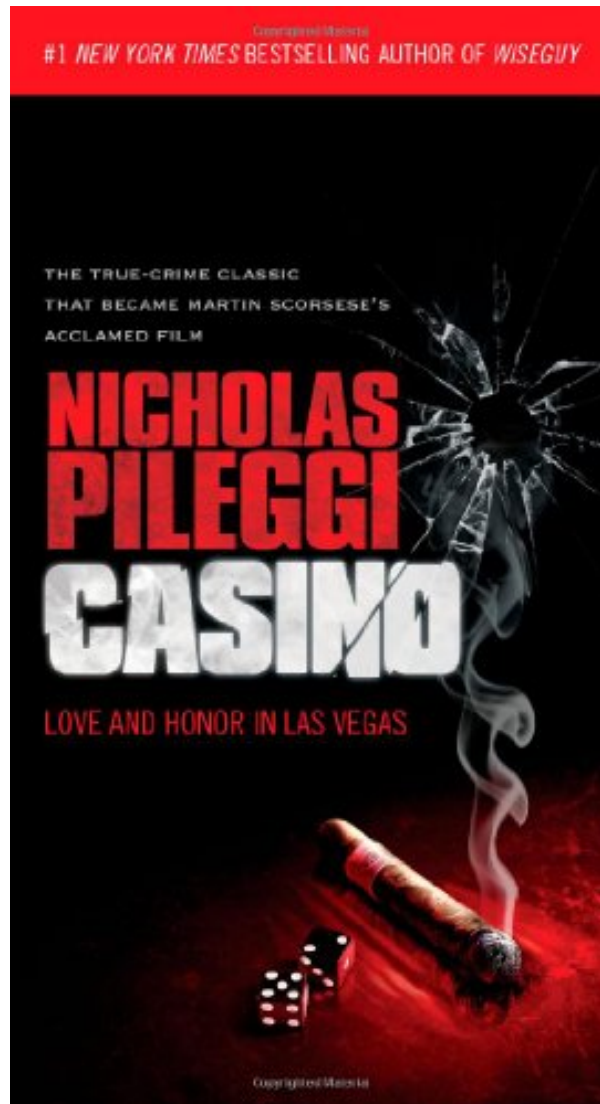


CASINO: LOVE AND HONOR IN LAS VEGAS BY NICHOLAS PILEGGI



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#1 *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *WISEGUY*

THE TRUE-CRIME CLASSIC
THAT BECAME MARTIN SCORSESE'S
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--Gregor A. Preston, Univ. of California Lib., Davis

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CASINO

From Nicholas Pileggi, author of *Wiseguy* —the #1 bestseller that became Martin Scorsese's Academy Award-winning film *GoodFellas*—comes the brilliantly told true story of love, marriage, adultery, murder, and revenge, Mafia-style . . . the shattering inside account of how the mob finally lost its stranglehold over the neon money-making machine it created: the multibillion-dollar casino gambling industry of Las Vegas.

CASINO

No one knew more about casinos than Frank "Lefty" Rosenthal, the gambling mastermind who, along with his best friend and partner, Anthony Spilotro, virtually ran Las Vegas for the mob. For years, it was the perfect arrangement—Lefty provided the smarts, while Tony kept the bosses happy with their weekly suitcases filled with millions in skimmed cash. It should have lasted forever, but Lefty's obsession with running the town—and Tony's obsession with Lefty's beautiful showgirl wife, Geri—eventually led to the betrayals and investigations that exploded into one of the greatest debacles in mob history.

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Most helpful customer reviews

53 of 54 people found the following review helpful.

Great piece on the mob and its Vegas heyday

By Scott Hedegard

Perhaps a little more well known for "Wiseguys", the book that became the movie "Goodfellas", Nicholas Pileggi is as good as they get when it comes to writing about the Mafia, its people and the drama of living the life. It is unfortunate that he doesn't work very fast - more books would be welcome.

"Casino" is the true story of Vegas in its heyday prior to the mega resort/casinos we see today, like Excalibur, New York New York, The Luxor, etc. Before large corporations turned Las Vegas into a theme park with casinos, the Chicago mob pretty much controlled the then famous casinos of the day, like the Stardust, where the movie "Casino" disguises it with the fictional name of The Tangier. Skimming the profits was the mob's business. Perhaps the greatest handicapper of all time, Frank "Lefty" Rosenthal, ran three major casinos and ran them well. Chicago sent out the legendary Tony Spilotro to keep an eye on "Lefty" and protect him and the moolah. Spilotro, however, had ideas of his own and soon became mired in a horrendous mess, dragging Rosenthal and eventually all the mob controlled casinos to their demise with him. Rosenthal still lives, and even has a web site, but Spilotro at books' end learns the hard way that being insubordinate to the mob and skimming their skim has dire consequences.

Pileggi is a master at showing a picture of the lives of these people, the shady deals, the threats from every corner, from the state, other criminals and the Mob, and how difficult life is for those who choose the gambling scene as a way of life.

It's morbid but fascinating reading. A must for fans of organized crime books.

93 of 104 people found the following review helpful.

Scorceese and De Niro together again!

By James R. Mckinley

Casino is nothing less than a Scorceese masterpiece, based primarily on the true story of the violent life and death of Tony "The Ant" Spilotro, who was the mob's chief enforcer during the early 70's, while protecting the mob's gambling interests run by Frank "Lefty" Rosenthal. As someone interested in the development of the American mafia, Casino is a brilliant translation of the building of Bugsy Siegel's vision in the desert up to the gaudy haven for high rollers that it was during the 70s. This movie brings the dusty pages of Las Vegas history to life. Spilotro was the real thing; Joe Pesci gives us only a taste of how brutal he really was. His death in a mid-west cornfield was the final act of this particular chapter in Las Vegas history. This is perhaps Scorceese's most underrated film, Casino contains one of De Niro's finest performances--his Sam Rothstein is controlled, nuanced, quiet, contemplative, depressed, ambitious, and furious. De Niro plays all these sentiments at once, and he ultimately creates a character that may not be Scorceese's most likable but is certainly his most mesmerizingly believable. The film's rare dual voiceover is so well executed, as Pesci and De Niro's characters fight for control over the storytelling just as they battle for power over Vegas. This film is flamboyantly stylized--In many ways it is about style. There are as many flashy whip-turns and ironic soundtrack selections as there are peach blazers and white patent leather loafers. If you want a film that is at once great entertainment and moving art, watch Casino, and let Scorceese transport you back to a rare moment in American history: "The last time tough guys like us we're ever given anything that 'effing' valuable."

87 of 98 people found the following review helpful.

New version of last year's Anniversary Edition that actually works...

By bunkaroo

This new "Special Edition" is a watered down version of last year's Anniversary Edition. Usually this is a bad thing. However, since Universal can't seem to figure out how to make a DVD-18 work properly, it's actually good they have seen fit to release this title as a single-sided, dual-layered DVD. Unfortunately, in doing so they have dropped most of the extras found on the Anniversary Edition. Still found on this release are the deleted scenes, the commentary and one of the featurettes.

Why they didn't decide to do 2 DVD-9's for this is beyond comprehension, but at least they've dropped the list price a few dollars.

My rating is for the overall the release, although in my opinion both the film and the transfer on this release get 5 stars. Colors are vivid and rich, and detail is very fine.

In closing, if you're not a "special features" junkie, definitely get this release, as it's much more likely to play properly. If you must have the Anniversary Edition, make sure you play the disc right away, because most likely, it will have problems.

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