

The background of the image is a close-up, shallow depth-of-field shot of ornate costume jewelry. It features intricate gold-colored metalwork with swirling, scroll-like patterns. Interspersed among the metal are several round, white pearls of varying sizes. A vibrant red fabric, possibly a ribbon or part of a garment, is visible in the upper right corner, adding a splash of color to the composition. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the metallic sheen and the luster of the pearls.

# Third In Line

PITCH

SCRIPT PIPELINE GREAT IDEAS CONTEST 2020 (II)

# LOGLINE/CONCEPT

What if America were a monarchy instead of a democracy?

The present-day King of the United States, FREDERICK III, has early onset Alzheimer's (unbeknownst to anyone but he and the Queen). He also has 5 very different adult sons, but only one favorite; his smart and hard-nosed middle son, MATTHIAS. Regardless of his middle child's position, the King intends to make him the successor to the Throne before he passes. Objections amongst family and court be damned...

*\*\*THIRD IN LINE is a one-hour, high-concept drama that aims to blend the political dynamics of HOUSE OF CARDS, the character-driven storytelling of THE CROWN, and the world-building of GAME OF THRONES.*





# BACKSTORY

James Buchanan was a terrible president who helped usher the US into a civil war. As his term came to a close, Abraham Lincoln and an abolitionist Army general named Bartholomew Miller decided to run against each other to be the next president. Miller ran on the economic realities of the South seceding from the North, the harsh, inhumane treatment of slaves, and the gain of prosperity that could be achieved if “Negros” properly joined the workforce. Miller called for the US to become a monarchy. To give him ultimate power into keeping the US a superpower without dehumanizing its citizens. He won and was made King of the United States.

As a result of King Bartholomew’s reign, Florida was made a “penal state” where confederate soldiers and sympathizers were banished, reconstruction included a vigorous Black workforce and upper class in the South, and police are a non-existent force given the King’s Guard acts as national law enforcement. However, the monarchy has created a long feud between itself, the descendants of Lincoln, and “Lincoln republicans,” anti-monarchists that wish for the US to return to a federal presidential constitutional republic.

Presently, the US remains a monarchy. There is no Congress (legislative branch), but there are local governments and a judicial system that includes a Supreme Court whose main job is to make sure the King or Queen’s power isn’t far-reaching to the point of putting citizens in danger or committing treason.

# CHARACTERS

## THE ROYAL FAMILY

- HM King Frederick III “Freddie” Miller (white, late 60s) – a sympathetic and impartial king, loving husband, but emotionally distant and critical father
- HRH Prince Matthias Miller (white, mid-30s) – middle son; a brilliant strategist, politician, and diplomat that’s never to be underestimated
- HRH Prince Alaric Miller (white, mid-40s) — eldest son; he’s unfairly handsome but arrogant and entitled
- HRH Prince Theodore “Teddy” Miller (white, late-20s) – youngest son; a down-to-Earth, devoted husband and father
- HRH Prince Evander Miller (white, early 40s) – second eldest son; a “jarhead” and secret romantic
- HRH Prince Basil “Baz” Miller (white, early 30s) – fourth son; a playboy that happily indulges in all his vices and desires
- HM Queen Ursula Miller (white, early-60s) – a dedicated wife, mother, and sovereign with a soft spot for her eldest son, Alaric

## CONSORTS/PARAMOURS

- Lady Grier Atwood (Black, mid-30s) – beautiful, cosmopolitan, and just as clever as her lover, Matthias
- HRH Princess Danica Miller (East-Asian, mid-40s) – beautiful and cutthroat; her only loyalty is to her husband, Alaric, and their children
- Jacob Lincoln (white, late-30s) – Teddy’s doting, anti-monarchist husband
- HRH Princess Hena Mehmet-Miller (Turkish-Arab, late-30s) – Evander’s beautiful but neglected wife
- Commander Sofia Reyes (Latinx, early 40s) – a commander in the King’s Army, and Evander’s mistress that’s dying of cancer
- Kerstin Greenberg (white, mid-30s) – a high class escort in love with Alaric
- Leo Deluca (white, British, early-30s) – a pro tennis player in love with Alaric
- Pia Yushkov (white, Russian, early-20s) – a “model/actress” that cons Baz into marrying her



# SYNOPSIS

KING FREDERICK III has ruled since 1983 and his reign has been good and prosperous, free of war and extreme poverty. However, with his mind slowly deteriorating from Alzheimer's disease (a secret kept between only he, the Queen, and his doctor), King Frederick is looking to the future. He's looking to his successor to continue his legacy and uphold the State. To keep the small, but very vocal, "republicans" at bay.

