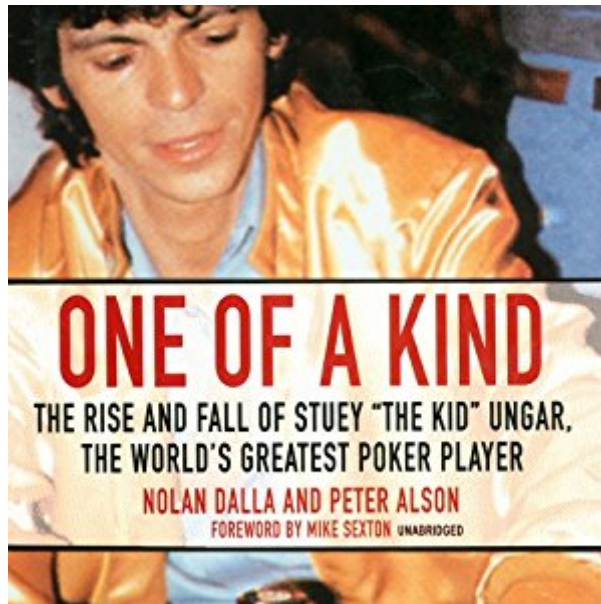


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One Of A Kind: The Story Of Stuey 'The Kid' Ungar, The World's Greatest Poker Player



Synopsis

Now in paperback comes the first and authorized biography of Stuey Ungar, the greatest card player of all time, who was backed by the Mob in New York before moving to Las Vegas where he won the World Series of Poker three times, then died mysteriously in a seedy motel on the Vegas strip at the age of 45. He was the Jim Morrison of the casino, a legend before he was of legal age. Stuey Ungar, the son of a Jewish bookie on Manhattan's Lower East Side, dropped out of high school to become an underground card-table sensation, eventually taking out every top gin-rummy player on the East Coast. Bankrolled by the Genovese crime family, Stuey would soon travel around the country in search of new opponents and opportunitiesâincluding poker. He would go on to win the World Series of Poker a record three times. And then his luck began to run out. One of a Kind is the startling tale of a man who won at his game and lost control of his life. Whether tossing away his winnings at the racetrack or on a single roll of the dice, Stuey was notorious for gambling every single dollar in his pocket. Though he had won an estimated \$30 million in his lifetime, Stuey had no bank account, not even a home address. He was found dead in a Vegas motelâwith \$800 in cash on his person, the only money he had leftâat the age of forty-five. An intimate, authorized biographyâNolan Dalla was commissioned by Stuey in 1998 to pen his story, resulting in hundreds of hours of taped interviews and conversationsâOne of a Kind illuminates the dark genius of one of poker's most memorable figures. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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Customer Reviews

Stu Ungar's legend transcends poker: he won the world championship three times (the third more than a decade and a half after the second and when he was regarded as a has-been or curiosity) and was supposedly an even BETTER gin player. He had a genius for games that was almost unfathomable. Then, just a year and a half after his greatest triumph, he was dead. Nolan Dalla and Peter Alson have big-league credentials as researchers and writers of a story about a broken genius of cards. Among other things, Dalla is the media director for the World Series of Poker, can get in touch with ANYONE connected with poker, and interviewed Ungar several times before his death in 1998. Dalla has papered poker publications and web sites with excellent accounts. Alson wrote a highly-acclaimed book about his days as a bookie at Harvard and has written for a writer's wish-list of men's magazines. Their account is so intimate that it's almost uncomfortable. I say this as a GOOD THING! Ungar was very private, closed even to most people in the poker world, and not a frequent interview subject. This was especially true regarding the two things we'd want to know about: his genius at cards and his self-destruction. Dalla interviewed him before his death and the periodic first-person accounts by Ungar are fascinating and shocking. In addition, the higher echelons of poker (especially where organized crime figures are possibly near, as they were in Ungar's early days and, socially, later on) can be a closed world. Even though men like Mike Sexton and Doyle Brunson are public figures, you would not expect them to be frank about their tragic friend, or about matters potentially at odds with poker's relatively recent, relatively wholesome reputation.

I recall that Jim Mcmanus, in his book on the World Series of Poker, mentioned that Stu Ungar was someone with a life truly in need of exploring, so I was pleased to find out about the existence of this book. I ordered it the minute it was released. I could not be more pleased with the purchase. Its pages flow like frames in a motion picture. I could not put the biography down. This is a tribute both to the professional writer employed, Peter Alson, and also to the ornate texture of the life it documents. Stu Ungar was a thoroughly compulsive, brilliant man who was given many gifts that he, with unprecedented impatience, smoked away through the tube of a crack pipe. There was no "could have been a champ" with Stuey though. He won The World Series of Poker three times and was victorious in 381 competitions overall. His memory was photographic and his mind a spinning computer, yet it was his ever-present need for instant gratification that finished him. A lack of concern for money was his greatest No Limit characteristic, but it was also his biggest weakness as he blew millions on sports betting, the ponies, and every other proposition put before him. Ungar was a man of total contradictions. He loved being a father and cared intensely for his daughter and

stepson, yet he disappeared for weeks at a time and could often not be reached when they needed him. Stuey lived for competition but allowed drugs to cause him to skip the 1998 WSOP and sleep through the last two days of the 1990 one. He could be charming and entertaining but had few social graces. This genius had parts which canceled out his whole. The book succeeds at many levels.

I was originally going to title my review "The Life & Death Of Stu Ungar" but this book is more about the downfall of the poker legend rather than the highs. He's been called the greatest poker player who ever lived by many people, and whether you believe that others in the past or present are better than "The Kid", there can be no denying that Stuey Ungar certainly knew how to play cards better than 99.99% of other players out there. It seems that the best players have a type of 'sixth sense' that others just do not possess, and this talent led Stu Ungar to heights of success that many can only hope to dream to achieve. Born into a seedy lifestyle where his father took bets every day out of his shop for all the sporting events, Stuey knew only one thing in his life: gambling. It was a constant throughout his every day in his childhood and his entire, short life. The book chronicles how Stuey got his early "training" to become the great card player that he was today, but this introduction which planted the seeds for his success also planted the same seeds for his destruction. Winning 2 World Series of Poker main events soon after he was legal to drink, Stu couldn't help the fact that he wasn't just a card player, he was a GAMBLER. Cards came easy to this legend, it was other challenges like sports handicapping and horse racing that really got him excited. Games like poker and especially gin just didn't have the action that he continuously craved. If Stuey had just played cards and was able to avoid the other demons in his life, no doubt he would be wealthier than players like Chip Reese, Doyle Brunson and the like. Sadly, because of these demons, Stuey would have moments of greatness that just would be few and far between after the early 1980s.

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