

Pole Position Pitch

By James Johansen

Logline:

A 22-year-old F1 superstar with a massive ego and world-class talent becomes slowly entangled with Vanterra Dynamics, his biggest sponsor, unaware it is secretly the front for his family's global drug empire and that he is the heir they have been grooming all along. Pulled into a world he never chose, Niko has to decide whether to disappear, confront his family head-on, or pretend to fall in line long enough to destroy it.

Who Is the Show About & How Will He Change?

The series follows Niko Sarin, a 22-year-old Formula 1 phenomenon with the confidence, ego, and natural speed of a future world champion. He's aggressive and cocky, openly hostile to the media, and genuinely convinced he can't lose. He treats racing as a battlefield and everyone around him as an obstacle.

But in the very first episode, Niko's world flips. He accidentally learns that Vanterra Dynamics, the sponsor that's plastered all over his car and suit, is not a normal company. It's actually the public front for his estranged father's global drug empire. The whole sponsorship deal was designed to pull him back into the family business.

Over the season, Niko starts to realise this isn't just sponsorship. Every opportunity feels designed to push him somewhere specific. By the finale, he has to face the truth. He pretends to accept his role in the family empire. He steps into it fully.

But only one person knows the truth: Maya, a brilliant data engineer who sees through his public antics and sees him for who he really is. Niko secretly tells her that he's not joining to help his father. He's joining to burn the whole thing down from the inside.

Themes of the Show:

Identity vs. Inheritance:

Niko wrestles with the question of who he truly is: the global superstar he forged through talent and ego, or the heir engineered for him before he was old enough to know it.

Power vs Performance:

Both Formula 1 and organized crime run on public image, fear, spectacle, and negotiation. Niko learns that every podium, every headline, and every handshake comes with invisible strings attached.

Family vs Destiny:

Niko learns he cannot outrun his bloodline. The central emotional question becomes whether he can break the cycle or whether the cycle will break him.

Connection vs. Control:

Through Maya, a brilliant and unfiltered data engineer who sees Niko without fear or awe, the show asks whether honesty can survive in a world built on manipulation.

Main Conflict:

The main engine of the show is Niko's double life. Externally, he is chasing a world championship in the most competitive motorsport on earth. Every race weekend is a pressure cooker of speed, ego, rivalry, and international spotlight.

Internally, he slowly becomes entangled in the hidden operations of Vanterra Dynamics that travel with the Formula 1 calendar. Handlers begin to appear at tracks. Strange sponsor obligations pull him into situations that have nothing to do with racing. His family becomes more present in his life. Rivals start to notice that something about Vanterra does not add up. Money shifts in ways that raise questions, and people around him begin to disappear or fall silent.

Niko must juggle the pursuit of racing glory with a criminal empire that tightens around him. His personality, which is centered on total control and ruthless competitiveness, becomes the exact trait that positions him as the natural successor to a world he wants nothing to do with. His victory on track becomes a trap. The faster he rises in Formula 1, the more valuable he becomes to Vanterra, and the harder it becomes for him to escape the legacy waiting for him in the shadows.

Season One Trajectory

Season One is the story of Niko's entrapment and his awakening.

- In the pilot, he learns the truth about his family.
- Mid-season, he sees how deeply Vanterra infiltrates racing and how powerless he is to stop it.
- By Episode 8 or 9, Arto becomes endangered for trying to keep Niko safe.
- In the finale, Niko publicly joins the empire to protect Arto and secure his own survival.
- In the final scene, away from cameras and family, Niko tells Maya the truth: he's not surrendering. He's buying time.

Genre, Format, and Length:

One hour drama with serialized storytelling.

A mix of crime thriller, psychological sports drama, and global mystery.

Ten episodes per season.

Comparable Shows:

Breaking Bad for the slow and intense moral descent, as well as the criminal empire

Drive to Survive for the intense behind-the-scenes Formula 1 world and psychological warfare

The tone can be described as Breaking Bad meets Drive to Survive.

