

# **The Making of Donald Trump Study Guide**

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## Summary

The following version of this book was used to create this guide: Johnston, David Cay. *The Making of Donald Trump*. Melville House Publishing, 2016, Kindle AZW file.

David Cay Johnston is a Pulitzer Prize winning investigative journalist with decades of experience. Years ago, he became interested in casinos and moved to Atlantic City to begin a series of stories about them. There, he met Donald Trump for the first time. Johnston said his first impression of Trump was that he was a modern-day P.T. Barnum. Since then, Johnston has investigated Trump on a deep professional and personal level, leading to this book. Johnston says he chose to release the book as voters were preparing for the 2016 General Election in the hope that voters would use it to further their education about one of the two main contenders for United States President. Johnston makes it obvious that he does not believe Trump is the best candidate, but he also does not endorse Trump's opponent, Hillary Clinton.

Johnston describes Trump's background, including his grandfather's arrival in America and how he began to amass the money that would eventually be turned into the Trump fortune. Trump's older brother, Fred Jr., died before their father, Fred Sr. When Fred Jr.'s family found out they would not receive the share of the estate as they had expected, they sued for the inheritance that they believed would have been given to Fred Jr., if he had survived. Meanwhile, Fred Jr.'s grandson was born critically ill in need of lifelong medical care. In retaliation for the lawsuit against his father's estate, Donald Trump withdrew medical insurance for the infant. The issue was later settled in court but the settlement was sealed from public view.

Johnston gives that episode as one example of Trump's vengeful nature. The author also talks about Trump's tendency to threaten a lawsuit against anyone who refuses to do as Trump says and Trump's tendency to walk out of anything – including live interviews – if he cannot control the conversation. Johnston points out that these traits are not acceptable for a president who cannot bully people into doing what he wants or walk out on Congress if lawmakers do not agree with him.

Johnston also covers some of Trump's business dealings, including hiring illegal Polish workers for a major demolition project and lending his name to projects to trick people into believing he was the developer. In the past, Trump had dealings with known criminals, including some who had ties to the mob. Johnston alleges that Trump has used fictional names to plant media stories about himself and has told outright lies about his personal relationships. He has also arranged for a series of elite awards to his own facilities from a hospitality organization, all while holding a seat on that organization's board. All the while, Trump has used his name and his wealth to avoid formal charges and straightforward investigations.

- There are multiple people named Trump mentioned in the book, especially in chapters that focus on family relationships. Donald Trump is the only person who is referred to by

last name only. For the sake of clarity, all others are referred to by first name, or by first and last.



# Introduction, Chapters 1-2

## Summary

In the Introduction, the author, David Cay Johnston, explains his own background and how he came to meet Donald Trump for the first time. Johnston describes himself as a “rogue” in the newsroom but that his superiors allowed him that freedom because he was an asset to the newspapers where he worked. He won a Pulitzer Prize for his work on exposing tax loopholes. He became interested in casinos, applied for a job at The Philadelphia Inquirer and moved to Atlantic City where he soon met Trump, all about 30 years before Johnston wrote this book. Johnston said his first impression of Trump was that he was a “modern-day P.T. Barnum.” Johnston watched as Trump ran multiple campaigns for president, making a profit for himself along the way by using his private jet and centering campaign stops around paid speaking engagements.

Johnston says he was the one who first reported that Trump was not the billionaire he claimed to be, and that his net worth was actually in the negative. Johnston promises that the reader will learn more about many of these issues in the body of the book. Johnston's purpose for the book is to present the truth about Trump, as Johnston knows it. He did not choose to write about Hillary Clinton, Trump's opponent in the 2016 Presidential campaign, because he has never met Clinton. He did, however, write about the Clinton's overpaying income tax, as part of a larger article about income taxes, and that Clinton was angry with him over that article.

Johnston closes the prologue by saying that the reader should also remember that Trump made the announcement in 2015 in front of a large crowd, and that some of those were paid actors.

Chapter 1, “Family History,” opens with Johnston talking about the Trump's heritage. The family is from Germany and the name was originally Drumpf. Though the word “trump” can mean triumph, such as a trump card, it can also be “to deceive or cheat,” as in the term “trumped up charges” (Location 145). Donald Trump's father is Fred, and his grandfather's name is Friedrich. Friedrich was the first of the family line in America and he left Germany to avoid military service. He made money, but was ambitious for more. He moved around. At one time he had a restaurant that was also a bordello, and he built it on property he did not own. He returned briefly to Germany, a wealthy man, and married a young German woman. They returned to America but his wife hated it. They returned to Germany but were ordered out because of Friedrich's lack of military service. He operated shops that could have been gathering places for the “criminal element” of New York City of that time. Friedrich died of flu in 1918.

Friedrich established American traditions for his family but “voting was not among them” (Location 159). Trump did not vote in the 2002 general election, nor did he vote in any Republican Primary election between 1989 and when he “voted for himself” in 2016 (Location 160). Trump's son and daughter, Eric and Ivanka, were registered as



Independent and were not allowed to vote in the Republican Primary in 2016, though their father was on the ballot.

Chapter 2 is titled “Family Values.” Fred was 12 when his father died in 1918. He was arrested at age 21 in Queens during a riot involving police and Ku Klux Klan members. Charges against all those arrested were dropped. When a reporter asked Trump about it, he said there were no charges, meaning it should never have become an issue. Trump said he did not believe his father was involved, and that they never talked about it.

Fred opened a self-service grocery store, cutting costs by cutting the number of clerks, and sold it for a profit. He built apartments, cashing in on the FHA program. He was accused of coming out with \$4 million of federal money, but explained it away and avoided charges. His explanations included that he had acted as his own contractor, gotten building materials cheaper than expected, and that it was not actually profit “because he had not taken any of that money out of the bank” (Location 250).

Donald Trump and his brothers were taught about the family business by working as laborers, sweeping, emptying the coins from washing machines, and making minor repairs. Trump's older brother, Fred Jr., was not on the same page with their father. He became a pilot, married, divorced, and struggled with alcohol. That put Donald Trump in position to become the second-in-command. Fred sent Donald Trump to military school to learn discipline after the younger Trump bullied both children and adults. Trump got multiple waivers for military service in Vietnam and a doctor wrote him a medical excuse based on a spur on his foot, though Trump later could not remember which foot. Trump was enrolled in Fordham College and then at the University of Pennsylvania. He did not attend classes but was awarded a bachelor of science degree in economics. When he was asked a question about his net present value, a concept all finance graduates should know, he answered with incomprehensible babble.

## Analysis

The author's bias can be seen throughout the book. He does not offer favorable information about Trump and that could mean that he distorts the truth or that he only reports the negative aspects of Trump, his life, and his family. It could also be that the author has found nothing positive to report. As with all biographies of this nature, the reader has to evaluate the author and decide whether his words are honest.

The author, David Cay Johnston, has written articles about taxes, including the tax loopholes, to the point that he is considered an authority on the issue. One of those articles was about Hillary Clinton and the fact that the Clintons paid a large fee for tax preparation and still overpaid on income tax. Clinton was angry with him over that article. Johnston may be saying that to ensure that readers do not mistake him for a Clinton supporter. He goes on to say that he wrote about Trump because he knows Trump, and that he had never met the Clintons.



Some readers may be put off by the first chapter of the book in which Johnston writes about Trump's family. The chapter opens with Johnston talking about the meaning of the word "trump," as if Donald Trump had a choice about what his name should be. The reader also learns about Trump's grandfather in this chapter, and his less-than-honest business practices. These seem more like personal attacks than about Trump as a political candidate, but it is left to the reader to decide.

## **Vocabulary**

investigative, rogue, authority, manipulations, prominent, variation, panoply, chaotic



# Chapters 3-5

## Summary

Chapter 3 is titled "Personal Values." Trump was the motivational speaker in Colorado in 2005. He said he was paid a lot for his time but he spoke without even creating a rough outline of things to cover. He rambled about the inefficiency of an airport and made personal attacks on a former employee, whom Trump said was disloyal to him. His advice was to get revenge and to be paranoid in business dealings. Some attendees later said his advice was counter-productive.

Trump had taken his own advice about revenge. He had fired that disloyal employee when she refused to ask a favor on Trump's behalf to a friend in a position of power. When people asked Trump for a reference on the woman later, he was brutal in his negativity. That attitude also carried over to actress Rosie O'Donnell, who had called Trump "a snake-oil salesman" (Location 368). Trump spoke out against O'Donnell, calling her names that included "pig" and deriding her sexual preferences (Location 369). Trump repeated that advice in his book, *Think Big*. There, he said it was not traditional advice, but was meant for real life.

Chapter four, "A Sickly Child," begins with the death of Fred Trump at age 93 in 1999. Fred's grandson, Fred Trump III, described his grandfather in glowing terms. The following day, Fred Trump III's wife, Lisa, gave birth to a son, William, who began having seizures within the first two days of his life. The family was insured by a Trump-owned company and the family lawyer instructed the insurance company to pay for everything related to the infant's care, whether it would have normally been covered or not.

Then Fred Sr's will was entered into probate. He left a comparatively small amount to the family of his oldest child, Fred Trump, Jr., who had died before Fred Sr. Fred Jr.'s family filed a lawsuit demanding the share they expected their father to inherit. Donald, the oldest surviving son, ordered the insurance company to stop paying out for William. A judge ordered insurance coverage continued until the question of inheritance was solved. The issue played out in the media. Donald Trump justified his action, saying Fred Jr.'s family caused it with their lawsuit. He said the issue would have been different if Fred III had asked for a settlement without filing a lawsuit. The issue was eventually settled for an undisclosed amount. William survived but developed cerebral palsy after the series of seizures.

In Chapter five, "Making Friends," Trump began to move in Manhattan circles. He joined the club named Le Club where he met powerful people and beautiful women. Trump was soon associating with attorney Roy Cohn. Cohn represented Senator Joseph McCarthy in a high-profile case. Trump knew from the beginning that Cohn was not a scrupulous man.





