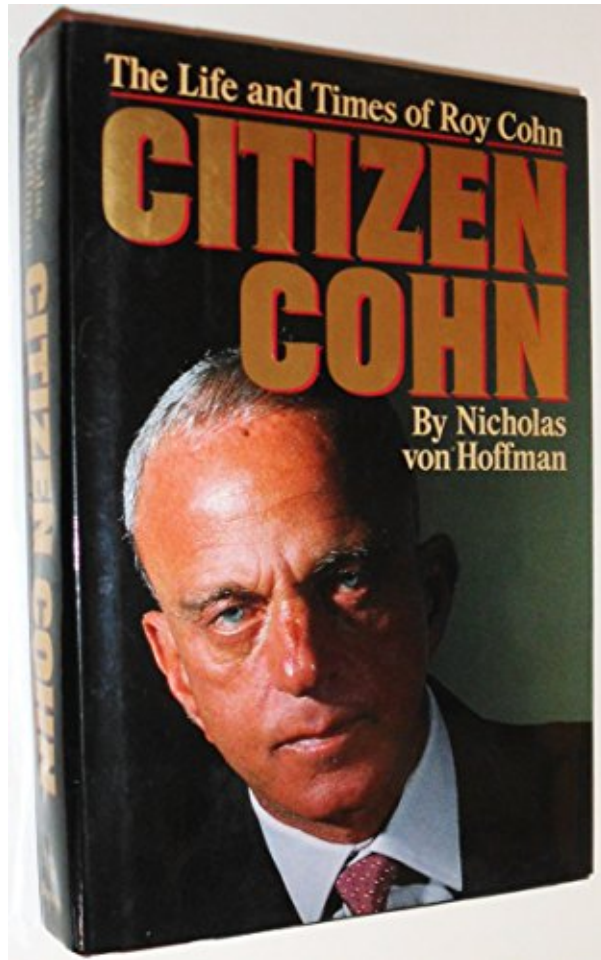
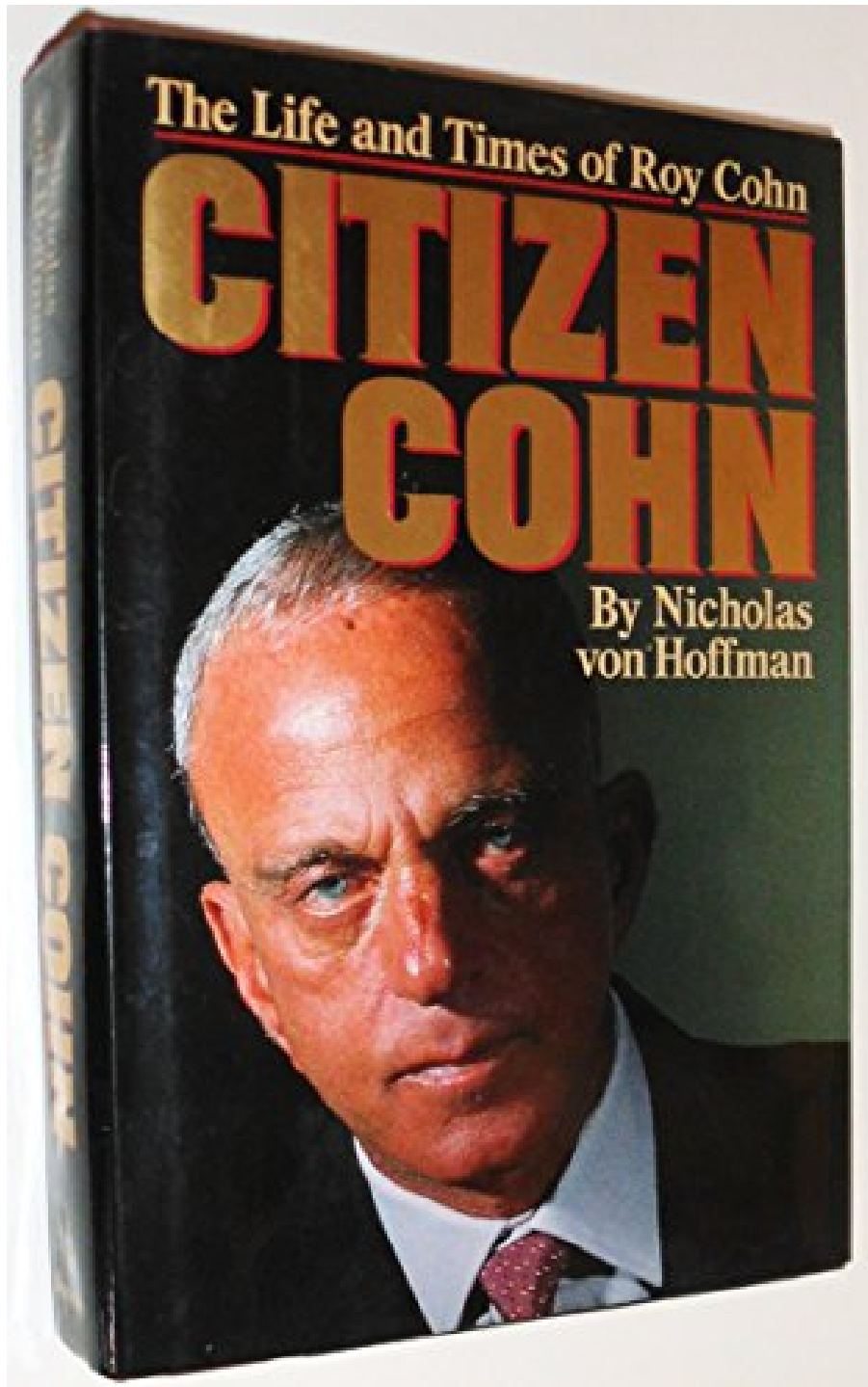


