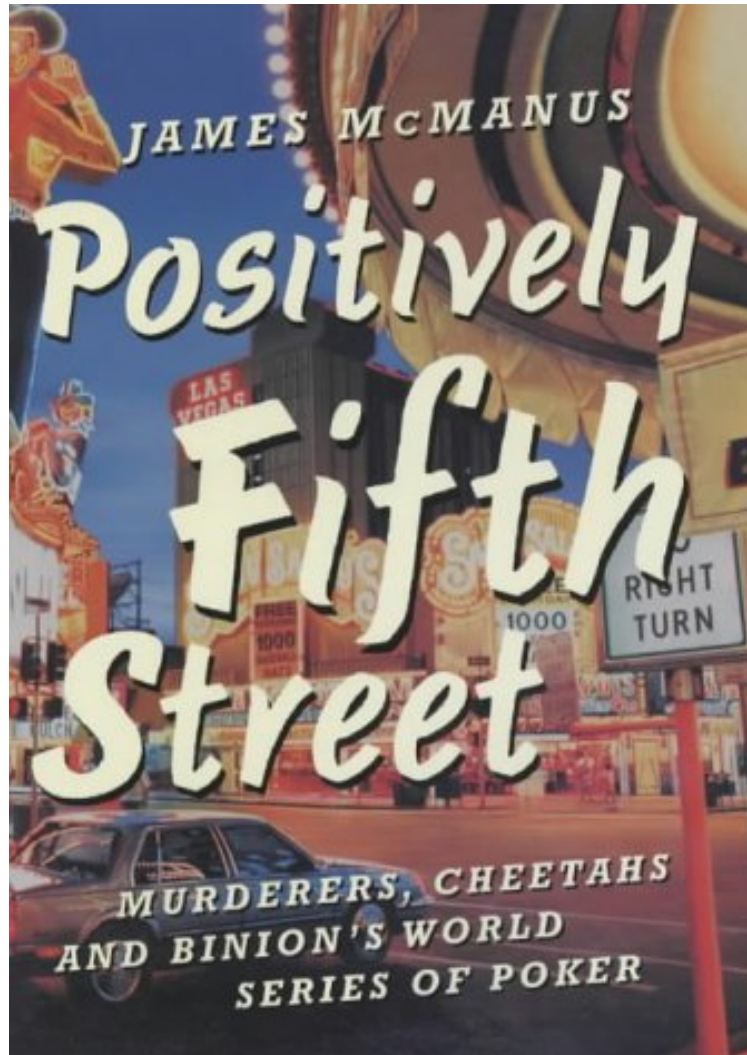


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POSITIVELY FIFTH STREET.

James. McManus

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James. McManus : POSITIVELY FIFTH STREET. before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised POSITIVELY FIFTH STREET.:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great read especially for poker playersBy Debizzle SizzlesExcellent collection of poker history coupled with an intriguing murder trial. I would eliminate a lot of the diverse tangents since I skim read through many pages and stick to the interesting items. A great storye however, and so exciting to have an inside view of a Main Event final table. Well written and honest, sometimes to a fault!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Great look at tounament poker and life and death in L.V.By Edsopinion.comMaManus has great style and insight and his take on tounament poker, sex and life and death in Las Vegas is excellent. His insights in to the death of Ted Binion are interesting but he may have been a little too close to Ted's family to have a completely clear perspective. The prosecution never proved their case beyond a reasonable doubt. The death of a

heroin junkie is almost always due to the drug not foul play and it takes a lot of direct and circumstantial evidence to reach beyond a reasonable doubt and the proof against the accused was speculative at best and non-existent at the worst. Sandy Murphy and her boyfriend were convicted on suspicious circumstances and other factors not evidence. The turkey baster and Burking theories were never more than the fantasy of the hired expert brought in from N.Y. The Supreme Court of Nevada has reversed the murder verdicts against Sandy Murphy and her lover and ordered a new trial not on lack of reasonable doubt but on other irregularities in the sensationalized trial which was unfair to the accused. Perhaps McManus will write a sequel dealing with the new trial. However this time he should stay out on the strip where his line of sight may be better. Also I would like to read his insights as to life on the strip and tournament play at the Bellagio. Maybe his publisher will provide the seed money again. 50 of 51 people found the following review helpful. A book that gets better every 50 pages. By Thomas Stamper *Positively Fifth Street* is one of those rare nonfiction books that read like a great first person novel. It doesn't hurt that McManus follows in the gonzo tradition of Hunter Thompson on his journey. The book begins with McManus a professor and freelance writer who is hired to write a story on how women are appearing more and more at the World Series of Poker and how women are becoming more visible in the game. But this is no ordinary World Series, because the Binion family that has run the event every year since its founding is distracted by the murder trial of sibling, Ted Binion. And to top it off, author, narrator, Jim McManus is also a bit of a poker player himself. Jim wants to enter the tournament with his writing advance, but he doesn't have enough money. He has two college aged children and two young children at home and nothing but bills. With all of the tension of the story Jim is sent to cover, his own personal tensions slowly become the center of the book, especially after he enters the tournament and goes up against famous players, including the author of Jim's favorite tournament book, TJ Cloutier. I found the writing very immediate like a conversation that happens immediately after the event. I also found the tension internal and external was enough to sustain the multiple storylines. McManus seems to end each section of commentary at a natural conclusion and this makes the transitions easy to follow. I enjoyed Alvarez' great history *ONLY GAME IN TOWN* and found Anthony Holden's *BIG DEAL* quite interesting, but neither was as fun to read for me as *POSITIVELY FIFTH STREET*. This is the kind of book that you can enjoy regardless of your poker knowledge. It may even convince you to take up the game.

