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**Putting the Olympic House in Order:
The Salt Lake City Bidding Scandal and the IOC's
Struggle to Regain Credibility**

In speculating about the social consequences of scandals, Cambridge social theorist John B. Thompson states they have "a corrosive impact on the forms of trust which underpin social relations and institutions." Utilizing a wide array of primary source documentation, this paper explores the historical foundation, evolution, and response to one of the most "corrosive" media sports scandals to envelop the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Bursting onto the stage of public awareness in late November 1998, a Salt Lake City newspaper reporter alleged that officials of the committee charged with the responsibility of securing the 2002 Winter Olympic Games committed serious

improprieties. The original allegation focused on the "gift" of a college scholarship for an IOC member's daughter in exchange for his vote to help secure the Games for Salt Lake City.

Unable to contain the crisis within those organizations that made up the Olympic Family, the circle of alleged corruption in the media widened beyond simply the Salt Lake City bid committee and certain IOC members. Representatives of the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) soon came under fire for their roles in the corruption scenario, as did officials of the bid committee for Sydney's successful quest to host the 2000 Games. A severe public outcry arose as the unfolding story captured world media attention for some three months. Unable to cope with the unprecedented media attention in any meaningful way, Olympic organizations implicated in the scandal scrambled to form commissions to investigate the facts and pinpoint wrongdoing. With the possibility that a violation of federal laws had occurred, the United States Justice Department directed the FBI to launch an investigation. Much finger pointing ensued. The USOC's investigative commission, created by its president, Bill Hybl, and chaired by former U.S. senator George Mitchell, publicly denounced the IOC as a closed, unaccountable, and ethically culpable body perpetuating a compromising gift-giving and-receiving culture. Well before the USOC's action, the IOC formed its own investigative commission headed by Canadian IOC member, Richard Pound. By the time Pound's commission submitted its report, four IOC members had resigned, six were expelled, ten received severe warnings, and Cameroon's René Essomba, whose name was linked to the very first disclosures of alleged corruption, had died.