The Federal Government sued the Trumps for discriminatory practices at their rental properties. Non-whites were routinely turned away from specific properties that were all-white and steered toward other properties that were mostly minority. Trump, with Cohn's services, filed a countersuit, alleging that the government had defamed the family. The judge dismissed the countersuit. Though Trump hated the idea of settling, he did so and acted under government oversight for a period of time. To the media, he said the government had failed to prove its case, and that Trump did not admit anything wrong. This was technically true, since the case settled before there was a trial with a guilty verdict. Trump's relationship with Cohn continued and Trump cited the attributes he appreciated, including loyalty above integrity, and the fact that Cohn would fight for Trump regardless of his personal feelings about an issue.

## Analysis

Trump's very public debate with Rosie O'Donnell became the subject of media attention, and Trump carried it on far longer than most people felt was appropriate. He made personal, hateful attacks on O'Donnell, putting himself in a poor light and making it appear that he lacked the ability to control himself or his words in public. It is interesting to consider this anecdote in light of the 2016 Presidential election campaign. At the time of the writing of this study guide, Trump is the Republican nominee for President; his insulting remarks have become an early issue for the campaign. His debate with O'Donnell also provides one of many examples of a recurring theme, Trump's image.

The author ties the details of the fight over Fred Trump, Sr.'s will to Donald Trump's decision to cut off insurance for his gravely ill great-nephew, indicating that Donald Trump took that step as revenge against the lawsuit. Trump publicly said that he was angry because the other members of the family had sued Fred Sr. This fits in with his attitude in the previous chapter, when Trump talked about the fact that business people should be ruthless and should get revenge whenever someone wrongs them. That attitude seems cold and heartless in any situation, but when it applies to an infant whose very life depends on a high level of medical care, the attitude becomes reprehensible. Trump did point out that William's family – as part of the Trump empire – was not destitute. But the insurance rules at that time were strict with regard to new coverage and a new insurance company would probably balk at being forced to cover an infant with a life-long disability. Trump's reaction is an example of his tendency to seek revenge, which is one of the book's themes.

Trump's attitude about the ruling on the discriminatory renting practices demonstrates the lack of respect he had for the court's authority. He spun the result of the lawsuit to the press so that it appeared he had done nothing wrong. That is one of many examples Johnston gives of Trump's attitude that he is above the law.

Johnston had worked in the newspaper field for about 50 years at the time he wrote this book. Journalists are prohibited from making comments that are not founded in fact, but Johnston clearly did not treat this book as he would have a reporting assignment. He cited Trump as having said that loyalty was a more important trait than integrity.



Johnston then went on to say that this is the kind of attitude expected from mobsters and dictators. That comment is Johnston's opinion. While most readers will find it to be true, Johnston's intimation is that Trump was either a mobster or a dictator, and he does not cite sources as would be expected in traditional news reporting.

## Vocabulary

gratuitously, expletive, functionality, fleece, prudent, degenerate, significance, invocation, allude, empire, anticipated, contemplating, litigation, disinherited, paternal, pique



## Chapters 6-8

### Summary

Chapter 6 is “Trump’s Most Important Deals” and Johnston details several of Trump’s enterprises, including his application for a casino license. The licensing process was lengthy and arduous, but Trump had New Jersey’s Attorney General John Degnan come to a meeting in which Trump hinted that he would take his plans for a casino to New York if he did not get quick approval. Knowing that Trump had friends there and that Trump could hamper Degnan’s bid for governor, he pledged that the process would be completed in less than six months.

The rules for opening a casino were stringent. Trump was approved in five months, despite having obviously lied. On the application, Trump was also supposed to disclose any lawsuits, but he denied having any, though some had been very public.

The casino license required that Trump be an upstanding citizen, but he had ties to known mobsters. He purchased concrete for extensive building projects at a time when mob-run businesses were increasing concrete prices and were prone to strikes. Trump’s concrete came from S&A Concrete, “secretly owned” by Anthony Salerno and Paul Castellano, both high in the Mafia hierarchy (Location 650). Cohn was the attorney for Trump, Salerno, and Castellano, and the concrete was delivered on time to the Trump projects, despite a strike in 1982.

When Trump Tower was complete, a woman with no obvious income became one of the tenants. John Cody, known for racketeering, was the woman’s frequent guest. After Cody was convicted, Trump sued the woman for “alteration work” (Location 668). She countersued, alleging that Trump had taken kickbacks. Trump settled for half a million dollars. Johnston described additional shady dealings and corrupt business partners.

Chapter 7 is titled “A Great Lawsuit.” Trump purchased the New Jersey Giants, a football team in the newly-formed United States Football League in 1983. David Dixon was one of the USFL founders and he had a solid plan to make the teams into contenders with the NFL teams. For example, they played in the spring to keep from competing with the NFL for fans. Trump soon led a lawsuit against the NFL for monopolizing the business by having all three of the major networks televising NFL games. He hoped that the lawsuit would force a merger between the two groups. Weeks of testimony ended with a jury finding that the NFL had met the criteria for monopolizing the business by having contracts with the three major networks, but the jury awarded the USFL only one dollar as a settlement. The USFL soon came to an end.

During the USFL’s existence, Trump had Lauded Mike Tollin, saying he had a bright future and career ahead. Years after that lawsuit, Tollin hosted an ESPN documentary about the short-lived USFL. At one moment during the interview, Trump said that his experience was the USFL was “fun” and that a “great lawsuit” came from that



experience (Location 777). Tollin asked Trump if the USFL might have survived if Trump had not led the charge for the lawsuit. Trump said the league would have been “small potatoes” (Location 775). Trump then removed his microphone and left the interview. Tollin sent Trump a courtesy copy of the documentary before it aired and Trump sent back a scathing reply.

Johnston concludes the chapter with concerns about Trump's response. He said Trump has a history of walking out if someone disagrees with him – a luxury that exists in business but does not exist if the President of the United States disagrees with Congress or the Supreme Court.

Chapter 8 is titled “Showing Mercy.” Trump had known associations with a man named Joseph Weichselbaum. Weichselbaum and his brother had a helicopter business and Trump used them as a shuttle service. The brothers went bankrupt multiple times but Trump continued his patronage with some \$180,000 in monthly business. Even after Weichselbaum no longer had the helicopter business, When Weichselbaum was indicted on drug charges, he agreed to plead guilty to one of the 18 charges against him. The case was transferred out of Cincinnati for sentencing. Johnston noted it seemed reasonable for the case to go to Florida or New York because of details in the case, but it was transferred to New Jersey where Trump's older sister, Judge Maryanne Trump Barry, was assigned the case. She recused herself and Judge Harold A. Ackerman took the case. Donald Trump wrote a letter asking for leniency against Weichselbaum, who got three years for his crimes, a much shorter sentence than others indicted in the same case.

Johnston talks at length about the Division of Gaming Enforcement. The rules for operating a casino were very strict and Trump had violated many of them, but the DGE never removed Trump's license and performed only cursory inspections into Trump's affairs. Trump telephoned Johnston in 2016 when Johnston was investigating Trump's “ties to various criminals” (Location 890). Trump said he did not remember writing a letter about Weichselbaum and threatened to sue Johnston if he “didn't like what I was about to publish.” Johnston said he was surprised by that comment because Trump was already a public figure, which would make it difficult for Trump to prove wrongdoing. He says Trump should also have known by that time that Johnston was not easily intimidated.

## Analysis

While the reader is to assume that Johnston relates facts in this book, he leaves some things unexplained. For example, he states that Anthony Salerno and Paul Castellano, both high in the Mafia hierarchy “secretly owned” S&A Concrete (Location 650). Johnston does not explain how Trump would have known that Salerno and Castellano were members of the mafia or how Trump would have known they were the owners of the company. The three men had the same attorney and reports indicated Salerno and Trump met at Cohen's home, but he does not claim to know what the men talked about or whether it was a chance encounter.



Trump's connections with mobsters and other criminals is one of Johnston's recurring messages. Trump was able to get a casino license even though associating with these criminals should have been enough to eliminate him as a casino owner. His ability to skirt the requirements is one of several examples of one of the book's themes.

Trump was already a public figure by 2016 when he threatened to sue Johnston over an article Johnston was writing. The journalistic rules about public figures make it difficult for a public figure to win a lawsuit against a journalist. The journalist basically has to have exhibited a disregard for the truth and a malicious attempt to defame the person. Donald Trump would have known this but it could be that he looked forward to another lawsuit or that he just hoped to frighten Johnston into backing off. Johnston's attitude was that Trump did not frighten him. Johnston obviously considers himself a reputable journalist and has cited his years at the job and his awards, including a Pulitzer Prize. Most public and political figures are conscious of the need to be respectful and careful in their dealings with journalists. Most care what journalists write and think of them, but Trump obviously does not.

## Vocabulary

nascent, gaudy, implicitly, monopoly, stodgy, antitrust, arcane, chastised, rebuke, unsavory, conscientious, undisclosed, credible, contrast, characterized

# Chapters 9-11

## Summary

In Chapter 9, “Polish Brigade,” Trump planned to build Trump Tower on the property that had been occupied by Bonwit Teller, an upscale department store that had been in business for decades. The front of the building had what Johnston called “priceless examples of the Art Deco era: two naked women with flowing scarves, dancers perhaps, cut in limestone” (Location 906). When Trump made plans to demolish the building, he agreed to save specific pieces of the facade, if it was economically feasible. Those pieces disappeared and Trump offered several explanations, including that the cost was prohibitive and that the pieces were actually worthless, despite other opinions to the contrary.

In addition, Trump used Polish workers rather than a union contractor for the demolition. Some of these workers were illegal immigrants and they worked without basic safety equipment, including hard hats. Trump was later embroiled in a lawsuit alleging that he did not pay a fair wage to workers, that they worked long hours and were sometimes not paid at all, and that he did not keep payroll records or pay in taxes on their wages. There was also no record of any city inspector visiting the demolition site.

