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SPORTS

Horse racing newsletter: A book suggestion for you

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Don't know about you, but I'm reading more than usual with entertainment options in short supply. I came across this book — actually I came across it when the author sent it to me — that I think a lot of you might like.

It's called "The Greatest Gambling Story Ever Told." The subtitle is "A true tale of three gamblers, the Kentucky Derby, and the Mexican Cartel." That pretty much covers what the book is about. It's by **Mark Paul**, a self-described action and adventure junkie wherever gambling takes place.

Now for the review. It's a total summer read. It's light, it moves quickly, it's fun and I think horse players will really enjoy it. It's only around 150 pages, so you can polish it off in a day. It's built around placing a Kentucky Derby futures bet on Winning Colors in 1988. The bet is placed at Agua Caliente in Tijuana. Now, if any of you have been there, you know how things can be, shall we say, interesting.

I once went to Tijuana with friends with a stop at Del Mar for day racing and jai alai at night. I swear we were allowed to bet after the jai alai matches started. We still lost.

Anyway, I thought the book read in the genre called "nonfiction novel" as Mark wrote it in third person. So, I asked him about it and it's a question he's been asked before as he had an explanation on his website. [You can access it here.](#)

"At first, I chose to write as a first-person narrator. After all, it was my story. It didn't work, and I tore up my first draft. I started writing again, using third-person point of view, and was delighted to feel freer; I got myself out of the way. I studied the genre of creative nonfiction and knew it would work. For inspiration, I watched every gambling movie ever made and hated them all because each had a depressing ending.

My book had to be fun; I wanted to recreate the colorful gamblers and other deranged characters I'd met during the adventure!"

Now, if you're not a fan of horse racing (why are you reading this newsletter?), Mark drops in little factoids about the sport and gambling through the first couple of chapters. But it doesn't get in the way. I'm not going to give away the ending, but the fact he wrote it probably means the cartel didn't do him in.

If interested, you can go to his [site](#) or find it on Amazon. It's in all the usual formats.



Horses race around the turn at Santa Anita in May.
(Wally Skalij / Los Angeles Times)