

The Abramoff Family And the Mob Families

by Anton Chaitkin

Jack Abramoff was born in Atlantic City in 1959, the son of Frank and Jane Abramoff. The family moved to California in 1968, and Jack grew up in Beverly Hills. But **Frank Abramoff** continued to do business in Atlantic City, bringing his increasingly powerful connections into a family partnership with his brother, **Bernard S. Abramoff**, and later bringing in his son Jack. After gambling casinos were legalized in Atlantic City in the 1970s, the Abramoffs focused on real estate investments pegged to prospects for the growth of casinos.

A 1979 *New York Times* article named Jack's uncle Bernard Abramoff as manager of most of the \$4.75 million of real estate purchases made since June 30, 1978 by "**Angelo Pucci**, a Toronto real estate developer who [Canadian and United States officials say is linked to organized crime. . . . **Paul Volpe**, whom Canadian and United States officials] say is a major figure in organized crime in Toronto, called Mr. Pucci, 'my partner' " (emphasis added, here and below).

The *Times* reported that "Bernard S. Abramoff, president of Jerome Realty here, served as broker in most of the Pucci purchases. He said in an interview in his office in Ventnor,



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The apparatus of organized crime, fascist guerrilla movements, and death squads, of the felon Jack Abramoff, gives the Cheney power cartel a means to spark terrorism in Israel, paving the way for a Netanyahu takeover.

that Mr. Pucci has introduced him to Mr. **Montemarano**," [another Toronto channel for an additional \$4.86 million]. . . .¹

"Mr. Volpe, who [New Jersey State Police] Col. [Clinton] Pagano said 'was interested in Atlantic City,' was named as a 'major Canadian Link' to organized crime in 1963 by the McClellan Senate subcommittee investigating organized crime . . . convicted of conspiracy in an extortion case . . . operated a casino in Haiti. . . ."²

Paul Volpe, whose men were pouring Mafia millions into Atlantic City through the Abramoffs, was part of the Buffalo, New York Cosa Nostra mob, operating in Canada under the reign of Montreal-based **Joseph Bonanno**.

Authors Antonio Nicaso and Lee Lamothe describe, in the book *Global Mafia*, the changes occurring within the gangster world when the Abramoffs got involved:

"In Toronto, Soviet gangs practiced organized extortion, gambling, loan-sharking, and drug trafficking, much of it in conjunction with the Paul Volpe group of the Buffalo La Cosa Nostra crime family. During the 1970s and 1980s, various police investigations turned up Soviets, many of whom said they were Jews who had immigrated from Israel.

1. The \$9 million total in 1979 is the equivalent of perhaps \$35-45 million in 2006 dollars.

2. Donald Janson, "Developer With Alleged Mob Ties Investing Millions in Atlantic City," *New York Times*, May 1, 1979. The Abramoff brothers' partnership is highlighted in this language from a Federal court's 1982 ruling, referring to some of what they bought with the mob money: "688 F.2d 204—17 ERC 2155, 12 Env'tl. L. Rep. 21,020—United States of America, Appellant, v. . . . Bernard Abramoff . . . Frank Abramoff, individually and d/b/a A.G.A. Partnership . . . appellees Bernard Abramoff . . . Frank Abramoff individually and d/b/a AG.A. Partnership. Upon purchasing the property in 1979, A.G.A. Partnership acknowledged in writing that the site had been used as a landfill."

The men were treated as run-of-the-mill bandits, and the cases never got beyond the basic investigations. In retrospect, police believe the Russian mob was behind many of the crimes. The same held true in New York City, where Russian gangs conducted ongoing crimes within the ethnic community, and expanded beyond its borders into partnerships with the New York La Cosa Nostra to whom they paid ‘an operating tax.’ ”³

The *New York Times* then reported on May 28, 1979, “Millions of dollars in underworld money is being funneled through Toronto into real-estate investments in Atlantic City, according to an unusual television documentary broadcast tonight by Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. . . . [A woman working for the mob told Canadian reporters that her] ‘Toronto connections’ have become convinced that the number of casinos in Atlantic City will grow rapidly in coming years. [They] cannot go into casinos [openly] so we buy buildings for them . . . we front it.”⁴

The Abramoff family benefactor, Paul Volpe, was shot to death, and his body was found in the trunk of a car at Toronto’s airport in November 1983.

