



Crime Pays: Scoundrels and Their Crooked Schemes

Joe Bruno

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Crime Pays: Scoundrels and Their Crooked Schemes will take you on a raucous ride that slithers across the underbelly of American society, where every crook and criminal has their own unique gimmick to fill their greedy pockets with other people's hard-earned cash.

Virginia Hill was a knock-around broad who bedded down the biggest gangsters of her time. It was said Hill spent more time on her back than Michelangelo did painting the Sistine Chapel. The word on the Las Vegas streets was that she was the exclusive property of mobster Bugsy Siegel, and it was plain to everyone in the know that Bugsy was just crazy about Hill.

But was Virginia Hill really a Trojan horse in Siegel's camp; put there by the Mafia to make sure Bugsy was giving them an honest count on their Las Vegas ventures?

The answer is not that cut and dried.

Degenerate gambler and sportsman, Jacob (Bald Jack) Rose (Rosenzweig), due to a rare disease, had nary a hair on his entire body. But what Rose lacked in hair, he more than made up for with a diabolical criminal brilliance that put him "head and shoulders" (no pun intended) above the competition.

In the early 1900s, one of Rose's competitors was fellow gambler Herman Rosenthal, a mean and snaky runt, who had the reputation of being a stool pigeon for the New York City Police Department. Rose and Rosenthal both owned competing gambling joints in the seedy uptown area of Manhattan called the "Tenderloin," or "Satan's Circus."

Rosenthal's partner of sorts was corrupt New York City Police Lieutenant Charles Becker, who was not adverse to taking money with both hands from the Tenderloin's gambling joints and houses of prostitution. Rose and Rosenthal both paid Becker handsomely, but then Rosenthal decided that Becker had to go.

What happened next was called "The Crime of the Century."

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