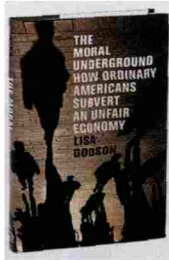


THE SKIMMER



The Moral Underground: How Ordinary Americans Subvert an Unfair Economy

By Lisa Dodson
New Press; 227 pages

IF ONLY THIS BOOK HAD been published in 2007. Then the hundreds of people interviewed by Lisa Dodson would have been able to pass along an important piece of advice: What's good for business is not necessarily good for America. For Dodson and her subjects, American corporations are amoral entities that continue to build their wealth on the backs of the nation's

low-income workers. Helping the less fortunate in this context becomes a form of civil and corporate disobedience, and Dodson, a professor of sociology at Boston College, isn't lacking in examples. There's the supervisors who tweak time cards so that employees can take care of their kids, the school nurse who keeps cots in her office so that students in difficult family situations can catch a few hours' sleep, and the doctor who flouts insurance regulations in order to prescribe medicine for an entire household. All see their behavior as necessary and moral acts of conscience. As one subject says, "Sometimes you just have to level the playing field a little."

—BY GILBERT CRUZ

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