



Busting Vegas: A True Story of Monumental Excess, Sex, Love, Violence, and Beating the Odds

By Ben Mezrich

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Busting Vegas: A True Story of Monumental Excess, Sex, Love, Violence, and Beating the Odds By Ben Mezrich

He played in casinos around the world with a plan to make himself richer than anyone could possibly imagine -- but it would nearly cost him his life.

Semyon Dukach was known as the Darling of Las Vegas. A legend at age twenty-one, this cocky hotshot was the biggest high roller to appear in Sin City in decades, a mathematical genius with a system the casinos had never seen before and couldn't stop -- a system that has never been revealed until now; that has nothing to do with card counting, wasn't illegal, and was more powerful than anything that had been tried before.

Las Vegas. Atlantic City. Aruba. Barcelona. London. And the jewel of the gambling crown -- Monte Carlo.

Dukach and his fellow MIT students hit them all and made millions. They came in hard, with stacks of cash; big, seemingly insane bets; women hanging on their arms; and fake identities. Although they were taking classes and studying for exams during the week, over the weekends they stormed the blackjack tables only to be harassed, banned from casinos, threatened at gunpoint, and beaten in Vegas's notorious back rooms.

The stakes were high, the dangers very real, but the players were up to the challenges, consequences be damned. There was Semyon Dukach himself, bored with school and broke; Victor Cassius, the slick, brilliant MIT grad student who galvanized the team; Owen Keller, with stunning ability but a dark past that would catch up to him; and Allie Simpson, bright, clever, and a feast for the eyes.

In the classroom, they were geeks. On the casino floor, they were unstoppable.

Busting Vega\$ is Dukach's unbelievably true story; a riveting account of monumental greed, excess, hubris, sex, love, violence, fear, and statistics that is high-stakes entertainment at its best.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Semyon Dukach couldn't believe how easy the money was. In one weekend, the MIT math genius and his team of geeks had made \$200,000 playing the blackjack tables in Las Vegas. They hadn't cheated. Instead, they had discovered one of humanity's greatest holy grails: a system to beat the casino. They had rendered obsolete the old saying that the house always wins. Dukach and his friends made millions during the 1990s playing blackjack in the world's top casinos, right under the noses of pit bosses and security consultants who thought they had seen it all. Dukach's story is told in author Ben Mezrich's vividly narrated book *Busting Vegas*.

Mezrich, the author of previous bestsellers about MIT gamblers and a colorful Ivy League trader in Japan, tells how Dukach's crew used a system that Vegas had never seen before. Dukach, the son of Russian immigrants who grew up in the poorest neighborhoods of New Jersey and Houston, was determined to climb out of poverty and help his family. His system didn't involve the commonly used techniques of card counting. Posing as an arms dealer or dentist, Dukach deliberately sought out blackjack dealers with small hands or thin fingers who frequently didn't conceal the bottom card when they shuffled the cards. Dukach would often manage to get a glimpse at the bottom card. This was highly significant because it was the card the dealer would hand the player to cut the deck. Dukach had practiced a technique to insert the card in a precise spot in the deck and then make big bets when the card was dealt. Dukach and his team ended up barred from casinos, threatened at gunpoint, and beaten in Vegas's notorious back rooms. This is a riveting yarn. —*Alex Roslin*

About the Author

Ben Mezrich graduated *magna cum laude* from Harvard in 1991. He has published twelve books, including the *New York Times* bestsellers *The Accidental Billionaires*, which was adapted into the Academy Award-winning film *The Social Network*, and *Bringing Down the House*, which has sold more than 1.5 million copies in twelve languages and became the basis for the Kevin Spacey movie *21*. Mezrich has also published the national bestsellers *Sex on the Moon*, *Ugly Americans*, *Rigged*, and *Busting Vegas*. He lives in Boston.

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The narrative drive that moves this audio along is the true story of a team, assembled by an MIT math whiz, that used three complicated techniques to tilt blackjack odds in their favor and win a pile of money. The accomplished writer of this fascinating story has a previous book on gambling strategies, as well as some well-received fictional titles. His attention to setting and nuance of behavior are vivid and immediate; they rivet the listener to a story line that's already as fascinating as any you'll hear. As narrator, the author is likable and easy to listen to. His brief interview at the book's end is a bonus for anyone interested in the writer's craft. T.W. © AudioFile 2006, Portland, Maine-- Copyright © AudioFile, Portland, Maine

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Cynthia Carter:

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David Marx:

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Sharon Edwards:

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