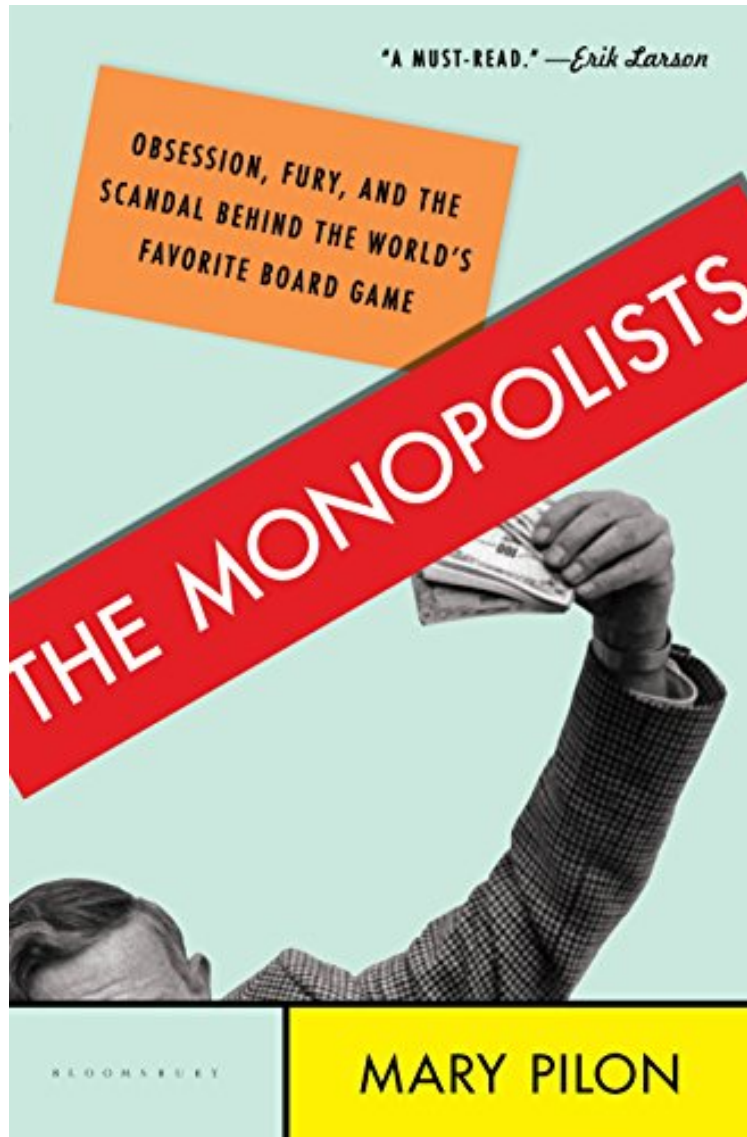


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The Monopolists: Obsession, Fury, and the Scandal Behind the World's Favorite Board Game

Mary Pilon

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Mary Pilon : The Monopolists: Obsession, Fury, and the Scandal Behind the World's Favorite Board Game before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Monopolists: Obsession, Fury, and the Scandal Behind the World's Favorite Board Game:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The 0.1% and the 99.9%, explained by the Landlord's Game -- and the alternativeBy Wyneth C. AchenbaumThe real history of this game may lead some of those who are looking to

