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Who is Roy Cohn?

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson



Whereâ??s My Roy Cohn?

Matt Tyrnauer (*Valentino: The Last Emperor*, *Studio 54*, *Scotty and the Secret History of Hollywood*, *Citizen Jane: Battle for the City*) opened his latest work, *Whereâ??s my Roy Cohn?* at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival, Friday, January 25th, 2019. *Whereâ??s my Roy Cohn?* is a documentary and premiered in the Sundance U.S. Documentary Competition. Utilizing traditional documentary techniques of voice-over narration, direct interviews, archival footage and photographic stills, Trynauer

exposes Cohnâ??s malign influence and contextualizes him as a modern Machiavelli who influences our country today at the highest level.

Cohn first came into the public eye as an assistant to J. Edgar Hoover and handled the prosecution of Julius and Ethyl Rosenberg, a Jewish couple arrested, tried, convicted and executed for spying for Russia and securing Manhattan Project documents for the Russian government. Cohn, a twenty-three-year-old fast-rising attorney, claimed to have not only persuaded the presiding judge, Irving Kaufman, to impose the death penalty but also to have had Judge Irving assigned the case. Cohnâ??s reward for the Rosenberg execution was an appointment as special counsel to the 1950â??s, US Senatorial demagogue, Joseph McCarthy.

Tyrnauer provides compelling evidence Cohn was responsible for much of McCarthyâ??s demagoguery and rise to power. Soon, however, Cohn would cause his own and McCarthyâ??s fall from grace. During the Army-McCarthy hearings, direct questioning revealed Cohn had a â??special relationshipâ?• with G. David Schine and pressured the U.S. Army to give Schine preferential treatment. Cohn would resign after he was humiliated and pummeled with homophobic comments during the televised hearings. Cohn claimed everybody wanted him to stay on. According to those who worked with Cohn, this was not the case.

From here, Cohn would go onto be the personification of the dark arts of 20th-century American politics. Cohn became a mover and shaker of dubious means. He fluffed his persona despite inflicting financial losses on his clients and family. Trynauer shockingly unearths the origins of the seditious right wingâ??s ascent, revealing how Cohn, a deeply troubled master manipulator, has shaped our current political world. Cohn persistently defended himself by attacking his adversaries. Moreover, Cohn utilized the press to generate sensational public sympathy for his plight.

Cohn had refined his strategy well over the years as the primary press leaker during his McCarthy days gaining the friendship of the formidable press magnate, Walter Winchell, and a cadre of ambitious reporters. How Cohn had been able to pressure the judiciary was less clear. To me, his political clout emanated from his wide social circle of wealthy, influential friends. Cohn was known for throwing lavish parties and hobnobbed with almost every imaginable socialite of the day including then artist, Andy Warhol, and re-emerged as a New York power broker, mafia consigliere, white-collar criminal, and, eventually, the mentor of Donald J. Trump.

Following Cohnâ??s lead, Trump began his flamboyant rise first on Cohnâ??s shoulders and then his back. Eventually, Trump became the master of personal attacks, hyperbole, sensationalism, and utilizing the press to get out in front of the story. The similarities are uncanny and for me to say the likeness of these character trajectories are disturbing would be an understatement. One of the most powerful and politically revealing films of the festival.

Highly recommended and coming to a screen near you as Director/Writer Matt Trynauer announced during the Q & A that he received a text message informing him, *Whereâ??s My Roy Cohn?* had been bought by Sony Classic Pictures.

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Director Matt Trynauer answers questions during a Q & A after screening his *Whereâ??s My Roy Co*

*As of December 6, 2020, *Whereâ??s My Roy Cohn* is available streaming.

Category

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Tags

1. Where's My Roy Cohn?

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