Rough sex, black magic, and the science--and eros--of gambling. Meet in the ultimate book about Las Vegas. James McManus was sent to Las Vegas by Harpers to cover the World Series of Poker in 2000, especially the mushrooming progress of women in the \$23-million event, and the murder of Ted Binion, the tournaments prodigal host, purportedly done in by a stripper and her boyfriend with a technique so outré it took a Manhattan pathologist to identify it. Whether a jury would convict the attractive young couple was another story altogether. McManus risks his entire Harpers advance in a long-shot attempt to play in the tournament himself. Only with actual table experience, he tells his skeptical wife, can he capture the hair-raising brand of poker that determines the world champion. The heart of the book is his deliciously suspenseful account of the tournament itself--the players, the hand-to-hand, and his own unlikely progress in it. Written in the tradition of *The Gambler* and *The Biggest Game in Town*, *Positively Fifth Street* is a high-stakes adventure, a penetrating study of America's card game, and a terrifying but often hilarious account of one man's effort to understand what Edward O. Wilson has called "Pleistocene exigencies"--the eros and logistics of our primary competitive instincts.

.com In 2000, novelist and poet James McManus was sent to Las Vegas, innocently enough, by Harper's magazine to write a story about the World Series of Poker held annually at Binion's Horseshoe. But then, as so often happens on trips to Sin City, something kind of ... happened. Rather than becoming an objective report, McManus's article evolved into a memoir as he put his entire advance on the line, got lucky with his cards and won a spot in the competition, and came much closer than anyone expected to winning the darn thing. The result, *Positively Fifth Street*, is just as dazzling, exciting, and disturbing as Vegas itself. McManus details his battles not only against his opponents but also against "Bad Jim," the portion of his own personality that needs to get in on a poker game in spite of both common and fiscal sense. Besides telling his own story, he relates the considerably more unpleasant tale of Ted Binion, whose grisly death was blamed on Binion's former stripper-girlfriend and her ex-linebacker beau. In the hands of a lesser author, the pursuit of these separate through lines of poker and the seedy personal lives of wealthy casino heirs may have lead readers to wish the author had picked just one subject. But under McManus's careful watch, they're really pretty similar: steeped in adrenaline, mystery, deception, and skating on thrillingly thin ice. Each story underscores the other, a neat little "narrative as metaphor" device, while also painting a vivid picture of Vegas casino life. Poker, as anyone who has lost at it will tell you, is an intricate game and it's nice to see a top-notch author and player relate its finer points in an entertaining style that will appeal even to non-players. The author's hilariously self-aware and at times self-loathing style make *Positively Fifth Street* a fun read. But beyond that, his account of nearly winning the biggest poker tournament in the world and subsequently watching as the verdicts are announced for Binion's accused murderers makes for a great story. Even if it wasn't the one he was sent there to write. --John Moe
From Publishers Weekly
It's a safe bet that no one at Harper's expected novelist McManus, who the magazine sent to Las Vegas to

cover the 2000 World Series of Poker, to parlay his advance into chips and play his way into the championship. The scene for this nonfiction work is Binion's Horseshoe Casino, and the game is No Limit Texas Hold 'Em, presumably the purest form of the game. McManus, a poker player since age nine, plays like he writes: gloriously. From the 512 starters, he finds himself, days later, at the championship table, playing for surreal stakes (he wins \$866,000 on a single hand). In addition, he is simultaneously covering Ted Binion's gruesome murder trial, which just happens to coincide with the Series. McManus reads with a poker face. Seemingly calm and impassive, his voice may initially make listeners wonder if the author is the right person for the job. But although McManus's style doesn't change, listeners' perception of it will. His even keel is a deception, and as he is describing making quarter-million-dollar bets after playing cards with the world's best for days on end, listeners will be able to feel his heart racing under the calm facade. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal To cover the 2000 World Series of Poker in Las Vegas for Harper's, McManus insisted on entering. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.