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INDUCEMENTS AND THE HARD SELL

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INTRODUCTION

Interest in gambling is old, yet the sociological literature on it is fairly limited. Problems focused on have been the legalization of gambling (casinos and lotteries), the mathematics of gambling (card counting, probabilities), and the psychology of gambling (motivation to gamble, compulsive gambling). In the few studies in the sociology of gambling, the problems focused on are the work situation, the social function of gambling, and the game-like character of gambling. In this paper, I shall look at a problem that has been the prime domain of psychology, sociologically: compulsive gambling.

With increased legalization of gambling in horse racing, lotteries, and casinos the problem of compulsive gambling will become one of increasing importance. Estimates of the number of compulsive gamblers in the United States range from between 6 and 12 million people. (Martinez, 1976:347) Compulsive gamblers come from all walks of life; from both sexes, from all races, and all socio-economic strata. Compulsive behavior is a repeated "irrational" act one performs against one's will. The actor often feels out of control.

We (of Gamblers Anonymous) are men and women who have lost the ability to control our gambling. Countless times we have sworn we would never make another bet, only to inexplicably find ourselves again and again in the grip of the same powerful obsession. (Gamblers Anonymous, 1964:vii)

The destructive consequences to self and society are gleaned from a few excerpts of compulsive gamblers' lives:

I was forced to relinquish my managerial job in order to devote more time to gambling. I found another fine position with a chemical company, but it too went down the drain. I tried to maintain a facade of respectability through this tailspin, but the virus ate away at me so that I became but a shell of my former self, sans truth, sans initiative, sans everything. (Gamblers Anonymous:x)

Gambling caused me to be thrown out of college, to receive a dishonorable discharge from the army, to lose a wonderful girl to whom I was engaged, to disregard my own welfare and that of those close to me, to never be

productive in work, to steal, cheat, lie and con anyone out of anything, and to go to prison for writing bad checks. All this was crowded into a very few years, for I am now only 27. (Gamblers Anonymous:xiii)

How could this nightmare have come about? I had an excellent family background, a university degree, had served as a naval officer in World War II and in Korea, had made outstanding progress in eight years with a large corporation, and above all was blessed with a wife and daughter who would make any man proud. Yet I was on the brink of suicide. My gambling had brought me to a dead end. (Gamblers Anonymous:xiv)

Lots of gamblers speak of how all-consuming gambling becomes; it often results in the gambler neglecting job, family and self. Writing bad checks, stealing, and even conning one's friends and family are common consequences of compulsive gambling. The most dramatic consequences are suicide and attempted suicide. It is with attempted suicide, arrest for writing bad checks, or loss of job that the compulsive gambler seeks help for his/her compulsive gambling. What kind of help do they get and how helpful is it?

APPROACHES TO COMPULSIVE GAMBLING.

There are three approaches in the literature to compulsive gambling: the psychoanalytic, Gamblers Anonymous, and what I shall call the deviant career-conscious mood perspective. In the psychoanalytic model, the gambler's conscious reasons for gambling are dismissed as irrational; instead, his/her motives are located in the unconscious. (Bergler, 1958) Bergler points out the illogic of five common responses gamblers give for gambling. To the comments: "I gamble because I want to win money," and "I gamble because life is boring, and the game gives me thrills and excitement," Bergler responds that the gambler will inevitably lose in the long run and he points to the selective memory of the gambler who remembers the success and corresponding excitement but conveniently forgets the failure and corresponding despair and sorrow. (Bergler:8-9) The idea that one will inevitably lose in the long run may hold by definition for compulsive gamblers but not for professional gamblers. A recent

example is the banning of card counters from casinos because they consistently win. Bergler looks only at compulsive losers (gamblers) and fails to note that some gamblers consistently win.

Bergler goes on to dismiss three additional reasons gamblers give for gambling as irrational. First, the idea of "subjective certainty" is correctly dismissed as irrational. The gambler gives no logical reason for a selection; s/he states they "just know" they are going to win. Bergler then points to a common characteristic of both the pros and the losers; an "unbounded faith in his own cleverness." (Bergler:9) The spirit of individualism is rampant at the race track. The pros may display this front, however, their basis for selection and wagering is never a personal attribution; it is always a rational logical analysis of the data at their disposal. The card counter may think s/he is clever but their actions or bets are rooted soundly in mathematical probabilities. The final reason gamblers give for gambling is luck. "The gambler claims that life is nothing but a gamble." (Bergler:9) Bergler counters this argument stating that the truth lies somewhere between luck and hard work. Here again the pros never believe that they win because of luck; they work long and hard at perfecting their models and making sound selections. They are thankful when luck is with them, but do not count on it. Belief in luck, and the idea that life is a gamble are often cited as evidence that gamblers want the easy way out. They do not work hard like the rest of us. This is a common stereotype despite regular gamblers investing enormous time and energy into gambling.

The psychoanalytic model quickly dismisses the conscious explanations of the gambler and focuses on unconscious motives. The quick dismissal of the gambler's conscious explanations is rooted in the evidence used by psychoanalysis. The psychoanalytic model rests on clinical evidence gathered from gamblers who have problems and seek help from psychiatrists. This data base is too limited. What about the winners, the pros who do not go to a psychiatrist? The conscious explanations of professional gamblers cannot be so easily dismissed as irrational; in fact, the pros are a valuable source of information on the nature of gambling.

The psychoanalytic model is often referred to as the medical model. William H. Boyd, M.D., (1976) working in this tradition distinguishes between two types of gamblers: the pathological and the non-pathological gambler. (371) The pathological gambling is of course the compulsive gambler. Boyd sees pathological gambling as a symptom of an underlying personality disorder. (371) He argues that gambling produces the gambler's drug: excitement. Winning or losing is relatively unimportant to the gambler; important are the states of excitement, euphoria, power, and triumph and control.

