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The Outrageous Barriers to Democracy in America: Or, Why A Progressive Presidency Is Impossible

John R. Macarthur

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The publisher of *Harper's Magazine* presents "an able, witty, and suitably pissed-off guide" (*Bookforum*) to American politics

Barack Obama swept into the White House in January 2009 still floating—or so it appeared to millions of his admirers—high above the crude realities of contemporary American political life. Old-fashioned landmarks—party loyalty, ideology, campaign fundraising, patronage, corruption, even race—seemed hopelessly outdated as points of reference for understanding what was trumpeted as a new phenomenon in the nation's civic history.

But nearly four years after Barack Obama's election, elite interests in America remain triumphant. Nearly all measures of inequality continue to rise. And barriers to entry to our political process have reached nearly insurmountable heights.

Looking closely at Congress, elections, and money in politics, and sparing neither side of the political spectrum, John R. MacArthur delivers a devastating exposé of the entrenched interests and elites that make change in America—even by a supposedly progressive president—so arduous. What, MacArthur asks, could change this system?

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