understand why the 99% are receiving a much smaller percentage of the benefits our economy provides, and the upper portion of the 1% collecting a disproportionate share. Lizzie Magie knew pretty clearly, and created a game that she hoped would reach both young people and adults. There were two sets of rules -- one which led to monopolies of that basic resource -- land -- and of franchises -- the privilege to hold a community-blessed monopoly on a necessity such as electricity or gas or rapid transit or railroads; and the other which, while still providing electricity, gas, transit, etc. (today, add cable TV and fast broadband), provided a sustainable economy and society in which all could prosper -- no big winners, but no losers either. Not socialism, but capitalism on a level playing ground. It also will help those who have read Thomas Piketty's "Capital" to figure out what's missing from his analysis. He, and most other contemporary economists, fail to recognize the distinction between Land -- that which nature provides, and the community by its presence makes valuable -- and Capital -- that which is created by individuals/corporations. The distinction is vitally important; it was widely understood 125 years ago, and seems to have fallen out of favor in many universities, where economics is taught by "neoclassical" economists. Their own instructors didn't teach them what our great, great grandparents, who learned their economics from the classical economists -- Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, David Ricardo, Henry George, to name a few -- knew. Lizzie Magie's Landlord's Game was not particularly exciting; there were no big winners, and no bankrupt losers. Not a great game -- but a pretty good model for a sustainable economy in which all can prosper, if they choose to work, without victimizing their fellow human beings. A fair field and no favor; a level playing field. Something we ought to aspire to.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Pilon > Orbanes
By Wood Notlie
When considering other texts on the famous board game Monopoly, this is certainly the best. The reason being the most vocal "historian" and author on the game is Philip E. Orbanes, whose texts I have perused. Orbanes is the former President of Winning Moves which has the republishing/reproduction right for the game in question. Orbanes has written texts on the game, as well as the Parker Brothers, and Pilon is the only one who seems to get the real history of the game correct. Not only does she explore the true origins of the game, she does so in a way that is much more thorough and expansive than any texts have done before - which makes this worthy of a read. The material stands on its own and is very compelling...if you're interested in it (which I am). The Monopolists is a very quick read and essential to those wishing to learn more about the true origins of the game.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The True Story of The Invention of The Game of Monopoly
By Frederick S. Goethel
For years I have heard the story of the man from Atlantic City, down on his luck, who created the game and became wealthy as a result. And, to me, it always seemed a little too perfect a story. It turns out that it was, in fact, just a little too perfect. Darrow, the man credited with creation of the game did little, if anything, other than to bring it to Parker Bros. and talk them into marketing the game. It had actually been invented years before and had been refined and tuned by various players over a 30 year span. This book follows the creation of the game, who played it when, and how Darrow came to appropriate it as his own. The story is mingled in with the legal battle of an individual who was being sued for copyright infringement in the 1970s. What comes out is a lot of lying, cheating and a subterfuge. Parker Bros. was willing to do almost anything to keep the trademark on its most lucrative game. The book is a good read, although there are some places where it bogs down a bit. If you have ever played Monopoly, it will give you a better understanding of how it was created, why, what rules have been changed and how to play the game so that it ends in a reasonable amount of time. An interesting look at a small piece of Americana.

The Monopolists reveals the unknown story of how Monopoly came into existence, the reinvention of its history by Parker Brothers and multiple media outlets, the lost female originator of the game, and one man's lifelong obsession to tell the true story about the game's questionable origins. Most think it was invented by an unemployed Pennsylvanian who sold his game to Parker Brothers during the Great Depression in 1935 and lived happily--and richly--ever after. That story, however, is not exactly true. Ralph Anspach, a professor fighting to sell his Anti-Monopoly board game decades later, unearthed the real story, which traces back to Abraham Lincoln, the Quakers, and a forgotten feminist named Lizzie Magie who invented her nearly identical Landlord's Game more than thirty years before Parker Brothers sold their version of Monopoly. Her game--underpinned by morals that were the exact opposite of what Monopoly represents today--was embraced by a constellation of left-wingers from the Progressive Era through the Great Depression, including members of Franklin Roosevelt's famed Brain Trust. A gripping social history of corporate greed that illuminates the cutthroat nature of American business over the last century, The Monopolists reads like the best detective fiction, told through Monopoly's real-life winners and losers.

Highly entertaining . . . Like Monopoly itself, the book unfolds in interesting directions, probing into lost Quaker communities, the early history of Atlantic City, and how a game originally invented to critique capitalism became its most diverting simulacrum. The Boston Globe [A] fascinating history . . . The Monopolists lucidly weaves together a multifaceted story . . . [It] builds to an intense pitch--while highlighting several fundamental issues of capitalism. Los Angeles Times A legal, corporate and intellectual whodunit . . . The tale, like the game, becomes a parable for American capitalism, with powerful players stamping out competitors and fortunes being made or destroyed at the roll of the dice . . . anyone who grew up playing Monopoly will have a hard time resisting

