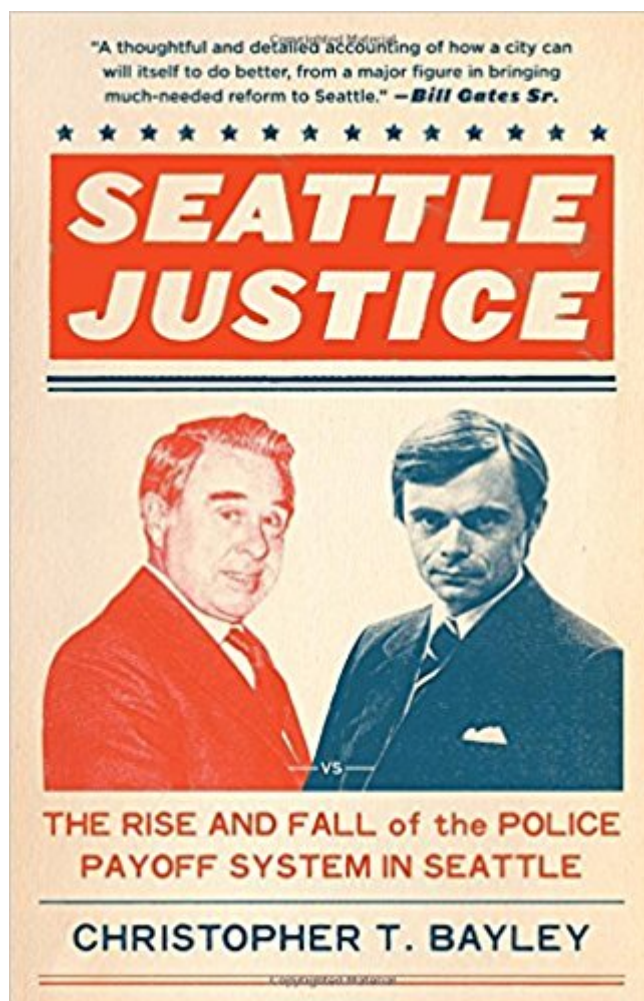


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# Seattle Justice: The Rise And Fall Of The Police Payoff System In Seattle



## Synopsis

This is the story of one of the youngest county prosecutors in the country whose mission was to finally end the system of vice and corruption that had infiltrated Seattle's police department, municipal departments, and even the mayor's office. In the late 1960s, Christopher T. Bayley was a young lawyer with a fire in his belly to break the back of Seattle's police payoff system, which was built on licensing of acknowledged illegal activity known as the "tolerance policy." Against the odds, he defeated an entrenched incumbent to become King County Prosecutor (which includes Seattle). Six months into his first term, he indicted a number of prominent city and police officials. Bayley shows how vice and payoffs became rules of the game in Seattle, and what it took to finally clean up the city.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Bayley's short first-person history is a compelling read and a vivid reminder that Seattle wasn't always the sparkling technological machine that it is now. In fact, not so long ago, it was something quite different." —The Seattle Times "[This book] provides context to the forces that helped shape some of the city's key neighborhoods and makes a compelling argument for why we need watchdogs for those in power." —The Stranger "Seattle Justice: The Rise and Fall of the Police Payoff System in Seattle" by former King County prosecutor Christopher T. Bayley, published by Sasquatch Books this fall, is an eye-opening new memoir that offers perspective on how hard it is to reform local law enforcement, but reassures that big changes can be

