

# The Apprentice (2024) - Dylan AI Report

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## Welcome

### Welcome to your Dylan AI-Generated Script Coverage Report!

This report provides an automated analysis of your script, leveraging Dylan AI to offer insights into its structure, character interactions, and other key elements.

Please note that this is currently an **experimental proof-of-concept**. While we are very excited about the potential insights Dylan AI can uncover, the analysis is generated automatically and may contain imprecisions or areas that require further refinement.

We are continuously working to improve the accuracy and depth of this analysis. Your feedback is invaluable in this process! If you have any questions, suggestions, or notice anything unexpected, please don't hesitate to contact us [here](#) or reach out at [script.scan.pro@gmail.com](mailto:script.scan.pro@gmail.com).

For more information about this project and future developments, please visit our website at [scriptscanner.pro](http://scriptscanner.pro).

We hope you find this initial analysis insightful!

## Script Coverage Analysis Guide

This AI-powered screenplay analysis covers:

### Report Structure

#### 1. Summary

- Logline: One-sentence concept pitch
- Synopsis: Brief plot overview
- Strengths/Weaknesses: Key highlights and areas for improvement

- Assessment & Recommendation: Overall evaluation

## 2. Genres & Comparable Titles

- Genre breakdown percentages
- Similar films in tone, scope, or theme

## 3. Characters

- Summaries of main characters' traits, motivations, and arcs

## 4. Coverage Analysis

- **High Level:** Concise evaluations of key elements:
  - Dialogue, Structure, Worldbuilding, Premise, Marketability
  - Characters, Pacing, Writing, Themes, Scene Description
  - Tone, Plot, Format/Grammar
- **In Depth:** Detailed analysis with specific script examples

## How to Use This Report

- Start with the Summary, Genres, and Characters sections
- Check High Level coverage for quick assessments of specific craft elements
- Consult In Depth analysis for detailed feedback and revision guidance

## Summary

### Loglines

Seeking to dominate 1970s Manhattan real estate and escape his family's legacy, an ambitious developer allies with a notoriously ruthless lawyer, adopting his corrupt methods to achieve power at any cost.

To forge a Manhattan empire and escape his father's outer-borough success, an ambitious young developer embraces the ruthless playbook of a corrupt power lawyer, navigating the treacherous world of 1970s New York real estate.

Mentored by a notoriously unethical lawyer in crumbling 1970s NYC, an ambitious young developer sheds his morals to master the ruthless tactics required to build a

Manhattan real estate empire.

In decaying 1970s New York, an ambitious young developer apprentices himself to a ruthless lawyer, learning the brutal tactics necessary to conquer the city's elite and build a powerful, controversial empire.

To build a Manhattan empire despite crippling lawsuits, an ambitious outer-borough developer partners with a ruthless power broker, mastering a dark playbook of manipulation and intimidation to achieve success at any cost.

## **Synopsis**

In 1970s New York City, ambitious young real estate developer Donald Trump seeks to make a name for himself in Manhattan, separate from his father Fred's outer-borough business. Facing a federal discrimination lawsuit, Donald hires the infamous, ruthless lawyer Roy Cohn. Under Cohn's tutelage, Donald learns aggressive tactics: attack, deny everything, and always claim victory. He uses these methods to navigate the lawsuit and secure a controversial tax abatement for his first major project, the Grand Hyatt Hotel, while also marrying Ivana Zelnickova. As Donald's success and profile grow with projects like Trump Tower, he becomes increasingly ruthless, alienating his brother Freddy and Ivana, and leveraging connections while employing Cohn's brutal strategies. Ultimately, as Cohn faces disbarment and illness, Donald distances himself, undergoes cosmetic surgery, and co-opts Cohn's rules as his own for his best-selling book, "The Art of the Deal," cementing his transformation.

## **Strengths / Weaknesses**

### **Strengths**

- Features a highly marketable and relevant premise centered on the fascinating, unexplored dynamic between a young Donald Trump and Roy Cohn.
- Compelling central characters, particularly the toxic mentor-apprentice relationship driving Trump's transformation arc which forms a strong narrative spine.
- Utilizes a clear and effective structure that logically charts Trump's rise and moral descent, strongly supporting the core themes.
- Explores resonant themes of ambition, corruption, and the nature of power in a compelling and historically specific context tied to 70s/80s New York.

## Weaknesses

- Pacing becomes rushed and somewhat episodic in the second half, potentially lessening the emotional impact of significant events and character shifts.
- Over-reliance on stating character emotions and internal thoughts directly in action lines (“unfilmables”) rather than consistently showing them through behavior.
- Distracting technical errors, particularly excessive/inconsistent capitalization in action lines and several typos/grammar mistakes, detract from the script’s professional polish.
- The protagonist’s characterization risks becoming less dimensional in the later stages as he fully embraces the ruthless persona taught by Cohn.

## Overall Assessment

“The Apprentice” effectively leverages its strong, marketable premise—the formative mentorship between Donald Trump and Roy Cohn—within a convincingly gritty 1970s/80s New York, utilizing a solid 3-act structure to chart Trump’s compelling transformation. The script excels in establishing distinct character voices, particularly for the central duo, and employs dialogue that generally drives the narrative and reveals character, anchoring the potent themes of ambition and corruption. While the worldbuilding is evocative and the plot engaging, the pacing becomes somewhat rushed in the latter stages, and the writing, though possessing a clear voice, is undermined by action descriptions that too often state internal feelings instead of depicting behavior and suffers from notable formatting inconsistencies and proofreading errors that require attention.

RECOMMENDATION: CONSIDER

*The script features a strong concept, compelling central characters, and effective period setting, but requires development to address pacing issues in the latter half and significant polish regarding formatting, proofreading, and reliance on unfilmable action lines.*

## Genres Classification

- **Drama: 60%** - The narrative primarily centers on the protagonist’s transformation, complex relationships (mentor/apprentice, family, romantic), ambition, and moral compromises within a biographical context.

- **Thriller: 25%** - Includes significant elements of suspense, high-stakes negotiations, legal battles, blackmail, and psychological manipulation, creating narrative tension throughout the story.
- **Romance: 15%** - Features a significant romantic subplot detailing the courtship, marriage, power dynamics, and eventual conflicts within the protagonist's primary relationship with Ivana.

## Comparable Titles

### Comparable Titles (Comps)

- **Vice (2018):** Explores the controversial rise to power of a political operator (Dick Cheney) through cynical ambition and manipulation, sharing a similar biographical focus on a polarizing figure and a tone mixing dark drama with biting observation.
- **The Wolf of Wall Street (2013):** Depicts the intoxicating rise and moral decay driven by unchecked ambition in the 1980s/90s, mirroring the script's themes of corruption, excessive greed, and a charismatic but ethically bankrupt protagonist.
- **Oppenheimer (2023):** A recent, large-scale biographical drama examining a complex historical figure's ambition, moral compromises, and navigation of immense power and political maneuvering, comparable in its prestige scope and character depth.
- **Black Mass (2015):** This biographical crime drama shares a gritty period setting and focuses on the ruthless ascent of a notorious figure (Whitey Bulger), exploring themes of loyalty, betrayal, and the corrupting influence of power.
- **Judas and the Black Messiah (2021):** A critically acclaimed period drama delving into complex power dynamics, betrayal, and morally grey choices within a specific historical context, reflecting the script's focus on manipulation and compromised ethics.

# Characters Summary

## Donald Trump

The protagonist of the story, Donald Trump begins as a young, ambitious, and somewhat insecure real estate developer from Queens, desperate to escape his father's shadow and conquer Manhattan. Initially possessing a certain charm mixed with brashness, he is tall, blond, and eager for validation, particularly from his harsh father, Fred Sr. Under the cynical mentorship of Roy Cohn, Donald's primary role is to learn and apply ruthless tactics to achieve his goals, navigating complex deals like the Commodore Hotel and Trump Tower while battling the DOJ, city bureaucracy, and establishment figures. His key relationships define his journey: the toxic apprenticeship under Roy, the fraught dynamic of seeking approval from Fred Sr., a mixture of pity and detachment towards his brother Freddy, and a transactional, increasingly controlling marriage with Ivana. Donald undergoes a significant arc of hardening and corruption, shedding vulnerability and fully embracing Cohn's amoral "killer" playbook of attacking, denying, and claiming victory regardless of truth, ultimately becoming a more ruthless operator than his mentor.

## Roy Cohn

Roy Cohn serves as Donald Trump's cynical mentor and a primary catalyst for his transformation, functioning more as a corrupting influence than a traditional antagonist opposing Donald's goals. Physically described as elfin with beady eyes, later ravaged by AIDS which he denies, Cohn is an infamous, ruthless lawyer known for his aggressive tactics, political connections, and hidden vulnerabilities beneath a performatively outrageous and patriotic veneer. His function in the plot is to provide Donald with the amoral tools and worldview ("Attack, attack, attack," "Admit nothing," "Claim victory") needed to succeed in his ambitions, helping him navigate the DOJ lawsuit and city politics through manipulation and intimidation. His key relationships include the exploitative mentor-apprentice dynamic with Donald, which shifts as Donald gains power, and his possessive, ultimately tragic relationship with his aide Russell Eldridge. Cohn experiences a distinct downward arc, declining from immense power to disbarment, illness, and dependency, serving as a dark mirror and cautionary tale that Donald ultimately disregards.

## Fred Trump Sr.

Fred Trump Sr. is a key supporting character and early antagonistic force,

embodying the limited, outer-borough world his son Donald desperately seeks to transcend. A domineering and racist patriarch with a thick mustache and bushy eyebrows, Fred Sr. is characterized by his blunt, often belittling language, his focus on frugal, smaller-scale development, and his deep-seated prejudices. His primary role in the plot is to fuel Donald's ambition through constant negativity and withheld approval, representing both the obstacle of limited vision Donald must overcome and the source of the deep insecurities Roy Cohn later exploits. His relationship with Donald is defined by this dynamic of sought-after validation and competitive tension, while his relationship with his older son, Freddy, is marked by scorn for Freddy's perceived weakness. Fred Sr.'s arc is minimal; he remains largely static, though his eventual, late acknowledgment of Donald as a "killer" provides a hollow victory for his son.

### **Ivana Trump**

Ivana Trump is a significant supporting character, initially introduced as Donald's stunning, ambitious, and independent Czech girlfriend who becomes his first wife. Initially resistant to Donald's advances but ultimately won over by his persistence and ambition, she possesses a strong will and her own aspirations, particularly in design, which she applies to the Hyatt project. Her function in the plot evolves from love interest to a partner in building the "Trump" brand, but she also serves as a barometer for Donald's increasing callousness, experiencing the transactional cruelty of his world through the pre-nuptial agreement, dismissive comments, breast implant pressure, and ultimately, marital rape. Her primary relationship is with Donald, shifting from chemistry and mutual drive to a complex, transactional partnership defined by power plays and his growing control. Ivana's arc sees her transform from an independent force into a powerful but compromised figure within the Trump empire, adapting to survive in Donald's world, seemingly trading personal dignity for status and wealth.

### **Freddy Trump**

Freddy Trump is Donald's sensitive older brother, serving as a supporting character whose tragic trajectory provides pathos and a cautionary tale. Initially a TWA pilot who rejected the family business and the "killer instinct" demanded by his father, Freddy is portrayed as more vulnerable and humane than Donald, though increasingly succumbing to alcoholism. His primary function in the plot is to highlight the human cost of the Trump family dynamics and the path Donald chooses, representing the sensitivity crushed under Fred Sr.'s pressure and



evoking fleeting moments of pity and guilt in Donald. His relationship with Donald is fraught, marked by initial brotherly affection that decays into Donald's frustration and Freddy's desperation, while his relationship with Fred Sr. is defined by paternal scorn. Freddy undergoes a clear downward arc, spiraling from a disillusioned pilot into alcoholic ruin and premature death, underscoring the destructive pressures within the family and the consequences of failing to meet Fred Sr.'s expectations.

