

**DAVID H. SAFAVIAN**, *Office of Management and Budget and the General Services Administration*

David H. Safavian served as administrator of the federal procurement office in the White House Office of Management and Budget from November 2004 to September 2005.<sup>1</sup> From May 2002 to January 2004, Mr. Safavian was the chief of staff for the administrator of the General Services Administration (GSA).<sup>2</sup> He also was a former colleague and personal friend of convicted Washington lobbyist Jack Abramoff.<sup>3</sup>

In September 2005 -- three days after resigning his post as the Bush administration's top procurement official -- Mr. Safavian was arrested and charged with perjury and obstruction of the criminal investigation into Mr. Abramoff.<sup>4</sup> These charges stemmed from the FBI's investigation into whether Mr. Safavian, while a government employee, provided assistance to Mr. Abramoff in his business deals and then lied about this fact in response to questions from GSA officers, the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and the FBI.<sup>5</sup>

In August 2002, while at GSA, Mr. Safavian joined Mr. Abramoff on a golf trip to Scotland with former Rep. Bob Ney (R-OH), former Christian Coalition leader Ralph Reed, and lobbyist and former Ney chief of staff Neil Volz.<sup>6</sup> In advance of the golf outing, Mr. Safavian sought guidance from a GSA ethics officer as to whether he could attend given that Mr. Abramoff was paying for the cost of a chartered jet to Scotland and ethics rules prohibit employees from receiving gifts from anyone seeking an official action by the agency.<sup>7</sup> In an email to the GSA ethics officer, Mr. Safavian stated that Mr. Abramoff "is a lawyer and lobbyist, but one that has no business before GSA (he does all of his work on Capitol Hill)."<sup>8</sup> Based on the information Mr. Safavian provided the ethics officer, he was granted permission to attend the

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. v. Safavian, Crim. No. CR-05-370, Indictment, ¶ 1 (D.D.C. Oct. 5, 2005) [hereinafter "Indictment"]. (Exhibit 1)

<sup>2</sup> Id.

<sup>3</sup> R. Jeffrey Smith and Susan Schmidt, Bush Official Arrested in Corruption Probe, *The Washington Post*, September 20, 2006. (Exhibit 2)

<sup>4</sup> Id.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. v. Safavian, Crim. No. 05-0501, Affidavit of Jeffrey A. Reising, Special Agent, FBI, In Support of Criminal Complaint Charging David Hossein Safavian (D.D.C. Sept. 16, 2005. (Exhibit 3)

<sup>6</sup> Smith and Schmidt, *The Washington Post*, Sept. 20, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Id.

<sup>8</sup> Indictment, ¶ 18. Although the indictment refers to Mr. Abramoff as "Lobbyist A," Mr. Abramoff's identity was confirmed at Mr. Safavian's trial.

golf outing.<sup>9</sup>

Around the same time as the Scotland trip, Mr. Abramoff “repeatedly” contacted Mr. Safavian regarding procuring property managed by the GSA for Mr. Abramoff’s clients.<sup>10</sup> Mr. Safavian emailed Mr. Abramoff with advice as to how best to secure a lease on GSA property and forwarded internal GSA memos regarding GSA land use requirements to Mr. Abramoff.<sup>11</sup> Mr. Safavian also arranged a meeting between GSA officials and Mr. Abramoff’s wife the day before the Scotland trip.<sup>12</sup> Mr. Abramoff, for his part, emailed Mr. Safavian requesting his comments on a draft letter to be sent by two members of the House of Representatives to the GSA Administrator (Mr. Safavian), urging him to consider providing certain organizations with preferential contracting opportunities in developing GSA property.<sup>13</sup>

Mr. Safavian was charged with lying about his contacts with Mr. Abramoff on three occasions after his initial misrepresentation to the GSA ethics officer: (1) in 2003, in response to questions from the GSA’s inspector general; (2) in a March 17, 2005 letter to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs; and (3) during a May 26, 2005 FBI interview.<sup>14</sup> During these interviews, Mr. Safavian falsely stated that Mr. Abramoff had no business before GSA and later lied to the FBI about his dealings with Mr. Abramoff and the financing of the Scotland trip.<sup>15</sup>

On June 20, 2006 a jury convicted Mr. Safavian of four charges of false statements and obstructing investigations.<sup>16</sup> In October 2006, Mr. Safavian was sentenced to 18 months in prison.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Id., ¶ 19.

<sup>10</sup> Id., ¶ 7.

<sup>11</sup> Id., ¶¶ 8, 10, 12-14.

<sup>12</sup> Indictment, ¶ 16.

<sup>13</sup> Id. at ¶ 9.

<sup>14</sup> Smith and Schmidt, *The Washington Post*, Sept. 20, 2006.

<sup>15</sup> Id.

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Press Release, Former GSA Chief of Staff David Safavian Sentenced to 18 Months in Prison on Charges of Obstruction, Making False Statements, October 27, 2006. (Exhibit 4)

<sup>17</sup> Id.