made." *Seattle Magazine* "Seattle Justice" is a valuable guide to the city's racial conflicts from the late 1960s to the present. We should not forget this history: The central message of Bayley's fine book: The good old days were pretty damned rotten." *Seattle P.I.* "Christopher T. Bayley has put forward a thoughtful and detailed accounting of, as he has written, 'How a city can will itself to do better.' You will find that Bayley was a major figure in bringing much-needed reform to Seattle." *Bill Gates, Sr.* "This is an important story of young citizen activists, dismayed over a tolerance policy on crime in King County, Washington. Bayley, a leader of the group, ran for county prosecutor against an entrenched incumbent in what appeared to be a hopeless race--and won. As prosecutor, he created a professional team that ended tolerance policies and his legacy is a highly professional county prosecutor's office that is the pride of citizens forty years later." *Daniel J. Evans, former Washington State governor and US senator* "Seattle suffers from the It-Can't-Happen-Here syndrome, and this book should shake that complacency. Our politicians, government, and the press became deeply corrupted by an illegal payoff system, and Bayley's book spells it out with an investigative reporter's relentless precision and a lawyer's attention to solid evidence. Toppling that system took a lot of courage, plenty of luck, and the rise of reform politics in the state. What a saga! What a narrow escape! What a warning for today!" *David Brewster, writer, editor, and publisher; founder of Seattle Weekly and Crosscut.com* "Christopher T. Bayley's memoir reminds us of an old and not very respectable Seattle in which he played a pivotal role in transforming it into a major city respected for the honesty of its politics and law enforcement." *Slade Gorton, former US Senator* "This is the story of how young Seattleites reformed a corrupt police force and prosecutor's office through intelligence, energy, and courage. Our burgeoning millennials need to step up and pursue needed reforms for American communities to continue progress today." *William D. Ruckelshaus, former administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency* "As candidate and prosecutor, Bayley led the cleanup of Seattle corruption. That he and his team did it largely through the political system shows the reforming power of representative democracy. There is a lesson here for right now in America. Sovereignty resides with the people, after all." *Bruce Chapman, Seattle City Council member (1971[-]75), founder of Discovery Institute* "Seattle Justice tells firsthand the important story of how a few dedicated reformers changed a corrupt civic culture. The battle was as much against complacency as the wrongdoing itself. Every generation needs its Bayleys to challenge the indifference and inertia of its time." *Ted Van Dyk, author of Heroes, Hacks and Fools and longtime Democratic*

national policy advisor. "I am not a fan of detective stories or police procedurals, and have never lived in Seattle (worse, I'm a 49ers fan). But I was drawn into Seattle Justice. Bayley writes crisply and clearly, sorting out the characters and transforming this tangled web into a fascinating tale of municipal corruption and cleanup."

•John Rockwell, former New York Times arts critic

"This is a well documented and lively story that is part youth movement, part political movement, and all about a properly aroused band of citizens focused on changing their city for the better. And, ultimately, doing it."

•Charley Royer, former Seattle mayor

"Seattle Justice provides a colorful, fascinating portrait of the ugly underbelly of the city and reveals how a well-intentioned tolerance policy undermines the morality of law enforcement institutions and leads to pervasive crime."

•Sam Reed, Washington secretary of state, 2001 to 2013

"In an age of squeaky-clean, process-heavy local government, it's hard to believe that in the 1960s Seattle was rocked by a shocking corruption and payoff scandal that implicated both the local police and elected officials. Bayley, a young lawyer in that era, ran for prosecuting attorney, won, and secured indictments against several public officials. This is his story."

•The Seattle Times

Christopher T. Bayley served as King County prosecuting attorney from 1971 to 1979. He graduated from Harvard College and received a JD from Harvard Law School. He is currently chairman of Stewardship Partners, a land conservation and restoration organization in Washington State.

Reading Chris's memoir was like a walk down memory lane. I was a 17-year old Lincoln High School junior when Chris and Ed Heavey debated in Lincoln's auditorium. I was impressed with both Chris and Ed. Chris was "old" to me at the time, but he was only 31 years old. I caught the bug and decided I would go to law school. Eight years later, I became a member of the Washington bar and started my career working for Ed Heavey in his private law practice. Many of the names Chris recalls I have met or know from court. As a trial and municipal attorney, I agree with Chris that public service requires a wariness of becoming too complacent. Reform never stops. Chris reminds us of this fact.