## Coverage Analysis (High Level)

### Concept

The concept for "The Apprentice" is strong, clear, and commercially viable, anchored by the immense public recognition and inherent intrigue surrounding Donald Trump's origins. Its specific focus on the formative mentorship by the notorious Roy Cohn provides a distinct and compelling hook, differentiating it from standard biopics by exploring a dark apprenticeship in power and ruthlessness against the gritty backdrop of 1970s/80s New York City. While utilizing familiar genre elements, the originality stems from this focused mentor-protege dynamic and the exploration of morally ambiguous tactics learned during Trump's early real estate ventures. The scope feels appropriately tailored for a feature film, concentrating on a pivotal period of transformation rather than attempting an overly broad life story, allowing for a potentially potent character study.

### Plot

The plot effectively chronicles Donald Trump's formative years under Roy Cohn's influence, presenting a generally clear and logical, if sometimes episodic, progression of events. Engagement is primarily driven by the compelling, controversial central relationship and the inherent drama of Trump's rise in a decaying New York City, rather than narrative surprise, given the well-known historical context. The focus remains tightly on the protagonist's transformation, using subplots involving family and associates to illuminate his character development and the ethical compromises made along the way. The narrative successfully explores its core themes of ambition, corruption, and the nature of "winning," delivering on the initial premise by showing the absorption and application of Cohn's cynical worldview. Within the established context of

pervasive influence and moral ambiguity, character actions and major plot developments feel largely consistent and believable, tracing Trump's journey from an insecure aspirant to a ruthless operator embodying his mentor's principles.

## **Marketability**

The script demonstrates strong marketability within the prestige/independent film space, primarily targeting educated adults interested in recent history, politics, and character-driven drama. Its high relevance and timeliness, directly engaging with the origins and influences of Donald Trump via his mentorship with Roy Cohn, position it to generate significant cultural conversation and media attention. While not geared towards broad commercial genre appeal, its awards potential is substantial, particularly for acting and screenplay, driven by its complex, morally ambiguous characters and exploration of enduring themes like ambition, power, and corruption. The project appears feasible within a moderate-to-significant budget typical for period dramas, though challenges include the detailed 1970s/80s NYC recreation and securing a cast capable of portraying these iconic figures convincingly. Its success will likely hinge on critical acclaim, skillful execution, and its ability to tap into the intense public interest surrounding its central subject.

## **Characters**

The screenplay presents a compelling and generally well-defined set of characters, anchored by the central, toxic mentor-apprentice dynamic between Donald Trump and Roy Cohn. Donald's transformation from an ambitious but insecure young man into a ruthless operator adopting Cohn's amoral playbook forms a strong narrative spine, feeling largely earned through specific plot points and interactions. Cohn himself is portrayed with considerable dimensionality, functioning as both catalyst and cautionary figure, his own decline providing a stark counterpoint to Donald's ascent. Supporting characters like Fred Sr., Freddy, and Ivana effectively serve their thematic and plot functions, highlighting the familial pressures, human costs, and transactional nature of Donald's world, though some possess more depth than others. Characters are successfully differentiated through distinct voices and actions. The relationships, particularly the core Donald-Roy dynamic, are clear, evolve significantly over time, and drive the narrative forward effectively, exploring themes of ambition, corruption, loyalty,

and the construction of a public persona. While Donald's dimensionality slightly diminishes as he fully embraces the "killer" identity in the latter stages, the overall character work provides a solid foundation for a potent biographical drama.

## **Structure**

The script employs a conventional 3-Act structure effectively to chronicle Donald Trump's transformation under Roy Cohn's mentorship. Its foundation is solid, providing a clear, linear path through the key events and relationships of Trump's early career. The narrative progresses logically, with a well-defined beginning that hooks the reader through the introduction of Cohn and the DOJ lawsuit, a middle section that effectively escalates stakes and develops Trump's character through key challenges like the Commodore deal and his adoption of Cohn's ruthless tactics, and a concluding act that delivers both plot and thematic climax before resolving the character arc. Pacing is generally engaging, skillfully balancing plot progression with character development, although minor tightening in early setup scenes or transitions between major plot points could enhance momentum slightly. Key turning points, including the inciting incident (Roy taking the case), midpoint (DOJ settlement), and climax (basement tape reveal/final lesson), are clearly defined and impactful, effectively charting Trump's descent into Cohn's worldview and his subsequent rise. The structure successfully supports the central theme of apprenticeship and moral compromise, culminating in a resolution that clearly establishes the cynical persona defined in the final scenes.

## **Pacing**

The script's pacing is generally brisk and propulsive, effectively covering a significant period in the protagonist's formative years. The overall flow benefits from a clear focus on the central mentorship dynamic with Roy Cohn and key milestones in Donald Trump's early career, establishing a strong narrative engine. Most individual scenes serve a distinct purpose, contributing to plot progression or character development, with adequate variation in length and intensity. Information regarding backstory, plot points, and character motivations is typically delivered clearly, building intrigue around Roy's methods and Donald's transformation. However, the pacing accelerates notably in the latter half, compressing several years and significant events, which occasionally risks feeling rushed or episodic, potentially lessening the emotional impact of key moments or

character shifts compared to the more detailed earlier sections. While efficient, the reliance on montages and rapid succession of events in the final act could benefit from minor adjustments to allow crucial developments slightly more breathing room.

## **Worldbuilding**

The script effectively establishes the decaying yet fiercely competitive world of 1970s and 1980s New York City, grounding the narrative in a tangible sense of time and place through specific, often gritty details. It successfully evokes distinct atmospheres, shifting between urban malaise, the sleazy allure of corrupt power circles centered around Roy Cohn, Donald Trump's relentless ambition, and moments of interpersonal tension or melancholy. The "rules" of this world – the mechanics of influence, leverage, and amorality in business, law, and politics – are clearly defined, primarily through Roy Cohn's explicit teachings and demonstrated actions, and are well-integrated into the plot, forming the core of Donald's apprenticeship. While exposition is often handled effectively through showing character interactions and manipulations (particularly Cohn's), some elements rely on direct statement (Cohn's rules, initial VO, lawsuit explanations) or introductory montage, which function clearly but are less immersive than purely demonstrated world-building. Overall, the world feels well-developed and serves as a potent backdrop and catalyst for the central character's transformation.

## **Description**

The descriptive writing in "The Apprentice" is largely effective, characterized by clarity, strong visual details, and an active present tense that engages the reader. Settings are established vividly, contributing significantly to tone and reflecting character, from the decay of 1970s New York to the increasing opulence and peculiarity of the protagonists' worlds. Action is generally easy to visualize, and character descriptions offer memorable physical markers. The script successfully uses description to manage pacing and underscore thematic contrasts. However, readability could be enhanced by minimizing explicit camera directions, rephrasing them implicitly where possible. Additionally, while mostly avoiding unfilmables, a few instances describing internal thoughts or feelings could be sharpened by translating them into more concrete visual actions or expressions to fully adhere to the "show, don't tell" principle. Overall, the descriptions effectively

serve the narrative and contribute to a compelling read, with minor refinements suggested for optimal professional presentation.

## **Tone**

The script effectively establishes its tone within the initial pages and maintains it with notable consistency throughout. Opening with the grit of 1970s New York City contrasted against the protagonist's ambitious voiceover and entry into the morally ambiguous world of Le Club, it clearly signals a dark, biographical character study. The tone blends dramatic realism with cynical observation, focusing on the interplay between ambition, environment, and corrupting influences like Roy Cohn. While narrative focus shifts between business dealings, family dynamics, and personal relationships, the underlying tone remains cohesive, anchored by the protagonist's relentless drive and the morally questionable world he navigates. Moments of dark humor punctuate rather than disrupt the seriousness, and escalations into darker territory feel like earned intensifications within the established narrative landscape. The intended dramatic, often cautionary, tone is evident from the outset, preparing the audience for a complex exploration of character formation rather than a simple success story.

## **Dialogue**

The dialogue in "The Apprentice" serves as a strong pillar for the screenplay, effectively establishing character, driving the narrative, and grounding the story in its period setting. The voices of the principal characters, particularly Donald Trump and Roy Cohn, are distinct and track their respective arcs convincingly—Trump's evolution from ambitious but unsure protégé to ruthless operator, and Cohn's consistent, performative cynicism masking underlying vulnerabilities. Fred Trump's patriarchal gruffness and Freddy's tragic decline are also well-rendered through their speech. Dialogue functions adeptly to reveal motivations, advance the plot through negotiation and conflict, and convey necessary information without typically resorting to cumbersome exposition. The script successfully captures the often brutal, transactional nature of the world depicted. While subtext is present, particularly in power plays and moments of manipulation like Cohn's interactions with Trump or government officials, some key relationships could benefit from more nuanced layers beneath the surface, occasionally relying on direct statement where implication might be more powerful. The overall style

balances naturalism with the necessary stylization for figures like Cohn, creating an authentic-feeling yet dramatically potent soundscape for the narrative.

## Themes

The screenplay presents a clear and compelling exploration of the corrupting nature of ambition, framed through the potent mentor-mentee relationship between Roy Cohn and a young Donald Trump. Its central theme, a Faustian education in ruthless power dynamics, is effectively woven into the narrative fabric via character arcs, pivotal plot events, and recurring motifs. While core concepts like ambition and corruption are familiar, the script achieves originality by grounding them in the specific, historically resonant context of its subjects and the decaying yet opportunistic milieu of 1970s-80s New York City. The exploration feels largely organic, though occasional moments, particularly near the conclusion, lean slightly didactic. Intellectually, the script offers significant resonance, prompting reflection on the origins of power and ethical compromise, especially given the characters' enduring public relevance. Emotional engagement may be complex; while moments of vulnerability and victimization offer connection points, the protagonists' escalating ruthlessness might intentionally foster critical distance rather than deep empathy. Ultimately, the thematic concerns are deeply integral, serving as the driving force behind the story's structure and purpose.

## Writing

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The writing demonstrates a high degree of professionalism and craft, adhering to industry standards in formatting and execution. The writer possesses a clear, direct voice well-suited to the cynical tone and period setting, effectively establishing the decaying world of 1970s/80s New York and the characters within it. Character voices, particularly those of Donald Trump and Roy Cohn, are distinct and track believable arcs, with dialogue often revealing subtext and driving conflict. The script is largely efficient, avoiding significant bloat through concise action lines and purposeful scenes, though minor opportunities for tightening exist, particularly concerning explicit camera direction and list-like descriptions. Overall, the writing effectively lays the foundation for the narrative, establishing

character motivations, core relationships, and thematic concerns with skill and clarity.

## Format

The script demonstrates a professional command of standard screenplay format, adhering well to industry conventions for margins, font, spacing, and element placement. Elements like scene numbering and revision notes suggest it is a production draft, where such additions are standard. Proofreading is of a high quality; the script is polished and largely free from distracting typos, spelling errors, or significant grammatical issues. While occasional minor errors and slight inconsistencies exist, they are infrequent and do not hinder comprehension or detract from the script's professional presentation. The use of offensive language seems deliberate, reflecting the characters and setting.

## Coverage Analysis (In Depth)

### Concept

- **Strength & Clarity:**
  - The core concept – the formative mentorship of a young Donald Trump by the ruthless lawyer Roy Cohn in 1970s/80s New York – is **strong and clear**. It's immediately understandable due to the high public recognition of both figures.
  - The title, "The Apprentice," directly reinforces this central relationship and theme.
  - The central question, or "what if," is effectively: "What if a young, ambitious, yet somewhat naive real estate heir fell under the tutelage of one of America's most notorious political fixers, and how did that shape the man who would become president?"
  - The script quickly establishes this dynamic, moving from Trump's outer-borough rent collecting ( **MS. NATHANSON / CRAZED MAN** encounters) and family pressures ( **FRED** 's dismissal) to his fateful meeting with Cohn at Le Club.
  - Clarity is further enhanced by the "Inspired by true events" tag, grounding the narrative in a recognizable historical context.

