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[Book Catalog](#) An excerpt from Running Scared

Publisher's Preface

In 1994, I signed an agreement to publish a book about Steve Wynn to be written by *Las Vegas Review-Journal* reporter, John L. Smith. Wynn, who master-minded the gaming revolution in America with his imaginative casinos, The Mirage and Treasure Island, was certainly a force to reckon with in gaming and a celebrity about whom there is much curiosity.

No sooner did we announce the book in our catalog than the *Review-Journal* received several angry phone calls. Wynn, a major advertiser, and a man many consider to be "the most powerful person in Nevada" wanted to know what that paper was "going to do" about Smith.

For several years, Smith has written a general interest column that appears on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday, in the *Review-Journal*. It is quite popular. Smith does his job well and so there was little the *Review-Journal* could "do about" Smith.

Nevertheless, in deference to Wynn, Smith was told by his editors not to mention the book's name or its publisher's name in his four-times-a-week column.

Two days later, Smith was sued for libel by Steve Wynn. Not for this book, mind you, for Wynn hadn't seen a word of that--but rather, for the mere description of it in our catalog. It was a description I had written and Smith hadn't seen until it appeared in print.

This action seemed to be an obvious attempt to delay and suppress the book. Because I wanted *Running Scared* to be razor-sharp accurate, I turned to an old friend, Albert B. Gerber. He wrote *Bashful Billionaire*, the national bestselling biography of Howard Hughes. He's a good friend, my primary attorney and my libel mentor.

Gerber made a deal with Steve Wynn's lawyer. Wynn would be allowed to read the manuscript before publication. He would then meet with us and voice his objections and offer evidence for statements in the book that he considered inaccurate. It would then be our judgment call on whether or not to make changes.

In return, Wynn withdrew his libel action against John L. Smith.

Wynn obviously misunderstood my wanting the book to be as accurate as possible. A few days before our scheduled meeting, when asked about the book, Wynn boasted to an interviewer: "There won't be any book. I've cowed the publisher."

He didn't know his man.

When my attorney Al Gerber, my wife and co-publisher Carole Stuart, and author John Smith appeared for our meeting at the executive offices of The Mirage in Las Vegas, Wynn wasn't there. A flimsy excuse was offered for his absence.

It seemed to us a clear case of arrogance in action.

Wynn's two attorneys presented us with a four-inch stack of documents and started the meeting by saying: "We don't expect you to publish this book."

The high-priced libel lawyer from Los Angeles seemed stunned when I replied, "Listen carefully. You've got it all wrong. No matter what, we're publishing this book."

The conference, scheduled for a day and a half, ended in about thirty minutes. The four of us walked out leaving two unhappy-looking lawyers sitting at a conference table.

A top Mirage executive later told me: "Nobody wants to bring bad news to Steve Wynn. He's got an uncontrollable temper."

Until that morning, I'd been a Mirage high-roller. I had a casino credit line of \$ 100,000. The failure of Wynn to appear for our meeting changed this. I never play where a casino owner breaks his word.

I immediately canceled my credit line. In the future, I'll stay and play at other Las Vegas casinos. No Wynn casino will ever again win a penny of my gaming money.

Two days later, on learning that I was going ahead with this book, Wynn sued again. Once again, the suit was about the catalog copy. This time he included my wife and me.

I've been sued before.

I know libel. I started my publishing house with money collected in libel actions I brought against gossip columnist Walter Winchell, the magazine *Confidential* and the trade weekly *Editor & Publisher*.

I've been a book publisher since 1956. Considering the controversial nature of many of the books I publish, lawsuits have been few and far between. For one thing, I work very hard to make sure that what is said in our books is accurate.

My company was once sued by five Mafia hoods. We won all five cases. King Fuad Farouk of Egypt, after he went into exile, sued me for libel in connection with a book called *Pleasure Was My Business*. We took his sworn depositions in the American Consulate in Rome for six days. To my knowledge, it was the first time a member of royalty ever testified under oath.

Farouk dropped dead two weeks later.

That ended the case but it didn't end my problems with *Pleasure Was My Business*. It seems that Madam Sherry, the author of the book, wrote about how she'd paid off the police to let her run her Miami whorehouse.

Embarrassed by these revelations, the local prosecutor banned the book in Dade County.

I took the case to the United States Supreme Court and won the right to sell copies in Dade County.

Another of our authors, Linda Lovelace was sued by her former attorney in such a sleazy case that Gloria Steinem attacked him publicly and demanded that the Florida Bar Association do something about him.

I, in turn, assured Linda that I'd pay all legal expenses to fight him on her behalf. I did. This scoundrel offered to settle the case for \$14,000 of her royalties. I told him flat-out that he would never get a nickel. The case dragged on for three years. It cost me \$175,000 in legal fees and travel expenses. He didn't get a nickel. Shortly afterwards, he was disbarred.

Nowhere in this book is Steven Wynn called a gangster. To quote Wynn himself in an interview with CBS-News: "...the guys who came out here weren't gangsters. They were friends of gangsters. So actually the hoods themselves didn't come except to visit once in a while."

The thesis of this book is that Wynn himself has often been a friend to and/or associated with known racketeers. The pages of this book are replete with documented instances. In fairness, we've also included the denials.

You're the reader. You're the jury.

The final verdict is yours.

--Lyle Stuart
Stuyvesant, NY 12173
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