



Combating the Culture of Corruption

Student Handout #2: **The Abramoff Affair: Timeline**

1958	Jack Abramoff is born in Atlantic City. Family moves to California and he grows up in Beverly Hills.
1981	Abramoff graduates from Brandeis University, comes to Washington and runs for national chairman of the College Republicans, where he forges lifelong bonds with Ralph Reed, Grover Norquist and Adam Kidan.
1985	Abramoff and Norquist take charge of Citizens for America, conservative advocacy group created by drugstore magnate Lewis E. Lehrman. They are asked to leave after a dispute about finances.
1986	Abramoff graduates from Georgetown law school, joins brother in film company and goes to Africa to work on "Red Scorpion," a Cold War thriller released in 1989.
1994	GOP wins control of House for the first time in 40 years. Abramoff joins lobbying firm of Preston Gates & Ellis. He begins lobbying for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and quickly strikes up a political relationship with Rep. Tom Delay (R-Texas).
1995	Abramoff signs up the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians as a client, the first casino-rich tribe he solicits.
1997	Abramoff arranges for lawmakers and aides to take trips to the Marianas. On one such trip, DeLay calls the lobbyist "one of my closest and dearest friends."
1999	Abramoff uses tribal money to hire Ralph Reed to run anti-gambling campaigns in the South to discourage competition for the tribes' casinos.
2000	Abramoff arranges more lawmaker trips. They include week-long visit to England and Scotland in May with DeLay, his wife and two aides, and a June trip for DeLay aides to golf's U.S. Open aboard corporate jet belonging to SunCruz Casinos. Abramoff and partners buy SunCruz in the fall.
2001	Abramoff switches lobbying firms to Greenberg Traurig in January. He leases corporate jet to ferry congressional staffers to the Super Bowl in Tampa. He and Michael Scanlon form partnership they call "Gimme Five" to share extraordinary fees charged to tribal clients. In February, the seller of SunCruz, Konstantinos "Gus" Boulis, is shot to death gangland style in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
2002	Abramoff and Scanlon are collecting tens of millions of dollars in fees from Indian tribes. In one case, they quietly work with Ralph Reed to help Texas shut down a tribe's casino, then persuade the tribe to pay \$4.2 million to try to get Congress to reopen it.
2003	Internal audit by the Louisiana Coshatta tribe finds that tribe spent \$18 million in one year on lobbyists and lawyers, mostly to Abramoff and Scanlon.
2004	The Washington Post reports in February that Abramoff and Scanlon have received at least \$45 million from tribes with casinos. Abramoff quits Greenberg a week later. Shortly thereafter, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) begins investigating Abramoff's Indian activities.

<p>2005</p>	<p>August: Abramoff and Kidan are indicted on fraud and conspiracy charges in Florida in connection with their purchase of SunCruz.</p> <p>September: Three men, including two associates of Kidan's, are indicted on murder and conspiracy charges in the killing of former SunCruz owner Boulis.</p> <p>October: Former Abramoff associate David H. Safavian, head of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy and the White House Office of Management and Budget, is indicted on charges of lying to federal investigators in the corruption investigation.</p> <p>November: Scanlon pleads guilty to conspiring to bribe a congressman and other public officials and agrees to pay back more than \$19 million he fraudulently charged Indian tribal clients.</p> <p>December: Kidan pleads guilty in the SunCruz case. Both Scanlon and Kidan are expected to testify against Abramoff and will cooperate in the investigation of at least half a dozen lawmakers including Rep. Robert W. Ney (R-Ohio).</p>
<p>2006</p>	<p>January: Abramoff pleads guilty to fraud, tax evasion and conspiracy to bribe public officials in a deal that requires him to cooperate in an investigation into his dealings with members of Congress.</p> <p>March: A judge sentences Abramoff and Kidan to five years and 10 months in prison for their roles in the fraudulent purchase of SunCruz.</p> <p>May: A former aide to Rep. Robert W. Ney (R-Ohio), Neil G. Volz, pleads guilty to conspiracy. Volz, who worked for Ney from 1995 to 2002, admitted that he conspired with Abramoff and others to commit fraud -- by giving and taking bribes -- and to violate a federal ban on lobbying within one year of his congressional employment.</p> <p>June: A federal jury finds former White House aide David H. Safavian guilty of lying and obstructing justice, making him the highest-ranking government official to be convicted in the spreading Abramoff scandal.</p> <p>September: Rep. Robert Ney (R-Ohio) became the first elected official face charges in the scandal when he agreed to plead guilty to conspiring to commit multiple official acts for lobbyists in exchange for campaign contributions, meals and luxury travel, sports tickets and gambling chips.</p> <p>October: Rep. Ney pleads guilty and faces a maximum of 10 years in prison.</p>
<p>2007</p>	<p>March: J. Steven Griles, the former No. 2 official in the Interior Department, pleads guilty to a felony for lying to the Senate about his relationship with Abramoff. The lobbyist had gained the official's intervention at the agency for his Indian tribal clients.</p>

SOURCE: Washington Post

< <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/custom/2005/12/28/CU2005122801176.html> >