

VESCO

SYNOPSIS

Vesco portrays the rise and fall of a modern buccaneer. Robert Vesco became the epitome of roaring 1960's excess, a hard working high-school dropout who made good on his vow to become a millionaire by the time he was thirty. Styling himself "the Che Guevara of international finance," Vesco built up an ailing, small New Jersey manufacturing and electronics company, International Controls, into a world player by pyramiding, sky-rocketing acquisitions in often hostile corporate takeovers -- raids common today but unheard of forty years ago. *Vesco* details his rise and crash, his entry into the inner sanctum of American political and financial power, and the ignominious betrayal and blowback that led one of the most powerful men in America to end up in a Cuban jail cell.

The Cuban police coming for Vesco in his Havana bungalow in 1995 is our starting point, the event which effectively puts to an end all that has gone on before in Vesco's life. This inexorable march of events is then wound backwards and told through various points of view -- Vesco's from the hindsight of his imprisonment and other characters through voiceovers in key moments. The screenplay is also punctuated by a few of Vesco's interviews with the mass media, such as his April 1974 TV interview with Walter Cronkite, so the media's "global eye" helps tell the story as well. Our story begins and ends, book-ended, with Vesco's imprisonment in Cuba, but despite the jagged and complex path of events it presents, there is a roughly chronological order here. Vesco's meteoric rise to power in the corporate world, his high risk takeover of International Overseas Services

(IOS), then the world's largest mutual fund conglomerate, his involvement in the Watergate scandal, and his precipitous fall as he is hit by the biggest Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC) suit in its history, and goes on the lam in the Caribbean rather than face charges. Vesco's talent for buying friends and influence turns against him as he is driven from one island to another, hounded by FBI and CIA assassination plots. Coming to see that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" Vesco eventually seeks refuge with first the Sandinista government in Nicaragua and then in Castro's Cuba, where he wheels and deals in a far more modest fashion before he runs afoul of the authorities there as well. The focus in the script is on the changes in Vesco, how his early grandiosity grows into full-blown megalomania, the reckless cunning so successful becomes hubris and self-destruction. Vesco in his early days enjoyed playing off his Italian background and tough guy mannerisms later he had to travel with a group of bodyguards and the threats were indeed real. Many felt that the SEC investigation would have been resolved or even gone away if Vesco had just slowed or stopped his activities for a brief period instead Vesco went even further, egging on the commission. The path of events and Vesco's personality follow the same trajectory into a breathtaking combustion. *Vesco* portrays an archetypal American character.

Vesco is in large part based on the best-selling book by Arthur Herzog, which was optioned for film/TV rights.

Vesco is 116 pages, Final Draft form at
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