"The essence of gambling is to avoid pain---that is, to replace this with the thrill of excitement." (Boyd:375) The pathological gambler's personality in part seeks pleasure and avoids pain. The pathological gambler's personality is also a regressive one; the gambler uses fantasy to avoid pain which was useful as a child, but as an adult is archaic. (Boyd:375) Instead of working through, for example, painful relationships the gambler resorts to his/her "masturbatory," "autistic-like activity": gambling. Thus the pathological gambler's personality avoids reality for fantasy when facing problems. The cure or treatment is for the gambler to open himself up to re-experiencing the pain that "emanates from unconscious sources unavailable to him." (Boyd:374) The psychiatrist primarily assists in this catharsis process.

The success rate of this treatment is low. The patient often leaves when s/he is feeling better. They eventually return to the gambling tables or arena. The view of the patient, being pleasure seeking and pain avoiding, and regressive is too negative and narrow. People not only act to avoid pain and seek pleasure; people look at possibilities, weigh them, and make rational reasoned choices. People are more than instinctive child-like creatures; they are social adult persons. Boyd's model blames the victim. He makes a personal attribution by locating the real problem as a personality disorder. His blaming the victim becomes clear when one looks at Boyd's description of excitement:

In this state of mind (excitement) the gambler is the master of his fate and all else is excluded. He is lost in a world of his own where the odds do not apply to him. Even time is nonexistent, and in a certain sense he is insane in that he cannot evaluate his behavior in order to adapt to or take

advantage of reality. In this case the reality means he cannot win because the mathematical odds are against him. (Boyd:372)

The gambler is "in a world of his own," not an arena that buttresses or elicits such feeling states as excitement. The gambler did not create this state of mind; it is a social production. Further in the paper I shall get to how the environment produces or at least encourages these feeling states.

A second approach to compulsive gambling which is more effective than the psychoanalytic model is Gamblers Anonymous (GA). Like the psychoanalytic model's treatment, in GA the gambler talks about the gambling experience as "faces pain; by working through their problems. Unlike with the psychiatrist, at GA the catharsis takes place among fellow compulsive gamblers who have and are working through similar problems. Here there is trusting fellowship, support and exchange of techniques for dealing with some of the monetary and familial problems which resulted from compulsive gambling. Gamblers Anonymous views compulsive gambling as a progressive emotional illness, "which can never be cured, but which can be arrested." (Gamblers Anonymous, 1964:32)

GA mainly deals with the resulting problems of the gambler's activity; how one pays back the debts incurred, finding a job, and getting a lawyer. It stresses that the gambler individually cannot deal with the progressive emotional illness; instead, they have to rely on one another for support and in general, rely on a force more powerful than themselves for dealing with their illness. For some members this more powerful force is a religious God while for others its the social fellowship of the group. The assumption that compulsive gambling is a medical problem leads GA to blame the individual. Compulsive gambling is an individual weakness. To overcome it one needs allies. The non-individual causes, however, are not looked into; instead, the symptoms are dealt with.

A third approach in the literature which I shall call the deviant career-conscious mood approach in part draws on and elaborates GA's approach. It lays out the course the

compulsive gambler travels from the compulsive gambler's perspective. It sees the process not as an illness but as a deviant career. This implies the possibility of change; of changing careers or being cured. This approach is developed by Tomas Martinez (1976) who conducted indepth interviews with members of the San Francisco chapter of GA for insight into the subjective experience of the compulsive gambler. Unlike the psychoanalytic approach he notes the existent of two styles of play: the compulsive and the professional. (367) Martinez lays out he compulsive gambler's subjective reward structure using what he calls conscious moods to delineate the various stages of the compulsive gambler's deviant career.

Martinez, drawing on David Matza and G.H. Mead, defines conscious moods as "the subjective indicator of a particular configuration of mind, self and society." (351) The change from one mood to another he calls a shift. He also distinguishes between a conscious mood and an ordinary mood. Ordinary moods are short lived and do not involve a redefinition of self.

There are five conscious moods that lead to an individual becoming a compulsive gambler. The individual often begins gambling with friends or relatives and is usually a willing participant. S/he moves from occasional gambler to regular and eventually to compulsive gambler. The five pleasurable conscious moods which become possible with increased participation are: risk-taking, here and now, fantasy, euphoria, and mysticism. All are important; if the person does not experience all five pleasurable moods it is unlikely s/he will become a compulsive gambler.

In risk-taking, the individual not only uses the occasion as an opportunity to show strong character, as pointed out by Goffman, s/he feels as if they are really "living." (Martinez:355) Their minds and bodies are filled with life. "Mind and body have a problem to attend to--- managing the moment." (Martinez:355) When success is achieved, "movements appear easy, almost graceful and cool." (Martinez:355)

In here and now the mind's full attention is on the situation at hand. (Martinez:355) The individual forgets all other problems and concerns; s/he concentrates exclusively on the problem at hand. If the person achieves success as a result, s/he gains confidence and eventually looks on the game as one that can be successfully managed. This leads to further involvement. The individual also associates a sense of freedom from outside worries with the conscious mood of here and now.