- **Hook:**

- The concept possesses an **extremely compelling hook**, primarily driven by the globally recognized and polarizing figure of Donald Trump. There's inherent audience curiosity about his origins and rise.
- The inclusion of Roy Cohn, another infamous historical figure, adds a layer of dark intrigue and promises a story about power, corruption, and influence.
- Audiences would likely be drawn by:
  - The desire to understand the "making of" Trump.
  - The exploration of the mentor-protege relationship between two controversial figures.
  - The dramatic potential of witnessing Trump's early struggles and morally ambiguous successes (the DOJ lawsuit, the Commodore deal).
  - The period setting – the gritty, decaying, yet vibrant backdrop of 1970s/80s New York City – offers strong visual and atmospheric appeal, established effectively in the opening archival sequence and descriptions ( **TIMES SQUARE: big blinking BILLBOARDS, PORNO THEATERS...** ).
- The narrative promise of seeing Trump learn Cohn's "rules" ( **Rule one: Attack, attack, attack.** , **Rule two: Admit nothing, deny everything.** , etc.) provides a structural and thematic hook.

- **Originality:**

- While biopics are a familiar genre, the concept's **specific focus** provides a degree of originality. It avoids a sprawling cradle-to-grave approach, instead zeroing in on a pivotal developmental period and relationship.
- Framing Trump's story through the specific lens of Roy Cohn's dark mentorship ("You were my apprentice") offers a **fresh angle** on a well-known public figure. It posits Cohn as the key influence shaping Trump's aggressive tactics and worldview.
- The concept stands out from generic success stories by embracing the morally complex, often unsavory aspects of both protagonists and their



methods (Cohn's blackmail tactics ( **WALTER** photos), Trump's learned ruthlessness ( **Guests complained about Russell's condition** )).

- It utilizes familiar genre elements (rise to power, mentor figure, period detail) but applies them to unique, highly specific, and controversial subjects.
  - The exploration of the darker side of ambition and the “win at all costs” mentality, as taught by Cohn, feels distinct compared to more sanitized biographical treatments.
- **Scope & Scale:**
    - The scope appears **appropriate for a feature film**, likely positioned as a significant independent or prestige studio drama.
    - It focuses on a defined period (roughly 1973-1986 based on script cues like Nixon, Koch, Trump Tower opening) and a core relationship dynamic.
    - The narrative feels **focused rather than epic**, concentrating on key early career milestones (DOJ lawsuit, Commodore/Hyatt deal, Trump Tower development) and personal developments (meeting/marrying Ivana, Freddy's decline, relationship with parents) as they relate to Cohn's influence and Trump's transformation.
    - While dealing with major real estate projects and interactions with powerful figures (politicians, mobsters, media), the scale feels grounded in character study and relationship dynamics. It portrays both the grimy reality of 1970s NYC ( **TRASH-FILLED street** , **Trump Village** ) and the emerging '80s excess ( **TRUMP TOWER ATRIUM** party, **TRUMP** helicopter/jet).
    - The concept doesn't attempt to cover Trump's entire life or political career, wisely containing its focus to this formative “apprenticeship” period, making it manageable and dramatically potent for a feature format.

## Plot

- **Clarity & Logic:**
  - The overarching narrative—Donald Trump's rise under Roy Cohn's mentorship—is generally clear and easy to follow chronologically from 1973 onwards.

- The cause-and-effect progression is mostly logical, particularly concerning Donald's transactional relationships and the consequences of Roy's aggressive tactics.
  - Example: Roy's advice ("Attack, attack, attack") directly leads to the countersuit against the DOJ.
  - Example: Donald's pursuit of the Commodore tax break logically follows his ambition established early on and necessitates Roy's influence.
- However, some transitions feel abrupt or rely heavily on montage, potentially leaving gaps if the audience isn't familiar with the real-world events.
  - The jump from the lawsuit settlement to the *New York Times* profile feels somewhat engineered by Roy rather than a fully organic plot development, though it serves the theme of manufactured reality.
  - The quick resolution of the lawsuit via Walter's blackmail happens rapidly after the courtroom scene, potentially feeling too convenient despite illustrating Roy's methods.
- Minor credibility gaps might arise from the sheer speed and ease of certain manipulations (e.g., flipping the City Hall vote instantly), though this aligns with the portrayal of Cohn's outsized influence. Believability is maintained within the slightly heightened reality established.
- The progression of Donald's business ventures (Commodore → Trump Tower → Atlantic City) follows a clear escalating logic tied to his ambition.
- **Engagement:**
  - The plot holds attention effectively, driven by the inherently compelling (and controversial) figures and the high-stakes world of NYC real estate and power politics.
  - The mentor-protégé dynamic between Roy and Donald provides a strong central relationship engine.
  - Predictability is inherent due to the "inspired by true events" nature and the public profile of the protagonist. The engagement comes less from

*what* happens and more from *how* it's depicted and the character dynamics involved.

- Key events like the DOJ suit, the Commodore deal, and Trump Tower's construction are expected milestones.
- Surprise elements are present in the specific, often shocking methods employed (Roy's blackmail photos, the tape recordings, Donald's ruthlessness towards Freddy and Ivana).
  - The scene where Donald discovers Roy's orgy provides a significant character and plot jolt.
  - Donald's callous handling of Russell's eviction and the subsequent confrontation with Roy offer potent, engaging conflict.
  - The depiction of the marital rape scene is shocking and escalates the dramatic tension significantly, though its necessity and execution require careful consideration regarding audience reception and thematic contribution.
- The escalating stakes, from the initial lawsuit to billion-dollar casino ventures and political maneuvering (Koch feud), maintain narrative drive.
- **Focus:**
  - The focus remains predominantly on the protagonist, Donald Trump, charting his transformation and rise.
  - Roy Cohn functions as a very strong secondary character, crucial to the plot and Donald's arc, but the narrative remains anchored in Donald's perspective and journey. His influence drives much of the plot, but the *story* is Donald's apprenticeship.
  - Subplots involving secondary characters (Freddy's decline, Ivana's journey, Roy's illness) generally serve to illuminate Donald's character and the consequences of his actions or the environment he navigates. They rarely divert focus for extended periods.
    - Freddy's tragic arc highlights the "killer vs. loser" theme and provides an emotional counterpoint to Donald's success, reinforcing Donald's character choices.

- Ivana's subplot shows Donald's transactional view of relationships and his evolving capacity for cruelty.
- The narrative effectively uses figures like Fred Trump, Vic Palmieri, Ed Koch, and various mobsters as obstacles or catalysts within Donald's main storyline, rather than letting their stories overshadow his.
- **Effectiveness:**
  - The plot effectively explores the central premise: the making of Donald Trump through his association with Roy Cohn and the specific environment of 1970s/80s New York.
  - It dramatizes the transmission of Cohn's "rules" and worldview, showing Donald internalizing and eventually surpassing his mentor in ruthlessness.
  - Themes of ambition, corruption, the performative nature of success, loyalty/betrayal, and the corrosive effects of power are consistently explored through the plot points.
    - The Commodore tax abatement plotline directly engages with corruption and influence.
    - The handling of the DOJ lawsuit explores themes of manipulating truth and media ("claim victory").
    - Donald's interactions with his family (Fred, Freddy, Mary Anne, Ivana) explore personal costs and shifting loyalties.
  - The script delivers on the promise set up in the opening—showing the gritty reality of NYC and positioning Donald as someone seeking to conquer it, learning dark arts along the way.
  - The ending, culminating in the "Art of the Deal" framing and Donald articulating Roy's rules as his own, provides a strong thematic payoff, showing the completion of his "apprenticeship."
- **Believability:** (Within the story's world)
  - Character actions generally feel consistent with their established personalities and motivations.

- Donald's relentless ambition, transactional nature, and eventual ruthlessness feel earned through the progression of events and Roy's tutelage. His initial awkwardness giving way to bravado is tracked.
- Roy's actions, while extreme, are consistent with his established reputation and methods (manipulation, blackmail, aggression).
- Fred Trump's resistance, then grudging pride, aligns with the portrayal of a cautious outer-borough developer wary of Manhattan's risks.
- Plot developments largely feel earned within the context of the power dynamics and ethical landscape depicted.
  - Roy flipping the City Hall vote via blackmail is shocking but believable given his established methods and the depiction of systemic corruption.
  - Donald securing financing or deals often relies on bravado and connections facilitated by Roy, fitting the narrative logic.
  - Donald's eventual discarding of Roy feels like a believable, albeit harsh, culmination of his character arc – the apprentice surpassing and abandoning the master.
- Some moments push believability for dramatic effect but generally stay within the bounds of the world established.
  - The speed of certain successes (like the lawsuit settlement post-blackmail) might feel slightly accelerated but serves narrative pacing.
  - Donald's almost immediate pivot to the *Times* interview after the settlement feels orchestrated but believable as a Cohn tactic.
- The increasing scale of Donald's ambition and risk-taking (culminating in the Taj Mahal) feels consistent with his established character, even as it leads toward implied future trouble hinted at by the creditors' warnings.

## Marketability

- **Target Audience:**

- **Primary:** Educated adults (35+) interested in recent American history, politics, and biographical drama. Likely politically engaged, potentially

leaning liberal or independent, drawn to critical examinations of power figures. Viewers familiar with the socio-political landscape of the 1970s/80s and the figures of Donald Trump and Roy Cohn.

- **Secondary:** Younger adults (25+) interested in the origins of contemporary political figures and power structures. Students of history, political science, law, or business.
- **Psychographics:**
  - Intrigued by complex, morally ambiguous characters and origin stories.
  - Appreciate character studies exploring themes of ambition, corruption, mentorship, and the nature of power.
  - Drawn to stories depicting specific historical eras and their cultural impact (1970s/80s NYC).
  - Seek thought-provoking, potentially controversial material that sparks discussion.
- **Genre/Comps Fans:** Likely overlap with audiences for:
  - Biographical dramas focusing on controversial figures (*Vice*, *The Social Network*, *I*, *Tonya*).
  - Political thrillers/dramas exploring power and ethics (*Frost/Nixon*, *All the President's Men*).
  - Films depicting gritty, specific eras/locations (*American Hustle*, *Goodfellas* - thematic resonance more than genre).
  - Stories centered on intense, often toxic mentor-protégé relationships (*Whiplash*).
- **Market Position:**
  - Predominantly **Indie/Prestige**. The subject matter, character focus, and historical setting position it strongly for the specialized/arthouse market and awards consideration.
  - **Awards Potential:** High.
    - Offers potentially transformative roles for actors portraying young Trump and Roy Cohn.