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\$19.95. biog Roy Cohn was not so much a lawyer as an operator. All his life, he preferred manipulating connections with the rich and powerful to playing by the rules diligently. von Hoffman's biography is a fuller and more damning account than Sidney Zion's *The Autobiography of Roy Cohn* (LJ 4/15/88), but it is fair; the extensive testimony from friends and foes alike make this almost an oral history. The chapter on Cohn's Washington years as counsel to Senator Joe McCarthy seems curiously out of focus, but the narrative quickly picks up steam as it details the indictments by Bobby Kennedy's Justice Department, the glory years as New York power broker, and finally disbarment and death from AIDS. This fascinating story of a figure at once brilliant and outrageous is highly recommended for public libraries. Jack Ray, Loyola/Notre Dame Lib., Baltimore

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Citizen Cohn

- Sales Rank: #92958 in Books
- Brand: Doubleday
- Published on: 1988-03-01
- Released on: 1988-03-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Binding: Hardcover
- 16 pages

Features

- Great product!

From Library Journal

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Most helpful customer reviews

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Informative especially related to Cohn's relationship with Donald Trump

By Robert

Overall it was an interesting read.

24 of 25 people found the following review helpful.

A Venal Man

By Smoten

He began his career by suborning the perjury that put an innocent woman in the electric chair. He was very proud of this. He lied, cheated and stole his entire life. He bribed judges and threatened witnesses. As a legal technician he was completely inept, unread in the law and ignorant of basic trial practice. His best and most frequently used courtroom tactic was the continuance. He was a fixer of the highest magnitude. He was disbarred just before he withered away from AIDS, way too late to do society any good. He is unmourned and unmissed. Good riddance to bad rubbish.

Still, Roy Cohn did live a life that makes for interesting reading and Nicholas Von Hoffman has pieced it all together in this wonderful biography. "Citizen Cohn" will be the source book on this annoying gnat of a man long after Cohn has joined his pal Walter Winchell in obscurity. "Citizen Cohn" is both serious and blisteringly funny, anecdotal, and gossipy. Mr. Von Hoffman trods the well-worn path of Cohn's early years-how he got David Greenglass to lie from the witness stand and send his sister Ethel Rosenberg to the death house at Sing Sing, how he used the notoriety he gained from the Rosenberg trial to vault to a position as Senator Joe McCarthy's witch hunter in chief, how he was caught red-handed trying to arrange special favors for his "special friend" G. David Schine, a humble army private who was also a member of McCarthy's staff (in Lillian Hellman's great phrase, Cohn and Schine and McCarthy were "...Bonnie and Bonnie and Clyde")-but it is Roy Cohn in New York where "Citizen Cohn" sparkles.

Cohn the uber lawyer was both powerful and petty. He could make or break a federal judicial nominee; he also wouldn't pay his electric bill. Cohn needed massive amounts of cash to maintain his dashing man about town persona (dashing, but closeted in the most transparent of closets) and he didn't care how he got it. He stole so much money from so many clients that the wonder isn't why it took so long to disbar him but why some outraged victim didn't simply shoot him. Mr. Von Hoffman minces no words in describing Cohn's lifetime of thievery and fortifies his revelations with the testimonials of those who were there. The writing is evocative, gray and somber during the McCarthy era, light and breezy during the disco years. There is an illuminating word picture of Roy Cohn at Studio 54, where he was royalty, standing with one of his handsome young men, both clad all in black, sunglasses, lights beating down on them in the middle of the floor, music blaring, the two standing stock-still, posing, profiling "...like secret service agents at the beach". When it was almost over he took to wearing an orange phosphorescent tuxedo. This blatant self-promoter was reduced to wearing an outlandish coat that screamed "Look at me! Look at me!". It was a pathetic, but fitting, end to a pathetic man.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Needs work

By Amazon Customer

Nicholas von Hoffman is a brilliant columnist who, if this book is any indication, should stick to shorter-format works. CITIZEN COHN is fact-packed, and has some well-drawn anecdotes, but overall it is an unwieldy and disorganized tome. Von Hoffman jumps forward and back in time, in an almost stream-of-consciousness style, which bogs down the narrative and muddies the chronology of events he recounts. In the space of one paragraph, he darts from 1954 to 1980-something and then back to 1964, bringing in a parallel but unrelated incident involving entirely different players.

If you have a lot of time on your hands, and access to a high-speed internet connection to provide additional context for his stories, this great lump of a book can help kill a few hours here and there, but to someone who admires von Hoffman's usual style, it was a serious disappointment.

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