Unfortunately, he doesn't see leadership when he looks to the next in line for the Throne, his eldest son, ALARIC. Alaric is more celebrity than politician. More figurehead than actual diplomat. He would look good while ruling but wouldn't be good *at* ruling.

This worries and disappoints Frederick. All of King Frederick's sons worry and disappoint him; EVANDER is a distracted militant, BASIL is an excessive deviant, and THEODORE wants nothing to do with royal duties as he's chosen an ordinary life over a stately one. And then there's his middle son, MATTHIAS... Matthias is quiet, independent, and distant. Truth be told, Frederick knows very little about him. Yet, curiosity gets the better of him when thinking of his children, and he decides to pay Matthias a visit.

Matthias has purposely kept a low and unimportant profile since he was 14 years old. He figured out early on that his father had very little interest in him, and a passing intrigue with his other brothers. Over the years, he's enjoyed this unspoken arrangement. Flying under the radar and adopting a meek persona has allowed him to work and play with little inference or judgement from his parents and the general public. But after his entire family bears witness to a bold act of aggression, his father has suddenly become fascinated by him. Matthias, however, grows increasingly annoyed with his father's continued presence in his professional and personal affairs. Though he quickly discerns the king's intentions – Frederick doesn't believe Alaric should ascend to the Throne and thinks Matthias may be better suited as the next king. He also figures out that Frederick is dying. He's surprised by his father's diagnosis, and his epiphany, but feels his wish may be impossible given heredity and birth order determines the next sovereign, and Alaric has been preparing for it since he was born.

Frederick reminds his son that currently *he's* king. He makes the rules. And if he wishes to cause a dust up by changing them, ensuring Matthias is to be king after him, then he will...



# SERIES SYNOPSIS

## SEASON 1

- King Frederick confides in Matthias that he's dying
- Matthias proposes to Grier
- Native tribes within "Indigenous Grounds" want financial help from the US while maintaining their independence
- Queen Ursula tells Alaric the king wants Matthias to be the next king

## SEASON 2

- Alaric confronts his father about making Matthias his successor
- Baz is "trapped" into marrying a Russian con woman named Pia
- Alaric tries to prove himself a leader to his father, but mismanages the situation greatly and Matthias is called to fix it
- Jacob is propositioned for a leadership role within an active anti-monarchist political group
- Hena discovers Evander's affair with Sofia

## SEASON 3

- Matthias and Grier get married
- Alaric and Danica's open marriage is exposed to the public by their resentful daughter; Alaric's affairs end
- Baz and Pia's marriage becomes physically violent; Baz's alcoholism/drug use worsens
- Teddy wants to return to royal duties once Matthias is king
- Matthias and Frederick manage a conflict between the UK and Hawaii
- Frederick amends the royal decree of ascension in order to make Matthias the next king

# SERIES SYNOPSIS, CONT.


## SEASON 4

- Press uncover a greedy business deal Alaric made with a tech company mining people's personal data
- An old civil rights case Danica mismanaged is brought to light publicly
- Pia threatens to expose Baz as a violent addict if not paid \$10 million dollars; Matthias pays her off in exchange for divorcing Baz
- Sofia's cancer returns, devastating Evander
- Teddy and Jacob temporarily separate
- King Frederick dies

## SEASON 5

- Alaric challenges Matthias in the Supreme Court for the Throne, despite not having familial or public support
- Danica is fired from her job
- Jacob resigns from the "republican" political group
- Pia gives a tell-all interview, exposing her short marriage to Baz
- Sofia dies with Evander by her side; Hena divorces him
- Queen Ursula can't adjust to being out of the "inner circle"
- Grier is pregnant
- Matthias is made king; he excommunicates Alaric from royal court





# SERIES SYNOPSIS, CONT.

## SEASON 6

- Baz enters rehab/boot camp
- Teddy and Jacob consider adopting another child
- Evander returns to active military duty
- Alaric is publicly shamed and ridiculed via the media
- Matthias successfully handles the kidnapping of his Secretary of State

## SEASON 7 (5 years later...)

- Alaric lives off-the-grid, alone, in Canada
- Baz and Teddy are active advisors and philanthropists
- Hena is remarried; she and Evander share joint custody of their children
- Matthias considers sanctions on China over human rights violations
- Grier is killed in a botched assassination attempt on Matthias' life; Alaric and a radical political group are the culprits
- Alaric is put on trial and executed by hanging

The background of the image is a close-up, shallow depth-of-field shot of an ornate piece of jewelry. It features intricate gold filigree, several large pearls, and numerous small, brilliant-cut diamonds. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures and facets of the gemstones against a dark, blurred background.

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THE END