- Themes of power, corruption, mentorship, and the shaping of a major political figure are ripe for critical discussion and awards attention.
- Period detail and biographical nature fit common awards categories (Acting, Screenplay, Production Design, Costume Design).
- **Commercial Focus:** Limited mainstream commercial appeal in the traditional sense; relies more on critical buzz, topicality, and potentially controversial marketing.
  - Its commercial success is likely tied to its cultural relevance and ability to generate conversation rather than broad genre appeal.
  - Could achieve crossover success similar to other critically acclaimed biographical dramas if executed strongly and timed effectively.
- **Niche Elements:** While the central figure is globally known, the specific focus on the Cohn mentorship and early NYC deals gives it a distinct, potentially niche historical angle appealing to those deeply interested in this specific backstory.
- **Feasibility:**
  - Appears producible within a **moderate-to-significant budget range**, typical for well-mounted period dramas aiming for prestige. Not a low-budget indie, but likely below major studio tentpole costs.
  - **Scale Considerations:**
    - **Period Recreation:** Significant requirement. Recreating 1970s/80s NYC (streets, interiors like Le Club, offices, apartments, construction sites) necessitates substantial production design, costumes, props, and possibly VFX for authentic cityscapes (smoggy skyline, period details, Commodore transformation). The use of archival footage at the start sets a standard that the narrative portion must match.
    - **Locations:** Diverse and numerous locations are indicated (NYC streets, specific buildings like the Commodore/Trump Tower sites, Roy's townhouse, courthouse, Queens residence, Aspen, Mar-a-Lago, various interiors). This suggests complexity in scouting, securing, and dressing locations, or building sets.

- **Cast:** Requires strong leads capable of embodying iconic, controversial figures (Trump, Cohn), plus a large supporting cast (Ivana, Fred, Freddy, mobsters, politicians, business figures, reporters). Attracting name actors for key roles would increase budget but also marketability.
- **VFX:** Primarily expected for period environmental enhancement (e.g., augmenting skylines, removing modern elements) rather than large-scale action or fantasy elements. Manageable within its likely budget tier.
- **Overall Scope:** Feels ambitious but grounded. The primary challenges are the period recreation and securing a strong cast, consistent with its likely market position.
- **Relevance/Timeliness:**
  - **Extremely High:** The script directly engages with one of the most dominant and polarizing figures in contemporary global politics.
  - **Cultural Resonance:**
    - Provides an origin story exploring the formative influences and experiences (especially the Roy Cohn mentorship) that arguably shaped Donald Trump's tactics and worldview ("Attack, attack, attack," "Admit nothing, deny everything," "Claim victory"). This directly feeds into current cultural and political analysis.
    - The depiction of 1970s NYC decay and subsequent development/gentrification themes also resonates with ongoing discussions about urban change, wealth disparity, and real estate power.
    - Themes of media manipulation, leveraging connections, ethical compromises in business and law, and the pursuit of fame/power remain highly relevant.
  - **Universal Themes:** Beyond the specific figure, it tackles enduring human experiences:
    - The nature of ambition and the "killer instinct."



- Complex family dynamics (father-son relationships, sibling rivalry/disappointment - Donald/Fred/Freddy).
- The seductive and potentially corrupting nature of power and wealth.
- Identity formation under pressure and influence.
- Mentor-protégé dynamics and their consequences.
- **Timeliness:** Given Trump's continued presence in the news cycle and potential future political runs, a film exploring his rise and the methods learned from figures like Cohn is timely and likely to generate significant public interest and debate.

## Characters

### • **Focal Character (Donald Trump):**

- **Effectiveness:** Clearly established as the focal point. The narrative successfully tracks his journey from an ambitious but somewhat naive outer-borough striver to a ruthless Manhattan player. His drive is palpable from the outset ("I wanna be bigger. I wanna be the biggest deal in the Big Apple").
- **Motivation:** Primarily driven by a potent mix of ambition, insecurity, and a desperate need for validation (especially from his father, Fred Sr., and later, the broader public/establishment). His desire to escape his father's shadow and conquer Manhattan ("Dad, Manhattan real-estate is a steal!") is a strong initial engine. This evolves into a pursuit of power, wealth, and fame for their own sake, heavily influenced by Roy Cohn's philosophy.
- **Portrayal:** Captures familiar mannerisms and speech patterns while grounding them in a specific formative period. The script shows the *making* of the persona, linking traits like transactional relationships, braggadocio, and sensitivity to perceived slights to his experiences and mentorship under Roy. Moments of vulnerability (fear at Roy's party, sadness over Freddy, brief panic with creditors) provide necessary contrast, though they become rarer as he hardens.

### • **Antagonist/Antagonistic Force (Roy Cohn & Others):**

- **Roy Cohn:** Functions as the primary *catalyst* and *corrupting influence* more than a traditional antagonist opposing the protagonist's goal. He is the cynical mentor figure who provides Donald with the tools and worldview to succeed, albeit by morally bankrupt means ("Attack, attack, attack," "Admit nothing, deny everything," "Claim victory and never admit defeat"). His goals align with Donald's initially (winning the lawsuit, gaining influence), making their dynamic complex.
  - His antagonism emerges subtly through his manipulation, possessiveness (towards Russell, perhaps Donald), and the toxic nature of his "lessons." His eventual physical decay and disbarment serve as a dark mirror and potential foreshadowing for Donald, though Donald ultimately discards him.
- **Fred Trump Sr.:** Acts as an early antagonistic force – representing the limited, outer-borough world Donald seeks to escape. His constant belittling ("Says the airline pilot," "Not this crap about your hotel"), racism, and lack of vision fuel Donald's ambition but also instill deep-seated insecurities and a craving for approval that Roy exploits. His eventual begrudging acknowledgment ("You're a killer. A king!") arrives too late to satisfy Donald.
- **Systemic Forces:** The script effectively uses the decay of 1970s NYC, bureaucratic hurdles (DOJ lawsuit, city planning), establishment figures (Helmsley, Koch), and financial pressures (creditors) as antagonistic forces that Donald must overcome, often using Roy's ruthless methods. Ed Koch emerges as a specific, principled opponent who sees through Donald ("I can't let you get rich on the backs of the people of New York").
- **Supporting Characters:**
  - **Fred Trump Sr.:** Clearly defined as a domineering, racist, and ultimately limited patriarch. Serves as a crucial benchmark against which Donald measures himself and rebels. His worldview shapes Donald's early biases ("We just don't want to rent to welfare cheats and drug dealers").
  - **Freddy Trump:** Provides pathos and serves as a cautionary tale. Represents sensitivity and a rejection of the "killer instinct" that Fred Sr. demands and Donald embraces. His decline into alcoholism and

eventual death ("Don't let him break you, like me") highlights the human cost of the Trump family dynamics and Donald's path, evoking moments of guilt/pity in Donald that are ultimately suppressed.

- **Mary Anne Trump:** Offers moments of warmth and maternal support ("Get yourself a blazer... Don't tell your father"), providing a contrast to Fred Sr.'s harshness. She shows flashes of moral clarity (objecting to Fred's language, questioning Donald's manipulation of the trust) but largely remains within the patriarchal structure. Her bond with Ivana is a notable detail.
- **Ivana Zelnickova/Trump:** Introduced as ambitious, independent, and initially resistant to Donald ("Is this some kind of joke?"). Her arc shows her transformation into a partner who embraces the "Trump" brand ("The Donald and I expect the best") but also experiences the transactional cruelty of Donald's world (the pre-nup negotiation, the dismissive comments, the implied marital rape). She serves as a measure of Donald's increasing callousness.
- **Russell Eldridge:** Functions primarily as Roy's aide and lover, highlighting Roy's hypocrisy and possessiveness. His jealousy towards Donald and eventual tragic demise from AIDS underscore the destructive nature of Roy's orbit and Donald's growing indifference/fear ("Give him a blanket").
- **Minor Characters (Vic Palmieri, Barbara Katz, Ed Koch, Tony Schwartz, etc.):** Generally serve their plot functions effectively, representing obstacles, allies, or observers along Donald's path. Koch stands out as a more developed minor antagonist. Tony Schwartz's brief appearance effectively frames the creation of Donald's public myth.
- **Dimensionality:**
  - **Donald Trump:** Achieves a degree of dimensionality, particularly early on. We see the insecurity beneath the bravado (flinching at cameras, needing Roy's help), the genuine desire for his father's respect, and fleeting moments of empathy (towards Freddy). Contradictions exist: craving establishment acceptance while flouting its rules, needing loyalty while being ruthlessly disloyal. However, as the script progresses and he adopts Roy's rules, this dimensionality arguably flattens somewhat into a more

consistent “killer” persona, especially post-surgery. The script shows the *construction* of a less dimensional public self. Suggestion: Ensure the final act retains glimpses of the underlying insecurity or cost, even if buried deep.

- **Roy Cohn:** Possesses significant dimensionality. Beyond the monstrous fixer, we see vulnerability (fear during the AIDS protest, sadness over Russell’s death, reliance on Donald’s attention), loneliness (“Everybody wants to be liked. To belong. I never did”), and a twisted form of principle (“We’re at war with an evil empire”). His frankness about his past and motivations (“My advantage is I don’t care what people think”) adds depth. His physical and professional decline provides a strong counterpoint to Donald’s rise.
- **Supporting Characters:** Vary in depth. Freddy has a clear inner life marked by pain and regret. Ivana shows ambition conflicting with her compromised position. Fred Sr. is somewhat one-note but effectively serves his purpose. Mary Anne has underdeveloped potential for more inner conflict. Others are more functional.
- **Arcs:**
  - **Donald Trump:** Undergoes a clear and significant arc, transforming from an eager apprentice absorbing Roy’s toxic lessons to surpassing his master in ruthlessness and ambition. He sheds vulnerability and embraces the “killer” identity, learning to manipulate, attack, deny, and claim victory regardless of reality. This change feels largely *earned* through his experiences (the lawsuit, the Commodore deal, navigating mobsters, facing down Koch) and Roy’s explicit tutelage. It’s a believable trajectory into amorality, culminating in his physical and psychological reshaping (surgery, adopting Roy’s rules as his own). It’s a meaningful arc of *corruption and hardening*.
  - **Roy Cohn:** Experiences a distinct downward arc, moving from a position of immense power and influence to disbarment, illness, and dependency. His arc serves as a crucial counterpoint to Donald’s ascent, highlighting the potential consequences of his lifestyle and methods, even as Donald ultimately avoids (or ignores) the warning.

- **Freddy Trump:** Has a tragic, downward arc from disillusioned pilot to alcoholic ruin and death. His trajectory underscores the familial pressure and provides an emotional contrast to Donald's relentless drive.
- **Ivana Trump:** Arcs from an independent, ambitious woman to a powerful but compromised partner in the Trump enterprise, seemingly trading personal dignity for status and wealth. Her journey reflects the transactional nature of Donald's world.
- **Differentiation:**
  - **Voice:** Characters are generally well-differentiated through dialogue.
    - Roy: Cynical, sharp, performatively outrageous, uses Yiddish inflections ("bubala," "schmuck," "putz").
    - Donald: Evolves from eager, slightly insecure, and occasionally earnest ("I wanna be bigger") to adopting Roy's declarative, often hyperbolic style, mixed with salesmanship ("It'll sparkle like a diamond!," "tremendous potential").
    - Fred Sr.: Blunt, racist, dismissive ("crook," "faggots," "blacks and spicks").
    - Freddy: Melancholy, self-pitying, uses fraternal affection ("brother," "Donnie").
    - Ivana: Eastern European accent (indicated), direct, pragmatic, later adopts corporate/brand speak ("The Donald and I expect the best").
  - **Actions/Perspectives:** Characters are also differentiated by their actions and worldviews. Roy manipulates and attacks, Fred Sr. builds within limits and complains, Freddy drinks and retreats, Donald relentlessly pursues deals and status, Ivana negotiates her position.
- **Dynamics:**
  - **Donald & Roy:** The central dynamic is compelling and clearly evolves. It moves from mentor/apprentice and mutual exploitation (Donald needs Roy's connections/methods, Roy enjoys the influence/vicarious thrill) to a power shift where Donald becomes dominant and ultimately discards the

ailing Roy ("I'm running a business, Roy," kicking Russell out, the fake cufflinks). This arc is the spine of the narrative.

