

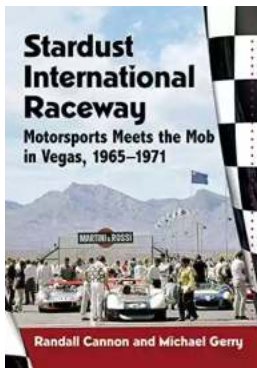
# Motorports Meets The Mob In Vegas: A Thrilling Tale from 1965 to 1971



Las Vegas, known for its glamorous casinos and entertaining shows, may not be the first place that comes to mind when thinking about motorsports. However, between the years of 1965 and 1971, this city witnessed an unusual intersection between the world of high-speed racing and the notorious mob. This unique blend of adrenaline, danger, and organized crime created a captivating chapter in the history of both motorsports and Las Vegas.

## Origins of the Connection

The connection between motorsports and the mob in Las Vegas can be traced back to the 1960s when the city was experiencing rapid growth. As the gambling industry flourished, the mob saw an opportunity to invest in racing and profit from its popularity. They recognized the potential in combining the excitement of motorsports with the allure of Vegas.



## Stardust International Raceway: Motorsports Meets the Mob in Vegas, 1965-1971

by What She Said Stitches(Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 32419 KB  
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Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 915 pages



During this time, one prominent figure emerged as a key player in both worlds: Anthony "Tony" Mirra. Mirra was a well-known mobster with close ties to the Chicago outfit, which had a significant influence over Las Vegas at the time. Known for his involvement in various illegal activities, Mirra saw motorsports as a perfect avenue for money laundering and expanding the mob's reach.

### The Birth of the Stardust International Raceway

In 1965, the Stardust International Raceway was established in Las Vegas. Located just outside the city, this track became the epicenter of motorsport events that would soon attract both professional racers and shady characters from the

mob. The track was alluring, with its challenging layout and bright lights, attracting a crowd hungry for thrilling races.

It didn't take long for Mirra to recognize the potential to use the raceway as a front for illegal activities. Through his connections, he ensured that the track became a hub for money laundering and other nefarious operations. The mob's involvement in the racing scene brought together a mix of honest competitors and those with ulterior motives.

## **The Glamour and Danger Collide**

The 1960s and 1970s were a golden era for motorsports. Iconic drivers like Mario Andretti, A.J. Foyt, and Richard Petty were household names, and racing was capturing the imagination of millions. In Vegas, these stars brought glamour and excitement to the city, drawing in crowds eager for a glimpse of their favorite drivers.

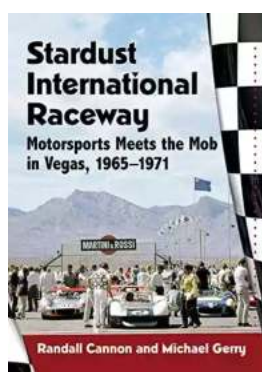
However, accompanying this glamour was an underbelly of danger and corruption. Behind the scenes, the mob controlled the races, exerting influence over officials, racers, and even the outcome of certain races. Illicit gambling activities thrived within the racing circuit, with bets being placed on pre-determined winners and rigged races.

## **The Downfall and Legacy**

The mob's grip on the motorsports scene in Vegas was eventually brought down by a combination of law enforcement efforts and changes within the city's leadership. In 1971, the Stardust International Raceway closed its doors, marking the end of an era that had seen motorsports intertwine with organized crime.

Despite its controversial history, this period left a lasting legacy in Vegas. The blend of excitement, danger, and mob intrigue became part of the city's mystique, adding to its allure as a place where anything could happen. Today, Las Vegas is recognized worldwide for its entertainment industry, and while motorsports no longer have the mob's influence, the memories of those thrilling races still linger.

The story of motorsports meeting the mob in Vegas from 1965 to 1971 is filled with suspense, danger, and high-speed thrills. The union of these two worlds brought together honest racers, glamorous fans, and notorious mobsters, creating a captivating blend that captivated audiences for six exhilarating years. Although the era may be over, the legacy lives on, reminding us of an extraordinary chapter in the history of both motorsports and the city of Las Vegas.



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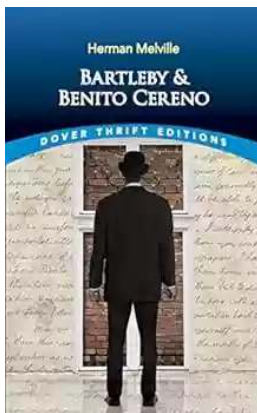
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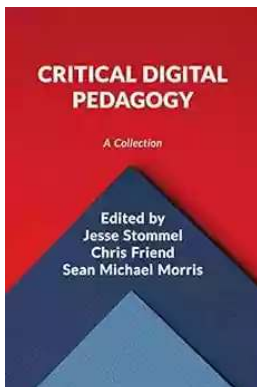
Professional motorsports came to Las Vegas in the mid-1950s at a bankrupt horse track swarmed by gamblers--and soon became enmeshed with the government and organized crime. By 1965, the Vegas racing game moved from makeshift facilities to Stardust International Raceway, constructed with real

grandstands, sanitary facilities and air-conditioned timing towers. Stardust would host the biggest racing names of the era--Mario Andretti, Parnelli Jones, John Surtees, Mark Donohue, Bobby Unser, Dan Gurney and Don Garlits among them. Established by a notorious racketeer, the track stood at the confluence of shadowy elements--wiretaps, casino skimming, Howard Hughes, and the beginnings of Watergate. The author traces the Stardust's colorful history through the auto racing monthlies, national newspapers, extensive interviews and the files of the FBI.



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