As the individual becomes more involved in the game, "...part of the mind becomes free to participate in another conscious mood---that of fantasy." (Martinez:357) There are three types of fantasy, but gamblers primarily participate in one. First, there is a reconstruction of the past fantasy. In this type the gambler returns to some past situation armed with the advantage of hindsight and does what s/he did not do but could have done in the past situation. In this fantasy, "the subject is rewriting his personal biography in order to construct a social foundation for feeling a sense of high self-esteem."(Martinez:357) In the second fantasy, the "subject" reconstructs the present. They see themselves as more powerful, more prestigious than they really are. This fantasy is maintained in part because of the high tolerance of the gambling subculture. Personal questions are almost taboo in this subculture. The third fantasy is more common than the other two. The gambler fantasizes about a big win and what s/he would do with the money. The gambler usually sees himself or herself as a "good-hearted" person; one who helps out friends and relatives, donates money to the church, hospitals, or schools. (Martinez:358) As a result of experiencing the conscious mood of fantasy, the gambler becomes "totally involved" in the game. "Total-involvement means a total involvement of self for the moment." (Martinez: 358)

The fourth and rarest conscious mood is euphoria. "It is typically short-lived, occurring usually during condensed moments of important events, such as winning a large pot after a calculated bluff or winning on the long shot." (Martinez:358) The gambler experiences body "bouyancy and vigor. It is sometimes described as *warm flashes across the stomach or an electric*

charge throughout the body by compulsive gamblers." (Martinez: 358) As the gambler experiences the conscious moods of fantasy and euphoria, s/he moves from occasional gambler to regular. The gambler often externalizes or acts out their fantasy.

The gambler also develops "sacred rituals" while playing and these make possible the fifth pleasurable conscious mood: mysticism. "Shifting into the conscious mood of mysticism enables the subject to conceive of self transcendently. It is described as a sense of communicating with the great forces in nature or God." (Martinez:360) The compulsive gambler feels all powerful when s/he experiences the conscious mood of mysticism.

The next stage of the compulsive gambler's career is a direct result of losing several large sum of money. The gambler gradually develops a negative conception of self. The next conscious mood the compulsive gambler experiences is the mythical pinch; it is the first of two unpleasant conscious moods.(Martinez:362) This comes about as the gambler continues to lose and it is the "awakening" from the dream-like pleasurable conscious moods. After the mythical pinch, the gambler experiences the ordinary, losing aftermath mood. In this, the gambler usually berates himself or herself: "I hate myself, or You stupid bastard." (Martinez:362) They often swore off gambling; this, however, is short lived. As the gambler continues to lose and develops an increasingly negative view of themselves; s/he eventually hits the final conscious mood: rock bottom. The compulsive gambler thinks more and more of changing their behavior. Events the gambler commonly interprets as rock bottom are: actual or threatened incarceration, loss of job, family dissolution, and near suicide. Rock bottom lasts longer than the losing aftermaths. (Martinez:365) The gambler has a depressing view of self and often pities himself or herself. (Martinez:365) The gambler no longer experiences fantasy, euphoria, or mysticism, "but there is a strong mood or here and now and great potential for risk-taking." (Martinez:365)

The problem the compulsive gambler faces in rock bottom is: "He is a loner, does not open himself up easily to others, and has done many things he believes few would do or

understand. He is down on himself, depressed and groping mentally for some answer to his problems." (Martinez:366) This is when some seek help from clergy, from psychiatrists, or from Gamblers Anonymous; others though unfortunately commit or attempt suicide.

Martinez's description of the conscious moods the compulsive gambler experiences is valuable from a subjectivist perspective. It is perhaps the best description of the process of becoming a compulsive gambler there is in the compulsive gambling literature. He, however, fails to elaborate on the differences between a compulsive gambler's and a professional gambler's deviant career. He largely accepts the psychoanalytic view of a pleasure seeking, pain avoiding human being. He also draws heavily on Skinnerian reward-response psychology. That is, he views the compulsive gamblers as "subjects" who respond only to pleasurable and painful stimuli (conscious moods). In distinguishing between the professional and the compulsive gambler, Martinez implies that for the pro the conscious moods do not replace money as the ends of the game as they do for the compulsive gambler. He, however, does not explore why this is so.

My major objection to Martinez's approach is that it is too subjective. The subjective perspective is valuable for illustrating the stages the compulsive gambler goes through. It, however, is not an explanation for the process as Martinez seems to imply. He does not pick up on the environmental aspects of the process of becoming a compulsive gambler. Like the other two approaches to compulsive gambling, he ends up blaming the victim by focusing too much on the conscious moods and not enough on the shifts. When he deals with the shifts, he blames the individual for contributing to them despite making two references to environmental factors which contribute to the process of becoming a compulsive gambler.

The first reference is made by a compulsive gambler who points out that "in commercial gambling establishments there is a clear psychological attempt to minimize the importance of money through the use of chips." (Martinez:361) The conceptualization of money is a key point in Martinez's argument. He implies that it is because of the five pleasurable conscious

moods that the compulsive gambler changes his/her conception of money. Chips make the spending of money easier; they do not look like "green backs." The second reference to environmental factors is made in connection with Martinez's attempt to explain why after reaching rock bottom, the second of the painful conscious moods, and not experiencing some of the pleasurable moods the compulsive gambler continues to engage in an essentially painful exercise. He explains that there is no revitalizing fantasy, no euphoria. The poverty of the rituals yields a poverty of mysticism, but there is a strong mood of here and now and great potential for risk-taking. (Martinez:365) In other words, the gambler does not experience three of the five pleasurable conscious moods, but s/he still experiences here and now and risk-taking while they go through the essentially ritualized painful activity. During this period, "the subject is, in fact, psychologically overwhelmed by the here and now of his situation and the high risk of continued participation." (Martinez:365, emphasis added) It is the task of this paper to outline the situational factors framing the subjective stages outlined by Martinez of becoming a compulsive gambler.

