

Embattled ex-governor will be taking your calls

By DEANNA BELLANDI
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

CHICAGO (AP) — Former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich certainly isn't acting like a man staring down a federal corruption indictment that could come any day.

Whether promoting his book deal or slamming the man who replaced him, the ousted governor hasn't stopped seeking the spotlight. His latest publicity-seeking move: a one-day gig as a Chicago radio talk show host.

Blagojevich's attention-getting ways are enough to make a lawyer cringe.

"I would just lay low and keep my mouth shut. That's the legally prudent thing to do," said Chicago attorney John Beal, who doesn't represent Blagojevich.

But the former governor, who was impeached and removed

from office following his arrest on federal corruption charges, denies any wrongdoing and refuses to fade quietly into private life. The Chicago Democrat hit the national talk show television circuit days before being bounced from office.

"It's not part of his human nature to just sit back, hide in the corner and not do anything," said his publicist, Glenn Selig. "He likes being out and about."

Blagojevich's two-hour gig hosting Wednesday's "Don Wade & Roma Morning Show" on Chicago's WLS-AM comes as his criminal case is poised to heat up. Federal prosecutors have less than two weeks to obtain a grand jury indictment or seek more time.

Blagojevich, who previously has been a guest on the radio show, will take calls from listeners, tell stories and talk with guests from 7 a.m. until

9 a.m. The station had offered Blagojevich his own weekend show in January if he resigned as governor. He didn't quit and he didn't get the show.

Newly retained Blagojevich attorney Terence P. Gillespie declined to discuss his client's plan.

"I think at this point, I won't comment on what my advice to the governor was and whether he accepted it or not," Gillespie said Tuesday evening.

Gillespie said earlier that Blagojevich's defense team was "still in flux" after his former chief defense counsel quit in January. Edward M. Genson had hinted that Blagojevich didn't listen to him.

U.S. Attorney Patrick J. Fitzgerald has until April 7 for a federal grand jury to indict Blagojevich, but it's possible his office could seek a deadline extension. Blagojevich was arrested Dec. 9 on corruption

charges that accused him of, among other things, trying to sell President Barack Obama's former U.S. Senate seat.

In recent weeks Blagojevich has blasted Gov. Pat Quinn — the lieutenant governor before his ouster — for proposing an income tax increase. He has also called state lawmakers drunkards and adulterers who don't know how to do their jobs.

It's anyone's guess what he'll say when he has the radio mike to himself.

He has at least one good reason to seek publicity. He has a book due out in October and attention — good or bad — can drive sales. Selig, his publicist, has promised that the book will expose the seamier side of politics.

"He just has to be out there to keep his name alive," said DePaul University marketing professor Bruce Newman.

But Blagojevich also must be

careful.

"Anything that's broadcast over the air can be subpoenaed and used against you at trial. ... They're trying to put him in prison for a long time so the stakes are very high," noted Beal, the attorney not involved in Blagojevich's case.

Blagojevich could face other pitfalls as a talk radio novice, said Hope Daniels, an associate professor in the radio department at Chicago's Columbia College.

"He has to allow his guests to actually speak and not speak for his guests," Daniels said.

Selig said Blagojevich has done his homework.

"This is an opportunity for him to get into some dialogues with people, have a good time, have fun and sort of be out there," Selig said.

SPAIN TRIP: Campus administration investigating incident, possible consequences

Continued from page 1

Both students were heavily intoxicated and did not have any identification on them said Vargas-Vila.

According to Vargas-Vila, an altercation between Gronski and the police ensued and resulted in damage to a police car. The Sevilla police wanted to charge Strohm and Gronski, said Vargas-Vila, for disturbing the peace, and damage to their car. According to Vargas-Vila, the charges could have landed the two students in jail for up to a month while they waited for a hearing in a Spanish court.

Gronski's explanation of the event to Vargas-Vila was that the altercation stemmed from a misunderstanding due to the language barrier.

According to Vargas-Vila, the police said Gronski attacked them.

Vargas-Vila said Gronski told him the police had stolen his passport. Vargas-Vila said he then pursued Sevilla police for three days until it was determined

that Gronski's passport had been lost at some point that night.

According to Vargas-Vila, the police brought both Gronski and Strohm back to the hotel where he vouched for their identity.

Vargas-Vila said Strohm confronted him in a threatening manner and that he sent Strohm to his hotel room until the situation could be resolved.

Starting at about 2 a.m., according to Vargas-Vila, he spent three to four hours negotiating with police and the hotel manager to allow the group to stay in the city and hotel despite concerns of another incident during the group's remaining three nights.

At approximately 7 a.m., the police agreed to drop all charges against Gronski and Strohm in exchange for an apology and Vargas-Vila's reassurance that there would be no more incidents the following nights, Vargas-Vila said.

The hotel manager allowed the group to stay under similar circumstances, said Vargas-Vila.

Immediately following the events, Vargas-Vila said he informed Penn State Harrisburg

of what happened and remained in frequent contact with the campus administration throughout the trip. The stance of the university was that the students were accountable for local laws and should have been taken by the police, Vargas-Vila said.

Vargas-Vila stated, however, "I wanted the exact opposite... I really tried to protect the students all the way".

While the possible consequence was discussed between Vargas-Vila and campus administration, no students were removed from the trip for logistical reasons including the cost and scheduling of a return flight, according to Vargas-Vila. Tight restrictions were placed on the group such as a 9 p.m. curfew and a ban on ordering from the hotel bar, Vargas-Vila added.

Vargas-Vila said the remainder of the trip went without any major incidents.

While Vargas-Vila could not comment on the disciplinary repercussions of the trip, he told The Capital Times the administration is handling

the situation and debating an appropriate response.

To aid in the prevention of future incidences, Vargas-Vila is proposing this week that university policy and a "Code of Conduct" be included in syllabi which correspond to study-abroad opportunities. His suggestion is a required period of instruction and an exam on the material before a student would be allowed to travel with the university.

The administration and Judicial Affairs are currently investigating the incident and gathering reports from all sides, said Mukund Kulkarni, senior associate dean for academic affairs. Kulkarni said the administration could not comment or arrive to any conclusion at this time.

John Gronski refused to comment on the events, and Ryan Strohm has not returned phone calls from The Capital Times. PSH faculty member Nihil Bayraktar was also accompanying the group on the trip to Spain, but was not directly involved in any part of the incident or negotiations, according to Vargas-Vila.

Student Activities audits SGA

By MARTY SANTALUCIA
COPY EDITOR
MFS5075@PSU.EDU

At the March 19 Student Government Association meeting, SGA Adviser Donna Howard informed the SGA that Director of Student Affairs Felicia Brown-Haywood had received a phone call from Penn State University Park regarding the Penn State Harrisburg SGA. Howard said Brown-Haywood requested a detailed report by April 16 on what organizations received money from the SGA, how many students were affected by those funds, and an outline of the procedure used by the SGA to allocate money.

Howard stated she was not privy to the details of the call.

SGA President Antonios Avramidis and Brown-Haywood met shortly after the SGA meeting where, according to Avramidis, Brown-Haywood assured him no event triggered the audit and the action was simply a precaution to make sure student money was accounted for.