

THE LAW IS A WHITE DOG

HOW LEGAL RITUALS

MAKE AND

UNMAKE PERSONS

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

Princeton & Oxford

THE LAW
IS A
WHITE
DOG

COLIN DAYAN

Copyright © 2011 by Princeton University Press

Published by Princeton University Press, 41 William Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08540

In the United Kingdom: Princeton University Press, 6 Oxford Street, Woodstock, Oxfordshire OX20 1TW

press.princeton.edu

All Rights Reserved

Fourth printing, and first paperback printing, 2013

Paperback ISBN 978-0-691-15787-0

The Library of Congress has cataloged the cloth edition of this book as follows

Dayan, Joan

The law is a white dog : how legal rituals make and unmake persons / Colin Dayan.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index. ISBN 978-0-691-07091-9 (cloth : alk.

paper) 1. Persons (Law)—United States. 2. Slavery—Law and legislation—United States. 3. Torture—United States. 4. Civil rights—United States. 5. Law—United States—Social aspects. I. Title.

KF465.D39 2011

346.73012—dc22 2010027474

British Library Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available

This book has been composed in Berling

Printed on acid-free paper. ∞

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4

For David, again

This page intentionally left blank

... dogs believe in thieves and ghosts

—Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

This page intentionally left blank