

## Where's My Roy Cohn?

While many Americans now feel compelled to follow the exploits of a New York City hustler with a take-no-prisoners style, a never-apologize attitude, and a tenuous connection to the truth, they can shift from current political turmoil to discover (or re-discover) the adventures of a comparable figure from last century: Roy M. Cohn, the “killer lawyer” who personified the legal con-man for decades, is the subject of the documentary “Where’s My Roy Cohn?” which outlines his life and labor in grim, yet fascinating detail

Produced and directed by journalist Matt Ryrnauer, the film is mostly chronological, beginning with Cohn’s origins as a single, pampered child of well-off but loveless Jewish parents who left him denying his own heritage and believing only in himself. It also chronicles a lifetime of Cohn’s malfeasance: conniving with a judge to send Julius and Ethel Rosenberg to the electric chair; being chief aide to Senator Joseph McCarthy’s anti-Communist witch hunt; abetting J. Edgar Hoover and McCarthy’s crusade to hound homosexuals out of government; finagling the law to favor American mafiosos; helping the family Trump on housing discrimination charges, and misappropriating his own clients’ funds.

All this while living the Manhattan high life of wealth, celebrity, and scandal with friends from slinky socialites through Donald Trump to Catholic cardinals. Through it all, Cohn not only was a Jew-hater but a gay-basher, never admitting his homosexuality (and his fatal AIDS diagnosis) even until his death in 1986.

Luckily for Ryrnauer, he has tons of film footage on the media-obsessed Cohn, and all aspects of his career are covered in photos and clips (kudos to the film’s editors). Some of the most telling stem from the landmark Army-McCarthy hearings which were a live TV phenomenon in 1957, and much else is revealed by a parade of interviews and television appearances of an indefatigable Cohn, always the caustic, confident defender of himself.

The documentary also features pertinent talking heads to outline the nature of the man. Among them are New Yorker magazine media chronicler Ken Auletta, Republican fixer Roger Stone, Cohn’s longtime lover, Wallace Adams, and his younger cousin, Marcus Cohn, who states: “He loved power and got used to using power early in his career.”

A dark, nasty skein of ruthlessness has always run through American life, and Roy Cohn stoked that tradition to a fare-thee-well.  
*(The film, in black-and-white and color, runs 97 mins. and is rated “PG-13”).*

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