

## Pepper humanizes 'Casino' character - Washington Times

Written by Administrator  
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Audiences for politically charged dramas based on actual events don't always get the whole truth.

Consider the questions swirling around "Fair Game," the recent retelling of the Valerie Plame scandal starring [Naomi Watts](#) and [Sean Penn](#). The film paints

[Mrs. Plame](#) as saintly and buries the name of the person who leaked her identity until the film's final seconds.

Actor [Barry Pepper](#) had a similar fear while reading the script for "Casino [Jack](#)," the feature opening in Washington on Wednesday depicting the rise and precipitous fall of uber-lobbyist [Jack Abramoff](#).

"That was one of the main questions I had going into it. How accurate is this?" says [Mr. Pepper](#), the intense actor known for roles in "Saving Private Ryan" and the [HBO](#) biopic "61."

He says the legal ramifications helped allay those concerns.

"You have to hire a First Amendment lawyer to vet for accuracies," [Mr. Pepper](#) says of film projects like "Casino [Jack](#)."  
." "You can't just go forward. [Otherwise,] you're in for a world of hurt with lawsuits."

It also helped to have access to reams of material in the public record regarding the case, including e-mails sent between the real life players in the Abramoff scandal. Consider it the latest proof of reality being stranger than fiction.

"Some of the most humorous scenes in the script were verbatim [from transcripts]," says [Mr.](#)

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, who also has a small but corrosive role in the new Coen brothers remake of "True Grit," opening Wednesday.

"Casino Jack " stars Kevin Spacey as the disgraced lobbyist, a Republican notorious for swindling American Indians and corrupting public officials.

### Mr. Pepper

plays Michael

### Scanlon

, a former aide to

### Rep. Tom DeLay

who helped

### Abramoff

pull off his acts.

Mr. Spacey chatted with an imprisoned Abramoff for background on the story, but Mr. Pepper

had to settle for speaking with some of Scanlons old associates to fill in the character blanks.

*Story Continues* □

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