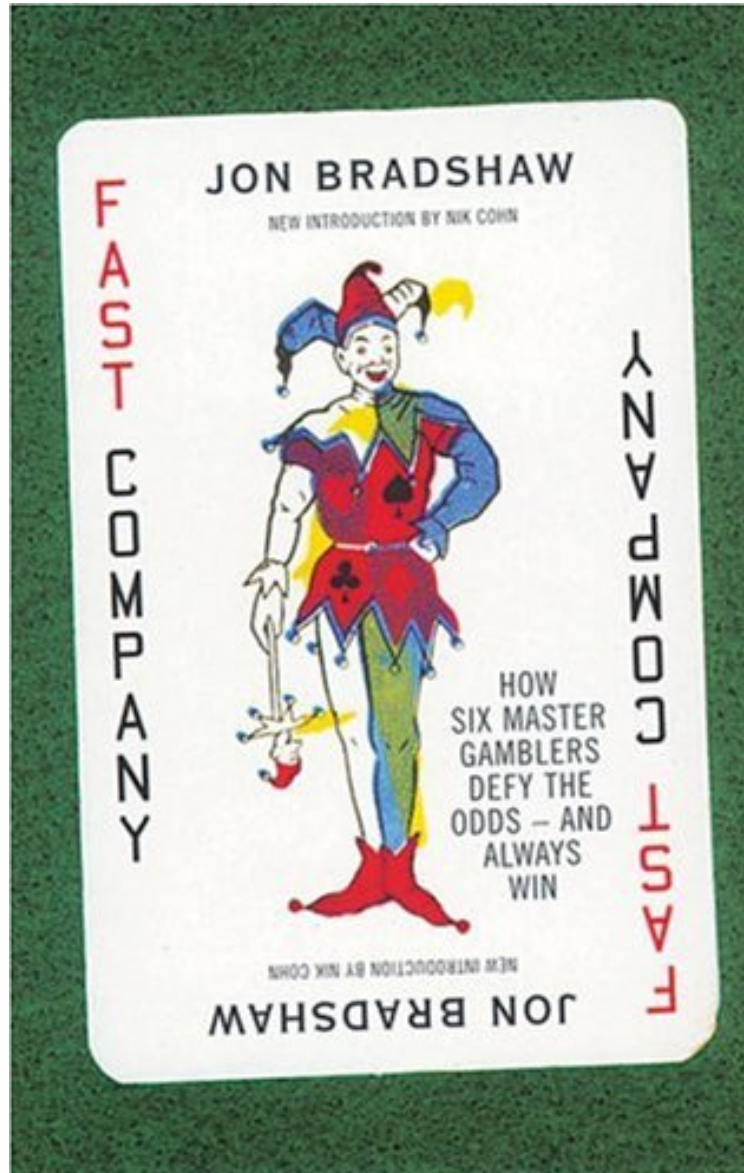


[Free read ebook] Fast Company: How Six Master Gamblers Defy the Odds - and Always Win

## Fast Company: How Six Master Gamblers Defy the Odds - and Always Win

Jon Bradshaw

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**Jon Bradshaw : Fast Company: How Six Master Gamblers Defy the Odds - and Always Win** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fast Company: How Six Master Gamblers Defy the Odds - and Always Win:

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Easily one of the best books on gamblers

By K. Swanson

I'm sitting here and recalling some of my favorites of the nearly hundred poker/gambling books I bought between 1999 and 2002 while learning the ropes. Looking through my collection I find not one but three copies of *Fast Company*. The memories come flooding back! I have three copies because back then it was out of print and I bought every used copy I could find online, just to be sure I always have a copy. It is that good.

