



## Abramoff in court on fraud charges

Indictment says he defrauded lenders and used funds to support politicians

**The Associated Press**

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LOS ANGELES - Lobbyist Jack Abramoff appeared in federal court Friday on charges of committing fraud while trying to buy a casino boat company — a case that has attracted attention because of Abramoff's close ties to House Majority Leader Tom DeLay.

The court appearance came a day after Abramoff was indicted in Florida. He surrendered to the FBI later Thursday in Los Angeles.

When U.S. Magistrate Judge Paul Game asked Abramoff if he was aware of the charges, the lobbyist replied, "Yes, sir."

Game ordered Abramoff to give up his passport before allowing his release ahead of his return to Florida next week. Abramoff later left the courthouse and departed in a car without commenting to reporters.

He was told he could post \$250,000 of a \$2.25 million bond on Tuesday in Florida only if federal prosecutors there determine that the money came from legitimate sources, said U.S. attorney's spokesman Thom Mrozek. Family members would be liable for the balance of the bond if Abramoff fails to appear at any subsequent hearing.

A defense attorney said Abramoff was in contact with law enforcement immediately after hearing about the charges.

"He does look forward to returning to Miami, where he will vigorously defend against the charges against him," Anthony Pacheco said after the court appearance.

### SunCruz intrigue

The six-count federal indictment unsealed in Fort Lauderdale alleges that Abramoff, 40, and a partner, Adam Kidan, 36, of New York, faked a \$23 million wire transfer to defraud two lenders out of some \$60 million to finance the \$147 million purchase of SunCruz Casinos from Konstantinos "Gus" Boulis in September 2000.

The deal ultimately collapsed and Boulis, 51, was killed five months later in an apparent hit. The shooting is unsolved.

Abramoff's indictment alleges that he used SunCruz income to pay for political fundraising activities. He has denied any wrongdoing concerning SunCruz.

Abramoff is also under investigation for his lobbying activities on behalf of Indian tribes and for his role in paying for overseas trips for DeLay. The Texas Republican has denied knowing Abramoff paid the expenses.

Both Abramoff and Kidan, who has also denied doing anything wrong, could face up to 30 years in prison and thousands of dollars in fines if convicted in the Florida case.

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