

MATTIAS BOSTRÖM

# DON'T GET CAUGHT



Mattias Boström

# **Don't get caught**

A true story about gambling addiction

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## OPENING WORDS

- You asshole, you disgusting piece of shit!

The eyes that look back at me are bloodshot and my look is completely blank

- Who the hell are you?!

I don't recognize myself at all, I just see a complete idiot. A moron who has managed to destroy everything. The tears are still pouring down my cheeks, while I wonder if this could be it. Is there still a chance to pull through.

The money's gone, my marriage cannot go on and it really feels like the game is lost.

I can feel my pulse in my forehead, as my thoughts are running back and forth in the years gone by.

How could this be?

How was I able to gamble every single penny I had. I had after all, a complete plan for everything. I had calculated the system for doubling the winnings in

the net casino. Not too much, just carefully, a little at a time. That way you can build on your winnings, and secure bigger and bigger amounts of money.

In addition I followed every single sporting event thoroughly, it should have been impossible not to win on betting.

Every day was a new opportunity, regardless of how much I had gambled the day before. As long as I had money there was always a chance to bounce back.

The treasure map in my mind was flawless, at least according to me. All I needed was 100.000 euros. With that amount I would have been able to pay off all my debt, and take my wife on that honeymoon I had gambled away less than a year ago.

Everything was planned, unfortunately it was all in my head. It was all a fantasy I had my mind set on

I want to punch my head in the mirror, to make the image disappear, but I can't. That would leave a mark, and you can't leave evidence, that's how you get caught, and I can't get caught.

I wash my face with cold water and clear my voice?

Maybe there is a way I can fix this, I have no idea how, but maybe...

- Get your shit together, you can fix this, you always push through, Always.

I wipe my face with a towel and open the door.

I see my daughter standing there

- What you doing daddy?

The little girl is completely unaware that her father is at one of the biggest crossroads of his life. A point where he has to choose in which direction he goes from here. A choice that will determine if he wins or loses



# 1.

## **MY RELATIONSHIP TO GAMBLING**

I have always played for money. Going back to my childhood I loved being at the local bus station or a fuel station somewhere. That's where the best slot machines were. I don't know if you can picture the wall to wall carpet, with thick smoke from cigarettes, but if you lived in Finland in the 80's you will know what I'm talking about.

I wasn't alone of course. My dad was the one playing, and I was there hoping he would win, so he would give me some of the winnings.

That's what we did together, he won, and gave me some money to put in the machine next to the one he was playing on.

I quickly learned which games I liked the most. The best games were the ones that had a quick pace. Quick wins and in case you lost that was quick as well, so you could forget it. It just had to be effective.

The times we didn't win, we just left and came back another day.

In 1987 I started 1<sup>st</sup> grade in school. I was 7.

I'm thinking I played mostly if I found a coin in the street or if my dad had won the previous day and had given me some. Sometimes you just bought candy, and that was fine as well.

In 1991 my family moved to Porvoo, a town nearby. I started the 5<sup>th</sup> grade there.

In a town there's a lot more to do than in a little village. There were also a lot more slot machines. If I was bored after school I ran around in the shops, and looked for coins in the storing compartments, people used while shopping. I'm surprised how often you actually found a coin. My favourite game at the time was a version of roulette, you could easily multiply the money you had just by choosing between red and black. So that's what I did.

My gambling was still quite innocent at that time, if I lost my coins, I did something else instead. No worries whatsoever.

In high-school and later the gambling got far more systematic. If I had money, I gambled it.

I remember well how I believed my friends were stupid when they spent their money on silly stuff like candy, cigarettes or something like a jukebox. I felt it was a no-brainer to invest the money on something that could give something in return. This, of course led to the fact that I rarely had any money.

If we played hooky from school, everyone else sat by the tables, drinking their coffee and smoking their cigarettes. I sat in front of the slot machine.

It was completely automatic and if I am honest it is where I felt at home. A cup of coffee in one hand and a cigarette in the other.

The coffee you had to buy to be able to sit down, and the cigarette I probably got from one of my

A book about how wrong things can go when being addicted to gambling.

I live in Finland so the issues in the book are mostly related to Finnish games and culture, but the addiction is the same regardless of origin.

I wanted to put my story to paper in case it could help someone struggling with the same issues I am.

We need to start talking about these thing we're ashamed of.

Not everyone is as lucky as me, not everyone survive.

