



The Price of Justice: A True Story of Greed and Corruption

By Laurence Leamer

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A nonfiction legal thriller that traces the fourteen-year struggle of two lawyers to bring the most powerful coal baron in American history, Don Blankenship, to justice

Don Blankenship, head of Massey Energy since the early 1990s, ran an industry that provides nearly half of America's electric power. But wealth and influence weren't enough for Blankenship and his company, as they set about destroying corporate and personal rivals, challenging the Constitution, purchasing the West Virginia judiciary, and willfully disregarding safety standards in the company's mines—in which scores died unnecessarily.

As Blankenship hobnobbed with a West Virginia Supreme Court justice in France, his company polluted the drinking water of hundreds of citizens while he himself fostered baroque vendettas against anyone who dared challenge his sovereignty over coal mining country. Just about the only thing that stood in the way of Blankenship's tyranny over a state and an industry was a pair of odd-couple attorneys, Dave Fawcett and Bruce Stanley, who undertook a legal quest to bring justice to this corner of America. From the backwoods courtrooms of West Virginia they pursued their case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, and to a dramatic decision declaring that the wealthy and powerful are not entitled to purchase their own brand of law.

The Price of Justice is a story of corporate corruption so far-reaching and devastating it could have been written a hundred years ago by Ida Tarbell or Lincoln Steffens. And as Laurence Leamer demonstrates in this captivating tale, because it's true, it's scarier than fiction.

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Editorial Review

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Starred Review Not content to dominate the coal-mining industry through Massey Energy and the West Virginia judicial system that indirectly supported it, CEO Don Blankenship ferociously punished anyone who dared to challenge that dominance. So, in 1998, when attorneys Bruce Stanley and Dave Fawcett went after Massey on behalf of their client, a small mining company, they set off a 14-year-long struggle that eventually took them to the U.S. Supreme Court to argue against corporate corruption of the judicial system. The legal intrigue that formed the basis of John Grisham's novel *The Appeal* (2008) includes fascinating real-life characters: vindictive, coldhearted Blankenship; folksy Stanley, a son of West Virginia; and meticulous, cause-driven Fawcett. Best-selling author Leamer offers a compelling nonfiction thriller that traces the story, steeped in the particular culture of dangerous coal country, from back-room influence peddling to courtroom drama, through arduous efforts to get and keep the issues before the media, and, finally, during the long, hard task of getting the case heard by the Supreme Court. Leamer is masterful at presenting the important issues, strong personalities, political and legal machinations, and economic stakes of the challenge to Massey, looking beyond the law to reveal a case about social inequities, greed, and arrogance. --Vanessa Bush

Review

"Laurence Leamer does a superb job of condensing this fifteen-year legal brawl into a highly readable and entertaining narrative. Greed, arrogance, injustice, corruption - it has it all, and, sadly, it's all true. Fortunately, it also has some heroes. This is a book I wish I had written."--John Grisham

"Includes fascinating real-life characters...Bestselling author Leamer offers a compelling nonfiction thriller...Leamer is masterful at presenting the important issues, strong personalities, political and legal machinations and economic stakes of the challenge to Massey, looking beyond the law to reveal a case about social inequities, greed, and arrogance."--"Booklist "(starred review)

"Riveting and compulsively readable...Leamer has produced a Shakespearean tale of greed, corporate irresponsibility, and personal hubris on one hand, and idealism, commitment to justice, and personal sacrifice on the other. Blankenship is a villain for all time, and Stanley and Fawcett are lawyers who bring honor to their profession."---"Publishers Weekly" (starred review)

"Some readers will understandably confuse the contemporary history chronicled in Laurence Leamer's *'The Price of Justice'* for compelling fiction... an expansive, clearly crafted account ... Inspiring...Straightforward and elegant."--"The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette "

"Kafkaesque considerations lie at the heart of *'The Price of Justice'* . . . If the whole thing reads like a Grisham novel, don't be surprised; Grisham based *'The Appeal'*""on many facts of the case. But it is a testament to Leamer's ability to capturing both the characters and the local West-Virginian ethos (he himself had worked in the mines while penning a piece in the early 70's) that the story functions just as well, if not more so, as nonfiction."-- "The Daily Beast "

""The Price of Justice" is the nail-biting, harrowing story of two courageous trial lawyers facing down corporate greed, Wall Street law firms, powerful politicians

About the Author

Laurence Leamer is the bestselling author of more than a dozen books, including *The Kennedy Women* and *Madness Under the Royal Palms*. He is an award-winning journalist whose work has appeared in *The New York Times Magazine*, *Harper's*, and *Playboy*, and has written cover stories for *Newsweek*. He lives in Washington, D.C., and Palm Beach, Florida.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Gerald Hackler:

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