- **Donald & Fred Sr.:** A clear dynamic of seeking approval, rejection, competition, and eventual surpassing. Donald's need for Fred's validation is a powerful motivator early on. The moment Fred calls him a "killer" is potent because it's earned yet hollow for Donald.
- **Donald & Freddy:** Characterized by pity, frustration, and repressed guilt on Donald's part, and desperation and resentment on Freddy's. It effectively highlights Donald's growing lack of empathy.
- **Donald & Ivana:** Evolves from initial spark and mutual ambition to a transactional partnership marked by power plays (pre-nup), infidelity, increasing cruelty from Donald, and Ivana's adaptation/hardening. The dynamic reflects Donald's view of relationships as conquests and possessions.
- **Roy & Russell:** Shows codependency, jealousy (Russell towards Donald), and the tragic consequences of Roy's lifestyle, adding another layer to Roy's character.
- **Overall:** Relationships are generally clear, engaging, and evolve over the course of the story, reflecting and driving the characters' arcs, particularly Donald's.

## Structure

- **Foundation:**
  - The script clearly utilizes a **traditional 3-Act structure**. It follows a linear, chronological progression charting Donald Trump's formative years under the mentorship of Roy Cohn.
  - This structure is **effective for the biographical nature** of the story, allowing for a clear depiction of cause-and-effect in Donald's transformation and rise. It provides a familiar and accessible framework for tracking his character arc alongside his business dealings.
  - The narrative focuses tightly on the **mentor-apprentice dynamic** as the central spine, anchoring the episodic events of Donald's early career (DOJ

lawsuit, Commodore deal, Trump Tower) to his internal development under Roy's influence.

- **Progression & Pacing:**

- **Beginning (Act I - Approx. Scenes A1-17):**

- **Setup/Hook:** Effectively establishes the gritty 1970s NYC context and introduces Donald as ambitious but unpolished and insecure (awkward date, collecting rent). The introduction of Roy Cohn at Le Club provides immediate intrigue and menace. The hook is solidified when Roy agrees to represent Donald in the DOJ lawsuit ("I might as well take this little lawsuit..."), establishing the core relationship and driving conflict.
    - **Pacing:** Generally well-paced introduction. Moves efficiently from establishing the world to the inciting incident. The rent collection sequence, while illustrating Donald's early struggles and character, feels slightly extended and momentarily slows the primary narrative thrust driven by the meeting with Cohn.

- **Middle (Act II - Approx. Scenes 18-89):**

- **Escalation/Development:** Successfully escalates stakes both externally and internally.
      - Donald learns and applies Roy's "rules" (countersuit, press conference manipulation, blackmail hints regarding Walter).
      - The Commodore Hotel project provides a tangible goal with increasing obstacles (skepticism from Vic, financing hurdles, navigating city politics, the tax abatement fight).
      - Personal relationships develop and complicate: the deepening, transactional mentorship with Roy; the whirlwind romance and pragmatic marriage to Ivana (prenup negotiation); strained family dynamics (Fred Sr.'s skepticism, Freddy's tragic decline).
      - Donald's character demonstrably develops – gaining confidence ("I wanna be the biggest deal..."), media savvy (NYT profile), and ruthlessness, while shedding empathy (treatment of Freddy, reaction to Roy's illness).

- **Pacing:** Maintains engagement through intertwined plotlines (lawsuit, Commodore, Trump Tower) and character arcs. The Commodore tax abatement arc provides strong narrative tension. Montages (TV appearances, buying spree) are used effectively to compress time and demonstrate rising success/hubris. The pacing feels appropriate for chronicling several years of development, though the sheer number of events occasionally gives a slightly episodic feel. Could potentially tighten transitions between some plot points (e.g., the jump to Atlantic City feels slightly abrupt).
- **End (Act III - Approx. Scenes 90-End):**
  - **Climax:** Features multiple climactic moments:
    - The **thematic climax** occurs in Roy's basement with the tape reveal ("The whole place is bugged.") and Roy's final, explicit lesson ("You have to be willing to do anything... to win."), cementing Donald's embrace of this philosophy.
    - The **plot climax** for the Commodore arc is the successful City Hall tax abatement vote, won through Roy's implied blackmail.
    - The Trump Tower Grand Opening serves as a climax celebrating Donald's arrival and success, built on these foundations.
  - **Resolution:** Effectively portrays the consequences and culmination of Donald's journey. He achieves outward success (Trump Tower, fame, wealth) but demonstrates profound inner decay and moral compromise (abandonment of Roy, cruel treatment and rape of Ivana, indifference to Freddy's fate, denial regarding Roy's illness). The physical transformation (surgery) symbolizes the constructed, artificial nature of his persona. The final interview with Tony Schwartz explicitly codifies the "rules" he learned from Roy, bringing the thematic arc to a clear, if chilling, close.
  - **Pacing:** Accelerates effectively towards the conclusion, covering significant events like Roy's decline and death, the Trump Tower opening, and the setup for "The Art of the Deal" concisely. The final phone call with Roy provides poignant closure to their arc.



- **Key Turning Points:**

- **Inciting Incident:** Roy agreeing to take the Trump Organization's DOJ lawsuit case ("I might as well take this little lawsuit..."). Clearly defined, impactful, and sets the primary relationship and conflict in motion.
- **Act I Break (Plot Point I):** Filing the \$100M countersuit against the DOJ and holding the press conference ("We intend to fight this injustice..."). This marks Donald's public entry into Cohn's confrontational style and the beginning of his tutelage in media manipulation, moving the conflict into a new arena. It's a decisive action pushing into Act II.
- **Midpoint:** The successful settlement of the DOJ lawsuit ("The government folded like a cheap tent."). This represents a major victory achieved directly through Roy's methods (including implied blackmail of Walter), significantly boosting Donald's confidence, validating Roy's approach, and marking a point of no return in his commitment to this path. It empowers him to pursue the Commodore deal with greater conviction.
- **Act II Break (Plot Point II):** The confrontation with Roy after Russell is kicked out of the Hyatt ("I made you! You were my apprentice."). This moment signifies the final power shift in their relationship. Donald fully asserts his independence and ruthlessness, even against his mentor, demonstrating his transformation is complete and marking his transition into the 'master'. The subsequent decline of Roy and Donald's rise into Act III feel like a direct consequence of this turning point. The Trump Tower opening immediately following serves as the outward manifestation of this arrival.
- **Climax:** The combination of the City Hall tax abatement victory and, more significantly, the basement tape reveal scene where Donald fully accepts Roy's nihilistic philosophy ("Off Donald, fully committed to his new master."). This sequence represents the peak of the plot's tension (securing the deal) and the thematic culmination (total corruption).
- **Resolution:** The final sequence, starting from the Trump Tower opening party aftermath through the physical surgeries and ending with the interview framing "The Art of the Deal." It clearly establishes Donald's new reality, the internalized rules, the personal cost, and sets the stage for his

future persona. The final lines articulating the “three rules” provide thematic finality.

## Pacing

- **Overall Flow:**

- The script generally maintains a brisk, forward-moving pace, suitable for a biographical piece covering over a decade (1973-1986). The episodic structure, focusing on key formative moments and relationships, largely works.
- The opening effectively establishes the 1970s NYC setting and introduces Donald and Roy without delay. The initial arc involving the lawsuit and Commodore deal feels well-paced, building narrative tension.
- **Potential Drag:** Minor moments in the initial Le Club scene might be tightened, though it serves crucial introductory functions. Ensure every beat before Roy’s approach directly builds character or atmosphere.
- **Potential Rushing:** The period from the mid-1970s (post-Commodore win) through the mid-1980s feels significantly compressed.
  - Years jump quickly (e.g., 1976 wedding to 1978 Trump Tower pitch; 1978 Koch meeting to 1981 Freddy’s funeral/casino expansion). While efficient, this acceleration risks glossing over nuances in Donald’s transformation or the impact of major events (marriage, fatherhood, Freddy’s decline).
  - The reliance on montages (TV features, buying spree) further accelerates the timeline, effectively conveying rising fame and fortune but sacrificing deeper scene work. Consider if breaking out a key moment from these montages into a full scene could add depth without significantly slowing the pace.
  - The latter third, chronicling peak success, escalating personal issues (Ivana, pills, Roy’s illness), and financial pressures, moves very rapidly. This density of events might feel slightly breathless or episodic, potentially lessening the impact of individual moments like the confrontation with Roy or the scene with Ivana. Evaluate if slightly

expanding a crucial late-stage scene could provide more breathing room.

- **Scene-Level:**

- Most scenes effectively serve a clear purpose: advancing plot, revealing character, or developing themes (ambition, mentorship, ruthlessness, illusion vs. reality).
  - *Examples:* The rent collection scenes ground Donald's beginnings; the family dinners reveal core conflicts; Roy's tutoring scenes establish the central dynamic; the City Hall hearing provides narrative climax for the Commodore arc; the final scene with Tony Schwartz crystallizes the thematic takeaway.
- Scenes demonstrating Roy's methods (courtroom antics, diner blackmail, basement tapes) are particularly effective in showing, not just telling, the education Donald receives.
- The parallel drawn between Donald's rise and Freddy's decline through intermittent scenes provides a strong emotional counterpoint, though Freddy's final appearances feel somewhat rushed.
- **Variation:** There is generally good variation in scene length and intensity.
  - Short, impactful scenes (e.g., phone calls, brief confrontations) contrast with longer set pieces (Le Club, Roy's party, City Hall hearing, Trump Tower opening).
  - Intensity ranges from the quiet menace of the Mob meeting to the overt aggression of the courtroom or the street confrontation with Roy. The inclusion of moments of vulnerability (Donald with Freddy initially, Donald post-funeral) adds texture, though these become rarer as the script progresses.
- **Contribution Check:** Scrutinize scenes primarily depicting Donald's success or social interactions (e.g., parts of the Trump Tower party) to ensure they actively reveal character change or plot points beyond simply showcasing wealth/fame. Ensure the "Buying Spree Montage" doesn't just list acquisitions but suggests something about Donald's insatiable nature or growing recklessness.

- **Information Flow:**

- **Exposition/Backstory:** Generally handled efficiently, though sometimes relying heavily on direct statement.
  - The opening archival footage and VO quickly set the NYC context.
  - Family dynamics and Fred Sr.'s influence are established mainly through dialogue in early scenes (dinner, interactions with Freddy). Consider if any of this could be shown more visually.
  - Roy's backstory (McCarthy, Rosenbergs) is revealed through dialogue, effectively positioning him historically and morally.
  - Donald's "rules" are explicitly stated by Roy and later co-opted by Donald. While clear, this could feel slightly didactic. The script *shows* the rules in action effectively, which mitigates this.
- **Reveals:** Pacing of reveals is largely effective in maintaining intrigue and tracking Donald's descent.
  - Roy's ruthlessness and methods are unveiled progressively, culminating in the basement tape reveal.
  - Roy's sexuality is hinted at and then graphically confirmed, marking a key moment in Donald's perception of him.
  - Donald's transformation from eager apprentice to callous operator is gradual, marked by key interactions (Vic Palmieri, Freddy, Ivana, Roy). The final scene with Tony Schwartz serves as a strong concluding reveal of his internalized worldview.
  - The introduction of financial strain (creditors, casino debt) late in the script effectively raises stakes as Donald reaches his apparent peak.
- **Intrigue vs. Confusion:** The flow generally maintains intrigue without being confusing. The central mentorship plot provides a clear through-line. The introduction of numerous deals (Commodore, Trump Tower, casinos) and relationships (Ivana, Roy, Freddy, family) is manageable within the chronological structure.
- **Pacing of Information:** The density of information increases significantly in the script's latter half. While tracking Donald's rapid ascent, ensure the

audience has sufficient time to process key character shifts (e.g., the turn against Ivana, the final dismissal of Roy) and the implications of new information (financial trouble, Roy's illness). The speed could risk making some later developments feel less earned or impactful compared to the more detailed early sections.

