



The Battle for Las Vegas: The Law vs. The Mob

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From the 1970s through the mid-1980s, the Chicago Outfit dominated organized crime in Las Vegas. Unreported revenue, known as the “skim,” from Outfit-controlled casinos made its way out of Vegas by the bagful, ending up in the coffers of the Windy City crime bosses and their confederates around the Midwest.

To ensure the smooth flow of cash, the gangsters installed a front man with no criminal background, Allen R. Glick, as the casino owner of record, Frank “Lefty” Rosenthal as the real boss of casino operations, and Tony Spilotro as the ultimate enforcer, who’d do whatever it took to protect their interests. It wasn’t long before Spilotro, also in charge of Vegas street crime, was known as the “King of the Strip.”

Federal and local law enforcement, recognizing the need to rid the casinos of the mob and shut down Spilotro’s rackets, declared war on organized crime.

The Battle for Las Vegas relates the story of the fight between the tough guys on both sides, told in large part by the agents and detectives who knew they had to win.

The Battle for Las Vegas: The Law vs. The Mob Details

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From Reader Review The Battle for Las Vegas: The Law vs. The Mob for online ebook

Joshua says

The reason this book works is because it's concentrated in a great fashion. During the "glory days" of Vegas Vs. the Mob there was so much unaltered criminal activity going on that it's surprising all hell didn't break loose. This book looks at the rise and fall of Tony "The Ant" Spilotro in Las Vegas from the late 70's to his death in the early 80's. The movie Casino is basically this story although providing more of a spotlight on Lefty Rosenthal (who escaped death from a carbomb).

This book is a quick read that really provides a background of the relationship between the Cops and Robbers...or Cat and Mouse. In depth interviews and contributions from retired officers and ex-FBI provides some very interesting insight and good stories.

I love Las Vegas, always will, i'm glad i read this book..it only took 3 days...

SVRosenmeier says

The book is ok, it is mildly entertaining and gives a view of organised crime in Las Vegas (around mainly 1950-1980). It goes through a long list of names which are soon forgotten.

Michael Tarpinian says

Fascinating mob story.

Lynn Smith says

I enjoyed reading this book. It is about Las Vegas during the time when the Mafia controlled the Las Vegas casinos. It covers much of the same ground covered by the movie "Casino", focusing on mobster Tony Spilotro (the Joe Pesci character in "Casino" is based on Tony Spilotro). The story of Las Vegas and the mob has always fascinated me. This book goes all the way back to Bugsy Siegel but focuses mostly on Spilotro. It also goes into the skimming operations where the Chicago and Kansas City mobs would skim cash from the Vegas casinos. It's an easy read and it's very interesting. The writing is well done. If you liked the movie Casino, you will enjoy this book.

Sam says

A great book about Vegas history...highly recommended

Tom says

Informative and entertaining, though a little slight. Best used as a supplement to the Rosenthal/Spilotro story from CASINO.

Eric Pulsifer says

The Battle For Las Vegas shows what Vegas was like before it tried to go mainstream and family-friendly, when organized crime ran it instead of corporations.

Griffin tells a good story, researches it well and puts it together into a fast-moving narrative. My main knock is that reading it is like reading a police report ("the subject was observed ..."), but Griffin had been a cop for something like 20 years.

A good read, though. If you saw the movie Casino and want to know the story behind it, it's in this book.

Hugh McBride says

Dennis Griffin does an excellent job of bringing this turbulent time in Las Vegas's history to life, providing a who-what-when-where historical record and infusing it with glimpses into the motivations and personalities of men & women on both sides of this battle.

For most folks with a passing familiarity with Las Vegas, mentions of the mob are likely to prompt thoughts of iconic crime figures like Meyer Lansky and Bugsy Siegel. But Griffin's account of the decline of the Mafia's control over Las Vegas focuses on Tony Spilotro -- a mobster with much less of a national profile, a man whose sole conviction (for improperly filling out a form) resulted in a \$1 fine, and the person whose death coincided with the end of mob rule in Vegas.

Griffin, a military veteran and retired investigator, doesn't only report on the activities of the bad guys, but also provides excellent insights into the efforts (and sometimes internal battles) among the various law enforcement entities who were charged with attempting to free Vegas from the Mafia's control.