Bradshaw was a truly gifted essayist and observer and was never out to sell the gamblers here as heroes. What he did instead was get inside their heads like a master poker player, and then show us what made them tick. Add to that their own reminiscences of many of the other greats and you get one of the most in-depth of all books on gamblers and their passion. (Those who judge gamblers as somehow unholy might learn a thing or three from this book, and might consider that our entire global economy is run by Wall Street gamblers who have recently made some of the worst wagers in history...though when you keep your billions in profits but your debts are picked up by the taxpayer, it's always a good bet!) The extra stroke of genius of *Fast Company* is that Bradshaw was able to meet and chronicle the lives of some of America's greatest gamblers (and what country is more based on gambling?) before they died, and before most in the mainstream realized how special they really were. Each of the six portraits is a masterpiece. It's hard to pick a favorite as each article is so fine, but the pieces on Johnny Moss and Titanic Thompson are truly legendary, as were their subjects. I won't go into detail other than to say that I just reread the last paragraph and got a chill up my spine remembering what I felt when I first read this book. I learned a lot about poker and life from *Fast Company*, lessons that have served me well and made me money ever since. Never underestimate the power of a great book! No hyperbole could match how far beyond other gambling writers Bradshaw was/is. He understood how complex and incredibly sharp and funny and wise and foolish these men were, because he was in their league. He doesn't lionize them nor does he demean them. He shows full respect for their incredible lives and exploits (and is willing to slyly point up their hubris, as with Fats) and by the time you've read about these six gamblers (three of the greatest poker players included, Moss being perhaps the finest of all time) you have a true feel for what being a real road gambler back in the day meant. There's also wry laughs aplenty, as in the Bobby Riggs tale, and so many great anecdotes. So many! The Gods of Gambling made sure that a writer of Bradshaw's calibre was able to meet Moss and Thompson et al before they (and he) died, so that we would have a book that finally reveals the depth and breadth (as well as the shallowness) of the life of a world-class gambler. These are not always the greatest of men but they are all great characters, with all that implies. For some reason I've never loaned this book to any friends; it's always felt like my own little secret world in some strange way, a hidden canyon full of dappled sunlight and dark corners that shows how glorious and venal life can simultaneously be. Read it and you'll see why. It is a very special book indeed, and it amazes me that it has never received anywhere close to the acclaim it deserves. Only two reviews five years after the second reprint in three decades? (Blessings to the reprinters, by the way! Few books are more worthy.) Truly incredible, especially in light of the poker boom and resultant poker book boom (most of which are trash and not worthy of sitting on a shelf next to this tome). And a dime for a used copy? Deal of the century! Buy a copy for everyone you know who appreciates great writing when they read it, or who has ever stayed up all night in a game trying to get unstuck. Thank you Jon Bradshaw, wherever you are, for writing the definitive book on what it means to be a gambler, warts and all. You are in the same class as Thompson and Moss: the best in your field, and sadly underappreciated by history. That will change. (One day you will hear this book mentioned and quoted by every lame tv poker commentator out there. Everyone tells the Moss/Greek story, but this is the only version in Johnny's own words.) This book will also sooner or later be accorded its just position atop the gamblers' literary pantheon beside Dostoyevsky and friends. Then again, true greatness is its own reward. As any real gambler knows (and who amongst us is not gambling every day, even just by driving on the highway or eating genetically modified "food"?), it's living the peaks to the fullest that counts, and then surviving to scale them again. Some of the finest and most interesting people I have ever met were at a poker table. Beauty is oft found in the most unlikely places. *Fast Company* has my highest recommendation for those who respect men who live life the way they want to, and long to slip back in time to a world before plastic was invented.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Journalistic art at its best

By Riccardo

Bradshaw's collection of gambler biographies is a stylistic masterpiece of sports journalism--it really didn't matter what the subject matter was, the style alone makes it worth reading, like a lot of Fitzgerald's short stories. The gambling life inherently adds scandal and pathos to the stories in a way I can't quite imagine for sports biographies. These biographies also reveal a social history of an America which wasn't quite gone by 1974 but is certainly lost today. If you think you aren't interested in gambling as a subject you'll still want to read this for the style and for the picture it paints of men living hard and fast in the era when laws were made to be broken...

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I expected more.

By William J. Nicholas

This book by Jon Bradshaw is composed of vignettes from the lives of six master gamblers: Pug Pearson, Johnny Moss, Titanic Thompson, Bobby Riggs, Tim Holland and Minnesota Fats. Bradshaw is definitely a good writer (he co-wrote "Backgammon -- The Cruellest Game" with Barclay Cooke). There is no question that the book is interesting, but for some reason it seems to be lacking. One thing that bothered me was the inordinate space given to Minnesota Fats, a character who is perhaps the least interesting of the six. Also, Bradshaw seems to give a different impression of the gamblers from other sources I have read. For example, Johnny Moss is portrayed as a good man, introspective and

caring. Most other accounts portrait him as vicious, cruel, and almost sociopathic. He also portrays Tim Holland in a much better light than I have read elsewhere. Most of Titanic Thompson's propositions have been listed repeatedly in the gambling literature; there is nothing new here. I suppose that considering the subject matter, these faults mean very little in the scheme of things. But they prevent me from giving the book five stars. (Incidentally, you can have my copy by going to Bill's\_Books at the Marketplace!)

Poker players Johnny Moss, Pug Pearson, and Titanic Thompson; tennis player Bobby Riggs; pool player Minnesota Fats; and backgammon player Tim Holland have come away with their pockets filled and their sense of infallibility intact. The dramatic descriptions of the ambience and the games are riveting, but more intriguingly, Jon Bradshaw deftly probes these gamblers minds and hearts as he attempts to define what makes some men winners and most losers.