Why This Show Now and Why I Am the Right Person to Write It:

Formula 1 has never been more popular or culturally relevant. Audiences are drawn to the glamour, the speed, and the global spectacle, yet very few fans understand how much corruption, financial manipulation, and behind-the-scenes influence already shapes the sport.

This show fits the moment. It uses the world of Formula 1 to explore identity, legacy, and the cost of greatness while exposing the darker reality that could exist beneath a sport many people assume is clean.

I am the right person to tell this story because I know that Formula 1 is not just glamorous. It has a complicated and often corrupt underlayer that most fans never see. I have spent time researching how sponsorships truly work, how dark marketing influences decisions, and how financial interests shape the sport more than sporting fairness. That deeper understanding lets me write this world with authenticity and insight, and allows me to build a story that reflects both the beauty and the corruption of Formula 1 with honesty.

Premise Lines:

Premise A: Niko Sarin is at the height of his superstar F1 career when Vanterra Dynamics announces a massive expansion of their sponsorship. Niko initially brushes it off. Later, he accidentally discovers that Vanterra is the public face of his father Arvid's global drug empire. Arto, Niko's mentor and Arvid's brother, panics, and Niko ends the episode torn between running, confronting his father, or pretending nothing has changed.

Premise B: When Maya, a brilliant but overlooked junior data engineer, wants to be taken seriously in the Formula 1 paddock, she pushes back against team hierarchy and dismissive egos, forcing her to decide whether speaking the truth is worth risking her job.

Beat Sheet For episode 1:

Episode Title: Pole Position

Teaser:

- Niko wins a Grand Prix with chaotic brilliance. Fans cheer, cameras flash, and Niko soaks in the attention. Arto watches from the pit lane. He looks proud on the surface but something unsettles him. (A)

Act 1:

- At the press conference, Vanterra Dynamics announces a huge expansion of their partnership with Niko's team. The media praises the deal. Niko pretends to be excited, while Arto looks deeply uneasy. (A)
- Niko is pulled from interview to interview. Handlers push talking points into his hands. He complains to Arto that he feels like a product. Arto tries to warn him that Vanterra is not just another sponsor. Niko waves him off. (A)

Act 2:

- Niko attends a corporate dinner held by Vanterra. The vibe is corporate and cold. Executives praise him as a “symbol of global ambition,” which makes him uncomfortable. (A)
- One executive casually mentions that “Arvid wants him visible again.” Hearing his father’s name leaves Niko unsettled. He excuses himself, confused and restless. (A)

Act 3:

- While wandering down a quiet hallway to avoid more small talk, Niko overhears two Vanterra executives discussing sensitive business matters. They mention distribution routes, territory expansion, and the need to keep Niko unaware of his role in “the operation.” (A)
- Niko puts together the truth. Vanterra is not a tech company. It is the public face of Arvid Sarin’s criminal empire. He panics and leaves the dinner without telling anyone. (A)

Act 4:

- Niko storms into Arto’s hotel room and demands answers. Arto is devastated that the secret got out this way. After trying to deflect, he finally admits everything. (A)
- He explains that Arvid runs a global drug empire. He explains that Vanterra exists to mask it. He explains that the sponsorship was created to pull Niko back into the family. Arto says he raised Niko in racing to keep him safe from this world. (A)

Act 5:

- Niko struggles to process the revelations. His entire identity feels shaken. He questions whether his success was genuine or engineered. He questions why Arto never told him the truth. He questions whether he can ever escape the Sarin name. (A)
- The episode ends with Niko sitting alone with his helmet beside him. He thinks about the three paths in front of him. He can run from this. He can confront Arvid. Or he can pretend he knows nothing. He cannot choose. Not yet. (A)

Tag:

- A shaded figure sits in a dim office reviewing documents. A Vanterra executive informs the figure that Niko overheard everything. From the depths we hear, “Good. He is ready.” (A)