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A long-simmering dispute between Governor Rod Blagojevich's lawyers dramatically spilled out for everyone to see last week, with one claiming that no lawsuit would be filed to stop the Illinois Senate's impeachment trial of the governor and another claiming that a lawsuit was possible. It all culminated with the disastrous resignation of the governor's top defense attorney, Ed Genson.

Insiders say that Genson, the senior member of the governor's legal team and a crack criminal defense attorney, had retained a high-priced lawyer from Boston who was an expert in impeachment issues. That attorney was preparing a case to be filed with the state Supreme Court this week to at least delay the Senate trial.

The ultimate goal reportedly was to force the Senate to agree to abandon the trial in exchange for the governor stepping aside and handing power over to Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn. The governor would then still receive his paycheck until at least the end of the fiscal year, which ends in June, and would also likely retain some of his state-police body guards.

But Sam Adam Jr., who has known Genson literally since the day he was born, reportedly convinced the governor to reject the idea.

Adam and Genson have been at odds for weeks, insiders claim. Adam was the governor's emissary to Roland Burris regarding his U.S. Senate appointment. Genson had said in public that the governor would not appoint a replacement for Barack Obama and privately told Adam that he shouldn't become involved in the ordeal.

Adam also reportedly convinced the governor to make the controversial decision to boycott the state Senate impeachment trial, apparently without consulting Genson in advance.

Governor Blagojevich loves nothing more than people who agree with him, and Adam has reportedly played that role since signing on to the legal team in December. Genson, on the other hand, is accustomed to calling the shots for his clients. Genson hates nothing more than a client who won't listen, and he apparently didn't realize what he was getting into with Blagojevich. The governor is infamous for his refusal to listen to anyone who doesn't agree with whatever the voices in his head are saying at the moment.

The tension became so intolerable that Genson threatened to resign from the legal team entirely after Blagojevich made the decision last week week to drop the carefully prepared court case against the impeachment trial and instead embark on an intense publicity blitz of national and local TV and radio programs.

Genson gave a couple of interviews last Thursday that more than just hinted at his discontent. Genson, for instance, told the Associated Press that he wasn't involved in impeachment decisions. "I should be," he said, "but I'm not."

A couple of hours later, Sam Adam told the AP that the lawsuit to block the Senate trial might still be filed, but Genson denied that any suit was imminent. Genson then told the *Chicago Sun-Times* , "I don't know anything about it." A day later, he resigned. As I write this, Genson is also reportedly refusing to refund any of the $500,000 legal retainer he received from Blagojevich's campaign fund.

The governor kicked off his ill-fated publicity blitz by appearing on a Chicago radio show last Friday morning. Blagojevich claimed that the impeachment process was in reality a removal from office so that Quinn could raise taxes. Amazingly enough, the hosts let him get away with this crazy talk. Blagojevich made the same claim later in the day to reporters, who weren't so accepting of his silly theory.

Blagojevich also said he was still hopeful that the Senate would change its impeachment-trial rules to allow him to call witnesses such as White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel. Emanuel has said that no untoward or illegal offers were made by Blagojevich regarding Barack Obama's vacant U.S. Senate seat.

But the Senate Democrats said last week that nobody from the governor's office has contacted them formally or informally about the trial rules. Blagojevich's trial boycott meant that he missed the deadline last week to ask that witnesses be subpoenaed.

In other words, he's just throwing verbal bombs on his way off the cliff, and Ed Genson refused to jump with him.

Rich Miller also publishes Capitol Fax *(a daily political newsletter) and TheCapitolFaxBlog.com* .