

PAY TO PLAY: A Life Settlements Pioneer's Inside Account of Power, Politics, and His Downfall

Stephen L. Keller's first-hand account of the Life Settlements boom, the forces he says targeted his firm, and the collision of business and politics.

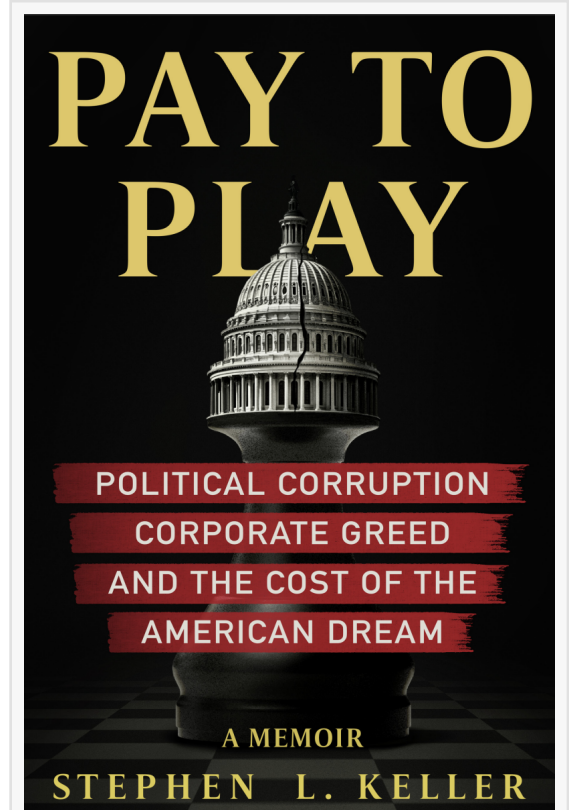
LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, June 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Storyteller Media, distributed globally by Macmillan Publishers, today announces the release of [PAY TO PLAY](#), the first-hand memoir of Stephen L. Keller, a once-rising entrepreneur whose firm helped pioneer the modern Life Settlements industry before what Keller describes as financial pressure and pay-to-play politics escalated into the events that sent him fleeing the country with his wife and two young children, through years of legal proceedings, and ultimately into a federal prison cell.

It arrives at a moment when questions of power, transparency, and pay-to-play financial scandals dominate global headlines.

For years, Keller's story was shaped almost entirely by the institutions surrounding him. Court filings told one story. Regulatory agencies told another. Larger industry players, many with far greater influence than his emerging firm, Kelco, filled in the rest. What never surfaced was Keller's own account of the financial dynamics and political pressures inside the burgeoning Life Settlements industry, or how those forces escalated into the events that upended his life.

PAY TO PLAY is the missing narrative: the insider's story, told directly by Keller in a gripping, first-hand account.

"For years, I was silenced by court proceedings, and I was afraid to speak out under pressure from much larger and more powerful entities," Keller says. "Now I'm sharing my side of the story. It has never been more important to show what really happens at the highest levels of business



Pay to Play, a memoir by Stephen L. Keller

and pay-to-play politics. This book is my chance to share my story in my own words."

In the early 2000s, as alternative asset classes exploded, Life Settlements transitioned from a niche concept into a multi-billion-dollar marketplace that captured Wall Street's attention. In his memoir, Keller details how he first launched the product, expanding the viaticals market (made mainstream during the AIDS crisis as a benefit for the terminally ill) to offer access to life insurance death benefits for policyholders over 65. He was among the first to grasp its potential and move into the regulatory vacuum surrounding it. As the March 14, 2001 Wall Street Journal column by Holman Jenkins noted, Kelco had quickly become "a leading viatical company."

Reading like an introspective thriller, Keller's retelling describes the broader ecosystem around him as he experienced it: the lobbyists who shaped early policy discussions, the Wall Street fund managers who saw Life Settlements as the next frontier for yield, the global insurance titans who became his competition, and the political figures who entered the fray once billions of dollars in assets were suddenly at stake.

PAY TO PLAY goes on sale June 23, 2026, in hardcover and ebook at [Amazon](#), [Barnes & Noble](#), Bookshop.org, Books-A-Million, and Walmart.

About Storyteller Media

Storyteller Media is a Beverly Hills based publishing house and a division of Curiosity Entertainment, dedicated to courageous, culturally resonant storytelling across books and film. Storyteller Media titles are distributed globally by Macmillan Publishers.

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By Stephen L. Keller

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