



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on August 20, 2010

Blago's Prosecutors Move for Retrial

For the fourth time since 1973, and the second time in only two years, an Illinois Governor has been found guilty of wrongdoing. There is one consolation for former Governor Rod Blagojevich, however. Of the 24 charges levied against him, he was convicted of merely one: lying to the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI).

Unfortunately for Blago, that crime alone can secure up to five years in prison. On the other 23 counts, the jury was deadlocked, in most cases, by a lone juror.

After 14 days of deliberation, the six-man, six-woman jury convicted Blago on the charge that he lied to the FBI about his involvement in campaign fundraising.



In response to the conviction, Blago responded, "The government threw everything but the kitchen sink at me, and on every charge but one, they could not prove that I broke any laws except one, a nebulous charge from five years ago. I did not lie to the FBI. I told the truth from the very beginning."

Relishing in his role as a victim, he added, "We have a prosecutor who has wasted and wanted to spend tens of millions of dollars of taxpayer money to take me away from my family and my home."

The jury also remained deadlocked on all four corruption charges pending against Blago's brother, Robert Blagojevich, who ran the Governor's campaign fund for four months in 2008.

The crime with which Blagojevich was convicted proved to be the least serious of the counts, some of which include racketeering and conspiracy. Of the variety of charges pending against Blagojevich, the most nefarious involves attempting to sell former Senator Barack Obama's Senate seat. For several jurors, the evidence against Blago in support of this crime was particularly strong. Twenty-one year old juror Erik Sarnello explained, "For a lot of us, the Senate seat was the most obvious." Voicing similar sentiments, juror Cynthia Parker said, "The Senate seat was the strongest the prosecution had."

Chicago Breaking News Center explains that the prosecution had as evidence government wiretaps that revealed Blago speaking to advisors about "how to parlay an appointment of Obama friend Valerie Jarrett into a Cabinet appointment or ambassadorship for himself." Most of the jurors saw this as the "smoking gun" for which they were looking.

Despite the difficulties the 11 jurors faced attempting to sway the single unconvinced female juror, there were no reports of angry deliberations or physical confrontations. The jurors contended that the deliberations were carried out with the utmost respect.

That's not to say that jurors did not grow frustrated with the woman who refused to join the 11 jurors in agreeing to convict the Illinois Governor.

Juror John Grover remarked, "If it wasn't for that one lady, we'd have had him convicted on probably 80 percent of the indictment."



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Fox News reports that several jurors did agree that the Attorney General's case was not as strong as it could have been" and at times "was hard to follow."

As for the trial, most of the jurors were unperturbed by Blago's unwillingness to take the stand, nor by the overzealous use of profanity on the recordings to which the jurors were exposed.

The outcome proved to be a setback for United States Attorney General Patrick Fitzgerald, who boasts a nearly perfect record of high-profile corruption convictions of public officials, including former Governor George Ryan.

Undaunted, Fitzgerald asserts that the government is in preparation for Blagojevich's next trial. "We intend to retry those charges," remarks Fitzgerald. "So for all practical purposes, we are in the mode of being close to jury selection for a retrial."

According to the *Chicago Tribune*, "Declaring a mistrial on the deadlocked counts, U.S. District Judge James Zagel gave the prosecution until August 26 to formally announce plans to retry Blagojevich and his brother."

The prosecution is expected to push for a retrial by fall, while the defense has already voiced its intention to appeal the single charge on which Blago was convicted.

Blago's defense attorneys took jabs at the Attorney General. "This guy Fitzgerald is a master at indicting people for noncriminal behavior. This guy is nuts," claims Sam Adam Sr.

Chicago Breaking News Center analyzed the nature of the trail as a whole, remarking it was "a vivid example of how slowly the wheels of justice can grind in public corruption cases. Blagojevich was arrested just weeks after he allegedly began plotting to sell Obama's Senate seat, but federal agents had been probing wrongdoing in the governor's administration since at least 2004 ... and questioned Blagojevich for the first time in 2005 during his first term."

Despite the severity of the charges Blago faces, he both entered and exited the courtroom jauntily shaking hands, giving "high-fives," and slapping the backs of well-wishers.

While the crime with which Blago was convicted carries a maximum penalty of five years, he will likely not receive his sentence until after the retrial. Whatever the final outcome, Rod Blagojevich finds himself in massive debt from the expensive legal proceedings. Likewise, his political career in Illinois is permanently over as the Illinois Constitution bars him from a political position after his 2009 impeachment by the General Assembly, a first-time ever occurrence for an Illinois Governor.

Photo of Rod Blagojevich: AP Images



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