I got this book and read it in four days while taking the bus back-and-forth to work - it was that good. The author takes us onto his journey of finally breaking the Tolerance Policy, an anachronism left over from Seattle's pioneer days. Low level vices were tolerated, on the theory that it kept out the

dangerous east coast mob. This tolerance then resulted in payoffs, which polluted both the police and politicians. I vaguely remember the news of the trials when I was a kid, so I was eager to finally get into this subject. The author tells a crisp and engaging story of how the Tolerance Policy was born, evolved over nearly a century, and finally died. I was impressed with his research and prose. In an subject with more tails than facts, the author does a great job of original research, connecting chronological points into a cohesive story line, and constructing a complete story of how something evolved grossly over time. Most of all, the book is well written, encouraging you to turn the pages, worthy of your time to read. I take off one star because while the book concludes, it doesn't wrap up. There's no follow-up on former-prosecutor Carroll (the main antagonist) after the indictment, even though he lived to 96 years old. (Had to go to HistoryLink to answer that question.) It seems like the author spent time talking to some of the old-time cops who resisted the Tolerance Policy, but their viewpoints are not well developed. I would have also liked to read the viewpoints of those who supported the Tolerance Policy. Even though it's easy to condemn in retrospect, what was the thinking at the time that lead them to conclude tolerance actually served the City of Seattle better? Lastly, I find the final chapter, of relating past events to City of Seattle police challenges in 2014 (of racial tensions and the Justice Department oversight) unsatisfying and superfluous. What this book needs is a good epilogue of what eventually happened to all of the players. I guess like any good book, it leaves you wanting just a little bit more.

Chris Did an excellent job of laying out a convoluted wide spread problem with corruption in the Seattle Police Department. Most of the main players in the graft were identified and labeled as co-conspirators in the problem. The first half of the book covered a period of time that I was not familiar with but identified the names of those who would play pivotal roles in my rookie years. I first witnessed the payoffs in China town working as a patrolman on the relief squad. I refused to accept free meals at restaurants and when walking a beat with an "old timer" on Pike street and First Avenue I made excuses to not take a drink in the back rooms of cocktail Lounges and Restaurants. It did not take long for the Officers and supervisors long to figure out that I was not going to participate in the corruption. Because they did not trust the new "straight arrow" rookie officer I was transferred to the South Precinct in George Town. That was where the non-corrupted were sent as the corruption had not reached there. I remember well the names of the participants in the corruption and Chris accurately identified the main people at the top. But missed a few of the participants at the lower end of the problem. All in all the book was well written and the facts were as clear as one could get in a corruption scandal. Good Job Chris, and a fun read for someone who

was there.

This is a fascinating book, a must read if you live in King County, WA, and simply interesting and instructive if you don't. It is the story of a young prosecutor who took on big odds and an amazingly corrupt system. Names are named. This is history, but in Seattle where we like to pretend that graft and corruption only happen elsewhere, it's good to know that our history argues strongly against that. The book is also a fun read, I could see it being made into a movie someday actually. Hmmm... who to play Bayley?

While this provides a good historical perspective on the vice activities in Seattle which lead to the era of Tolerance, it leaves me with a lot of questions regarding some of the main characters and situations described in the book. What happened to Charles O. Carroll after his defeat and trial? What happened to the Washington Liquor Control Board members who were indicted, was there a trial, did graft among that entity get cleaned up? Did Charles Berger continue running his bingo parlors? Among other questions. While the book is intended to detail police activity it would have been nice to have these questions answered.

Detailed, informative and somewhat lacking in conclusion. Bayley could have said more about his role but he did paint a detailed picture of the political process. This is not bedside reading but his treatment does open a window into an active time in Seattle politics. The book is worth a read by those interested in Seattle's political history.

I was a young pup at the end of the Charles O. Carroll police scandals and when Bayley (and the federal prosecutor) led the charge to clean up Seattle's policing, so I sort of remembered following the story in the newspapers. The book is a fascinating look at a part of Seattle's history that a lot of people would rather forget. A worthwhile read for anyone interested in western Washington history.

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