Chapter 10 is titled “Feelings and Net Worth.” Johnston said Trump has estimated his new worth at various amounts, with totals changing dramatically from one day to another. In 1990, he gave numbers between three billion and five billion. That same year, Trump's bankers presented a report that he had a negative net worth of some \$300 million. In 2015, just prior to the Republican presidential nomination, Trump gave equally varying figures, ranging from \$8.7 billion to \$11 billion. In a court hearing, Trump testified that his figures changed based on specific criteria that included markets and even Trump's own attitude at a given moment. He said that his own feelings about himself and his environment affected his new worth.

Trump's attitude about value was also seen in his dealings for an extensive Florida property. Trump borrowed \$10 million from Chase Manhattan with the agreement that the debt would not be publicly recorded as long as Trump made the payments on time. In one of his books, Trump said he paid cash for the property. When tax assessors said the property was worth \$11 million, Trump argued that they had over-estimated its value. Several banks soon discovered that Trump had multiple off-the-record loans, meaning he had significant debt that had not been considered when each of them made his loan.

As part of his presidential candidacy, Trump's financial report shows similar inconsistencies. He had argued with tax authorities that one of his properties should be valued at \$1 million, but valued that same property at \$50 million on his presidential financial report.



Chapter 11 is titled “Government Rescues Trump.” Johnston reviews Trump's mortgage-heavy lifestyle and business practices. The Department of Gaming Enforcement often prosecuted minor participants in the casinos, but never looked seriously at Trump's practices. The rules for a casino owner required that he be able to pay his debts on time, even if that meant taking out new loans to pay off old ones. It was clear that Trump was not able to meet that requirement but the DGE did not pursue Trump until a series of banks did. When those banks set out to get some of their money back from Trump, the DGE stepped up to investigate. However, the majority of the banks worked out a deal and the DGE's government-appointed board members worked out a deal to let Trump continue his casino operations. He paid back less than he actually owed, and years later talked about that as a standard business practice. He said he sometimes borrowed knowing that he would “restructure.” The deal granted Trump an “allowance” of \$450,000 a month.

Johnston writes that Trump refused to let lawyers utter the word “bankruptcy” during that hearing, but had filed multiple bankruptcies himself. When Johnston wrote a story about the fact that Trump was on the verge of losing everything, other reporters covering the trial were surprised. Because the lawyers had carefully avoided the word bankruptcy, many other reporters did not pick up on the situation. They had repeated what the lawyers said without understanding what the words really meant. Johnston completed the chapter by saying that Trump would have “drowned in a sea of red ink” if the government had not “saved him by taking his side against his bankers” (Location 1200).

## Analysis

Johnston uses the word “consigliere” to describe Roy Cohn's role in the demolition of the Bonwit Teller department store. Cohn was Trump's lawyer and Trump described him as a close friend and even a mentor. The term “consigliere” specifically refers to crime bosses. Johnston repeatedly points out that the people who surrounded Trump and who participated heavily in his business enterprises were criminals themselves.

The issue of Trump's worth became a major point with Johnston, who delved deeply into Trump's finances over a long period of time. Johnston pointed out Trump's ridiculous statement, that his actual value varied depending on factors that included his own state of mind. He cited the terrorist attacks on New York as a reason for feeling less optimistic, and indicated that actually affected his financial value at that moment. People may have changed buying and spending habits in the months or even years after that attack. That could have changed Trump's net worth, but the author makes it clear that Trump really has no idea what he is worth, or perhaps that he knows and chooses to ignore the actual figures in favor of his own feelings.

Johnston's title of the chapter regarding Trump's bankruptcies and financial trouble at the casinos seems to be an attempt to grab attention. The title hints that the federal government directly gave Trump money. That will hit home with modern-day readers because of the public opinion regarding the bailout money paid to car manufacturers and other government bailouts in recent history. In fact, it was people in government-



appointed positions who sided with Trump and kept him from falling completely into bankruptcy. While those people were representatives of the government, it was not as if the government directly gave Trump money. It is left to the reader to decide whether the government played a role in the situation at all, or if it was personal decisions by the people appointed to those positions.

## Vocabulary

facade, prohibitively, tony, prudence, explicit, dissident, fiduciary, fluctuating, onus, prospect, deeming, reckless, swashbuckling





# Chapters 12-14

## Summary

Chapter 12 is titled “Golf and Taxes.” Trump owned several golf courses, including the Trump National Golf Club Westchester at Briarcliff Manor, near Trump Tower. Trump wrote on his presidential campaign financial statement that the property was worth \$50 million, but he argued with tax assessors and insisted the property was worth less than \$2 million. After newspaper and television stories about the situation, Trump increased his tax value to \$9 million, which was still far below what he had claimed on this presidential financial report.

Trump also bought the 580-acre farm that belonged to John DeLorean, who created the famous car with his name. Trump built a golf course there and used a series of tax loopholes, including a pen for goats to justify the property as agricultural, to drop his property taxes to about \$1,000. In California, he set aside a piece of property as an easement and valued that property high, despite the fact that it was location on fault lines and was not suitable for development anyway.

The Trump International Hotel and Tower is the tallest building in Chicago. Trump has sold some individual condominiums in the building but claims he owns the rest. With help from a lawyer, he reduced his taxes on that building. The building is on the less attractive side of the river and the retail space in the building was never finished. It seems incredible, Johnston notes, considering Trump's experience in business, that he invested so much in a losing proposition.

Chapter 13 is titled “Income Taxes.” Johnston presents information about Trump's taxes, including that he did not owe any income tax in 1984 despite collecting “many millions of dollars” from his various business ventures (Location 1317). In 1978 and 1979, he reported negative earnings, claiming his expenses outweighed his income. In 1979, he reported a negative \$3.4 million. Jack Mitnick was the attorney of record handling Trump's taxes. He was an attorney and a Certified Public Accountant, and he represented Trump on multiple occasions when Trump argued about his taxes. During one of those appeals, a judge demanded to know if Mitnick filed Trump's return. Mitnick agreed that it was his signature on the return, but denied having prepared the tax return. He offered no explanation about how his signature wound up on a copy of the return. Johnston suggested that it would be easy to create by simply using a copier.

Johnston then talks at length about the law that allows taxpayers to use depreciation of existing buildings to offset income. The resulting money could then be used by the taxpayer as investment capital. Johnston pointed out that this was a loophole available to a very small number of Americans.

Chapter 14 is titled “Empty Boxes.” Johnston explains a scam whereby wealthy customers purchased jewelry from Bulgari, an exclusive store on Fifth Avenue. To avoid



paying New York sales tax, the customers indicated they wanted their jewelry shipped to their homes in another state. The jewelry store would ship empty boxes to fulfill the requirement of the law, but the customers took possession of their purchases. Trump was one of several wealthy patrons who participated. Adnan Khashoggi was another. He was an Arabian arms dealer who often “partied” with Trump.

Tax officials discovered the scam and Trump agreed to testify in order to escape prosecution. The fact that Trump was involved in the illegal avoiding of taxes could have been enough for the DGE to revoke his casino license, but officials did not seek that remedy. New York's attorney general, Robert Abrams, did not prosecute any of the buyers, but charged a manager and part owner. Neither served time.

Trump later bought a huge yacht from Khashoggi, avoided paying sales tax on it through what officials called a legitimate loophole, but sold it just a few years later. As was the case with most of his business transactions, the exact purchase price, selling price, and value were never revealed.

Trump and Khashoggi were also the two men named by Spy magazine as the “cheapest rich person in New York” (Location 1465). The magazine created a fake business and sent 58 refund checks for one dollar, 11 cents. The magazine then sent checks for increasingly smaller amounts to everyone who cashed the original checks. Trump and Khashoggi each cashed checks for 13 cents, and were the only two who did.

## Analysis

Johnston sometimes makes claims that seem without merit, and he does not always explain these. For example, in writing about the value of Trump's golf courses, Johnston talks about the neighbors' reactions when Trump appealed the value assessed for his taxes on the golf course in Briarcliff Manor. He says they were “annoyed” because they would “have to make up for the reduced tax bill he'd receive” (Location 1220).

Traditionally, counties assign value to property and the owners then pay property tax. Johnston hints that Briarcliff has to collect a specific amount of taxes, which is not how most states assign property taxes. It could be that Briarcliff, as an exclusive neighborhood, is operating on some other tax platform, but Johnston does not explain. This is one of many instances in which the reader is expected to accept what Johnston says as truth without a thorough explanation.

Johnston continually makes references that some readers may see as reaching for connections. He talks about Adnan Khashoggi, the Arabian man who was believed to be an arms dealer and who was a known social associate of Trump's. That much of the association can probably be accepted at face value. Then Johnston says that Khashoggi owned an apartment at Olympic Tower. That building, a short distance from the Trump Tower, “was one of only two buildings in Manhattan that allowed apartments to be owned in the name of untraceable corporations, a form of anonymous wealth” (Location 1427). Trump Tower was the other building that allowed that practice. The fact that there was another seems to indicate that the practice was not illegal and that



Johnston only includes that piece of information as a means of tying Trump to the arms dealer.

Johnston berates Trump for having cashed checks for 13 cents when a satirical magazine created a fake company and issued tiny refunds as part of a story. Johnston makes it sound as if Trump personally cashed the checks, or decided to cash them. It is ridiculous to think that Trump has his hands on the daily business to the point of making decisions about checks of that amount. Some people would have business practices set up that would preclude handling checks of such small amounts, simply because of the paperwork involved, but there is nothing unethical or illegal about cashing tiny checks. It may also appeal to some people as a frugal habit, though it is badly out of sync with many of Trump's other business habits.