My use of the terms environment and situation are fairly wide; they include everything that is not personal. I shall, however, limit the discussion to interaction at the physical plant or arena in which gambling takes place; for example, the sporting arena of a race track, the casino proper or the commercial card club. The terms could legitimately be used for gamblers encountering gambling friends outside of the physical gambling arena, but the terms will be restricted to actions and interactions within the gambling arena proper.

THE SETTING: THE RACE TRACK

Horse racing has for centuries been the most popular gambling game. Between 1960 and 1974, horse racing's yearly attendance was three times that of the combined total of major league baseball, collegiate football, and professional football. (Herman, 1976:41) Horse racing is now legal in "twenty-eight states, representing 75 percent of the U.S. population."

(Herman:41) On an average weekday at Hollywood Park in Los Angeles, attendance is about 20,000 people who bet \$2,000,000. On weekends, attendance jumps to 40,000 people betting \$4.5 million. (Herman:41)

If one were to visit a race track for the first time, one would be struck by the large amount of real estate it takes up. Race tracks usually have two one mile in circumference racing surfaces; one for racing and training and the other exclusively for training. There is also a secured compound, called the "backside," where horses are stabled and grooms live. There are three or more huge parking lots; two for the Grandstand area, and one with valet parking for the Clubhouse and the private Turf Club. Turf Club patron's cars are often kept separate from clubhouse patrons.

Located in the middle of all this real estate, as an island surrounded by water, is the "encapsulated" sporting arena. (Foster, 1972:185) The sporting arena, commonly called the Grandstand, is above all an encapsulated social unit. It is physically separated from the outside daily hustle and bustle. This separation is not merely physical, however; it is also psychological. This separation in part makes possible the fantasy, dream-like world described by compulsive gamblers. Race tracks, in their advertisements, often play on the theme of "breaking away" from the hustle and bustle of daily problems to the implied race track's peace and tranquility. Or, phrased slightly different, "escape" from.... to the race track. Within the arena, the race track has encapsulated social units. There is physical division of the plant into three sections. Each section "brings together people of comparable means and statuses, excluding those deemed not meeting entrance requirements." (Foster:185) About 70 percent of the crowd at the race track goes to the Grandstand section. It has the cheapest admission price. At Golden Gate Fields (GGF), for example, it is \$2.50. This section takes up two levels of the four level structure. There is, however, only seating on the second level. The lower standing level crowd is largely composed of minorities, poor people and horse people. The

seated level is mostly working class and the elderly who get in at a discount, and a reserved seated middle class section.

The second section, the Clubhouse, cost twice as much as the Grandstand, \$5.00. It is completely seated and there seems to be more room per person. About 25 percent of the crowd sits there. These patrons are clearly middle class. About 4 percent of the crowd go to the private Turf Club. (Herman:45-46) It cost \$10 and there is also a dress code as entrance requirements. These patrons are mostly upper class. Adjacent to the Turf Club, is a richly decorated room which seats perhaps 50 people. To gain entrance, one has to be invited. The board of directors and their friends and any visiting celebrity occupy this exclusive room. The Turf Club and the executive suite resemble expensive restaurants with black tied waiters. In reality though, these patrons are in large part the racing elite. They are the breeders, large owners, managers, shareholders, jockey club members, and directors of the business enterprise called horse racing.

The idea that horse racing is a business is not new. Herman (1976), and Barich (1980) are authors who have used this approach. They, however, have done so in a limited way. Barich, who wrote the popular novel *Laughing in the Hills*, parts of which appeared in *The New Yorker*, only examines the racing industry after he was his first horse die. He was interested in how the operations of the industry impacted on this event. Despite this limited perspective, Barich, who conducted interviews with people in all sectors of racing at Golden Gate Fields where I did my participant observation, provides us with valuable background material on management practices.

A group of Bay Area businessmen brought Golden Gate Fields in 1965. In the first year they put a million dollars into the plant. Besides building a turf course in 1972, that was the only major overall the track has had. They have "raked in" the profits from then. "In 1966 Bay Area Turf Club stock split ten-for-one, and the corporation declared a five-dollar-per-

share dividend on the new over-the-counter issue, which had a par value of a hundred dollars."

(Barich:182) Its important to note who these people are. Barich describes them as follows:

I could feel the power of their connections, interlocking of stocks and bonds: *Director, Hyatt Corporation Of America; Partner, J. Barth & Co.; Director, State Savings & Loan; President, British Motor Car Distributors Ltd.; President, Zellerbach Paper Company; Director, First Western Bank & Trust; Member, Commonwealth Club.* These connections, inherited, married into, purchased, bartered for, occasionally earned, were more important than the directors' names, fixing them more firmly in time and space. (Barich:180-181)

These directors rarely visited the track. They only made appearances on special "occasions" such as the running of the California derby. (Barich:181) Clifford Goodrich, general manager of Golden Gate Fields from 1977 to 1980 and representative of the directors had a peculiar problem when interviewed by Barich. On the one hand, he was being pressured by the directors because attendance was down 8.1 percent with a concomitant drop in wagering (also called the handle.) On the other hand, he knew how to run a race track because he had learned from working his way from the ground up. (Barich:181)

Barich went into see Goodrich armed with a Stanford Research Institute (SRI) study on the racing industry in California. One of the findings of the report was that racing associations,... were not plowing enough money back into their tracks. Instead, they chose to pay big dividends, double the going rate in similarly structured nonfinancial corporations. (Barich:182-3) On the issue of making more money, the SRI report proposed several ways of improving the quality of racing and thus attracting more people. But increasing attendance is only one of three ways the track makes money. According to the SRI report, "racing associations attempted to increase their already inflated profit margins by requesting the right to run even more races per season." (Barich:183) "From 1967 to 1978 the number of racing days in California jumped from 633 to 996 a year." (Barich:183)