## Worldbuilding

- **Effectiveness of World-Building (1970s/80s NYC & Power Circles):**

- The script successfully establishes the gritty, decaying world of 1970s New York City from the outset.
  - Strengths: Uses specific, evocative details (Times Square "PORNO THEATERS, PEEP SHOWS", Commodore Hotel's neglect, Trump Village "HEAPS OF TRASH", smoggy skyline). This grounds the narrative effectively in a specific time and place defined by urban decay and social tension.
  - Opening archival montage is a standard but functional way to set the scene quickly, though it leans towards telling rather than showing the city's state.
- The world of power, influence, and corruption revolving around figures like Roy Cohn is depicted clearly.
  - Le Club serves as an effective microcosm of this world – a nexus of mobsters, billionaires, politicians, and socialites ("Jet-setters," "MOBSTERS gesticulating wildly," Roy holding court).
  - The contrast between different spheres is well-defined: the sleaze of Midtown, the aspirational but grimy work in Queens (Trump Village), the insular upper-middle-class world of the Trump family home ("Archie Bunker land" but with a mansion), the exclusive Le Club, Roy's strangely decorated townhouse, the sterile power of boardrooms and City Hall.
- The "mythology" isn't fantastical but centers on the unwritten rules of power, leverage, and amorality in this specific milieu. This is effectively conveyed through character interactions and Roy's explicit "rules."

- Suggestion: While the external decay is shown, the *internal* decay or moral landscape within the power structures could be explored with slightly more nuance beyond Roy's explicit pronouncements. Perhaps showing more subtle manipulations or casual corruption.
- **Atmosphere & Mood:**
  - The writing strongly evokes a mood of **urban decay and societal unease** in the early sections.
    - Examples: Descriptions of Times Square, the Commodore ("neglected and possibly squatted"), Trump Village ("dimly-lit hall," "smell of something terrible cooking," "concrete buildings and HEAPS OF TRASH").
    - The description of the skyline ("shrouded in dense smog that glows blood red") effectively creates a post-apocalyptic feel appropriate to the city's crisis.
  - A distinct atmosphere of **sleaze, dangerous power, and transactional relationships** permeates scenes involving Roy Cohn and his associates.
    - Examples: Le Club's "eclectic" decor with "BIG GAME and SWORDS," Roy's physical appearance ("sallow skin," "rat-like eyes," "face transplant" lines), the casual presence of mobsters (Fat Tony, Carmine Galante), Roy's predatory advances ("hand on Donald's lap," "slides towards Donald's crotch"), the disturbing party scenes (coke use, call girls, orgy).
    - Roy's townhouse, mixing power symbols (photos with Nixon) with bizarre decor ("KERMIT THE FROG DOLLS"), creates an unsettling, decadent atmosphere.
  - An underlying mood of **raw, ruthless ambition** drives Donald's actions, contrasting with the surrounding decay or the stifling environment of his family.
    - Examples: Donald's internal monologue about potential, his relentless pursuit of the Commodore deal ("I will eat, sleep and shit this job"), his confrontation with Vic Palmieri, his interactions with his father.

- Moments of **tension and intimidation** are palpable, particularly in legal and political dealings.
  - Examples: The courtroom scenes ("gallery hoots," Roy's aggressive tactics), Roy's phone calls (threatening Katz, manipulating Pottinger), the City Hall hearing ("atmosphere is tense," "storm of discontent").
- The atmosphere occasionally shifts to reflect **vulnerability or melancholy**, particularly concerning Freddy.
  - Examples: The bar scene ("mood is now heavy and melancholic"), Freddy's apartment ("air is fetid and tropical," ball python), Freddy at the wedding ("drowning in shame"), the funeral.
- **World Rules & Exposition (Historical/Biographical Context):**
  - The "rules" of this world – how power operates in NYC real estate, law, and politics during this era – are established primarily through Roy Cohn's actions and explicit teachings.
    - **Clarity & Consistency:** The rules (attack, deny, use leverage, claim victory, importance of connections/press/appearances) are stated clearly by Roy and consistently demonstrated in his behavior (countersuit, threats, manipulation of DOJ official Walter, flipping the City Hall vote via blackmail). Donald's adoption of these rules forms his character arc.
    - The script effectively portrays the ecosystem of influence: Roy's connections (Nixon, judges, mobsters, Murdoch, Steinbrenner), the importance of figures like the Hotel Association President (Formicola), the transactional nature of political support (Beame, Koch), the role of the press (NYT profile, Rona Barrett).
  - **Integration:** These rules are well-integrated into the plot. The lawsuit, the Commodore deal, the Trump Tower tax break – all hinge on navigating or manipulating these unwritten (and written) rules. Donald's journey is explicitly about learning and mastering them under Roy's tutelage.
  - **Exposition Handling ("Show, Don't Tell"):**
    - Strengths: Much of the world's functioning is *shown* through action – Roy's interactions at Le Club, his courtroom tactics, the City Hall

blackmail reveal, Donald schmoozing at Roy's party. The initial introduction of Roy and his world feels organic within the club setting. Donald's apprenticeship unfolds through observation and participation.

- Areas for Refinement:
  - Roy explicitly stating his "four rules" feels somewhat direct, though arguably in character for a mentor figure like him. Could potentially be woven *slightly* more subtly through demonstration before explicit statement, but it serves its purpose clearly.
  - Donald's opening voiceover about potential is effective character setup but slightly on-the-nose exposition.
  - Explanations of complex dealings (the lawsuit's specifics beyond discrimination, the intricacies of the tax abatement) are sometimes condensed into dialogue (Donald explaining the suit to Roy, Roy explaining the case is "a dog"). This is often necessary but could feel slightly expository.
  - The scene revealing Roy's basement recording setup is a powerful "show, don't tell" moment regarding his methods.
  - The initial archival footage montage is pure "tell."

## Description

- **Clarity & Visuality:**
  - Generally strong and clear. Action lines effectively establish setting, character appearance, and key actions.
    - Descriptions of locations like the decaying Commodore Hotel ("TRASH-FILLED street," "boarded-up WINDOWS"), Le Club ("eclectic. BIG GAME and SWORDS"), Roy's bizarre bedroom ("KERMIT THE FROG DOLLS cover every surface"), and the contrasting Trump family homes (Queens "budget luxury," penthouse opulence) are visually distinct and informative.
    - Character introductions often provide vivid physical details (Roy: "elfin MAN... sallow skin... beady, rat-like eyes"; Donald: "Bohemian version of an Aryan Prince"; Ivana: "stunning BLONDE in a short red dress").



- Specific actions are well-described and easy to picture (Donald adjusting hair in reflection, Roy picking food off Donald's plate, Donald kicking Charlie Brown, the surgical procedures).
- Use of contrast is effective: Roy's rundown townhouse vs. his Rolls Royce, Donald's initial awkwardness vs. later confidence, the glamour of parties vs. underlying darkness (Roy's orgy, Freddy's decline).
- Sensory details occasionally enhance visuality (smell from Ms. Nathanson's apartment, Roy smelling of sex).
- Figurative language is used sparingly but effectively (Donald pushing through crowd "like a salmon swimming upstream," Roy eating asparagus "like a rabbit").
- Areas for refinement:
  - Some descriptions rely slightly on telling rather than showing mood ("This city is on the brink of collapse," Donald feeling "pride," Donald feeling "nothing"). While sometimes acceptable shorthand, grounding these more in visual cues could strengthen them. Example: Instead of "Donald feels nothing" after Fred's praise, describe a blank expression or an immediate shift in focus, letting the visual convey the lack of impact.
  - Shorthand like "young Robert Redford-ish" is efficient but leans on external knowledge. Adding a specific physical detail alongside could be beneficial.
- **Engagement:**
  - The description largely engages the reader, contributing effectively to tone and pacing.
    - The opening archival montage and description immediately establish the gritty, decaying tone of 1970s NYC.
    - Descriptions of parties (Le Club, Roy's townhouse, Trump Tower opening) build energy and convey the atmosphere of power, decadence, and danger.

- Action sequences (Crazed Man attack, courtroom confrontations, protest scenes) are dynamic and keep the reader engaged.
- Pacing is managed well through description, alternating between quick cuts/montages (archival opening, Roy's rules, buying spree) and more detailed scene-setting.
- The writing is consistently active and uses the present tense, maintaining immediacy.
- Tone shifts are often signaled effectively through description (e.g., the shift from the public wedding reception to Freddy's drunken despair, the contrast between the celebratory Mar-a-Lago party and Roy's deterioration).
- Suggestions for enhancement:
  - Occasionally, description flags slightly during extended dialogue scenes. Injecting small, relevant physical actions or reactions could maintain visual interest without disrupting flow (e.g., a character nervously adjusting tie, tapping fingers).
  - Ensure descriptions consistently serve character or plot; avoid details that feel purely decorative unless establishing milieu (e.g., naming minor mobsters without description unless they have a later role).
- **Readability:**
  - Generally very readable, with clear and concise language for the most part. Free of excessive jargon.
  - Avoids overly dense paragraphs of description, often breaking action down into specific beats.
  - Largely avoids unfilmable descriptions of internal states, though a few instances could be sharpened.
    - Examples needing refinement: "his mental map being redrawn" (show his reaction instead), "Donald feels nothing" (show blankness), "fully committed to his new master" (show through action/expression), "surprising herself" (the smile shows it), "hurt hardening into resolve" (needs visual), "freaking out inside" (show awkwardness/sweat),

"Donald senses Roy and Roger are lovers" (show through their interaction/proximity), "Donald senses he's in a bad mood" (show Roy's posture/expression). These are minor but tightening them improves professionalism.

- Camera Directions: The script contains several explicit camera directions ("The camera is moving," "We PUSH IN," "CLOSE ON"). While sometimes used, professional readers prefer these are minimized. Often, the desired shot can be implied through focus in the description.
  - Suggestion: Rephrase camera directions where possible. Instead of "We PUSH IN on an elfin MAN," try "Focus on an elfin MAN..." or simply describe him in a way that draws attention. "CLOSE ON: Donald's WRISTWATCH" is more acceptable as a standard convention for emphasis.
- Excessive Detail: Generally avoids unnecessary detail. Descriptions focus on what's relevant to character, setting, or plot. The level of detail in settings like Roy's homes or Donald's apartments feels purposeful in revealing character.
- Formatting (e.g., use of CAPS for key sounds/objects) is standard and aids readability.

## Tone

- **Establishment in First Ten Pages:**

- Yes, the first ten pages effectively establish the prevailing tone.
  - The opening archival footage immediately grounds the story in the grit and decay of 1970s New York City ("This city is on the brink of collapse"), setting a specific, unglamorous mood.
  - Donald's initial voiceover ("I really think if they tested me, I'd be two percent. No question") introduces his distinct self-perception and nascent ambition, hinting at the character study to come.
  - The Le Club scene contrasts the external decay with the insulated, morally ambiguous world of power players Donald aspires to join. His awkwardness ("He's trying too hard and it turns her off") juxtaposed

with his observations of figures like Ludwig and Newhouse establishes his outsider status and yearning.

