

Bob Menendez, morals for auction

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Sen. Bob Menendez and his wife Nadine indicted on federal bribery charges.

"In the marrow, in the marrow is the vice, in which life has no object on this earth for love. On this earth there is no other object than the amassing of fortune!". -Jose Marti

From scandal to scandal, American political life is a parade of scandals, from one to the next. Personalities of the jet set of the empire, public officials, and high administrative positions are involved in an endemic impudence that cyclically, shakes the fabric of politics and society.

Senator Bob Menendez, considered “the most Republican of Democrats,” architect of many of the “initiatives” proposed to harm Cuba, faces criminal charges brought by the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York for conspiracy to commit bribery, fraud, and extortion.

His “leadership position on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee” allowed him to peddle influence, the indictment says.

Menendez allegedly accepted hundreds of thousands of dollars in bribes, the U.S. Justice Department said, for which he could face up to 20 years in prison.

The marrow of vice

If we search the annals of the U.S., we will find dozens of stories related to scandals of various kinds involving politicians and public officials. One of the first cases was that of Crédit Mobilier, the company contracted to build the Union Pacific Railroad, which used shares to bribe high officials of the Ulysses S. Grant administration.

Secretary of the Interior Albert Bacon Fall, during the administration of President Warren G. Harding (1921 to 1923), leased Navy oil reserves at Teapot Dome in Wyoming and two other locations in California to oil companies.

Iconic is the 1986 Iran-Contra case, when several government officials organized a complex operation to sell drugs and firearms to finance the Nicaraguan Contras.

Watergate revealed, in 1972, a spying and wiretapping scheme used by the Nixon administration during the election campaign of that year, which forced the President

to resign, one of the most shameful acts in U.S. political history.

On the other hand, one of the most “famous” cases in recent years was that of Jeffrey Epstein, a multimillionaire hedge fund manager on Wall Street, accused of sexual abuse of minors between 2001 and 2005. The case involved, directly or indirectly, high officials and powerful businessmen of the empire.

If we follow the graft trail, we will find several Cuban-American politicians, sharks with mud splashed on their immaculate suits.

For example, we have Senator Ted Cruz, a prominent member of the conservative Tea Party group, remembered for having abandoned his constituents in the middle of a terrible winter storm to go to Cancun on vacation with his family.

Cruz belongs to the most conspicuous of the anti-Cuban lobby in the U.S., together with Marco Rubio, senator for Florida, who is suspected of having a not very clear past with mafiosi and drug traffickers.

Bob Menendez, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was one of the main critics, within the Democratic Party, of the rapprochement between Cuba and the US, promoted by Barack Obama’s administration.

In the last seven years, Robert has been in the crosshairs of U.S. authorities for crimes of conspiracy, sex trafficking, fraud, and bribery.

In 2017, he was indicted on 18 counts of fraud and bribery offenses. According to prosecutors, he received \$750,000 in donations, gifts, private plane trips, and luxurious vacations paid for by a benefactor.

Previously, the ultra-conservative politician was involved in a scandal with Dominican prostitutes. According to a whistleblower, identified as Peter Williams, who alerted the FBI, Menendez hired and had sex with four teenage girls in that

country.

The indictment records state that between August 2006 and January 2013, the politician stayed on several occasions at a resort in the Dominican Republic, known to be an exclusive Caribbean retreat in La Romana province on that country's southeastern coast, for the encounter with the prostitutes.

A federal grand jury found that the politician used his senatorial office to favor projects "in exchange for donations and favors," to encourage false statements under oath from underage sex workers, and to defraud the U.S. Health Care system.

Bob is also notorious for allowing the expansion of prostitution, gambling, and racketeering while he was mayor of Union City, New Jersey, a town near New York City.

How did he manage to get rid of these charges? It is an impenetrable mystery.

How much does a Senator cost?

In the investigation of the Democratic politician and his wife Nadine, the authorities found more than 480,000 dollars, a luxury car, and gold bars in their residence. This was revealed in the indictment of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York.

"More than \$480,000 in cash was discovered in the house, much of it stuffed in envelopes and hidden in clothing, closets and a safe, along with more than \$70,000 in Nadine Menendez's safe deposit box," quoted La Opinión.

In addition, the Attorney General's Office filed charges against businessmen Wael "Will" Hana, José Uribe and Fred Daibe, beneficiaries of the Menéndez family. The authorities stated that the main implicated party provided "highly confidential" information he obtained from the State Department to his then-girlfriend, Nadine,

who forwarded it to Hana, who then forwarded it to an official in Egypt.

According to the indictment, Bob used his power and influence, including his leadership on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to benefit a foreign government.

The investigation shows how both parties attempted to conceal traces, in emails and messages, and how they operated to favor three New Jersey businessmen, and the Government of Egypt.

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York argued that Hana obtained lucrative exclusive rights to certify meat exports, thanks to Menendez's influence, including for negotiations on arms sales from the United States.

Menendez, who is up for re-election next year, has been in the Senate since 2006 but now faces the second set of corruption charges brought against him by the Justice Department in a decade.

Senate Democratic Legislative Caucus rules require Menendez to resign as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, but he can still serve on the panel.

However, the senator refused to resign following the indictment and the request of other colleagues, claiming it was a sham: "I'm not going anywhere," he said.

In a previous trial, in which he was acquitted, Menendez was tried in 2015 by the U.S. Attorney's Office in New Jersey for conspiracy, bribery, fraud, and abuse of the power of his office.

Prosecutors argued then that the senator accepted more than \$600,000 in political contributions, a luxury hotel suite at the Park Hyatt in Paris, and free rides on the private jet of a wealthy ophthalmologist, Dr. Salomon Melgen, in exchange for favors.

The corruption trial was eventually declared a mistrial in November 2017 after the jury reported that it was deadlocked. Following that, a federal judge acquitted them of several of the charges in 2018, and the Justice Department dropped the remaining ones, BBC referred.

Interestingly enough, Melgen, the wealthy ophthalmologist, was convicted of dozens of healthcare fraud charges and sentenced to 17 years in a separate case, but the sentence was commuted by then-President Donald Trump in 2021.

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