## Vocabulary

eponymous, parcels, moguls, relish, litigation, erroneous, egregiously, voided, squeamishness, lucrative, equivalent, modest, disclosure



# Chapters 15-17

## Summary

Chapter 15 is titled “Better than Harvard.” Michael Sexton, pitched the idea to use Trump’s name in a series of online continuing education courses for realtors. Trump took the idea to the next step and, with Sexton at the helm, opened the Trump University. Education officials eventually forced him to change the name because the word “university” could not be used for any program in New York unless the New York Department of Education had authorized it. Trump and Sexton did not change the name until five years later, when the program became the Trump Entrepreneur Initiative.

In the first promotional video Trump taped in 2005, he made outlandish promises, including that he would personally choose the best people to serve on the faculty. It was later proven that he did not do that, and that the majority of the staff were completely untrained with no expertise to share with students. Under oath later, Trump said he did not know any of the educators hired or the program, making it clear he had not personally chosen them. He also testified that he did not know if Sexton was qualified to run the program. Trump also promised the program would “teach you better than the business schools,” and went on to say that he had attended the “best” of those schools (Location 1502).

Trump collected about \$40 million from students of his program, but a few sued him for fraud. Consumer protection agents in Texas attended some seminars and reported that the sessions were high-pressure sales sessions in which Trump’s representatives urged students to attend more sessions and to engage in unscrupulous business practices. As a final blow, the classes were touted as continuing education classes, but realtor organizations never approved them as such. Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott declined to sue Trump and later endorsed Trump in his bid for the presidency. In addition, Trump donated to Abbott’s run for governor.

Florida Attorney General Pan Bondi launched an investigation but dropped it after Trump donated \$25,000 to her reelection campaign from Trump’s private foundation, a practice prohibited by Congress. Johnston wrote that this could have been cause for felony charges for both Trump and Bondi. Trump’s spokespeople later insisted that they had gotten a request for a donation to Bondi’s campaign, which was named And Justice for All, and created records that indicated they had donated to a different organization by a similar name. Despite these situations, Trump berated United States Attorney General Loretta Lynch and former president Bill Clinton because they talked during a “chance encounter” at an airport while the FBI was investigating Hillary Clinton (Location 1564).

Trump was also sued in California. There, he battled a judge who turned over court documents to members of the media who requested them. Trump went on the attack, saying the judge had a Mexican heritage and that he was against Trump because



Trump had pledged to build a wall separating Mexico from the United States. The judge was born and educated in the United States.

Chapter 16 is titled “Trump Charities.” Trump offered a significant donation to Liberty House, a charity for veterans in New Hampshire, but the director refused to attend a Trump political rally to collect the money, citing that it was “illegal for charities to participate in partisan politics” (Location 1626). Later, someone who lived at Trump Tower made good on the donation but Trump never donated the money.

Trump declared that all money raised at a political event in Iowa would be donated to charities. He announced that donors had pledged \$six million. The charities did not receive the donations until journalists questioned the whereabouts of the money, four months later. Trump then donated \$5.6 million. He said that \$1 million of that money was his own, and that some donors had not fulfilled their pledges.

Trump and Milton-Bradley partnered to make the Trump board game, very much like Monopoly. Trump pledged his royalties to charity, which Milton-Bradley probably hoped would increase sales. Trump later said he earned \$808,000, and that the money was given to the Donald J. Trump Foundation. Johnston said Trump entered into a “deal with banks to avoid bankruptcy” about a year after the game was released (Location 1659). That deal included a limit of \$100,000 for charities. Johnston says that about that same time, he contacted many charities but found none listing Trump among their donors. Another reporter, David Fahrenthold, tried again some 20 years later and found only one donation from Trump - \$10,000 to the New York City Police Athletic League. Tax filings indicate that Trump has given only \$30,000 to the Trump Foundation, not the foundation's largest donor by far.

Johnston also says that Trump does not properly vet the charities he supports. In 2015, Trump refused to participate in a Republican debate because of the host. He spoke from the Battleship Iowa in Long Beach, California, and lauded the Veterans for a Strong America for their sponsorship when their nonprofit status had actually been revoked. He talked about the “hundreds of thousands” of members (Location 1685). Johnston said that there were actually two related groups, and that one of them was a “dark money political group” that is “enabling money from undisclosed sources to influence elections” (Location 1686).

Chapter 17 is titled “Imaginary Friends.” Johnston claims that Trump uses the name John Baron or John Barron and invents titles for himself within the Trump organization, then uses that identity to speak directly to reporters and others about Trump. Baron answered questions about the demolition of the Bonwit-Teller building and gave false information about the New Jersey Generals football team. In some cases, Trump then verified whatever “Baron” had said. Trump also instigated stories about his personal life, claiming to be Baron.

Trump, claiming to be Baron, threatened a lawyer involved in the case of the unpaid Polish workers. Trump admitted that he had used the name John Baron during a court hearing, but said he was not the person who called the lawyer. In another situation,



Trump claimed to be Baron to threaten a woman who made a documentary film about Trump. Trump's threats ensured that television stations showed the documentary only twice before refusing to risk a run-in with Trump. When some journalists learned about John Baron, Trump began to use the name John Miller.

## Analysis

There is a confusing passage in the first chapter of this section. Johnston writes that Trump had claimed to have “watched on television as thousands of Muslims in New Jersey cheered while the Twin Towers burned. No videotape, photograph, or police report has ever been found to support this memory” (Location 1496). Johnston seems to be questioning whether Trump was watching television but he in fact must be questioning that there was televised coverage of Muslims who were cheering as the Twin Towers collapsed. This lack of clarity appears in several instances throughout the book and the casual reader may be confused by these passages.

Johnston makes the point again that Trump was enrolled for two years in Wharton School at Penn State, but did not actually attend classes there. The college was a four-year university and Trump was only enrolled for two years, indicating again Trump's lack of formal education. When Johnston focuses on charities, he says that Trump has not built any buildings on the Penn State campus bearing his name. Johnston believes that is strange for someone who has such a tendency to put his name on buildings. Johnston goes on to say that Trump's name does not appear on the list of donors for the school.

Johnston talks about the fact that Trump is able to avoid prosecution, possibly by making donations to prosecutors' campaigns. That level of action is seen repeatedly and is one of the book's themes.

## Vocabulary

adjunct, swindlers, brokerage, keen, ludicrous, imperil, taint, prohibit, proprietary, penchant, flaunting



# Chapters 18-21

## Summary

Chapter 18 is titled “Imaginary Lovers.” A news agency reported that Trump had ended his love affair with Marla Maples. People magazine had a reporter contact Trump and received a call back from John Miller who talked at length about Trump's busy life and the number of women he routinely talked to. Miller talked about Carla Bruni, a new woman in Trump's life, claiming she had a wealthy family, and that they had not yet entered into a committed relationship. Bruni later denied the claim and the People reporter figured out that she had been fed false information by Trump himself. Trump later married Marla Maples, despite their on-again, off-again relationship. After Bruni married the French King Nikolai Sarkozy, radio personality Howard Stern asked Trump about Bruni. Trump refused to admit he had faked the relationship but said that he did not want to make an enemy of the French king.

Chapter 19 is titled “Myth Maintenance.” Johnston talks about Trump's extensive work at creating an image of himself and presenting the exact image he wants the public to see. As Trump was nearing the Republican nomination, a tape of him talking to the reporter from People was released. Johnston and some others speculate that Trump released the tape so that he could publicly question whether that was his voice and move the public attention on to something else.

Chapter 20 is called “Collecting Honors.” The American Academy of Hospitality Sciences handed out diamond awards to several Trump businesses, including golf courses and resorts. Trump was chosen for a lifetime distinction award – the only one ever presented by the organization. But Trump was one member of the organization's board. Others have included his son, his daughter, friends, and company employees.

The organization's president is Joseph Cinque, otherwise known as Joey No-Socks or The Preppy Don. He is a known criminal who might have been involved with the mob and drugs. Trump claimed he did not know Cinque, had never attended one of the organization's board meetings, and did not know if other family members or company employees attended meetings. Trump said he did not vet the organization or Cinque, but merely accepted the awards and had them placed on the walls of the appropriate businesses.

Chapter 21 is titled “Who's That?” When Trump was in Colorado in 2005, a reporter interviewed Trump's traveling companion, Felix Satter. Satter made it a point to spell his last name for the reporter. More investigation into Satter's past revealed that his name was really spelled Sater, and that he had been indicted for a \$40 million stock swindle. Sater and two crime families reaped the profits from that scam. Sater later admitted that he had changed the spelling of his name in an effort to keep people from finding out about his past.





Johnston writes that Sater pleaded guilty in the stock case but never served any jail time, probably because he became an informant for the CIA. Trump was closely involved with Sater in a real estate deal but distanced himself once that deal failed.

## Analysis

The reader has to accept that Johnston is telling the truth about Trump using false names to make comments to members of the press if the book is taken at face value and as the sole source of information. However, independent news organizations made similar claims and posted online stories of similar experiences, making the idea more credible. Johnston goes into detail about Trump's image, the methods he used to achieve that public image, and how much work it became to maintain the image over subsequent years.

If Johnston's objective is to make readers understand how completely Trump objectifies women, he makes that point clear in Chapter 18. Johnston says that Trump and Marla Maples had a daughter together and that Trump speculated on television about the child's future breast size. Some readers will find that reprehensible, even more so than his questionable business dealings.

Johnston writes extensively about reporters and news organizations for their lack of understanding and their inability to withstand Trump's threats. Johnston says that Trump has threatened him, but that he refused to be intimidated. Johnston also says that Trump has studied the media and learned to exploit the reporters. Johnston names some reporters who he believes have been duped by Trump, and some readers may interpret that Johnston sounds almost as if he is bragging that he is too smart to have been taken in by Trump. As readers evaluate Johnston's reliability as a biographer, these nuances may make some feel that Johnston wants to put himself in the limelight. Others may readily accept that Johnston was one of the few able to see through Trump's actions.