The Bizarre Alfred Bloomingdale

When President Ronald Reagan took office in 1981, Jack Abramoff became chairman of the College Republicans national organization. Jack had worked in the Reagan campaign in college; more importantly, he had the right family connections.

Out in Beverly Hills, California, his father had been a top executive of the Diners Club credit card company, owned by Ronald Reagan confidant and “kitchen cabinet” member **Alfred Bloomingdale**.

Paul Volpe’s Frank Abramoff and the bizarre Bloomingdale were a good fit. Throughout the 1970s, Bloomingdale paid up to \$18,000 a month to his mistress, **Vickie Morgan**, usually through his corporate accounts, for her “therapy” of his “Marquis de Sade complex.”

Time magazine reported that “Bloomingdale had been investigated by the FBI as early as the late 1960s, when his name came up in connection with organized-crime figures in Las Vegas.” In the late 1970s, “Bloomingdale shelled out \$5,000 in blackmail because of his habit of beating up prostitutes.”⁵

Potential blackmail was the Bloomingdale/Diners Club subtext. *Time* reported, “While working as an aide on the Reagan campaign, [mistress Vickie] Morgan gossiped about dining with Bloomingdale and Reagan cronies and chauffeuring Vice Presidential Candidate George Bush around Los

Angeles. Recalls Marvin Mitchelson: ‘She said she knew political and sexual secrets about this Administration that would make Watergate look like a play school.’ ”⁶

Abramoff family patron Bloomingdale was appointed to the President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board in 1981, with top-secret global access, while young Jack captured the College Republicans, and leaped into international intrigues with Nazis and gangsters.

Fortunately for some, Bloomingdale died the next year; his mistress was soon beaten to death, and none of the reported orgy videotapes were ever published.

Mob Lawyer Roy Cohn

Jack Abramoff’s confessed dirty-money dealings of the past few years took decades of practice to refine, beginning with the financing of his College Republican organization.

On July 8, 1981, Abramoff wrote to **Roy Cohn**, the legal counsel to the leading Mafia families of New York and Canada, asking for funding, and discussing, with the mob’s man, the use of the most secret fundraising lists of the Republican Party.

Jack wrote, “Alfred Bloomingdale, a close personal friend of my family, told me to contact you immediately. . . . Although we [College Republicans] are an arm of the RNC [Republican National Committee], we must become financially self-sufficient. . . . Because of his close association with the President, Mr. Bloomingdale was able to free up the RNC contributor list for our use. Within the next couple of weeks, we must raise \$50,000 in order to mail and phone bank these lists. I have no doubt that we will pyramid that \$50,000, to over \$1 million within the first year.”⁷

Cohn’s response may be known only to Abramoff.

Father Frank, Again

Family connections originating in the Volpe/Bloomingdale years have moved Abramoff’s entire career.

Rightist Republican control of the House of Representatives in 1994 gave Abramoff his re-entry to Washington power as an influence-broker. His main lobbying clients were the government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, a U.S. Territory in the Pacific, and the owners of the concentration camp-like garment factories there, whose virtual slave workers have been shipped in as “immigrants” from east Asia.

It was Jack’s father, Frank Abramoff, who had sought to start a casino in the Northern Marianas, who first introduced Jack around the Islands.

Jack took millions from the Marianas racket, which he shared with **Tom DeLay**. His father’s operations thus gave

3. Antonio Nicaso and Lee Lamothe, *Global Mafia: The New World Order of Organized Crime* (Toronto: Macmillan Canada, 1995), p. 45.

4. Andrew H. Malcolm, “TV Film Links Mob in Toronto To Atlantic City,” *New York Times*, May 28, 1979.

5. Alessandra Stanley, “A Mistress’s Life and Death,” *Time*, May. 21, 1984.

6. Ibid.

7. Nina J. Easton, “Abramoff’s Grand Aims Came Early; Made Powerhouse of GOP Group,” *Boston Globe*, Feb. 6, 2006. Easton told this reporter that the letter to Cohn is in a College Republicans collection in the National Archives.

Jack his start as DeLay's financial godfather. His power grew as he became prime architect of DeLay's dictatorship over the House of Representatives. After repeated U.S. government probes and lawsuits failed to stop the criminal treatment of Marianas workers, DeLay blocked legislation that would have set American labor standards.

