

CHARLATAN

AMERICA'S MOST DANGEROUS HUCKSTER,
THE MAN WHO PURSUED HIM,
AND THE AGE OF FLIMFLAM

A REMARKABLY RICH HISTORICAL NARRATIVE THAT
TELLS THE FORGOTTEN STORY OF AMERICA'S MOST
INGENIOUS CON MAN AND ONE MAN'S DECADES-
LONG BATTLE TO BRING HIM TO JUSTICE.

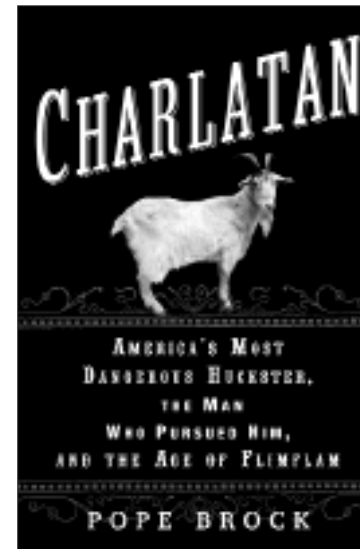
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POPE BROCK

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IN 1917, HAVING NO MEDICAL TRAINING ASIDE
from years of selling worthless patent cures, "Dr."
John Brinkley opens a medical practice in the tiny
town of Milford, Kansas. Fifteen years later, he's
become America's most famous surgeon, having pio-
neered an outlandish and highly dangerous method for
restoring male virility.

It's pure flimflam, of course, but this is the Age of
Flimflam, when toxic snake-oil tonics sell under hun-
dreds of brand names and traveling minstrel shows
hawk bizarre machines that supposedly cure everything
from cancer to the common cold.

Chicago firebrand intellectual Morris Fishbein, editor
of a little-read publication called the *Journal of the
American Medical Association*, has done more than any-
one else in fighting this tidal wave of charlatanism, and
he makes it his life's mission to bring Brinkley down.

Assisted by such luminaries as H. L. Mencken and
Sinclair Lewis, Fishbein launches offensive after offensive.
Yet each time Fishbein closes a door, Brinkley opens a
window, eventually becoming America's most popular
broadcaster so that he can plug his services on the radio.
While murdering dozens of patients, he runs for gover-
nor of Kansas and nearly wins. Finally, his decades-long
cat-and-mouse game with Fishbein culminates in a
spellbinding trial.

POPE BROCK is the author of *Indiana Gothic*, the story
of the murder of his great-grandfather. He lives in
upstate New York.

"Shocking and hilarious in equal measure...
As irresistible as Brinkley's snake oil, and far
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—Francis Wheen, author of

HOW MUMBO-JUMBO CONQUERED THE WORLD



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