

Well acted and directed **Casino Jack** provides a scary look into government politics and through the eyes of super lobbyist Jack Abramoff. It's Kevin Spacey at his best with a brilliantly cringing performance that tells all about the government gangster who goes out of control. With Barry Pepper at Spacey's side, this film comes up a

winner.

Inspired by true events, this story shows how Jack Abramoff (Spacey) takes control of some of the world's most powerful men, including the President of the United States for his ill gotten gain. With the country tied up at war and a President in a struggle to keep America on track, Abramoff uses his conniving power to build an empire with the help of his business partner Michael Scanlon (Pepper). His illegal schemes lead to the kind of greed that can make a man so strong that even his mistakes are overlooked. That is until his wealth and influence get out of hand and the world takes notice.

Here Spacey shows his might as the businessman with clout. Dominating the screen with the Abramoff persona, he makes the lobbyist a scary reality. Having seen the documentary **Casino Jack and the United States of Money**, I am amazed on how close Spacey comes in character to the real Abramoff.

But, without Barry Pepper as the business partner and envoy of their schemes, the film would have lost its dramatic genius. Pepper takes on the character of Scanlon with a slick performance showing how easy it is to deliver some of the world's most powerful men and the mob to the greedy Abramoff.

Also in support Kelly Preston shows how oblivious Abramoff's wife Pam is to his dirty dealings. In one scene by the pool of their multimillion-dollar estate Pam confronts Jack with a few questions including bills that are not being paid. The super con easily brushes her off as Preston walks away wagging her butt with sheer naiveté.

Direction by Hickenlooper comes up to snuff with some of his other good works like **Factory Girl** and **Hearts of Darkness**

. Here he brings out the best in Spacey and Pepper as they are moved within the world of shady business dealings and government power plays. Paying close attention to the real Abramoff, Hickenlooper never loses control of the darkness and domination that the man

possessed.

Casino Jack is rated R for pervasive language, some violence and brief nudity.

FINAL ANALYSIS: An explosive drama that exposes a scary reality

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