Abramoff was indicted and confessed to fraud in the 2000-01 takeover of the Florida-based SunCruz casino cruise lines, and to fraudulently obtaining a \$60 million purchase loan. To get the loan, Abramoff specified that he holds a \$1.4 million investment jointly with his father, in the parking lot of an Atlantic City gambling casino, the legacy of the Volpe-Bonanno days.

Eighteen days after defrauded former SunCruz owner **Konstantinos "Gus" Boulis** sued to get his money and recover control of the floating casinos, Boulis was gunned down Mafia-style. Reputed Gambino crime family associate **Anthony Moscattiello**, and two of his cohorts, have been indicted

as trigger men. After Abramoff took over, SunCruz paid over \$100,000 to Moscattiello.

Sources close to the case have told *EIR* that prosecutors' attempts to interrogate or even interview Abramoff, five years after the killing, have been blocked under ambiguous and baffling circumstances, despite his obligation under a Federal plea agreement to cooperate with all investigations.

The problem may stem from the potential international political fallout were Abramoff to open up about the sources and destinations of the mammoth cash flows at stake in control of SunCruz.

The murder-case source told *EIR* that probers are looking closely at the angle of money laundering. "Tens of millions of dollars cash per month" went through the SunCruz casino boats, offshore, away from regulators and law enforcement, which according to the source, might motivate the hiring of Mafia-connected people like Moscattiello to help launder the money.

Abramoff, the Russian Mob, And Israel

The set of e-mails published by Senate investigators, cited above, between Jack Abramoff and his Israel-based paramilitary agent Shumuel Ben Zvi, actually consisted of a three-way dialogue involving also some furtive Russian figures who have paid Abramoff millions.

Leaders of the Russian oil company NaftaSib, including NaftaSib Vice President **Marina Nevsakaya**, were collaborating on acquiring paramilitary and sniper supplies (Russian equipment or otherwise) for routing to Israel, which were to be paid for by looting American Indian gambling casino clients and falsifying accounting records, according to Senate Indian Affairs Committee exhibits of Nov. 2, 2005.

Abramoff's Russians loom large in the overall story of the Abramoff-DeLay money-laundering apparatus. NaftaSib paid for **Tom DeLay's** 1997 visit to Moscow, where DeLay worked alongside Abramoff and DeLay chief of staff **Ed Buckham**. These Russians subsequently paid about \$1 million through Caribbean cutouts, on behalf of Abramoff, to Buckham's political money laundry, combining political action committees for DeLay, Enron lobbying, and the Republican party front group, Family Action Network. Following the trip and these covert payments, DeLay agreed to allow Congress to proceed with the 1998 International Monetary Fund bailout of Rus-

sian finances, including a deal stopping taxation of private Russian oil companies.

Also in 1998, NaftaSib and its lobbyists (presumably Abramoff) worked with circles within the U.S. political, military, and intelligence community (including the American Security Council Foundation, identified with the late CIA deputy director **James J. Angleton** and neo-conservatives), to prepare the way for a U.S. visit of corrupt Russian leader **Viktor Chernomyrdin**. That NaftaSib lobbying was "part of the work of the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission," according to the Russian daily *Kommersant*, Aug. 20, 2004.

The frenzied looting of privatized post-Soviet Russia by billionaires and gangsters, facilitated by the personal alliance between Vice President **Al Gore** and sometime Prime Minister Chernomyrdin, reached a spectacular 1999 climax in the case of "Golden ADA": a Russian corporate entity used by the Russian "Mafiya," Chernomyrdin, and other high Russian officials, to loot huge public sums through stolen and smuggled diamonds and other gems.

The *Boston Globe*, Feb. 23, 2006, reported that Federal prosecutors are probing deeper into further work by Jack Abramoff for NaftaSib, in light of an additional \$2.1 million NaftaSib paid him through their Dutch front company, Voor Huizen, which ceased to exist days after Abramoff was forced to resign from his lobbying firm.

On March 1, 2006, the *Globe* reported that Abramoff and his Russian friends had set up a front company, First Gate Resources, to arrange for oil-drilling ventures inside Israel. Intrigues around this enterprise are discussed in the set of e-mails released by the Senate probers, alongside the paramilitary matters.—*Anton Chaitkin*