For Barich, an increase in racing days with the same number of horses meant that horses had to run more often, thus developing more leg problems calling for increased drug

use. All this resulting in more horses breaking down and being destroyed. Goodrich and the directors largely ignored the SRI report. Their explanation for falling attendance was competition from other sports and the high state take-out. Their solution to falling attendance and the resulting falling handle as usual was to lobby for "legislative relief" which means more racing days. In the mid seventies, the California Horse Racing Board sponsored another study of horse racing in the state to be undertaken by Temple, Barker & Sloane, Inc., of Lexington, Massachusetts instead of SRI. The new study supported management and the directors that the state's take-out was too high but, in large part, repeated many of the criticisms the SRI report made. Their finding on the attendance issue was that attendance is affected by many factors, several of which are "the quality of racing, the quality of the facilities, the level of the take-out and the appearance or perception of race manipulation..." (Barich:184)

The important things to note about Barich's approach is that he views management and the directors negatively. He sees them as connections, as absentee landlords merely interested in more and more profits at the expense of the public, the horseman and the horse. A second, more positive approach, is offered by Herman. (1976) He sees the racing industry operating as any other business. For him, the racing industry is similar to other sports enterprises because it "must take its earnings from the masses of people it can assemble on site." (Herman:47) He even elaborates on the ways tracks make money. He states that there are three considerations important for the industry to make a profit: the number of racing days per year allowed by the state, the number of patrons the tracks can attract, and "the amount of money the patrons can be *induced* to wager." (Herman:47, emphasis added) Despite pointing to scandals in connection with lobbying efforts for more racing days, Herman holds that the racing industry operates as any other business does. Unlike Barich, who thought that the directors were pursuing unreasonable profits, Herman assumes the directors are reasonable businessmen. He states that like other businesses, the racing industry pays wages, taxes, and other operating expenses such as advertising, policing costs, prize money, plant upkeep, and certain

concessions in order to maintain good will of especially desired patrons or supporters. (Herman:47)

While taking this position Herman, however, gives us some statistics that makes us question the racing industry's fair business practices. He tells us that between 1960 and 1974 the number of racing days in the United States increased 100%, attendance increased 62 percent and wagering (or the handle) went up 120 percent. (Herman:49) The states concomitantly increased their tax revenue 110 percent. Why with only a 62 percent increase in attendance the handle increases 120 percent, twice as much as expected? What is it about more racing days and fair business inducements that cause the additional 60 percent increase in the handle? The number of racing days obviously increases the number of opportunities the gambler has to wager. The question of fair business inducements, however, needs addressing. What are these inducements and do they constitute fair business practice? Herman, unfortunately did not elaborate on how people are "induced" to wager (bet their money). The nature of the inducements used at the race track is the topic of the rest of this paper.

INDUCEMENTS AND THE HARD SELL

In laying out inducements the track uses, the important relationship is that between management and customers. The patrons at the race track on any day consists of first timers, occasionals, and two sort of regulars: the compulsive gambler and the professional gambler. All customers expect good service and to have fun or to be entertained. The professional regular expects to win, and the compulsive gambler, the occasionals, and the first timers hope for the "big payoff."

The "big payoff" is the most visible inducement the track uses to attract customers and to generate customers betting. Radio advertisements and sports sections of daily newspapers publicize and report the big payoff. A recent advertisement in the Sunday, 6-28-81 *San*

Francisco Examiner and *Chronicle* for harness racing at Bay Meadows race track states that for a \$2 bet you could get the payoff of a lifetime. The track's public relations office actively promotes "day at the races" for companies, radio stations, clubs and groups using the big payoff inducement as the center piece of their sales pitch.

The big payoff, however, is only possible on exotic bets. Exotic bets make up about 40 percent of the handle and 46 percent of the take-out. (Figures calculated using 6-27-81 attendance and handle at Golden Gate Fields) In exotic bets, the customer picks horses in various combinations. Golden Gate Fields uses three types of exotic bets: the daily double, in which the customer needs to select the winner of the first two races; the exacta, in which the customer selects the exact order of the first two finishers (there are three \$5 exacts and one \$2 exacta at GGF); and the picksix, in which the customer tries to select six winners from the second through the seventh races. At other race tracks, for example, in New York's Belmont Park and Aqueduct race tracks, there is also the triple in which the customer selects the exact order of the first three finishers. Like lotteries, the odds of winning on exotic bets are high.

The other type of bet is called a straight or normal bet. The odds on these are comparatively smaller. They range from about 1 to 10 to as high as 100 to 1. Most straight bet payoff, however, range from about 1 to 1 (even money) to about 10 to 1. (In a 1 to 1 bet, if you bet \$2, you make a \$2 profit if you win) There are three kinds of straight bets: win, in which the customer tries to select the winner; place, in which the customer tries to select one of the first two finishers; and show, in which the customer tries to select one of the three top finishers. Professional bettors make mostly straight bets and occasional exotic bets. Compulsive gamblers, occasionals, and first timers on the other hand spend most of their money on exotic bets.¹

¹ Before proceeding to the next inducement, it is important to explain the handle and the take-out. According to GGF 1981 Media Guide, on each dollar wagered at the track, "85 cents is returned to race goers with winning wagers. Slightly less (80.25) from each dollar is returned to those making winning wagers on the daily double, Exacta and Picksix races." (GGF 1981 Media Guide, 1981:36) The money that is not returned to the public is the take-out. It is similar to how the "house" operates in card clubs; they take out a fixed percent of the pot. (money bet) The rest is divided up among the winners. The track does not operate as casinos do. Casinos are apart of the game. The race track has no interest in who wins and who loses. Management's interest is to increase

A second inducement the track uses to attract customers is the "bargain." Here, for example, the track occasionally lets everyone in for half price and refreshments are sold at cost. There is also cap day, jacket day, tote bag day, and belt buckles with a Golden Gate Fields insignia. There are times when the big payoff and the bargain are combined. Upon admission, the customer is given an entry blank to a lottery give away. Like the Irish Sweepstakes, the customers select the winner of one race. Of those who picked the winner, one is drawn for the grand prize: a brand new car. In New York, the bargain is practiced in its highest form. By going to the races, the customer also gains admission to the early or late free concert with big named entertainers on the race track grounds.