- The introduction of Roy Cohn – his predatory gaze (“Roy’s piercing gaze makes Donald very uncomfortable”), association with mobsters, and immediate probing (“Does your father need a lawyer?”) – injects a darker, more cynical, and manipulative element central to the unfolding narrative.
  - The overall tone emerging from these pages is one of **biographical drama with significant dark, cynical, and cautionary undertones**. It promises a character study focused on ambition, environment, and the corrosive influence of power, rather than a straightforward rise-to-success story.
- **Consistency:**
    - The tone is maintained with **notable consistency** throughout the provided script pages.
      - The initial blend of gritty realism (rent collecting scenes, Freddy’s struggles, the state of the Commodore) and the darker, manipulative dynamics (Roy Cohn’s influence) persists.
      - Scenes depicting Donald’s professional climb consistently filter his ambition through the lens of the era’s harsh realities and his adoption of morally questionable tactics learned from Roy (“Rule two: Admit nothing, deny everything”).
      - Family dynamics consistently contribute a dramatic, often tense layer (Fred’s dismissiveness, Freddy’s tragic arc, the pre-nup negotiation with Ivana), reinforcing the personal costs and pressures intertwined with Donald’s ambition.
      - The introduction of Ivana adds romantic and partnership elements, but these are frequently framed within the context of deals, ambition, and transactional dynamics (the prenup fight, Donald evaluating her appearance later), keeping them tonally aligned.
      - **Shifts in Intensity, Not Tone:** While the narrative focus shifts between business, mentorship, family, and romance, the underlying tone

remains anchored in dramatic realism and cynical observation.

- Moments of dark humor (Roy's outrageous pronouncements, Donald's early press awkwardness) serve as punctuation rather than tonal deviations.
- Escalations into darker territory – Roy's party ("Roy is up against the wall while a BLONDE GUY(19) fucks Roy in the ass!"), the blackmail of Walter, Donald's treatment of Freddy and later Ivana ("I think I've found the G-spot!") – feel like intensifications within the established moral landscape, not jarring tonal shifts. They underscore the consequences and corrupting nature of the world depicted.
- **Effectiveness of Shifts:** The shifts in narrative focus feel organic and serve to build a comprehensive picture of the protagonist's development within his environment. The consistent underlying tone provides cohesion across these different facets of his life.
- **Area for Attention:** While consistent, the sheer darkness and amorality associated with Roy Cohn could potentially overshadow Donald's own internal journey if not carefully balanced. Ensure the focus remains on how Donald *absorbs* and *internalizes* these influences, maintaining the character study aspect. The script largely achieves this, showing Donald's evolution (e.g., his handling of the press conference vs. later interviews).
- **Establishment:**
  - The intended tone is **clearly established** from the beginning.
    - The juxtaposition of decaying NYC imagery with Donald's aspirational VO and his entry into the morally murky Le Club environment immediately signals a complex, serious drama.
    - The script effectively communicates that it will explore the formation of a controversial figure through the specific lens of his early influences and environment.
    - It avoids suggesting a hagiography or a light satire. The presence of figures like Roy Cohn and the initial focus on Donald's social

awkwardness and naked ambition clearly telegraph a story interested in moral ambiguity and the mechanics of power.

- The “Inspired by true events” title card primes the audience for a dramatic interpretation grounded in reality, aligning with the established tone.

## Dialogue

- **Naturalism/Style:**

- **Overall Authenticity:** The dialogue generally captures a believable, albeit often coarse, tone suitable for the characters and the depicted milieu of 1970s/80s New York real estate, politics, and organized crime. It reflects the blunt, transactional, and often prejudiced nature of the world.
  - *Example:* Fred Trump’s lines like “How can I be racist when I have a black driver?” or Roy Cohn’s casual anti-Semitism and homophobia feel authentic to the characters and period, though potentially challenging for modern audiences.
- **Stylization:** Roy Cohn’s dialogue often leans towards a cynical, performative stylization, which fits his established persona. His pronouncements (“Attack, attack, attack,” “Admit nothing, deny everything”) have a memorable, aphoristic quality appropriate for his role as mentor/corruptor.
- **Trump’s Voice-Over:** The opening V.O. (“They say the human mind is only using one percent...”) establishes a specific, slightly naive yet arrogant tone for the young Trump. It works as an initial framing device, though extensive V.O. could become a crutch if overused later. Consider if this specific V.O. line feels slightly too philosophical/abstract compared to the very grounded, transactional dialogue that follows.
- **Period Feel:** Dialogue mostly avoids anachronisms. References to figures (Nixon, McCarthy, Beame, Rockefeller), cultural elements (disco, TWA, *Dirty Harry*), and social issues (civil rights suits, NYC’s decay) ground the dialogue in the era.

- **Weakness:** Occasional lines feel slightly too on-the-nose or declarative, potentially sacrificing naturalism for thematic emphasis.
  - *Example:* Freddy telling Donald, "Don't let him poison you. There's more to life than winning and losing." While functional, it borders on being overly explicit about the theme.
  - *Example:* Warhol's lines ("Making money is Art," "Think of nothing, care about nobody") feel like textbook Warhol quotes rather than fully integrated conversation, though this might be intentional characterization.
- **Function:**
  - **Character Revelation:** Dialogue is highly effective in revealing character traits, motivations, and flaws.
    - *Example:* Roy's immediate transactional question ("Does your father need a lawyer?") upon learning Donald is Fred's son.
    - *Example:* Donald's early awkwardness on the date ("I watch a lot of TV...all the time!") contrasts sharply with his later learned confidence and eventual cruelty ("I just don't feel attracted to you anymore").
    - *Example:* Fred's constant negativity and belittling ("My firstborn son is a Goddamn bus driver with wings").
    - *Example:* Ivana's initial assertiveness ("Is this some kind of joke?") during the prenup negotiation.
  - **Plot Advancement:** Dialogue consistently drives the plot forward, particularly through negotiations, threats, and strategic discussions.
    - *Example:* Roy outlining the strategy to fight the DOJ lawsuit ("Tell the Feds to fuck themselves").
    - *Example:* Donald pitching the Commodore deal to Vic Palmieri and later to Hyatt, using dialogue to convey his plans and overcome obstacles.
    - *Example:* The dialogue surrounding the tax abatement hearing clearly outlines the stakes and the political maneuvering involved.

- **Exposition Handling:** Necessary background (the lawsuit, character relationships, political context) is generally woven into conversations, avoiding large expository dumps.
  - *Effective:* The initial lawsuit details emerge through Donald's conversation with Roy at Le Club.
  - *Slightly Less Effective:* Roy's recounting of the Rosenberg trial feels slightly like an inserted monologue for thematic effect, though it powerfully defines his character. Could perhaps be trimmed slightly for pacing.
- **Theme Reinforcement:** Dialogue consistently reinforces key themes: the corrosive nature of ambition, the meaning of "winning," loyalty vs. betrayal, mentorship, power dynamics, and the creation of a persona. Roy's "rules" are a prime example.
- **Subtext:**
  - **Present but Could Be Deeper:** Subtext exists, particularly in power dynamics and unspoken desires/fears, but many interactions are quite direct.
    - *Strong Example:* Roy's physical actions (hand on lap, sliding towards crotch) combined with seemingly innocuous dialogue ("Just like that") create strong subtext regarding his interest in Donald.
    - *Strong Example:* The entire negotiation around the prenup is layered with subtext about trust, control, and the transactional nature of the relationship. Ivana's line "Is this some kind of joke?" carries weight beyond the specific clauses.
    - *Strong Example:* Donald claiming victory to the press ("We got the strongest case in years") immediately after Roy tells him the case is "a dog."
    - *Needs More:* Interactions between Donald and Freddy have potential for deeper subtext regarding jealousy, disappointment, and shared trauma, but often lean towards direct statements ("Don't let him break you, like me").



- *Needs More:* Donald's interactions with his father contain conflict but could benefit from more moments where politeness or deflection masks deeper resentment or need for approval. The final scene where Fred praises Donald ("You're a killer. A king!") and Donald "feels nothing" relies more on description than dialogue/subtext to convey the hollowness.
- **Transactional Nature:** The constant focus on deals, favors, and leverage often brings the subtext to the surface, making interactions explicitly transactional. Roy asking Walter about Cancun pool boys is blackmail disguised as conversation.
- **Emotional Evasion:** Donald frequently uses deflection or changes the subject to avoid emotional depth, which functions as a form of subtext revealing his character. His reaction to Roy's illness or Freddy's pleas often involves transactional solutions or dismissal.
- **Differentiation:**
  - **Strong Core Voices:** The primary characters (Donald, Roy, Fred, Freddy, Ivana) generally possess distinct voices and speech patterns.
    - **Roy:** Cynical, sharp, manipulative, often uses dark humor and provocative language.
    - **Donald:** Evolves from trying-too-hard eagerness ("people say I'm the youngest member ever admitted") to mimicking Roy's aggression ("Tell the Feds to fuck themselves" - echoing Roy), and finally to his own brand of arrogant pronouncements ("I'm gonna buy the Commodore and make it the best fucking hotel in the city"). His later dialogue reflects the "rules" he learned.
    - **Fred:** Gruff, patriarchal, repetitive in his complaints and prejudices ("Only blacks and spicks fighting for turf..."). Vocabulary feels grounded in his outer-borough perspective.
    - **Freddy:** More colloquial initially, shifts towards weary resignation and the slurred patterns of alcoholism.
    - **Ivana:** Accent noted in script; dialogue reflects her initial confidence ("Is that your best pick-up line?") and later adaptation/pain.

- **Secondary Characters:** Generally functional, though some could be sharpened.
  - *Effective:* Fat Tony's dialogue combines menace with business-like language ("It's like making a Swiss watch...or a Catholic girl cum. HA!"). Vic Palmieri sounds like a skeptical, experienced broker. Barbara Katz sounds like an earnest but outmatched government lawyer.
  - *Could Be Sharpened:* Some minor characters (mob associates, lawyers, reporters) tend to blend slightly. Ensuring even brief appearances have a specific flavor or cadence could enhance realism. Russell's dialogue is minimal, primarily conveying jealousy or coldness, which works for his role but limits distinctiveness. Mary Anne's voice is defined mainly by her occasional firmness and biblical quotes.
- **Consistency:** Characters maintain their established voices throughout the script, reflecting their backgrounds, personalities, and evolution (particularly Donald).

## Themes

- **Clarity:**
  - Yes, there is a clearly discernible central theme: **The corrosive nature of unchecked ambition and the transactional, morally bankrupt path to power, specifically modeled as a Faustian apprenticeship under Roy Cohn.**
    - The narrative charts Donald Trump's adoption of a ruthless "win at all costs" philosophy, demonstrating how the pursuit of success, as defined by Cohn, erodes empathy, integrity, and personal relationships.
    - On a deeper level, the story explores the creation of a public persona built on aggression and denial ("killer instinct"), the psychological cost of suppressing vulnerability, and the specific socio-political decay (1970s/80s NYC) that allows such figures to thrive.

- The script explicitly frames this as an education: Cohn is the master, Donald the “apprentice” learning a dark art of manipulation and power brokerage.
- **Exploration:**
  - The theme is primarily explored through the **central mentor-mentee dynamic** between Roy Cohn and Donald Trump.
    - Roy’s explicit articulation of his cynical “rules” (“Attack, attack, attack,” “Admit nothing, deny everything,” “Claim victory and never admit defeat”) provides the philosophical core Donald internalizes.
    - Key sequences demonstrate this transmission: Roy coaching Donald through the lawsuit (“Your case is a dog”), advising him to create his own reality with the press (“spread the news like it’s happening tomorrow”), blackmailing the DOJ official, and manipulating the City Hall vote.
  - **Character Arcs** are pivotal to thematic exploration:
    - **Donald:** His arc traces the central theme – from an eager, somewhat naive aspirant (“I wanna be bigger”) seeking validation, to a hardened, manipulative figure who masters and eventually discards his mentor’s teachings (“He has never been my lawyer, per se”). His interactions with Vic Palmieri, Ed Koch, and Ivana show the practical application of learned ruthlessness.
    - **Roy:** Embodies the cynical philosophy he preaches. His arc demonstrates the power derived from these methods but also its ultimate emptiness, hypocrisy (his closeted life vs. public pronouncements), and the isolation/discardability that follows weakness (“Russell has AIDS. So does Roy”).
    - **Freddy:** Functions as a thematic counterpoint – the sensitive individual destroyed by the pressure to embody the “killer” instinct valued by Fred and Donald (“Don’t let him poison you”). Donald’s shift from concern to revulsion towards Freddy mirrors his own hardening.
    - **Ivana:** Represents the collateral damage. Initially strong (“I am not a trophy wife”), her ambition becomes entangled with Donald’s, leading

to compromises (the prenup) and eventual victimization, illustrating the human cost of Donald's ascent.

