*American Hustle* Paper Outline

**Intro:**

**Thesis Question**: What power do females have in *American Hustle* and how does that contribute to the success of their cons?

**Thesis: The women in American Hustle seemingly only have power by their connections with men, sex, and their manipulative techniques. Though they are vital to the operation, Roslyn and Sydney are often over-looked and under appreciated, exemplifying the way women have been treated throughout American history.**

**P1: *American Hustle* is based off ABSCAM, an FBI sting operation that took place in the late 1970’s.**

*American Hustle* Quote

“IRVING ROSENFELD We succeeded because we stayed small. I got you Carl Elway. He bought stolen art, sold fake bank C.D.'s, that's enough. That's one. I get you three more -- no politicians. Richie and Edith look at him. RICHIE DIMASO You're gonna do this because you got no choice. You work for me.”

Or

“Irving Rosenfeld: We took down some very big guys. -REP. SANDERS SWARMED BY PHOTOGRAPHERS WALKING OUT OF BUILDING, ESCORTED BY FBI AGENTS. -REP. SIMMONS ESCORTED OUT OF CITY HALL. IRVING ROSENFELD (V.O.) Some of whom were just doing business as usual helping their communities or their states. -REP. KESHOYGAN IS GRABBED AS HE APPROACHES HIS CAR IN A GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT WITH A BAG FULL OF GROCERIES. IRVING ROSENFELD (V.O.) But some of them knew they had larceny in their blood-- -REP. O’CONNELL COVERS HIS FACE AS PHOTOGRAPHERS SWARM HIM AS HE’S ARRESTED OUTSIDE HIS HOUSE AS WIFE AND DAUGHTER LOOK ON. 150. CARL ELWAY IS CHELSEA HOTEL OFFICE IN HIS BATHROBE WITH HIS SECRETARY IN TEARS. IRVING ROSENFELD (V.O.) And they even admitted it.”

*Note: will reformat quotes*

*ABSCAM Ethics: Moral Issues and Deception in Law Enforcement* quote:

Analysis/Purpose:

* Set’s up the essays background
* Gives history of how *American Hustle* aligns with ABSCAM
* Starts to show how the idea of power in the film comes into play
* The ABSCAM only focuses on the male characters of the movie

**P2: A successful con consists of gaining trust, exploitation, and knowing when it’s time to leave.**

*American Hustle* quote:

“IRVING ROSENFELD You will never do it properly because you got too much government attitude to be small and sleek. I'm like the fuckin' Vietcong, man. I'm in and I'm out. I was there the whole time -- you don't know it. That's the fucking art of becoming somebody who people can pin their beliefs and their dreams on. And you can't do it.”

Or

“IRVING ROSENFELD People believe what they want to believe. Cause the guy who made this was so good that it’s real to everybody. Now who’s the master -- the painter or the forger?”

*The Ponzi Scheme Puzzle* quote:

“In many respects, con artists’ behavior is like everyone else, but it addition, we discover that con artists actually view their activities as business… Their belief can make them believable. (85)”

Analysis/Purpose:

* The truth to schemes
* *The Ponzi Scheme Puzzle* only mentions three male examples
* Con artists are not specified to gender
* The manipulation and stereotypical character traits to how that relates to men vs. women

**P3: Women’s roles in cons are subtle and reliant on men, their greatest power is through their physical appeal.**

*American Hustle* Quote:

“Edith Greensly: We got the bureau to park 2 million for three days -- we got the account numbers. Irving Rosenfeld: ‘We’ meaning you and him? Richie Dimaso: Yeah we did it. Irving Rosenfeld: Really? Edith Greensly: Yeah, me and that guy. Richie Dimaso: She showed me. Irving Rosenfeld: You showed him our thing?”

*Madcaps, Screwballs, and Con* Women Quote:

“feminism and female trickery not only are compatible, they may be inseparable…the advice that making a man think that he is smarter than you, is the best strategy for relationships between men and women, the tricksters’ tactics of impersonation, deception, theft, disguise, and pranks abound in the series (205)”

Analysis/Purpose:

* Female Trickery
* The guy has to be in it for it to be recognized
  + “We”: Though Sydney has the brains and manipulation to pull of the scheme she either needs to be with Richie or Irving to be successful, even though both their lives existed without her in the movie, hers is only in relation to theirs.
  + “making a man think he is smarter than you”
* How success has been skewed for women throughout history because it’s been based off of men’s success

**P4: The 1970’s was the middle of the Sexual Revolution, this influences how the women in *American Hustle* are hyper-sexualized.**

*American Hustle* Quote:



*Social Change: The Sexual Revolution* Quote:

Analysis/Purpose:

* The influence of the sexual revolution on women’s rights
* How the sexual revolution has also allowed women to be hyper-sexualized
* In the photo:
  + their breasts are emphasized by their dress
  + their fighting in a ladies’ room
  + Roslyn is showing Sydney her ringer
  + They are all made up and acting
    - Both are pretending to be something they are not

**P5: In *American Hustle*, women seem to have power through manipulation, this trend has falsely been portrayed throughout history.**

*American Hustle* Quote:

“ROSALYN ROSENFELD: You know that I could take Danny. You know that most of your work is illegal. And you know that if you tried to divorce me, you know that-- I'm not saying that I would, but I'm saying that I could.”

*Women, Power, and Politics* quote:

Analysis/Purpose:

* The way in which women can use their body to get power
* Women seem to have to always fight and grapple for their power, which makes it seem that even when they have power, they are less powerful because they didn’t have enough power to obtain it easily.
* Power is through items, manipulation, and or sex, not from respect

**Conclusion:** Comparing the 70’s with the film made today. The so what effect about women and power

Things to fix:

* Find more quotes from secondary sources
* Clean up thesis
* Pull out the highlights from the quotes that will best strengthen my argument