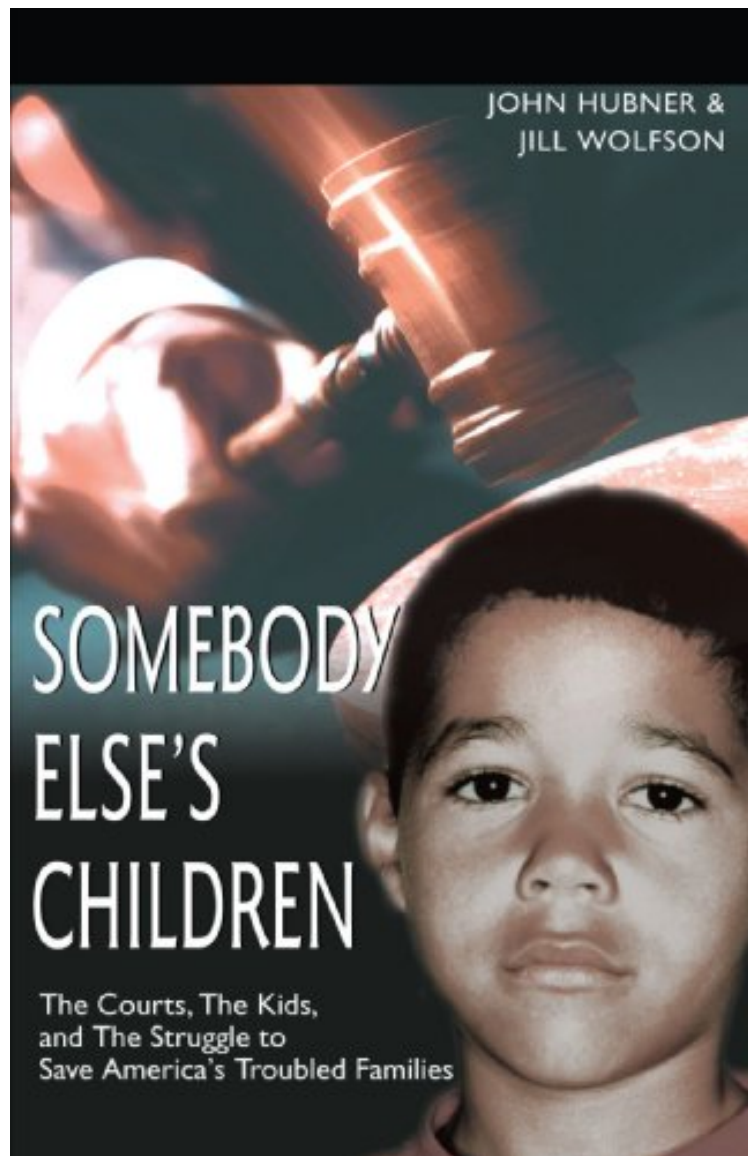


(Online library) Somebody Else's Children: The Courts, The Kids, and The Struggle to Save America's Troubled Families

Somebody Else's Children: The Courts, The Kids, and The Struggle to Save America's Troubled Families

Jill Wolfson

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Jill Wolfson : Somebody Else's Children: The Courts, The Kids, and The Struggle to Save America's Troubled Families before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Somebody Else's Children: The Courts, The Kids, and The Struggle to Save America's Troubled Families:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Outstanding and still pertinent
By Paul T. Stone
This is a superb, eminently readable, and balanced overview of the child welfare system. It contains true, compelling, and representative stories of children and families which were caught up in the system for various reasons. The names of the children and their families were changed in order to protect their privacy. It's a miracle this book could ever be published, due to the strict protections of privacy in the law. In the process of telling the stories, the authors explain how the child welfare system works (or doesn't work). It turns out, like any human institution, the system has its flaws, but there are almost always very valid reasons for why things are done the way they are. Myths are debunked, and the system is shown for what it is - a sometimes flawed, but nonetheless vitally important support for children whose parents and society have failed them. There are numerous references in the back of the book to support the assertions in the text. The book is about 20 years old, but I believe it should still be pertinent and relevant today. I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in children or the child welfare system. If you would like to make a difference, please consider volunteering as a CASA or Guardian Ad Litem.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great service
By Debe
The book I ordered was shipped promptly and was in great condition as promised, thank you! I would order again. Very economical way to purchase books that have been recommended.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Must Read
By Neuter and Spay
I could not put this book down. If you are interested in learning how the system can help, or hinder, this is the book to read.