- **Plot Events** serve thematic purposes:

- The DOJ lawsuit acts as the inciting incident for the apprenticeship.
- The Commodore/Hyatt deal showcases Donald applying Roy's lessons in leveraging, lying, and manipulating systems.
- Trump Tower symbolizes the peak of this ambition, built via questionable means (mob concrete, Roy's machinations).
- Roy's illness and death, and Donald's reaction (kicking Russell out, the cheap cufflinks, the fumigation), starkly illustrate the transactional nature of loyalty in their world.

- **Motifs and Symbolism** effectively reinforce the themes:

- **"Killer" vs. "Loser":** A recurring dichotomy explicitly stated by Donald, defining the worldview he adopts.
- **Appearance vs. Reality:** Constant focus on expensive suits ("Dress well"), physical transformations (Donald's surgery, Ivana's breast implants, Roy's makeup), and architectural facades (mirrored glass, marble) underscores the theme of constructing a winning image, regardless of substance.
- **Decay/Corruption:** The backdrop of NYC's decline mirrors the characters' moral decay. Roy's physical deterioration symbolizes the endpoint of his choices. Freddy's alcoholism. Systemic corruption (mob ties, city hall deals).
- **Transactional Interactions:** Most relationships devolve into transactions (Donald/Roy, Donald/Ivana, Donald/creditors, Roy/mobsters). Donald's handling of Freddy's request for money, the prenup negotiation, the fake cufflinks gift for Roy.

- **Organic vs. Heavy-handed:**

- The exploration largely feels **organic**, emerging from character actions and dialogue within the narrative context.

- Roy's explicit stating of his "rules" feels **in character** for a cynical mentor figure, serving as necessary exposition of the core philosophy.
  - The final scene with Tony Schwartz, where Donald claims Roy's rules as his own ("It's my instinct"), serves as a thematic button but risks feeling **slightly didactic**.
  - The surgery montage is **symbolically potent** but leans towards **heavy-handed** in its visual metaphor of physical reshaping mirroring moral transformation.
- **Originality:**
    - While the core themes – ambition's corrupting influence, the dark mentor, the price of success – are common dramatic territory, the script derives **originality from its specific biographical focus**.
    - Applying these archetypes to the **documented, real-world relationship between Trump and Cohn** provides a unique and unsettling framework.
    - It offers a **distinct perspective on the genesis of a specific, highly influential approach to power, deal-making, and public persona**, tracing its roots to Cohn's tutelage.
    - The focus on this formative "apprentice" period distinguishes it from portrayals focusing solely on Trump's later career.
    - The detailed depiction of the era's specific power dynamics (NYC politics, mob influence, media manipulation) adds freshness.
  - **Resonance:**
    - **Intellectually:** The themes possess **strong intellectual resonance**, particularly given the subject matter's continued public relevance.
      - It prompts reflection on the mechanisms of power, the ethics of ambition, the role of mentorship in shaping character, and the construction of public image.
      - The portrayal of systemic corruption and manipulative tactics resonates with contemporary discourse about politics and business. The lineage from Cohn's methods to Trump's later style is clearly implied.

- **Emotionally:** Emotional resonance is **present but potentially complex** for the audience.
  - Empathy or pity might be evoked for characters like Freddy, early vulnerable Donald, Ivana during moments of abuse, and even the declining Roy, creating points of connection.
  - However, the central protagonists' increasing ruthlessness, narcissism, and lack of empathy (particularly Donald's) may create **significant emotional distance**. This forces a more critical, observational stance rather than deep identification, which may be the script's intention.
  - The abusive dynamics (Donald/Ivana, Fred/Freddy) are likely to evoke strong negative emotional reactions.
- **Integral vs. Tacked On:** The thematic exploration feels **fundamentally integral** to the script's purpose and structure.
  - The narrative *is* the story of Donald Trump's absorption of Roy Cohn's worldview and the consequences thereof. The themes are the engine driving the plot and character arcs, not superficial additions.

## Writing

- **Professionalism: Does the overall quality of the writing demonstrate craft and skill?**
  - Yes, the script demonstrates a professional level of craft and adherence to standard screenplay format.
    - Scene headings, character introductions, dialogue, and action lines are formatted correctly.
    - Revision history and production company details are included, indicating a professional workflow.
    - Prose is generally clean, with minimal typos or grammatical errors, facilitating a smooth read.
  - The writing effectively utilizes screenwriting techniques:
    - Strong visual storytelling is present (e.g., the contrast between the decaying Commodore and Donald's vision, Roy's Kermit-filled

bedroom, the Trump Tower fire reflecting on Donald's face).

- "Show, don't tell" is employed effectively in moments like Donald observing Roy's power at Le Club, Roy's photos showcasing his connections, and the stark reality of Freddy's apartment.
  - Subtext is evident, particularly in the power dynamics between Donald and Roy (Roy's physical advances, Donald's growing mimicry), and within the Trump family (Fred's dismissals, Mary Anne's quiet influence, Freddy's despair).
  - Pacing in the opening sections effectively establishes the world, introduces key players, and sets the central conflict in motion (Donald's ambition vs. his reality, the DOJ lawsuit).
- **Voice: Does the writer have a unique and engaging voice?**
    - The writer possesses a clear and engaging voice, characterized by directness and a cynical edge appropriate for the subject matter and era.
      - The tone effectively captures the grit and decay of 1970s New York City ("This city is on the brink of collapse," descriptions of Times Square, 42nd Street).
      - Descriptive language, while often functional, occasionally offers distinct flavor ("elfin MAN," "Bohemian version of an Aryan Prince," Roy's "sleazy smile").
    - The voice successfully differentiates characters through dialogue:
      - Roy Cohn's dialogue is sharp, profane, manipulative, and filled with specific aphorisms ("Attack, attack, attack," "Admit nothing, deny everything," "claim victory and never admit defeat"). His casual cruelty and transactional nature come through clearly ("Stan, bubala," "communist cunt," "I say if you're indicted, you're invited!").
      - Donald Trump's dialogue shows a clear evolution – from the initial awkwardness and eagerness to please ("I love disco," his fumbling press conference answers) to adopting Roy's bravado and transactional language ("I will eat, sleep and shit this job," "claim victory"). His later dialogue reflects growing arrogance and entitlement.

- Supporting characters have distinct voices: Fred Sr.'s gruff pronouncements and racism ("Goddamn bus driver with wings," "Only blacks and spicks"), Mary Anne's mix of piety and pragmatism ("Dress for the job you want..."), Ivana's determined, slightly accented speech ("Is this some kind of joke?", "I am not a trophy wife").
- The opening voiceover effectively establishes Donald's early mindset and ambition ("I really think if they tested me, I'd be two percent").
- **Efficiency: Is the writing tight and economical? Is every word necessary? (Avoids "bloat").**
  - The writing is largely efficient and avoids significant "bloat."
    - Action lines are generally concise, focusing on necessary visual information and character action (e.g., the sequence of Donald collecting rent, the confrontation with Vic Palmieri).
    - Dialogue typically serves to reveal character, advance plot, or establish conflict without excessive exposition or rambling (exceptions, like Fred's dinner table rants, feel character-driven).
    - Scenes generally serve a clear purpose in the narrative progression – establishing setting, introducing characters, escalating conflict, developing relationships (Donald/Roy, Donald/Ivana, Donald/Family).
  - Minor areas where efficiency could be marginally increased:
    - The initial description of NYC decay via archival footage feels slightly like a list; could potentially be woven more seamlessly or slightly condensed while retaining impact.
    - Some scene descriptions include specific camera directions ("We PUSH IN," "Camera moves forward," "Camera zooms in"). While not excessive, these could often be implied through strong action writing instead.
    - The introductions of figures like Ludwig and Newhouse via Donald's VO at Le Club are functional but could potentially be slightly streamlined.



- Redundancy is minimal; recurring themes (Donald's ambition, his relationship with his father, Roy's influence) are reinforced through varied interactions rather than simple repetition.
- The script effectively uses montage sequences (TV Montage, Donald Buying Spree) to convey passage of time and shifts in status economically.
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## Format

- **Standard Formatting:**
  - The script generally adheres to standard industry screenplay format.
    - **Font:** Appears to be standard Courier 12pt.
    - **Margins:** Visually appear correct (Top/Bottom ~1", Left ~1.5", Right ~1"). Element indentation (Action, Character Name, Dialogue, Parentheticals) largely follows standard conventions.
    - **Spacing:** Vertical spacing between elements (scene headings, action, dialogue blocks) aligns with industry norms.
  - **Scene Headings:** Mostly standard (INT./EXT. LOCATION - TIME). Inclusion of specific years (e.g., "(1973)") is acceptable. Use of scene numbers (e.g., A1, 2, 5A, 5B) and revision information (colored pages references on title page, date in header) indicates this is likely a **production draft**, not a spec script, which accounts for these elements.
  - **Action Lines:** Correctly formatted, starting at the left margin. Effective use of capitalization for key props, characters, and occasionally sounds (e.g., "MAN IN A BUSINESS SUIT", "THE COMMODORE", "TRASH-FILLED street"). List format using hyphens (e.g., "-POLICE CARS speeding...") is clear and acceptable.
  - **Character Names:** Correctly capitalized and centered above dialogue. Extensions like (O.S) and (CONT'D) are properly used.
  - **Dialogue:** Appears correctly formatted and indented.
  - **Parentheticals:** Correctly placed and formatted (e.g., "(half heartedly)", "(impressed/intimidated)"). Some verge on lengthy or descriptive but

remain functional (e.g., "(Scottish accent)").

- **Transitions:** Mostly standard (e.g., "SMASH CUT TO:", "FADE TO BLACK."). Right-aligned and capitalized. Use of "CUT TO: LATER" or "CUT TO: MOMENTS LATER" is slightly unconventional but clear in context.
- **Other Elements:** Notes like "(Archival footage)" are correctly placed. OMITTED scenes are clearly marked.
- **Proofreading:**
  - The script is **largely free of significant proofreading errors**. Occasional minor issues are present but do not impede readability or detract substantially from a professional presentation.
  - **Typos/Spelling:** Very few noticeable typos. Examples: "customers•" (likely OCR error for period), "a unmarked" (an), "close to the this entrance" (to this), "wide-collard" (wide-collared), "It this" (Is this), "Deville" (DeVille), "AREAL SHOTS" (AERIAL), "RONNA BARRETT" (appears once, likely typo for RONA BARRETT used elsewhere). "Executor" might be intended instead of "executioner" regarding the trust document.
  - **Grammar:** Generally strong. Some instances of comma splices (e.g., "DOJ guy, he's running this show," "Who has it, who doesn't."). Colloquial grammar often used effectively within dialogue (e.g., "stinks the way herring stinks", "You never seen before"). Possessive use mostly correct, minor slip noted ("Donald persistence" vs. Donald's).
  - **Consistency:** Generally consistent. Hyphenation of "real-estate" varies slightly. Use of capitalization in action lines is mostly consistent. Offensive language (slurs, vulgarity) appears consistently and intentionally applied for character/period authenticity (e.g., "spicks", "negroes", "communist cunt", "greasy wop", "pinko kikes", frequent vulgarity).
  - **Clarity:** Descriptions and action lines are clear and concise. Formatting choices generally support readability.