The Monopolists. "The tale is as infuriating as it is fascinating." Carlos Lozada, Washington Post, "The whiniest, funniest, creepiest and most memorable books of 2015" "With more twists and turns than an Agatha Christie mystery, reporter Pilon reveals the tumultuous history of Monopoly . . . More entertaining than the game itself." starred review, Publishers Weekly "Pilon takes us on a jaunt through turn-of-the-century America, where we learn about such far-flung things as the origins of the price tag, the founding of Atlantic City, and the fact that one of the most coveted addresses in the game was home to some of the earliest gay bars in America. This is a must read for anyone who loves the game, and really, who doesn't?" Erik Larson "Briskly enlightening . . . [Pilon] has woven a plush, often humorous tapestry of board-game and social history. Even passages devoted to sick children during the Depression fail to deflate the book's buoyancy." New York Times Book "What enormous fun this book is! Clever, engaging, finely crafted, and endlessly surprising--and revealing in passing much about the ghastliness of American corporate greed. Much like the game itself, indeed." Simon Winchester, author of THE PROFESSOR AND THE MADMAN "Mary Pilon has discovered an enthralling story behind Monopoly, as much a history of our country as of its favorite game. She writes with the assurance and energy of a historian who knows she has struck gold." Gay Talese "Mary Pilon's page-turning narrative unravels the innocent beginnings, the corporate shenanigans, and the big lie at the center of this iconic boxed board game." Stefan Fatsis, author of WORD FREAK "Thanks to Mary Pilon's meticulous reporting and mellifluous prose, we now know the real story of the corporate greed and relentless cover-up that scars Monopoly, one of the most beloved and successful board games of all time. Finally, the truth is out." William D. Cohan, author of THE LAST TYCOONS "The book abounds with interesting tidbits for boardgame buffs but treats its subject seriously. After reading The Monopolists--part parable on the perils facing inventors, part legal odyssey, and part detective story--you'll never look at spry Mr. Monopoly in the same way again." Booklist "Pilon invests this surprisingly contentious chronicle with a dynamic mix of journalistic knowledge and subtle wit . . . A fascinating, appealingly written history of an iconic American amusement." Kirkus "Thoroughly researched and deftly paced, this fascinating narrative is at once legal thriller, folk history, underdog story, and expose of corporate greed, and deserves a wide readership among fans of Monopoly, critics of monopoly, and all who enjoy a good story well told." Library Journal "This past November, a New Hampshire woman was charged with domestic violence for slapping her boyfriend during a game [of Monopoly]. The British royal family, Prince Andrew said in 2008, isn't permitted to play it at home because 'it gets too vicious.' All of these people, and my own family, and anyone else who has threatened to eviscerate a loved one over their income-tax accounting, should be required to read Mary Pilon's enthralling new history of the long, pitched battle over the origins of the game." Slate "[A] dive into the real Monopoly." Flavorwire, "10 Must-Read Books for February" "The true--and downright bizarre--origin story of one of the most popular games ever made . . . A brisk read, and the readability is considerably heightened throughout by the author's sense of outrage . . . Fascinating." The Daily Beast "Few books can be said to have a transformative effect on the way readers look at a particular subject. Those that do often concern big subjects--books like Charles Darwin's 'On the Origin of Species' or Rachel Carson's 'Silent Spring.' While Mary Pilon's The Monopolists does not deal with matters like evolution or the environment, it nonetheless fits the bill. Irresistible . . . On the basis of this terrific book, Pilon . . . might just have a monopoly when it comes to writing on pop culture in a consistently enlightening, completely absorbing way." Christian Science Monitor "A fascinating history . . . There's plenty of turmoil in this readable book. Read it, and the next time you're circling the board with your Scottish terrier you'll have a deeper understanding of Monopoly's enduring popularity." Booklist "Pilon's research is deep, and it makes for a solid caper about corporate greed." Bloomberg "[An] intriguing history . . . Pilon is a prodigious researcher, and delves into great detail about the intellectual and business roots of Monopoly." Financial Times "Excellent . . . Mary Pilon revisits the sordid story of Monopoly . . . in glorious detail." Mental Floss "Engaging . . . there is plenty in The Monopolists to hold one's interest--not least, tips on how to win at Monopoly . . . it passes Go." Wall Street Journal "That history is interesting even if you don't love the game . . . The Monopolists is a quick, enjoyable read that takes less time than a game of Monopoly." Minneapolis Star Tribune "A deep dive into industrial and pop culture apocrypha . . . riveting . . . The book is superlative journalism." Paste "Smart and revealing . . . Pilon's refreshingly direct prose and ample storytelling skills make for a breezy, enlightening inquiry into the plight of an under-appreciated innovator." The Rumpus

About the Author Mary Pilon is an award-winning journalist who writes primarily about sports and business, including as a staff reporter at the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal. In 2011, she was named one of Forbes magazine's 30 Under 30 for media. Her work has appeared in Gawker, USA Today, Fast Company, the New Yorker, and New York magazine and she is an honors graduate of New York University. She lives in Brooklyn. Visit her website at marypilon.com and follow her on Twitter at @marypilon.