

1-12-2010

Split Estate

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Repository Citation

Ipri, T. A. (2010). Split Estate. *Educational Media Reviews Online* 1. University at Buffalo Libraries. https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/lib_articles/263

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Split Estate

2009

Distributed by [Bullfrog Films](#), PO Box 149, Oley, PA 19547; 800-543-FROG (3764)

Produced by Red Rock Pictures, LLC

Directed by Debra Anderson

DVD, color, 76 min.

Jr. High - Adult

American Studies, Environmental Studies

Reviewed by Tom Ipri, University of Nevada Las Vegas

 Highly Recommended

Date Entered: 1/12/2010

The concept of a split estate refers to the fact that owners of a property do not necessarily own the minerals and resources that reside under the property. Debra Anderson's *Split Estate* highlights the more damning aspects of this oddity by documenting how oil and gas companies are setting up shop on home owner's land. In some instances, oil rigs are constructing within 100 feet of people's homes. The film points out, for example, that 85% of landowners in Colorado do not own the rights to the minerals under their land. Although some regulations are in place which require oil and gas companies to work with homeowners, these regulations are not strong enough to stop the companies even if the owners resist.

Not only does this process scar the land by having thousands of smaller rigs in multiple locations, but it also causes the release of toxic chemicals resulting from the drilling methods which, in turn, cause a myriad of health problems for the homeowners. In addition, the products companies use to extract gas consist of chemical combinations considered to be proprietary, so residents have no way of knowing exactly what chemicals are being used.

Split Estate certainly relies on the typical evil corporation/good citizen dichotomy found in many environmental films. But Anderson gives the company representatives enough air time to damn themselves.

Split Estate is **highly recommended** for collections with an interest in environmental issues, especially those with a focus on the western United States.