

The Man Who Invented Las Vegas

Author's Comments

After my father's death in 1962, I began hearing family stories about his pivotal role in Las Vegas history. For this reason, I eagerly anticipated the Warren Beatty film "Bugsy." Sadly when the movie was released in December 1991, the story on-screen bore little relationship to my treasured family memories.

I launched a one-man media campaign to publicize my father's story. Initially, I encountered a stone wall. Enchanted by the persuasive power of filmed legend, the press was reluctant to criticize "Bugsy's" factual basis. Getting the truth out was a slow, uphill battle. Finally, on Academy Award Night in 1992, many papers, including a few national dailies, ran accurate accounts containing elements of my father's story.

Although my efforts had paid off, I felt that the battle was just beginning. There was so much of my father's story still to be told. I decided to take some time off and uncover the full story behind the Flamingo Hotel. I began my research by trying to prove the Bugsy myth correct. I was unable to find a shred of evidence to support either Bugsy's or the filmmakers' claims. I then turned to my father's well-documented life. Methodically piecing together everything from family interviews to cancelled checks, generated such a compelling paper-trail that I could not understand how history had gone so far astray.

I packaged all this material into a voluminous manuscript and sent it to British biographer, Robert Lacey. Lacey, who created the definitive account of organized crime in America with the 1991 publication of his *Little Man* a biography of Meyer Lansky, suggested trimming the manuscript down into a much smaller, but no less persuasive book.

"Stick exclusively with your Dad's story," he recommended. "That's what's never been told before." Six years later, as I look back on four years of research and the two years I spent actually writing "The Man Who Invented Las Vegas," I realize that Robert Lacey gave me very, very good advice.