A third inducement that seems to apply more to attendance than to the amount of money people bet is the special group treatment. The public relations department of the track reaches out into the community to get groups, companies, and clubs to sponsor a day at the races for their employees and members. A race on the nine race program is named in honor of the group and they present the winning jockey and owners a bouquet of flowers. They are also included in the winner's photo, a repeated ceremony following each race. These groups are chaperoned and introduced to racing in the Turf Club by a public relations person. Compulsive gamblers often speak of getting their introduction to racing by being part of these special groups. The compulsive gamblers were the "lucky" ones who won first-time-out and thought winning was easy and could be repeated regularly.

The bargain, special group treatment, and the big payoff appear to be more important for attracting customers than for getting them to bet their money; a possible exception being the big payoff which functions both to attract customers and to motivate their betting. The

the handle (the total amount of money bet) and thus the take-out. The handle is increased by getting customers, winners and losers, to go to the mutual windows as often as possible. A large part of the handle is recycled money. Losers constantly leave the track while winners recycle their winnings. During the running of the seventh race the track opens the gates for the last two races bringing in fresh money. Management of course pushes exotic bets because of the big payoff potential and also because they make more money on exotic bets percentage-wise. On exotic bets the take-out is 19.75 percent while on straight bets it is 15 percent. The take-out is further divided up as follows: On every dollar wagered on straight bets, the state of California gets 4.80 cents, track operations 5.42 cents, horseman's purses 4.44 cents and California breeder award .34 cents. On every dollar wagered on exotic bets, the state of California gets 6.55 cents, track operations 6.95 cents, horseman's purses 5.16 cents, breeder awards .75 cents, and stallion awards .34 cents. (GGF 1981 Media Guide:36)

question then for us is once the customers are in the arena, how does the track get them to place bets and how does its strategy relate to the conscious moods the compulsive gambler experiences?

Once in the arena the big payoff is still operating. The big payoff, as stated previously, however is only possible on exotic bets and these bets comprise about 40 percent of the handle and about 46 percent of the take-out. The big payoff is central to the five pleasant conscious moods of fantasy, euphoria, mysticism, risk-taking, and here and now. In preparation to making an exotic bet, the gambler engages in here and now and fantasy. Elements of mysticism even come in at this stage if the gambler has a ritualized system (method of selection). Risk-taking occurs upon placing the bet. If the gambler is successful, the other two pleasurable conscious moods become possible; euphoria and mysticism. With the big payoff incentive used up in exotic bets, how does the track get customers to wager most of their money, 60 percent of the handle, on normal or straight bets?

Once in the arena, the track provides services that encourage and facilitate the customers betting and making them comfortable. Golden Gate Fields has introduced computerized wagering machines that make placing and collecting bets faster and convenient. Both cashing and betting is done at any window throughout the plant. Previously, customers had to go to separate cashing and selling windows in various denomination and bet type. Another convenient service is the food. The food at the race track varies with the section one sits in: junk food on the Grandstand levels, cafeteria food on the upper Grandstand and Clubhouse levels, and restaurant quality in the Turf Club and executive suite. All varieties of alcohol are served in abundance. Beer can be brought at any food stand and there are two well equipped bars on each of the four levels. The track's public relations office also provides free handicapping seminars to educate racing fans. Protection and security is provided by a prominent pinkerton police force.

The ease with which one can place bets surely facilitates the conscious mood of risk-taking. The food and especially alcohol facilitates, if not encourages risk-taking, fancizing and mysticism. The handicapping seminars are important for moving the customer from an occasional to a regular bettor. It promotes the notion that beating the game is possible through only rationally evaluating the horses' past performances. The police not only protect, they ensure a tolerant gambling subculture. No one will comment on behavior when a policeman can be quickly summoned. This service thus encourages fantasy and acting out ones fantasy which eventually leads to mysticism.

The third and most important way through which the track gets their customers to place bets is the hard sell. The hard sell is more than an inducement; it is a ritualized intimidation process conducted by the announcer on behalf of management. Tomas Martinez describes the process a compulsive gambler passes through when going from occasional to regular to compulsive gambler as follows:

Fantasy and euphoria are experienced as the subject passes from occasional to regular gambler. The passage from regular to compulsive is characterized by an intensification of shift which gambling subculture simply calls *making the action faster*. Shift is intensified as the subject begins to externalize his fantasized self which, in turn, heightens the euphoria. This is done initially by role-playing, which sets in motion a process of imaginary socialization. In the gambling subculture there is an available social mirror that reflects a tolerance for the subject's role-playing. This suggests to the subject that there is at least a quasi-objective basis for believing the fantasized self is a real possibility. Now the subject has helped to create the social conditions that make possible the fifth conscious mood of compulsive gambling--*mysticism*.

Gambling begins to take on ritualistic meaning. Theoretically, any activity that can be repeated could become a sacred ritual. The main requirement is a large investment of self. The subject has already made such an investment of self. (Martinez:359)

What is important here is Martinez's repeated blaming the victim. The gambler makes the action faster rather than the race track, the gambler makes up and goes through rituals rather than the race track producing these rituals. No note is made of the large police presence that makes the gambling subculture tolerant. Finally, the gambler helps to create the social

conditions that make mysticism possible. Ritualisation is a central social condition mentioned and, for Martinez it is the production of the individual gambler.