Griffin's account of period covered in his book is well researched and documented, and he seems to have spoken (or attempted to speak) with all the major players and observers of that area who were alive when he was writing.

Cloak88 says

A good Docu book about an interesting subject.

Just as the title states this Book chronicles the history of the battle between the the police and the Chicago Mob over the control of the Las Vegas casinos from roughly 1940 until the end of the 1970s. Expect lots and lots of names, places and bad guys slipping bye.

The book is well compiled, well ordered and covers a variety of subjects from the personal lives, political views and their exploits of those involved.

In short a good read for anyone interested the history of Las Vegas and her Mob connections.

Jan C says

A lot of focus on Tony Spilotro. Once he and his brother get whacked and buried in an Indiana cornfield a lot of the air goes out of the story. I have heard that there is no more mob in Vegas but I don't know whether to believe that. And this book didn't help clear it up. It just kind of left the reader (or in this case the listener) hanging.

A lot of repetition if, like me, the reader has read Casino by Nicholas Pileggi. Let alone, seen the movie.

Kind of disappointing.

Sassafrass says

This was actually quite good. It kept my attention. I think it helped that I was listening to this on audio. The Narrator (Michael Taylor) did an excellent job of adding voices to the interviews and such so I was able to add a personal aspect to the story.

I was amazed at how recently the mob had ties to Las Vegas. I guess I figured all of that was before my time, but it wasn't. And this also helped me realize that I just really don't have the balls to be a criminal. It's a simple as that. I couldn't stomach looking over my shoulder at all times. always trying to find the "real meaning" behind everyone's intentions. It's just not a way to live in my opinion.

I know that the next time I go to LV, I'll be looking at it through much different eyes.

Teri says

This book was packed with facts and good stories about the mob in Las Vegas. It was crazy how much I remembered from growing up during the 70s and 80s.

I'm a huge mob history enthusiast, former Ned Day fan, and loved the movie "Casino" for its portrayals and for my memory of when it was filming.

Finally, my uncle was a small part of the story on the "law" side of things- and it was really cool to read about his role.

Chuck Thomas says

If you enjoyed the movie Casino starring Robert DeNiro and Joe Pesci, then you'll probably enjoy reading this book. Covering the period from the post World War II era through the late 1980's, Griffin goes into detail about the Mob's influence on Las Vegas casinos and their various organized criminal activities in the

desert valley. Griffin focuses heavily on Tony "The Ant" Spilotro and his Hole In The Wall Gang crew, and to a lesser extent discusses Frank "Lefty" Rosenthal. Spilotro, as the Chicago Mob's enforcer in Las Vegas, led a ruthless and dangerous group of thugs, thieves, burglars and murderers. Griffin equally details the activities of law enforcement in Vegas, through research and interviews with members of the Las Vegas Metro PD, FBI and prosecutorial personnel who spent the peak years of their careers trying to bust Vegas' biggest mobsters. All in all, a pretty good historical overview of organized crime in the city that sprung out of the desert.

Jeff says

The great thing about this book was that it goes in detail about the history of Law Enforcement Officials who fought and won the Battle for Las Vegas. The Sheriff, Sheriff Deputy's, Police Officers, the FBI, the Judges, the District Attorneys the Federal Justice Department Officials and the print and TV news media finally brought in the open the fact that most of Vegas was controlled by the mob.

It does get into the lives of some of the criminal elements and what illegal activities they were involved with but instead of glorifying them, the LAW was the central theme of the book.

The obstacles Law Enforcement had in Vegas and elsewhere around the country to bring the mob to justice took years of hard work and incredible patience. I admire the fortitude and the persistence of men and woman who want to rid the world of bad men and bring them to justice.

Myth says

Historical Non-fiction is not among my favorite or preferred genres, so I was pleasantly surprised that I enjoyed this book.

I picked it up on a whim while in Las Vegas at the Stratosphere. I love Las Vegas and it was fun to learn about it. I was most interested in the mob activity mentioned in the book. I thought it slowed a bit in the middle and with the chapters that focused mainly on the police politics. It was still interesting to know, but it did make me end up taking more time than I would've liked.

The pace felt a lot faster when it was about the mob. I like all the little extras the author included. I think he did a good job of bringing in the relevant factors and some that were just entertaining. It's an easy read with a variety of sources and the chapters are divided up into smaller sections.
