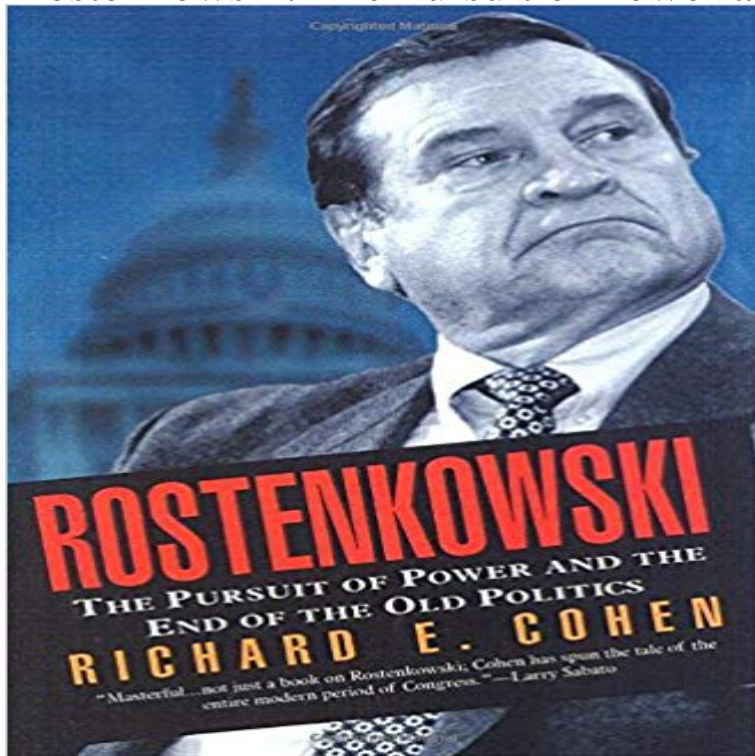


Rostenkowski: The Pursuit of Power and the End of the Old Politics



For thirteen years, during a time of Democratic congressional dominance in Washington, Dan Rostenkowski became one of the most influential American legislators of the twentieth century. As chairman of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, the representative from Illinois influenced the nations tax laws, international trade, Social Security, health care, welfare, and a good many other areas?policies that affected most Americans. Richard Cohens scrupulous political biography of Rostenkowski follows his rise to power from modest origins in the Democratic ward politics of Chicagos Polish northwest side, to his legislative triumphs, and ultimately to his criminal conviction and imprisonment for abuses of House practice. Because Rostenkowski served so many years in Congress (1959-1995), his career offers a prism into the changing nature of the institution and of the Democratic party, a change that gradually brought a new bitterness to Washington politics. Even when the congressman gained national influence, he remained close to Chicago politics and his boss, Richard J. Daley; but as he lost touch with local voters, opposed to political reforms, and clung to his personal stubbornness, he greased the skids for his downfall. Mr. Cohen has written a compelling, eye-opening story of American politics at work, portrayed through his career of one of its most fascinating practitioners. With 8 pages of photographs.

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