With the narrative force of an epic novel and the urgency of first-rate investigative journalism, this important book delves into the daily workings and life-or-death decisions of a typical American family court system. It provides an intimate look at the lives of the parents and children whose fate it decides. A must for social workers and social work students, attorneys, judges, foster parents, law students, child advocates, teachers, journalists and anyone who cares about our nation's children.

From Publishers Weekly
Award-winning California reporters Hubner and Wolfson were given unusual access to the confidential proceedings of family court in their hometown of San Jose, Calif. The raw, unmediated portrait of the machinery of juvenile justice, which includes the voices of the families and children as well as of service providers, reveals how intricate and interconnected the problems are. In the courtroom of a juvenile judge, we view the day-to-day routine of welfare, delinquency and child-placement hearings. Writing with admirable conviction and convincing urgency, the authors make the point that the press usually ignores the system until a crisis erupts. Here their aim is to follow children and their families through shelters, courts and foster homes to see how the system really works. The thrust of this graphic report is a push for more government programs for juveniles and a plea for personal commitment through volunteering "to make somebody else's children all our children." Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal
Hubner, a former probation officer, and Wolfson, news columnist for the San Jose Mercury News, tackle here the complexity of the American juvenile justice system. Granted unusual access to the records of the Santa Clara County (California) Probation Department of Family and Children, they were also allowed to interview the social workers, children, and families involved in confidential court proceedings. The result is a gripping narrative of juvenile case stories, "the ordinary drama that...reflects the day-to-day working of the system." It's a story of the often well-intentioned counselors, legal constraints, substance abuse, deprivation, and child and family protection gone awry. More descriptive than prescriptive, the book's overarching theme is the lack of responsible community recognition of the necessity for commitment to the healthy development of "our" kids in our society. Especially appropriate and thoughtful reading for our times; recommended for professionals, academics, politicians, and the general public.

Suzanne W. Wood, SUNY Coll. of Technology, Alfred
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From Kirkus
An unusually levelheaded and perceptive view of the so-called child welfare system. Hubner, a reporter with the San Jose Mercury News, and Wolfson, a freelance journalist (and former probation officer), live in California's Santa Clara County, site of Silicon Valley and the boomtown of San Jose, now the 11th-largest city in the country. Despite its flourishing economy, San Jose is burdened with all the usual societal problems, including juvenile delinquency and child abuse. With the cooperation of the presiding judge of the county juvenile court, the authors were given access to usually confidential court, probation, and child welfare agency records, and they have produced a fascinating insider's view of the mesh of policy, precedent, legislation, and social gestalt that shapes how children in trouble are treated. They interviewed not only children at risk, but their families, friends, teachers, foster parents, and counselors. Neither awash in bathos nor steeped in cynicism, their report focuses on a number of individuals, including Jenny, a teenage mother fighting to keep her baby; Nicky, a baby born prematurely with cocaine and alcohol in his frail system; and Corey, a 15-year-old who stabbed a counselor to death. These stories gain dimension by being set within the larger perspective of America's roller-coaster attitudes toward out-of-control children, a review of often confusing social welfare policy (preserve the family and keep the children safe--sometimes mutually exclusive goals), and an understanding, if not always sympathetic, look at the difficult roles of social workers, attorneys, and prison staff. Despite increasing political pressure to punish juvenile offenders with long prison terms, the authors produce impressive statistics to show that incarceration doesn't work and that intensive, long-term therapy in small, controlled

settings does. Balanced, informative, and often very sad, not only in the tragic stories but in the picture of a system that seems close to being overwhelmed. -- Copyright 1996, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.