It is not the gambler that quickens the action and makes up and indulges in ritualized behavior that make possible the transition from regular to compulsive gambler; it is the race track orchestrating the hard sell through the announcer that makes this transition possible. It is also through the hard sell that the race track is able to squeeze out an additional 60 percent of its handle from normal or straight bets.

By betting large amounts on straight bets it is possible to make a lot of money on one bet but not enough as on the big payoff. So most bettors return several times to the mutual windows. The track, of course, wishes that they return on every race. It is important to note that the racing crowd is a captive audience. Between races there is not much else one can do but engage in selecting the winner of the next races. One cannot simply turn off the announcer as on television or the radio. Since there is only 30 minutes between races it does not make sense to leave and return. To fill this dead time, the track provides alcohol and an occasional feature race from Santa Anita race track in Los Angeles, where there are better horses, on the television monitors throughout the plant. More important at this time than the alcohol and an occasional feature race, is the hard sell which is produced between races and begins 30 minutes before the first race.

The announcer is central to the hard sell. Barich describes the announcer's job as lending "a sense of order and purpose to animals spilling out of the gate." (starting gate) (93) Barich attaches prime importance to the announcer's race calling style.

An announcer has to work on fans, to build the pace of a race with his voice, wheedling and modulating and creating effects, and then at the finish punch it to them in a vibrant hoof-echoing staccato.(95)

Calling the race is important to the announcer's job, but other aspects are as important if not more so. Barich hints at other aspects of the job when he tells of being "prodded into the usual

last-minute scurrying" upon hearing the announcer say, "just five minutes until post time, ladies and gentlemen." (97) The reminder of how many minutes are left to post time is a central ingredient of the other aspect of the announcer's job: conducting the hard sell.

The hard sell is a ritualized process through which the announcer intimidates the crowd into betting. At first, he is polite and provides needed information. As the race approaches, however, he gets sharp and insistent. He then calls the race while "playing the crowd." Finally, he returns to the cordial ritualized winners circle ceremony and then begins the process anew.

Approximately thirty minutes before the start of the first race the announcer introduces himself, gives his affiliation, and directs the crowd through the opening ritual: The raising of the flag.

I'm John Gibson. On behalf of the Tanforan Racing Association we would like to welcome you to Golden Gate Fields. *Ladies and gentlemen*, at this time would you please stand for the raising of the flag of the United States of America. (emphasis added)

The bugler, dressed in riding hat and boots and a long-tailed red riding jacket blares out reveille. Most of the crowd stands, placing their hats or hands on their hearts.

Thank you. Now *ladies and gentlemen*, would you turn to your program for the changes we have thus far...*Ladies and gentlemen*, we would like to start off by asking you to turn your attention to the eight race. In the eight race.....(emphasis added)

After giving the changes and announcing the types of wagering available on the program, Gibson extends the invitation:

Mutual wagering windows throughout the entire race program are *now* open.

The announcer remains silent for about the next twenty minutes unless he has to make a special announcement. If he does, he still addresses the crowd as ladies and gentlemen; if he does not, there is silence while the customers read their programs, racing forms, or go to the paddock. Most customers are, in other words, involved in the conscious mood of here and now. The silence is interrupted by the bugler playing *Boots and Saddles* as the horses leave the

paddock. This is the first of the repeated rituals. Gibson draws attention to the proceedings and issues the first reminder:

The horses are leaving the paddock and onto the track for the running of the first race, the first half of *your* daily double at 1 mile and one sixteenth. There is less than 11 minutes, the infield board shows less than 11 until post time. (emphasis added)

Note the absence of ladies and gentlemen. The first reminder attempts to break the customer's concentration and thus take them out of the conscious mood of here and now and direct them to the wagering windows where customers experience the conscious mood of risk-taking while the track increases the handle and thus its share of the take-out.

For the next five minutes the announcer is silent while some of the crowd mill toward the windows. Most of the customers, however, continue to read their racing forms, confer with friends on selections or watch the on going warm-ups. At precisely five minutes to post time, the announcer's voice rings out short and sharp:

five minutes, the horses will reach the gate in five minutes.

Like the reminders to follow, this one is more urgent and insistent than the 10 minute reminder. There is an economy of words. Most customers about this time head toward the mutual windows and the noise level in the stand rises as people attempt to place bets while periodically cursing the slow older customers and Asians in front of them in the lines. Fear of being locked out makes the customers restless. As the horses leave the starting gate, the mutual windows simultaneously close.

The undecideds continue to read their racing forms and watch the warm-ups. At exactly 3 minutes to post time, another short, sharp, almost inaudible insistent reminder occurs.

3 minutes, the horses will reach the gate in 3 minutes.

Some of the crowd respond like robots; rising while still burred in the racing form as they head for the pari-mutual wagering windows occasionally glancing at the odds.

As the warm-ups end and the horses finally head toward the starting gate in post position order, the announcer attempts to pick up the stragglers and procrastinators.

The horses are approaching the starting gate, one minute.

Almost immediately, he blurts out:

There at the gate!

The reaction this time is not robot-like, but impatience and anger. For the pari-mutual clerks, this is the worst time. The customers in line shout obscenities at the people in front of them while the people in front call off bets they do not want and their bets often are not a result of their intense handicapping. The mutual clerk makes sure these customers are showing their money before issuing the asked for ticket. These customers either timidly call off numbers while looking at the tote board or quickly blare out numbers, often without specifying amount of money they would like to bet or the type of bet they desire.