Johnston tends to meld one chapter into the next by hinting at something in a coming chapter. That tactic is traditionally seen in fiction books when a writer is hoping to keep the reader engaged to the point that he cannot stop reading. In this case, Johnston talked about Joey No-Socks in a previous chapter, then gave details and used that to lead into a promise of other "shady" associates in a coming chapter (Location 1989).

Investors filed lawsuit related to a failed real estate project that involved Trump and Felix Sater. Lawyers for the investors said that the investors put money into the project because they knew it would be a Trump property. In fact, Trump had only lent his name to the project. The investors were also angry that Trump had not "disclosed Sater's criminal connections upfront" (Location 2021). Johnston says that investigating investment partners is a normal part of doing business, especially when there are large amounts of money at stake. It appears that Trump did not reveal that he was not personally involved in the project, which was the main reason investors were angry.



The lawyer took a direct shot at Trump in a statement, which made it sound as if he was questioning the intelligence of his clients. He said, "It's bad enough that they prop up Donald Trump as the developer..." (Location 2021). In the lawsuit, the lawyers indicate that the investors were willing to pay a large price when they believed Trump was directly involved, because he was known to produce quality buildings.

## **Vocabulary**

analysis, exploits, presumptive, tactic, veer, verbal, tangents, equivocation, cusp, scrutinized, stymied, personae



# Chapters 22-24, Epilogue

## Summary

Chapter 22 is titled “Down Mexico Way.” Trump's older daughter and son, Ivanka and Donald, Jr., spent time in California touting a new project. Guests were invited to buy luxury apartments in a soon-to-be-constructed resort a few miles off the California coast. The high-pressure sales included a deposit to hear the formal sales pitch and a five-minute period to decide. Months rocked on and the project never began. Buyers sued and learned that Trump had merely lent his name to the project. He was not a developer. The actual developer settled for about a third of the purchase price. Trump also settled, but the agreement was sealed. In a similar deal, Trump loaned his name to a project in Hawaii. Buyers there found out that his agreement with the developer included the right to remove the Trump name from that building, and to use it on any other building. That meant anyone who bought an apartment just because of the added value of the Trump name might lose that value if Trump put his name on another building in the area.

In Tampa, Trump lent his name to another project. There, he said he was “developing” a building. When the project failed and buyers sued Trump, he said that his use of the word “developing” did not mean he was the developer. “A civil jury agreed” (Location 2173).

Chapter 23 is titled “Trump Beaches a Whale.” A high-stakes Japanese gambler, Akio Kashiwagi, won a great deal of money at the Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino. High-stakes gamblers such as Kashiwagi were called “whales.” He had bankrupted the Diamond Beach Casino, winning \$19 million. Trump wanted to win his money back from Kashiwagi. Trump hired mathematician Jess Marcum to study videos of Kashiwagi. Marcum decided Kashiwagi was not cheating, but he was predictable. He played baccarat and Marcum told Trump that challenging Kashiwagi to a double-or-nothing tournament would win Trump his money back. Kashiwagi arrived with \$6 million and Trump granted another \$6 million in house credit. Kashiwagi was to play until he doubled his stake for a total of \$24 million or lost his entire \$12 million. Marcum knew that the odds were heavily in favor of the house. Kashiwagi played for days, but he began to steadily lose.

Al Glasgow was a former concrete contractor. He was a rough man who had drunk with mob lawyers. At the time of Kashiwagi's second visit, Glasgow was an adviser to Trump. He watched the game and left the casino one evening thinking that there was something wrong with the number of chips on Kashiwagi's table. The next day, he discovered that Kashiwagi's aides had been steadily cashing in chips, walking away with about a half million dollars. Kashiwagi did lose the rest of his stack, but Trump still lost. Kashiwagi was soon tagged as being unable to pay his debts. He was murdered at his home in Japan, apparently by the Japanese version of the mob.



Chapter 24 is titled “Biggest Loser.” Bob Libutti was a compulsive gambler who lost excessively. Trump lured him to the Trump Casino to gamble. Trump employees met his every need. Trump held a birthday party for Libutti's daughter, Edie, and bought her a car. He bought many cars for Libutti, though Libutti never actually took possession. Instead, it was a way for Trump to skirt the law, giving Libutti money. The casino bought the car and gave it to Libutti, but Libutti then sold it back to the dealership. The dealer kept a percentage and gave Libutti the rest in cash, and he promptly kept on gambling. Libutti said that Trump gave him rides in his helicopter, provided anything he needed other than a ride home from the casino, and that Trump even handed him a check in the casino. That check between Trump and Libutti was illegal, but Trump denied it happened. After Libutti lost everything, the gaming commission banned him from entering the casinos at all, claiming that he had connections to known mob members.

In the “Epilogue,” Johnston explains again his motivation for writing the book. He says he wanted voters to be informed about Trump before the 2016 General Election, and encouraged readers to also learn what they can about Trump's presidential opponent, Hillary Clinton. Johnston has been lauded as one of the country's best investigative journalists, and he cites the requirement that journalists check and double check every fact to get at the truth of a subject. He says he included information about Trump's dubious business deals and associations as a means of showing the American public what kind of man they would be voting into the top office in America. He finishes the book by urging readers to gather all the information they can, and then to follow up by going out to vote.

## Analysis

Tibutti was a high-stakes gambler who was known for his heavy losses. Johnston interviewed Tibutti after Tibutti's big losses to Trump. Tibutti claimed that Trump knew Tibutti had an unhealthy addiction to gambling and that Trump took advantage of that. Just as the reader has to evaluate Johnston's reliability, the reader has to evaluate Tibutti's. Tibutti apparently lost a fortune, but not all of it went to Trump. Trump lured him away from playing at another casino in Atlantic City. Tibutti obviously did have an addiction, but the losses may make him a less-than-reliable witness to Trump's practices.

Johnston compares Trump's actions in his casino to those of another casino owner. The other owner has a subtle staff who provide him information about important players, giving him keys to the complimentary rooms for specific guests. He has an easy way about him and is understated in his personal attention to patrons. By contrast, Johnston says that Trump is loud and can never let a patron talk about himself without turning the conversation to Trump's life or accomplishments. Johnston also makes several references to Trump's lack of understanding with regard to the casino business in general. These subjective statements are partly backed up with Johnston's facts in the stories he tells, but are partly based on his own observations as a veteran reporter.



Johnston talks in the “Epilogue” about the need to summarize information as much as possible for the reader. He says he collected many pieces of information and documents over the years, in addition to spending time with Trump. His goal was obviously to condense all that information into a book of manageable size. That explains why there are some sections that may confuse some readers. Johnston assumes that readers know basic details about specific subjects, and does not always go into detail. Readers without that knowledge may sometimes flounder in their understanding, but will likely grasp the overall meaning. For example, Johnston does not explain why Trump would give Bob Libutti expensive presents and money, even though Libutti was losing a great deal of money in the casino. The reader who does not fully understand how the casino business works will not fully understand the financial gain to giving a player hundreds of thousands of dollars in money and complimentary services.

Johnston talks about Trump's greed in several places. In the stories about Trump's casinos, Johnston talks about the money that a casino owner could reasonably expect on an average day. The bulk of a casino's earnings comes from typical players who are just out to play for fun and accept small or moderate losses as the cost of play. But Johnston pointed out that Trump was not satisfied with those small earnings and that he recruited high-stakes players including Bob Tibutti and Akio Kashiwagi. Johnston does not address the fact that most casino owners participate in recruiting techniques. At the end of the book, Johnston says that some people have compared Johnston to Trump, specifically in their determination to do things their own way. But Johnston asserts that the main difference between the two men is that Johnston will choose honor above money, while Trump will always choose money.

Johnston sums up his impression of Trump, saying that he lacks the skill to make significant changes in America. Johnston then says that Hillary Clinton has the skill, “but despite her decades of action on behalf of the less fortunate, it is not at all clear that this is foremost on her political agenda.” Johnston seems to be indicating that helping the less fortunate in America should be a top priority for a candidate.

## Vocabulary

denizens, burnished, voluptuous, atheist, fickle, sanctuary, adulatory, prosperous, divine, aggressively, antithetical, apostates, apocalyptic



# Important People

## Donald Trump

Donald Trump was the 2016 Republican presidential candidate when this book was written. He is the second oldest son of a wealthy family, and became head of the family empire when his older brother died. Trump is described by the author as a self-aggrandizing man who often exaggerates his net worth and employs questionable business and personal practices. The author writes that Trump has associated and done business with known criminals, often with huge benefits for his businesses. For example, Trump chose a company that was secretly owned by a criminal element to provide concrete for one of his major building projects; when most of the industry was at a standstill because of strikes, the trucks kept arriving on time to Trump's project.

Trump has owned a myriad of businesses, including casinos. The author points out that the rules for owning casinos are so strict that Trump should have been investigated for several aspects of his business practices, but the Department of Gaming Enforcement never really looked into his businesses, his character, or his associations. Many issues in Trump's life should have prompted an end to his license, the author purports, but that never happened.

Trump's grandfather and father built the family business, including apartment buildings. Some of those are still in operation today, and the family is still collecting rent on some of those early investments. Trump's impressive empire is massive and includes golf carts, hotels, casinos, and more. However, the author points out, Trump is unable to provide accurate figures about his net worth and claims that it varies depending on several factors, including market values that day and his personal feelings about himself and his environment. As Trump has faced court questions and inquiries, the author writes that Trump's typical response is to respond or to respond with nonsensical answers.

## David Cay Johnston

Johnston is the book's author. He met Trump years prior to the writing of the book and broke several news stories about Trump. Johnston is considered by many as an authority on taxes and is a reputable investigative reporter, as he has won several awards, including a Pulitzer Prize. In this book, Johnston compares Trump to P.T. Barnum, a famous circus owner who known or his ability to make people want to pay to see wonders that were really nothing more than illusions. The comparison is not complimentary and is one of several examples of Johnston's opinion of Trump clearly seen throughout the book.

