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NEWS

The Apprentice Finalist Lee Bienstock Hired By Trump Organization

Written by [Eric Berlin](#)
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As my dad would always say, "Fair? You want fair? Life isn't fair!"

Lee Bienstock, the young and plucky New Yorker who came within a hair's breadth of becoming *The Apprentice* last season, was recently hired to be the associate vice president for corporate development at Trump Mortgage.

Now, I like the kid. Through the highly edited lens of reality television we, at the least, saw a Lee who is bright, nervy, and loyal (perhaps to a fault) to

his people. Throughout *The Apprentice*, he showed an uncanny ability to understand retail sales and often out-thought his older and more experienced competition. Donald Trump often referred to Lee as "the politician" in the boardroom because of his ability to slip out of the razor-edged noose of The Don's leading questions (note to all future *Apprentice* contestants: if Mr. Trump asks you a question that begins, "Don't you think..." while arching his eyebrows, you're already toast).

Bienstock also displayed an ethical and moral code not often seen in the shark-eat-rattlesnake world of *The Apprentice*. He was allowed to skip out of two tasks to observe the Jewish High Holy Days, acts that brought him both praise and scorn from his fellow contestants. More interesting and significant was the friendship he formed with Lenny, a Russian contestant who received generally low scores for his ability and communication skills both. Nonetheless, Lee displayed fierce loyalty toward his friend, even shocking many for bringing him back to help him out during the finals competition. Lee eventually lost out to the silver-tongued British charmer Sean Yazbeck.

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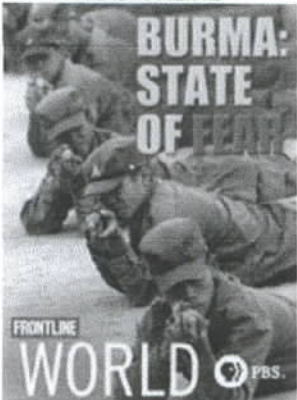
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I bring all of this up to ask one simple question: is it fair that Lee lost to Sean but was then subsequently hired by the Trump organization anyway? Isn't the whole point of the show that one person gets a posh job at an exciting company with caviar dreams and supermodel globe trotting and gaudy soup-slurping splendor with the chief executive haircap?

Season Four arguably had a much higher level of talent overall. In a thrilling final, Randal Pinkett just bested Rebecca Jarvis for the title. Trump then took the unusual move of asking Randal if he should hire Rebecca as well, and the bright and ambitious young man — to his everlasting discredit — declined.

So Rebecca nearly had the co-title (if not for Randal's ego) in Season Four, and Lee was defeated cleanly in the final boardroom in Season Five. Then Randal and Sean and lastly Lee were hired by Trump, and Rebecca continues on as a financial reporter.

Is that fair? I guess my pops was right.

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Eric Berlin is the Executive Producer of [Blogcritics.org](#). He tries to write about politics, television, and the Interwebs whenever he gets the chance. He's also prone to referring to himself in the third person in author bios in an attempt to make it look like someone Less Important wrote it for him. *Contact:* dumpsterbust@gmail.com

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