

Staffer helps convict boss

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- A memo written by a Justice Department attorney indicates the cooperation of former U.S. Rep. Bob Ney's chief of staff was instrumental in convicting him. Ney, R-Ohio, is currently serving a 30-month sentence in federal prison for performing official acts for lobbyist Jack Abramoff's clients in exchange for luxury vacations, tickets to sporting events, campaign contributions and other favors. Documents filed in court recently show Ney chief of staff Will Heaton secretly recorded his boss' conversations and wore a hidden wire to a meeting with Ney that proved "extremely important" to the FBI's investigation of Abramoff, The Washington Post reported Monday. Heaton pleaded guilty last February to conspiring with Ney and Abramoff in the corruption scheme. His lawyers filed a joint request with the government last week seeking leniency because of his cooperation in the case. According to a memo written by Justice Department attorney Mary Butler, Heaton's cooperation was crucial because of constitutional obstacles involved in prosecuting a member of Congress.

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