Johnston does not set out to offer an unbiased opinion of Trump. From the beginning, he talks about the negatives of Trump's life, history, and business affairs. Johnston



explains that he arrived in Atlantic City because of his work on articles about casinos and their owners, and that he met Trump soon after his arrival. Johnston writes about Trump as Trump launched his campaign for president in an effort to provide information to the voters. Johnston writes that he might have been inclined to write about Trump's opponent, Hilary Clinton, if he knew Clinton.

Over the years, Johnston has had dealings directly with Trump and with Trump's associates. On at least one occasion, Trump threatened to sue Johnston for writing about him. Johnston said he was surprised by that, because he has a reputation for refusing to bow to threats.

## **Roy Cohn**

Cohn was Trump's attorney in several cases and Trump said he was a mentor of sorts. Cohn was also the attorney for known criminals and was always ready to fight it out in court, even if the case was weak. Trump said Cohn's loyalty was an important trait – more important than integrity.

## **Rosie O'Donnell**

O'Donnell is a television celebrity who made disparaging remarks about Trump, prompting Trump to retaliate with personal attacks and slurs about all aspects of O'Donnell's life. The situation became very public and some people cited it as an example of the fact that Trump would not be able to control himself if he were elected president.

## **Michael Sexton**

Sexton is the man who proposed the use of Trump's name in a program advertised as continuing education seminars but that was actually never accredited. Trump admitted during court questioning that he did not know Sexton's background or if he was qualified to run an educational program.

## **Felix Sater**

Felix Sater is the man who was involved with Trump on a failed real estate deal that resulted in a lawsuit. A known criminal, Sater spent time with Trump, including traveling to Colorado. Trump seemed to distance himself from Sater after the real estate deal collapsed.



## Joseph Cinque

Joseph Cinque is also known as Joey No-Socks. He was a known criminal with ties to the mob. Cinque was the president of the American Academy of Hospitality Sciences and presented several awards to Trump. Trump claimed that he hardly knew Cinque, though they appeared in several photographs together. Trump said he did not vet the organization or Cinque personally, and that he merely accepted the awards.

## Akio Kashiwagi

Kashiwagi is a Japanese gambler who played at Trump Tower and Casino. He was a high-stakes gambler and had literally bankrupted a casino by winning \$19 million. He played baccarat at Trump's casino and lost the \$6 million he brought with him, but took about a half million of Trump's money by cashing in chips on the side. He was murdered by the Japanese equivalent of the mob.

## Bob Libutti

Libutti is a high-stakes gambler who spent many hours and a lot of money at Trump's casino. Libutti claimed that Trump gave him money, an obvious illegal action on Trump's part, but Trump denied the charge. Libutti was eventually banned from casinos because he claimed to know a mobster.

## Al Glasgow

Al was a concrete contractor who left that behind to become one of Trump's advisers. He was the first to figure out that Kashiwagi was cashing in chips on the side during his marathon of gambling at Trump's casino.



## Objects/Places

### **Bonwit Teller Department Store**

This is the department store that was on the property where Donald Trump built Trump Tower. Johnston writes that Trump used immigrants – some in the country illegally – to work on the demolition and did not provide them with even basic safety items.

### **The Polish Brigade**

This was the nickname given to the group of immigrants that worked on the demolition of the Bonwit Teller department store, which occupied the space where Trump built Trump Towers.

### **A&S Concrete**

This is the concrete company that Trump used when he was doing large construction jobs. The company had secret ties to the mafia and the trucks continued to deliver to Trump's building projects even when a strike halted deliveries elsewhere.

### **Empty Boxes**

This is a scam that allowed a person to buy an expensive piece of jewelry without paying New York's sales tax. If the buyer had the jewelry shipped to an out-of-state residence, the sales tax was waived. In practice, one specific jewelry store was shipping empty boxes while the customer accepted local delivery of the jewelry. Trump was among a list of people investigated for participating in this practice, and then failing to pay the use tax that should have been paid in their home state.

### **American Academy of Hospitality Sciences**

This organization handed out several awards to Trump-owned businesses, including golf courses and resorts. The organization appears barely legitimate with a known criminal serving as its president. Trump and several members of the Trump family and Trump business were listed as the organization's board, making Johnston question the validity of the awards.





## **John Baron/John Miller**

These are two names Trump used when he talked to members of the media, sometimes giving false information or offering up details about his personal or professional life. He reportedly admitted to using the aliases but later said he had not.

## **Trump University/ Trump Entrepreneur Initiative**

Trump and Michael Sexton launched the Trump University, touted to be a real estate course though it was never approved as a continuing education course. The program was investigated in several states and officials questioned the ethics and practices being used in selling the course and being taught to the attendees. Despite negative findings, Trump never faced formal charges.

## **Spy Magazine**

This was the magazine that set up a fake business and sent out checks to wealthy business people, claiming it was a refund. Trump and one other wealthy man continued to cash the checks, even when the final check was for 13 cents, earning him the award of being one of the cheapest rich people in New York.

## **Baccarat**

This is the game of chance Akio Kashiwagi played at Trump Plaza and Casino where he technically lost all his money, but actually cashed in chips on the side, earning himself about a half million dollars.

## **Trump Plaza and Casino**

This is a facility in Atlantic City owned and operated by Trump. He knew little about owning a casino and was awkward in his interaction with patrons.

# Themes

## The Trump Name

The Trump name alone carries weight, and has done so for years. Trump's father made a fortune and created a family dynasty that outlasted his lifetime. Donald Trump further polished the image and worked at making himself into a public figure. He succeeded completely, to the point that the tabloids were interested in Trump's personal life long before his bid for president.

The name is so valuable that people seek out Trump's permission to lend his name to various projects, knowing that the name alone will make the project more valuable. That is seen in two building developments described by the author – one just off the California coast and one in Hawaii. The Trump children personally touted the one in California and Trump's image appeared on brochures for the one in Hawaii. Buyers paid in the hundreds of thousands of dollars for the privilege of living in one of the Trump buildings, only to discover that Trump was not the developer. In some cases, buyers made decisions in a matter of minutes because of the high-pressure salesmanship. The fact that they were willing to do so is a statement of the power of the Trump name.

Buyers banded together and sued for refunds. In the case of the California project, the buyers' attorney cited the added value of the Trump name, and the fact that they believed they would be living in one of the Trump buildings. That attorney made it clear that the buyers expected a building of superior quality because they believed Trump was to be in charge of the project.

Other people have sought out Trump in the hope of using his name on other projects. For example, Michael Sexton proposed to use Trump's name on a series of courses touted as real estate courses. The fact that Sexton sought Trump out for the endeavor proved that he believed that simply using the Trump name would increase the number of participants. In that case, Trump went a step farther and took ownership of the program and putting Sexton in charge with an enormous yearly salary and a small portion of ownership in the business. That business was successful, though officials in several states investigated and declared that it was nothing more than a high-pressure sales scam that little of real value and encouraged questionable ethics. Participants paid more than a thousand dollars for a session, but many signed up – another statement of the power of the Trump name. Apparently, one man went so far as to put himself in bankruptcy, continuing to sign up for classes that he could not afford. He apparently believed that Trump's classes could get him out of a shaky financial situation.

## Trump's Public Image

Johnston said that he met Trump soon after arriving in Atlantic City. His first impression of Trump was that he was a circus owner, out to sell the public the image of a wealthy,



upstanding business man and public figure – an image Johnston did not believe. Johnston compared Trump to P.T. Barnum, a circus owner who became famous for his sideshow that consisted of fakes. The public loved his sideshow anyway. For example, Barnum had the famous Feejee Mermaid. Visitors knew that the mermaid could not possibly be real, but they paid a small price to see it anyway. Johnston felt that he could see through Trump's public image from the beginning.

Trump worked diligently at honing that public image and people were soon enamored with his life, evidenced by the fact that tabloids and celebrity magazines followed his romances long before he became a political figure. He furthered that interest by pretending to be an official in the Trump empire. He identified himself sometimes as John Baron or John Miller and answered questions from the press or gave reporters information. The scam came to light when he duped a reporter from People magazine, pretending to have inside information about romantic connections between Trump and beautiful, well-known, and wealthy women. At one point, Trump confirmed, under oath, that he had used false names. As he became a presidential hopeful, he denied it.

Johnston also discussed Trump's presence in his casino as another example of Trump's public image. He said Trump had an over-the-top personality that made him intrusive and obvious at the casino. Johnston compared that to a competitor who had a subtle staff that quietly gave the owner information about important players, allowing him to personally hand them keys to suites and to know details about the players. The comparison was that Trump tried to be the perfect casino host, but failed.

Another example of this theme is seen in Trump's 2015 campaign announcement. Johnston said that Trump made his presidential announcement in the auditorium of Trump Tower. The crowd included young people, cheering for Trump. Johnston says that some of those were actors, each paid \$50 for his or her performance. Trump obviously wanted to ensure that he had a wide demographic present – including young people – and that he would have an enthusiastic cheering section.

These are all examples of the way Trump tries to put himself in the best light, and he often fails. But there are other examples of his public image that put him in an even poorer light. Trump has been in multiple public appearances in which he lost his temper and left. During the filming of a documentary about the failed United States Football League, Trump grew angry, pulled off his microphone, and walked away. When actress Rosie O'Donnell compared Trump to a “snake oil salesman,” Trump responded violently and personally. He prolonged the very-public feud far longer than some believed was prudent. Johnston uses those and other examples to show that Trump's public image is not that of a man who could be a diplomatic president.