A sigh of relief goes up from the clerks as Gibson says, "There they go" and calls the race. The insistent 5 minutes, 3 minutes, 1 minute, and there at the gate reminders are repeated for each race, 9 times a day, 45 times a week. After the first or second visit to the track, customers no longer hear these reminders especially from 5 minutes onwards; they become subliminal. The crowd's reaction is either robot-like or impatience and anger. The result for the track is an increase in the handle. The subliminal process is the essence of the hard sell.

The noise level rises to feverish levels as the announcer "punches" the finish to the crowd. Customers call for their horses, "come ooonn 5," "get him Wesley!" Then there is smug winning laughter, "ha ha haaaaaa.." rising in pitch towards the end. Some of the winners dance lightfootedly towards the windows, the big winners experience the conscious mood of euphoria as they float around in circles eventually ending up at the mutual windows to collect.

The noise level dies down quickly. Fans engage in post race analysis as Gibson announces the order of finish and officiates over the winners circle ceremony:

And into the winners circle comes number 11, ..., with jockey, is owned by ..., ..., the trainer, the running time"

Upon completion of the winners circle ceremony, the announcer declares the race official and renews the invitation to wager on the next race.

Result is official. Windows are now open for wagering on this afternoon's second race, the second half of the daily double, the start of *your* picksix, and in the second race number 1, will be one pound over, the weight 118 lbs.... Also *ladies and gentlemen*, your daily double possibilities are now appearing on the Alpha board in the infield. (emphasis added.)

The hard sell is repeated for each race of the 9 race program. At the end of the day, Gibson thanks the ladies and gentlemen and bids them a safe drive home.

The hard sell primarily promotes risk-taking and makes the action faster. By ritualizing the process it also promotes mysticism, the conscious mood that marks the all important transition from regular to compulsive gambler. A customer who wins a big payoff bet in the last hectic minutes before post time by gazing at the tote board and calling numbers attempts to repeat the process. They are swept away and become attuned to illusive "feelings." Customers who are successful choosing between two horses in the last couple minutes flood also attempt to repeat the process when undecided. They too are swept away toward mysticism. Another way mysticism is promoted at the track is through the instant replay service. Immediately after the running of each race, the television monitors throughout the plant transmit a slow motion replay of the last 100 yards or so of the race. A frequently reported mystical experience is the slow motioned moving of the finish line to meet your selection. In this mystical experience there is no noise and the other horses appear to slow as your selection moves by in slow motion.

The mystical effect of the hard sell is reinforced by the physical structure of the Grandstand. The structure faces east to avoid the setting sun. The mutual windows, located at

the rear of each level, are bathed in fluorescent light. The customer passes from the sunlit seated or standing area to the artificially lit, sometimes enclosed betting area to wager. Here, live snorting half ton horses become numbers.

The conscious moods and the situation within which they occur are so closely inter-related that the situation has largely been ignored in the literature. Instead, the literature, both Freudian and deviant career-conscious moods, has rooted compulsive behavior within the instinctual pleasure seeking, pain avoiding structure of the individual. This explanation of compulsive behavior appears to be inadequate because the individual returns repeatedly to a painful experience. It is in explaining this repeated return to the painful experience that the situational perspective is helpful. It is because of the hard sell that the gambler repeatedly goes through the painful behavior. Compulsion is in effect institutionalized. This suggests that keeping the compulsive gambler out of the gambling situation is a necessary condition for overcoming the compulsive behavior. Avoiding the situation, however, is not sufficient for overcoming compulsive gambling. Other personality, emotional and social factors that make some people and not others susceptible to the hard sell to be explored. Procrastinators and people affected by hypnotic suggestion are personality types the situational perspective would predict are more likely to be compulsive gamblers.

How can one immunize oneself against the hard sell? The hard sell not only produces a robot-like and angry impatient response, it essentially forces customers into action while short-circuiting their decision making processes. The choices customers have are not to bet, bet a clear unhurried choice, or bet a hard sell selection.

The decision not to bet requires that the gambler be aware of and consciously combat the hard sell. This is difficult because the hard sell is so subtle that one frequently forgets that its taking place. Another way some pros deal with the hard sell is to partially submit to it by making two types of bet. First, there is the prime bet. S/he makes a prime bet when all indicators point to a clear unhurried choice. Some pros make as many as five prime bets a day

while others make only one or two daily. When a clear choice does not emerge, the pro submits to the hard sell but only places a \$2 (minimum bet) "action" bet. The compulsive gambler, not only submits to the hard sell but only makes prime bets whether or not a clear unhurried choice emerges. A third option is to get rid of the hard sell tactics or reduce its effects by only having 10 and 5 minute cordial warnings. The insistent, short 3, 1 minutes, and there at the gate warnings should be removed. This would bring the race track operators within fair business practice. The hard sell would become a service instead of an intimidating process.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This paper addresses the problem of compulsive gambling. It criticizes three approaches; the psychoanalytic, Gambler's Anonymous, and the deviant career-conscious mood approach for victim blaming. The paper attempts, through an analysis of the race track to illuminate environmental factors that contribute to the process through which a gambler becomes compulsive. It shows how through four inducements and the hard sell the race track attracts customers and rings them dry. Suggestions are made for dealing with the hard sell. The environmental factors suggest that the limited success of the psychoanalytic and the relatively successful Gamblers Anonymous treatment owe their effectiveness in large part to keeping the compulsive gambler out of the gambling environment. It is not possible to remain apart of the gambling environment and be cured of compulsive gambling. The paper does not deny the importance of personality and emotional factors contributing to the process. It does, though, cast doubt on the assumption that pleasure seeking, pain avoiding instinctual drives are the sole basis for compulsive gambling.

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