



# Chicago to Springfield:: Crime and Politics in the 1920s (Images of America)

*Jim Ridings*

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The story of Chicago gangsters in the 1920s is legendary. Less talked about is the tale of the politicians who allowed those gangsters to thrive. During the heyday of organized crime in the Prohibition era, Chicago mayor "Big Bill" Thompson and Gov. Len Small were the two most powerful political figures in Illinois. Thompson campaigned on making Chicago "a wide open town" for bootleggers. Small sold thousands of pardons and paroles to criminals, embezzled \$1 million, and was then acquitted after mobsters bribed the jury. This book is the story of those Jazz Age politicians whose careers in government thrived on and endorsed corruption and racketeering, from Chicago to Springfield. It complements author Jim Ridings's groundbreaking biography, *Len Small: Governors and Gangsters*, which was praised by critics and situated Ridings as a trailblazer among Chicago crime authors.

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