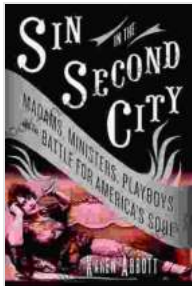


Sin in the Second City: The Corrupting Influence of Chicago Politics



Sin in the Second City: Madams, Ministers, Playboys, and the Battle for America's Soul by Karen Abbott

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

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Chicago has a long and sordid history of political corruption, earning it the nickname "Sin in the Second City." From the days of Al Capone to the present day, the city has been plagued by a culture of corruption that has infected every level of government.

This article will explore the history of corruption in Chicago, from its roots in the 19th century to its modern manifestations. We will examine the factors that have contributed to Chicago's corrupt culture, and we will discuss the efforts that have been made to combat corruption in the city.

The Roots of Corruption in Chicago

The roots of corruption in Chicago can be traced back to the city's early days as a frontier town. In the 1830s and 1840s, Chicago was a hub for the fur trade and a magnet for immigrants. The city's rapid growth attracted a

mix of honest citizens and criminals, and the lack of effective law enforcement allowed corruption to flourish.

In the late 19th century, Chicago became a major center of organized crime. The city's saloons, gambling dens, and brothels were controlled by powerful criminal gangs, and politicians were often in the pockets of these gangs.

The most notorious of these gangs was the Outfit, which was led by Al Capone. Capone's gang controlled much of Chicago's criminal activity, and he was known for his willingness to use violence and intimidation to achieve his goals.

The Rise of Machine Politics

In the late 19th century, Chicago's corrupt political culture was formalized through the rise of machine politics. Machine politics is a system in which a political party controls a city or state through patronage and graft. Party bosses used their control of government jobs and contracts to reward their supporters and punish their opponents.

The most powerful machine in Chicago was the Democratic Party machine, which was led by Mayor Richard J. Daley. Daley ruled Chicago for over two decades, and he used his machine to control every aspect of city government.

Daley's machine was based on a system of patronage and graft. He rewarded his supporters with jobs, contracts, and other favors, and he punished his opponents by denying them access to these benefits.

Daley's machine also controlled the city's elections. Through a combination of fraud and intimidation, the machine ensured that Democratic candidates won elections, regardless of their qualifications or the wishes of the voters.

The Modern Era of Corruption

Daley's machine was finally broken up in the late 1970s, but corruption continued to plague Chicago. In the 1980s, Mayor Harold Washington was elected on a reform platform, but he was unable to overcome the city's corrupt culture.

In the 1990s, Mayor Richard M. Daley, the son of the late Richard J. Daley, was elected. Daley promised to clean up corruption, but he was unable to keep his promise. Under Daley's leadership, Chicago continued to be plagued by a culture of corruption.

In recent years, there have been several high-profile corruption scandals in Chicago. In 2019, Mayor Rahm Emanuel was forced to resign after he was implicated in a bribery scandal.

The Factors that Contribute to Corruption in Chicago

There are a number of factors that have contributed to the culture of corruption in Chicago. These factors include:

- **The city's history of organized crime.** Chicago has a long history of organized crime, which has provided a fertile ground for corruption.
- **The rise of machine politics.** Machine politics has been a major force in Chicago for over a century, and it has provided a systematic way for politicians to engage in corruption.

- **The city's strong mayor system.** Chicago has a strong mayor system, which gives the mayor a great deal of power. This power can be used for good or for evil, and it has often been used for evil in Chicago.
- **The city's dependence on property taxes.** Chicago is heavily dependent on property taxes for revenue. This makes the city vulnerable to corruption, as developers and other special interests can use their influence to get favorable treatment from the city.

The Efforts to Combat Corruption in Chicago

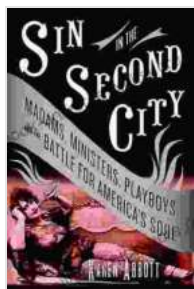
There have been a number of efforts to combat corruption in Chicago. These efforts include:

- **The creation of the Independent Inspector General's Office.** The Independent Inspector General's Office was created in 2009 to investigate corruption in Chicago. The office has investigated a number of high-profile corruption cases, and it has helped to bring a number of corrupt politicians to justice.
- **The passage of ethics reforms.** The city of Chicago has passed a number of ethics reforms in recent years. These reforms have included limits on campaign contributions, disclosure requirements for lobbyists, and a ban on gifts from lobbyists to city officials.
- **The creation of a new crime-fighting task force.** In 2019, the city of Chicago created a new crime-fighting task force to combat corruption. The task force is made up of law enforcement officers from the Chicago Police Department, the FBI, and the IRS.

Corruption is a serious problem in Chicago, but it is not an insurmountable problem. There have been a number of efforts to combat corruption in the city, and these efforts have had some success.

However, much more needs to be done to root out corruption from Chicago. The city needs to continue to pass ethics reforms, strengthen law enforcement efforts, and create a culture of integrity in government.

Only then can Chicago truly become a "City of Big Shoulders" and a city that is free from the stain of corruption.



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