

Reagan Library Topic Guide - Abscam

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ABSCAM

Scope and Content Note:

Abscam (sometimes ABSCAM) was a US political scandal in 1980. The FBI set up a sting operation which led to the arrest of members of Congress for accepting bribes.

The FBI set up Abdul Enterprises, Ltd. in 1978 and FBI employees posed as Middle Eastern businessmen in videotaped talks with government officials, where they offered money in return for political favors to a non-existent sheik. It was the first major operation by the FBI to trap corrupt public officials - up until 1970 only ten members of Congress had ever been convicted of accepting bribes.

In early 1980, media reports surfaced that FBI personnel were targeting members of Congress in a sting operation. The operation was dubbed Abscam after the name of the phony company set up by the FBI. The operation resulted in 12 convictions for bribery and conspiracy.

This scandal has had numerous cultural references in film, television and print media. It was most recently the basis for the 2013 film *American Hustle*.

WHORM SUBJECT FILES

[FG006-01](#) casefile 069502

[JL001](#) casefile 140899

[JL002](#) casefile 264649

[JL003](#) casefiles 050075, 087044, 103288, 110425, 120290, 122716, 162829, 248193

[PE001](#) casefile 053212

WHITE HOUSE STAFF AND OFFICE FILES

COUNSEL TO THE PRESIDENT, OFFICE OF

Fielding, Fred F.: Files

Box 23F

ABSCAM

Roberts, John G., Jr.: Files

Box 1

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