed through law. Unlike much critical legal theory, this work is grounded in concrete, detailed cases, and their consequences for local lives. Secondly, it is a very fine work on that peculiar area of law known as Indian Law. In reading it, you will gain a good understanding of the last two centuries of Indian Law. Thirdly, it is a fine work of critical anthropology focusing on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota. I cannot think of a work of equal value to an aspiring anthropologist who wants to understand the legal conflicts that shape reservation life. As if this were not enough, this is a fine study of the construction of white innocence and white privilege. So the audiences of interest here are multiple: law students, anthropologists, and readers interested in critical race theory, as well as anyone with an interest in Native American studies. It is written with a clarity that makes it an excellent text for adoption in either upper division undergraduate courses, or graduate seminars. Each chapter develops a case study focused on a specific legal struggle between the tribal government on Rosebud reservation, local cities, and various interests in the state of South Dakota. These local struggles, Biolsi argues, are fought out within, and gain their momentum from, the shifting field of federal Indian law. The chapters steadily build his central thesis: federal Indian law is founded on contradictory impulses, and these contradictions mean that whatever decisions a particular case produces, the result will never be definitive. Though I doubt Biolsi's central thesis holds up, he does an excellent job presenting it. In the courts where Indian law is contested, all parties to the dispute have something to lose, whether Indian or white. The cases roll forward, driven by new challenges, and reversals, continually sharpening the local divisions and hostilities. It is Biolsi's proposal that federal Indian law, intended to protect Native communities from local whites - the "deadliest enemies" of the title - in fact act as an accelerant for local conflicts. The core of the indecision in Indian law, Biolsi holds, springs from two contradictory policies that have been followed alternately over the course of American political history. One political movement has sought to annihilate Native people as a distinctive entity, to eliminate tribes as polities, to assimilate Indians as individuals. The alternate political movement has been to recognize and preserve Native peoples as sovereign polities. Current legal struggles reflect the long oscillation between these movements over the course, particularly, of the twentieth century. As the century opened, the Dawes Act, and the allotting of reservations and privatization of tribal lands it set in motion, represented a determined push to erase the political existence of Native peoples. The Indian New Deal of John Collier reversed that movement, and sought to restore tribal lands and embed tribal governments within the American fabric. This was followed by the push for Termination, which later gave way to the last half century, dominated by a vision of sovereignty. That federal Indian law is contradictory, and American history equally, cannot be argued. That federal Indian law provides incentives to those wishing to press for either outcome is equally reasonable. But I doubt, fundamentally, that Indian law explains local conflicts between Indians and whites in South Dakota. The fact is, that the designation of local whites as "deadliest enemies" accurately reflects much of the local history of Indian people across North America. Biolsi's argument too easily lays the blame on the federal government, and absolves the state of South Dakota and its citizenry. As insightful as his analysis often is, Biolsi fails to consider that local contradictions, and local motives, might be driving the persistent recourse to the federal courts. Like many Americans, Biolsi blames the federal government for problems that were generated by private citizens and local initiative. The federal government has proven itself remarkably expressive of and responsive to the desires of American citizens. It was private citizens who drove the westward expansion of the American system. No one forced their emigration. It was private citizens who pressed for the erasure of local Native lands. It was local whites who everywhere sought the extinction of local Natives, so their lands would be liberated for their use. Try this thought experiment: If the federal government had not taken shape and formed itself in the course of westward expansion, if instead new territories had been given full sovereignty without federal interference, what would have been the fate of the Native peoples within those new republics? The Texas Republic, and the California Republic, shortlived though they were, often a lesson. Of the former, too little has been rewritten. But on the latter, see *Murder State: California's Native American Genocide, 1846-1873*. It is precisely where federal interference was least, that the erasure of Native people has been greatest. This is a re-issue of this book. It was originally published by the University of California Press *Deadliest Enemies: Law and the Making of Race Relations* on and off Rosebud Reservation in hardcover in 2001. This new paperback edition includes a new introduction.

Many people living far away from Indian reservations express sympathy for the poverty and misery experienced by Native Americans, yet, Thomas Biolsi argues, the problems faced by Native Americans are the results of white privilege. In *Deadliest Enemies*, Biolsi connects the origins of racial tension between Indians and non-Indians on the

Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota to federal laws, showing how the courts have created opposing political interests along race lines. Biolsi demonstrates that the courts' definitions of legal rights—both constitutional and treaty rights—make solutions to racial tensions intractable. This powerful work sheds much-needed light on racial conflicts in South Dakota and in the rest of the United States, and holds white people accountable for the benefits of their racial privilege that come at the expense of Native Americans. Thomas Biolsi is professor of Native American studies at the University of California at Berkeley.