



Pay to Play: How Rod Blagojevich Turned Political Corruption Into a National Sideshow

Elizabeth Brackett

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Weeks after President Barack Obama's remarkable victory, the nation was shocked to learn that Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich had been arrested at his home by the FBI. There are allegations that Blago had tried to sell Obama's soon-to-be-vacant Senate seat for cash. This effort appeared to be only the latest in a cascade of corruption that prompted U.S. attorney Patrick Fitzgerald to charge the governor with actions that would make Lincoln roll over in his grave. In *Pay to Play*, Elizabeth Brackett, award-winning correspondent in the political realm for PBS's *The NewsHour* with Jim Lehrer, uncovers new details as she goes behind the story of the first governor to be impeached by the Illinois legislature. All the time tracing the background of corruption in Illinois politics and its implications for state government executive branches across the country, she tells precisely how Blagojevich's personal biography and his political upbringing paved the way for his reckless fall; what the dilemma of selecting replacement senators means for other states; what secrets the federal trial of the governor is likely to produce; why Roland Burris was selected for the U.S. Senate seat for Illinois; and how a man named Obama could emerge with integrity from the swirl of this same political environment.

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