## **Trump Avoids Charges and Investigations**

Johnston alleges that Trump has made a habit of doing illegal and incorrect actions, all the while avoiding investigations and charges. One of the main examples of this theme is seen in the situation involving Trump University, later named the Trump Entrepreneur



Initiative. In the introduction video for the program, Trump pledged his personal involvement in the courses, including a promise to choose the best possible instructors. Later, he claimed he did not know the instructors at all, and that he could not identify any of them. In addition, the courses were touted as qualifying continuing education hours for realtors despite the fact that no realtor organization approved them as such.

Despite this unethical practice, the bigger questions about the courses came when officials in several states investigated complaints about the courses. Investigators participated in the courses and reported that the methods being taught were impractical, sometimes unethical or even illegal. Those reports were handed over to the appropriate prosecutors but none of them filed charges. In at least two cases, Trump made campaign donations for prosecutors bids for office after the investigations were conducted. In both those cases, the prosecutors declined to file charges.

Trump personally set out to do major projects with a blatant disregard for the rules. When he began to plan for Trump Tower, he was forced to tear down the famous Bonwit Teller department store, which was an elaborate and iconic building on Fifth Avenue. Trump used Polish immigrants for the demolition work. Some of those immigrants were in the country illegally and many were not paid. The workers were working without proper safety equipment and, despite the very public venue and the scope of the project, there was never a city inspection or permit of the demolition.

Trump also managed to avoid a full inspection when he began seeking a license for his casino. The licensing process usually took about a year and a half but Trump hinted that he might take his project elsewhere if he could not be assured of a faster turnaround. The gaming commission promised to be quick and Trump had his license in only a few months. The licensing requirements included that Trump could not have ties to organized crime but the investigation skimmed the surface of Trump's life and there was no mention of his connections to various criminals, including some with obvious mob connections.

Another example of this theme is seen in Trump's dealings with Bob Libutti. Trump lured Libutti away from another casino and catered to his needs in order to keep him playing at Trump's casino. Trump gave Libutti cars, which was legal, but Libutti claimed that Trump handed him a check while the two men were in the casino – which was not legal. Libutti told Johnston the story, predicting that the gaming commission would say Libutti was not a reliable witness. Johnston found Libutti's prediction to be true, and the commission's only investigation into the claim was to ask Trump if Libutti was telling the truth. Trump denied the charge and the commission did no further investigation.

## **Trump Cherishes Money Above All Else**

While Trump had a large amount of income on a regular basis and a huge family estate, he was always looking for ways to make more money and to protect his fortune. One of the main examples of this theme is seen in the way Trump operated his casino.



Johnston explains that casino owners make a relatively small profit from each of the typical players. These are the players who arrive with only a small amount of money to spend and leave when they lose that money. With the volume of players, this becomes a significant amount of the overall profit, but Trump set out to find high-stakes players. This is a dangerous business proposition because the player could lose a great deal, but it could also mean that the player could win a great deal. Akio Kashiwagi was one of those high-stakes players. He had won millions from one casino, pushing it into bankruptcy. Kashiwagi arrived at Trump's casino and won a small fortune, then left. Trump wanted to win that money back and he hired a mathematician to help him figure out how to do that.

Trump hired a famous mathematician, Jess Marcum, to help figure out how to get Kashiwagi back into the casino and to win his money back. Marcum suggested that Trump challenge Kashiwagi to a game in which Kashiwagi pledged to play until he lost everything or doubled his money. Kashiwagi agreed and played for days on end. At the end of the play, Kashiwagi had lost some money, but had also managed to take almost a half million dollars of Trump's money by cashing in chips when Trump was not paying attention. While Trump knew that the game was going on, Trump was nervous, fearing that he might lose millions to Kashiwagi. Trump apparently felt the hope of a big payoff was worth the days of pacing and fear.

Trump also lured Bob Libutti to his casino. Libutti was known as a high-stakes gambler who lost a lot of money. Trump gave Libutti expensive gifts and, according to Libutti, even gave him cash to entice him to keep playing – and losing – money at the Trump casino.

Trump also lent his name to various projects for a fee, expanding his financial gains. He discovered and used tax loopholes to save paying in income tax. He was not above spending money to make money, and invested whenever he felt it was necessary. Johnston finishes the book by saying that he and Trump have some traits in common, but money and honor are the main points on which they differ. Trump cherishes money above all else, but Johnston feels that honor is more important.

## Revenge

Trump believed that a person who was wronged should seek revenge, especially with regard to financial matters. That theme is seen repeatedly and has put Trump in the limelight on numerous occasions.

One of the most public examples of this theme is the feud between Trump and actress Rosie O'Donnell. O'Donnell compared Trump to a snake oil salesman – and obvious slur indicating that she did not trust him. Trump responded viciously. He made very public comments about O'Donnell's weight and sexual orientation. Many people felt that he had taken their public argument to a personal level and carried on the argument longer than was necessary.



Another example of this theme is seen in Trump's statements during a business conference in Colorado. Trump told attendees that they should always seek revenge in business dealings. He cited the case of an employee who refused to do a favor for Trump that she felt was unethical. Trump fired her and then gave horrible references to the woman's potential future employers.

Yet another example of this theme is seen in Trump's reaction in a family situation. Trump's brother, Fred Jr., died before their father. When Trump's father, Fred Sr., died, he did not leave Fred Jr.'s family their entire share of the family fortune. Shortly after Fred Sr.'s death, a child was born into that branch of the family. The infant began having seizures and his medical crisis grew. The family was insured by a family-owned insurance company and instructions were issued for the insurance to pay for any care the family deemed necessary, even if it was not typically covered. Then Fred Sr.'s will was read and Fred Jr.'s heirs, learning that they had been cut out of their father's share of the family fortune, filed a lawsuit. Donald Trump answered that lawsuit by eliminating the infant's medical coverage. A judge put a halt on that while the family hashed out their differences in court. Asked about his action, Trump admitted that he was furious because members of the family had sued his father. Trump's revenge in that case could have put the infant's life in danger.

There are other examples of Trump's tendency to seek revenge. When reporters wrote things that made Trump angry, he tended to threaten lawsuits. In some cases, his threats were enough to make the reporters change their stories, write retractions, or drop specific levels of questioning.

# Styles

## Structure

The book is divided into 24 chapters of varying lengths. The author focuses each chapter on specific aspects of Trump's life. Chapters are identified by number and title, and the titles are indicative of what the reader can expect to find in that chapter. For example, the first chapter is titled "Family History" and the author delves into the past two generations of the Trump family. The second chapter is titled "Family Values" and the author talks about issues such as the family's disinclination to vote except when Trump became a candidate.

The book ends with an acknowledgments section, notes, and an "About the Author" page. The notes section is lengthy and consists of a list of sources. The majority of these sources are newspapers, blogs, and magazines. One of the magazines is "Mother Jones," which is known for progressive stands on political, environmental, and social issues.

The information is not presented in chronological order. The author focuses on issues rather than a timeline. For example, in the chapter titled "Trump's Most Important Deals," Johnston details Trump's choice of cement companies for the building of Trump Tower, and gives information about a woman who moved into the building when it was complete. That chapter is about Trump's business associations with criminal elements. Three chapters later, Johnston talks about Trump's questionable tactics when he was tearing down the building on the property where Trump Tower would be built.

## Perspective

The book is presented from the perspective of the author, David Cay Johnston. Johnston is a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist who has decades of experience investigating various subjects and people. He has a lengthy history writing stories about taxes, charities, and casinos, and he focuses heavily those subjects in relation to Donald Trump.

The reader who is expecting an unbiased account of Donald Trump's life will be disappointed with the book. The author makes it clear from the beginning that he is opposed to Trump and he presents negative accounts, one after the other. The author depends on his own experiences with Trump as one source of information, which is appropriate. He also depends heavily on media-related sources, including blogs, newspapers, and magazines. Some of these sources are considered main-stream publications but some readers may find some of the sources less reliable or biased. The reader also has to evaluate the trustworthiness of the sources to decide if the author is being fair. The public attitude about media-based publications is such that some people





may not trust the mainstream newspapers, including the New York Times. If the reader is among that group, the entire book becomes questionable or even meaningless.

The author includes a chapter about a high-stakes Japanese gambler who spent days at Trump's casino with millions of dollars at stake. In this chapter, Johnston describes an anxious Donald Trump, pacing the floor and demanding updates on the game every half hour. The author was obviously not in the room with Trump and bases that description on information from other people, but he presents the scene as if he knows exactly what Trump was doing and thinking. It is up to the reader to evaluate the truth of that scene.

## Tone

The story is written in modern-day English with a tendency toward traditional Associated Press style. For example, the AP style calls for no comma between a name and a name suffix, including Jr. and Sr. Therefore, Johnston writes Donald Trump Jr., instead of Donald Trump, Jr., as other styles require. There are few differences, and these are minor to the overall understanding of the story.

The reader with an average vocabulary will find only a few unfamiliar words and will typically be able to understand the meaning from the context. The everyday language makes the book easy to read and understand. While the book is not written in chronological order, it is presented by topic. As a rule, a chapter covers a specific subject or event, though there may be ancillary information presented as background or as additional details.

Johnston seems to attempt to explain subjects as fully as possible without going into tedious detail. For example, he talks about the casino business and the fact that the gaming commission did not adequately investigate Trump, even when there were allegations of wrongdoing. Bob Libutti alleged that Trump gave him a check in the casino, which was an illegal action, but when Johnston followed up on that allegation, officials only questioned Trump, who denied the claim.

The writer explains that he condensed a great deal of information into the book, and that he chose what he felt was most relevant to the reader who would vote in the 2016 General Election, which was slated for a few months after the book was released. Johnston indicates that is why he focused on Trump's criminal associations, his personal values, and his questionable business practices.



## Quotes

I sized him up as a modern P.T. Barnum selling tickets to a modern variation of the Feejee Mermaid, one of the panoply of Barnum's famous fakes that people decided were worth a bit of their money.”

