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McCain's Abramoff investigation was 'pure political payback' for 2000 election.»

In "[The Perfect Villain](#): John McCain and the Demonization of Lobbyist Jack Abramoff," journalist Gary S. Chafetz details how Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) pursued his investigation into the fallen lobbyist as "[pure political payback](#)," rather than "the high-minded reform crusade he has made it out to be on the campaign trail." McCain reportedly remained upset that Abramoff had backed Ralph Reed's effort to defeat him in the 2000 South Carolina primary:

Chafetz argues that McCain nursed the wounds of that defeat for years, and in 2004 jumped on the chance to investigate Abramoff after the Washington Post published a damning expose of the millions of dollars in lobbying fees Abramoff had collected from his casino-rich Indian tribal clients.

Peppered with new quotes from Abramoff — who met with Chafetz while in federal prison in Cumberland, MD — **the book alleges that McCain withheld the vast majority of emails he confiscated during the inquiry, many of which could be exculpatory to the former lobbyist or damaging to McCain allies.**