

Ex-Istook Aide Pleads Guilty to Corruption Charges

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A former aide to retired Rep. Ernest Istook pleaded guilty on June 2, 2008, to a federal public corruption charge as part of the ongoing Jack Abramoff investigation.

John Albaugh, once Chief of Staff to then-Oklahoma Congressman Istook, admitted to accepting thousands of dollars' worth of tickets for sporting events, concert tickets, and free meals from an Abramoff colleague and his clients, according to the plea agreement as reported by the FBI. These gifts violated the House gift rules then in place, and Albaugh failed to report them on his annual financial disclosure forms. In exchange for these gifts, Albaugh admitted to taking official action as a staff member for the congressman on behalf of Abramoff's clients in the form of assistance with transportation appropriations requests. Albaugh's former boss was then Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Treasury, and Related Agencies.

Albaugh also admitted to accepting catering and tickets to events that were not properly disclosed to the Federal Election Commission (FEC) as contributions to Congressman Istook's re-election campaign.

In total, Albaugh admitted to accepting more than \$4,000 worth of meals and event tickets from Abramoff and his associates. Albaugh has agreed to cooperate in the ongoing investigation of former lobbyist Jack Abramoff and others.

Albaugh will be sentenced in September and faces up to five years in jail and a fine of \$250,000. According to his plea agreement, Albaugh will cooperate with the investigation surrounding Abramoff

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and others. Istook has not been charged with any wrongdoing.

According to the FBI, Albaugh's plea marks the 13th indictment of a lobbyist or public official as part of the ongoing Abramoff investigation.

For previous coverage of the Abramoff investigation:

Rudy Guilty of Bribery, Violating Revolving Door Rules

Congressman Ney Pleads Guilty, Awaits Sentencing on Abramoff-Related Charges.