-- David Cay Johnston (Introduction paragraph 5)

**Importance:** This is Johnston's first impression of Trump, shortly after their meeting in 1988. Johnston's reference to Barnum, a circus owner who was famous for convincing people to view fake wonders and freaks. The point is that Barnum sold his stories to people and most people bought in, even knowing they were going to be seeing fakes. Johnston's comparison indicates that he believes people can see through Trump to realize that he is selling people on his image, which is also a fake.

So assuming it was him – I don't think it was him, I never even heard about it. So it's really not fair to mention. I never happened ... if there are no charges that means it shouldn't be mentioned.”

-- Donald Trump (Chapter 2, "Family Values" paragraph 5)

**Importance:** This is Trump's answer to a journalist questioning him about the arrest of Fred Trump Sr., Donald Trump's father, at a Ku Klux Klan battle. Fred was 21 at the time and was arrested along with many others, but was not prosecuted. Trump's answer was that his father was not prosecuted, therefore it was as if the arrest never occurred. Johnston uses the situation as an example of Fred Sr.'s racial bias and of Trump's tendency to wave off anything he does not want to address.

On March 30, 2000, one week after the lawsuit was filed, Fred III received a certified letter stating that all medical benefits would cease on May 1. For Little William, that was a potential death sentence.”

-- David Cay Johnston (Chapter 4, "A Sickly Child" paragraph 8)

**Importance:** This was Donald Trump's reaction when heirs of his brother, Fred Trump Jr., filed a lawsuit against the Trump estate, claiming that Fred Sr. had not left them their fair share of the family fortune. Donald Trump was angry that his relatives had sued, prompting him to cut off the medical insurance for a very ill child who would need medical care for his entire life. Johnston uses the scene to demonstrate Trump's tendency to seek revenge whenever he felt wronged.

In *The Art of the Deal*, Trump boasts that when he applied for a casino owner's license in 1981, he persuaded the New Jersey attorney general to limit the investigation of his background. It was perhaps the most lucrative negotiation of Trump's life, one that would embarrass state officials a decade later when Trump's involvement with mobsters, mob associates, and swindlers became clearer.

-- David Cay Johnston (Chapter 6, "Trump's Most Important Deals" paragraph 1)

**Importance:** Trump convinced the gaming commission that he would take his casino



elsewhere unless he got quick approval, and he did. Johnston makes the statement that the officials were “embarrassed” when details about Trump's associates came to light, but no one ever questioned his license or reviewed it with the possibility of revoking it.

They didn't have goggles to protect their eyes from the bits of concrete and steel that sometimes flew through the air like bullets. The men didn't have power tools either; they brought down the twelve-story building with sledgehammers.”

-- David Cay Johnston (Chapter 9, "Polish Brigade" paragraph 4)

**Importance:** Johnston is talking about the Polish immigrants, many in the country illegally, who demolished the famous Bonwit Teller department store building to make way for Trump Tower. Johnston goes on to talk about the lack of city oversight – including inspections – despite the large, very public project. In the sentences preceding this quote, Johnston talks about other basic safety equipment that was missing, including hardhats and facemasks.

Even my own feelings, as to where the world is, where the world is going, and that can change rapidly from day to day.

-- Donald Trump (Chapter 10, "Feelings and Net Worth" paragraph 12)

**Importance:** Johnston includes this as a direct quote during a court hearing. Trump was clarifying a statement he made that how he felt about himself played a role in his net worth. His point is that Trump's fortune may not have been near what people believe it to be, and that Trump may have had a limited understanding of what his net worth was.

An NYU-educated lawyer and certified public accountant, Mitnick also handled appeals when Trump felt his income taxes were unfair. That included two tax appeals in 1984, a year in which Trump collected many millions of dollars but paid no federal income tax.”

-- David Cay Johnston (Chapter 13, "Income Taxes" paragraph 1)

**Importance:** Johnston is an authority on income taxes, having written series of articles about tax loopholes. He talks at length about Trump's ability to avoid paying income taxes, though he publicly claims millions in income from various sources.

Journalists had good reason to ask where the charity dollars were, given Trump's long history of promising donations and no public record of them actually being made.”

-- David Cay Johnston (Chapter 16, Trump Charities paragraph 10)

**Importance:** This chapter focuses on Trump's donations – and public promises of donations – to an array of charities. Johnston says he was unable to find any record of Trump donations, and that another reporter years later was also unsuccessful. At this point in the story, Trump had held a political event, stating that the money would go to charity, but months passed and none of the charities had received anything until journalists began questioning where the millions of dollars in pledges had gone.

For years, Trump telephoned journalists using the name John Baron (or Barron). He posed as a publicist, planting stories about how this or that woman was in awe of him or



how some business deal was about to come his way.”

-- David Cay Johnston (Chapter 17, "Imaginary Friends" paragraph 3)

**Importance:** Johnston says that Trump admitted to using the false names, including John Miller, over the years. This is one example of Trump's effort to hone his public image, which is one of the book's themes.

After a court dismissed the case, Trump made it clear that he merely wanted to harass O'Brien, not necessarily win damages. 'I spent a couple of bucks on legal fees and they spent a whole lot more. I did it to make his life miserable, which I'm happy about,' Trump bragged.”

-- David Cay Johnston/Donald Trump (Chapter 19, "Myth Maintenance" paragraph 2)

**Importance:** Trump had sued a writer, Tim O'Brien. Trump's attitude – that he had merely wanted to harass O'Brien – was in keeping with his determination to get revenge on anyone who went against him, which is one of the book's themes.

He was also Donald Trump's best customer and Trump treated him like a friend. Trump lavished gifts on Libutti, was generous with his time, and, less graciously, repeatedly tried to seduce the gambler's grown daughter.”

-- David Cay Johnston (Chapter 24, "Biggest Loser" paragraph 1)

**Importance:** Johnston is referring to the relationship between Bob Libutti and Donald Trump. Libutti was known as one of the biggest gamblers – and biggest losers – in the region. Trump and Libutti were later at odds, with Libutti saying Trump took advantage of him and that Trump even gave him cash. The reader should remember that lavishing gifts on a customer who spent thousands of dollars at a time at the gaming tables was not unusual, and that other casinos practices this marketing technique as well, but that Trump was accused of giving Libutti cash, was not legal.

No book can capture the entire life of someone who has done half as much as Donald John Trump has in his seventy years. Through sheer force of will, he has made himself a household name and left a dramatic mark on both the biggest city in America and a much smaller one along the New Jersey shore.”

-- David Cay Johnston (Epilo paragraph 1)

**Importance:** Johnston is wrapping up the book with this section, including his insistence that he is trying to educate people who would be called on to vote just months after the book was released.



## Topics for Discussion

### **Describe Donald Trump.**

The reader should talk about Trump's early life and touch on his business dealings, then focus on the actions that speak to his attitudes. These topics would include information about his casino, his connections with the criminal element, and his flamboyant lifestyle.

### **Describe the situation involving the death of Fred Trump Sr. and the birth of William Trump.**

This answer should include the familial relationship between Fred Sr. and William. (Fred Sr. would have been William's great-grandfather.) The reader should then talk about William's health issues and the fact that Fred Sr. chose to leave Fred Jr.'s family only a fraction of what they expected from his estate. When they sued, Donald Trump eliminated the infant's healthcare coverage in retaliation.

### **What has always been Trump's reaction when someone wrongs him, according to the author? How has Trump historically accomplished this?**

Trump believed that he should get revenge on anyone who wronged him, including journalists who wrote things he did not like. His typical action was to file a lawsuit, though he often made threats to accomplish his desired purpose. The reader should also discuss how this affected Trump's image and the conflicts between Trump and the book's author.

### **Describe the author. Does he seem to be a reliable person to relate information about Trump?**

The reader should discuss the facts Johnston reveals about himself, including his years as an investigative reporter. The second part of this question will be answered differently by readers who have different views of the media and perceptions about Trump. The reader should be willing to examine those views as he evaluates Johnston's trustworthiness.



## **Who was Akio Kashiwagi? Describe his interaction with Trump.**

The reader should talk about Kashiwagi's gambling, especially his time at Trump's casino. There should be information about the challenge Trump issued to Kashiwagi and how that turned out, including that Kashiwagi got away with about a half million dollars of Trump's money. The answer should also include information about Kashiwagi's death.

## **Who was Bob Libutti? What was his interaction with Trump?**

Libutti was the high-stakes gambler who lost big, including heavy losses at Trump's casino. The reader should talk about Trump's tendency to meet Libutti's requests and the gifts Trump gave to Libutti. The reader should also talk about Libutti's claims against Trump.

## **Describe the Trump Entrepreneur Initiative, including the resulting lawsuits.**

This was the real estate program Trump created, that was originally called Trump University. The answer should examine the fact that officials in several states investigated Trump and issued reports that indicated the program was unethical and basically a scam, but that Trump made donations to specific campaigns and the officials never filed charges.

## **Describe the instances in which Trump lent his name to building projects, duping investors into believing that he was the developer.**

The reader should talk about the two specific instances in this book, including one off the California coast and one in Florida. In both cases, the Trump name lent added value to the projects. Buyers paid their money believing they were purchasing a Trump property and felt cheated when they learned that he was not the developer. The reader should talk about the reason the Trump name carried so much weight with these buyers, how Trump misled them, and what happened to the projects.



## **Why does the author say he chose to write about Trump? What were some of the topics of focus?**

The author released the book as the 2015 General Elections were a few months away and said he wanted to inform the voting public. The reader should talk about the author's interactions with Trump, including that he said he wrote about Trump because he knows Trump. The topics of focus could range from criminal associations to questionable business practices to personal actions that speak to Trump's priorities.

## **What does the author say about Trump's attitude toward the media? Toward women? Toward money?**

The author says that Trump has studied the media to learn how to manipulate reporters, that he objectifies women, and that he cherishes money above all else. The reader should then delve into each of these topics, examining Trump's actions and what those actions say about his character.