

## Card Counting Strategies and Dangers

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Robert Marks:

Welcome to Mind Matters News. I'm your competitive host, Robert J. Marks. We're talking today to Sal Cordova, who made bucks card counting in Vegas. He's sharing his insight into the world of gambling and it's just been a fascinating trip, but we want to talk about a little bit more. Have you ever taken advantage of your skills embedding with other people?

Sal Cordova:

Yes. Team play.

Robert Marks:

Oh, team play. But this is a team play at a casino.

Sal Cordova:

Yes.

Robert Marks:

Okay. We'll talk about that in a minute. I want to tell you one of the great examples. I want to tell you a way to be honest and always win in a lottery. Would you like to know?

Sal Cordova:

I would like to know.

Robert Marks:

Okay.

Sal Cordova:

I've never heard of that.

Robert Marks:

This is where you're in a situation where they collect ballots and they put them in a hopper and turn the hopper, and they invite somebody up and they reach in and they pull out a winner.

Sal Cordova:

Like a raffle.

Robert Marks:

Like a raffle. That's exactly right. The way that you increase this... and I learned this by the way, from my sweet wife who doesn't have a dishonest bone in her body... but you take your entry and you crumple it

up, so that it's crumpled up in all of these other flat entries and that gives it more volume and you get a better space. You get more space in which to draw. And I'll tell you a true story. Have you ever heard of Hugh Ross?

Sal Cordova:

Yes.

Robert Marks:

Okay. Hugh Ross, a great Christian man, great apologist, a great cosmologist. He visited Baylor and he says, "I'm going to have a drawing for my DVD." He had a new DVD that he was putting out, and he says, "I'm going to send around these cards." And they were like index cards. And what he wanted was to collect some emails and stuff in order to increase his email list and things like that. And so you filled it out and you handed it back in. So I was sitting with my wife and my brother, and I elbowed my wife and said, "Fold it up." So we folded it up like an accordion. Okay? And we handed it back in and my wife did too. And I asked my brother to do it.

Robert Marks:

And he said, "No, I'm not going to do it." He felt dishonest. So anyway, it was not put in a hopper. Rather, Hugh Ross took all of the cards, kind of shuffled them. And then he held them in his left hand. He reached down with his right hand and grabbed a place where it was convenient, and put the card up. And then the next card was the winner. Guess which one he chose? Me. And I was the host. And everybody said, "This is fake. Mark's has hosted Ross." But I got his DVD. And then he put my card aside and then he shuffled them again, and he did the same thing and he chose my wife's card. True story, true story. And so he looked at it and he said... Ross is a very smart guy... And he looked at it and he said, "You know, there's something wrong here." And so he put that one aside and he chose the next one, which was my brother. So that's a true story. That's hilarious. So that's how to cheat it at raffles.

Sal Cordova:

Oh, wow. Oh, I see.

Robert Marks:

The entire idea is to get the volume of your entry bigger so that you have a bigger chance. I learned the following interesting story from Bill Dembski. It's from a book called *The Broken Dice*, by Ivar Ekeland. E K E L A N D. And it turned out the kings of Norway and Sweden, back in the Middle Ages, they were having this fight to determine the ownership of the Island of Hising. H I S I N G. It was a settlement that had alternately belonged to both countries, and you know how they were going to do it? Instead of fighting a war, they were going to roll die.

Sal Cordova:

Wow.

Robert Marks:

And so they're up on king Olaf, King of Norway cast the die. And one six shows on one of them. I'm sorry. No, it wasn't king Olaf. It was the other king. Anyway, that's not important. But one of them threw the die and it got a 12. And the only way that it could have progressed, according to the way we think

about it, is that King Olaf had to also draw a 12. But this was in the Middle Ages. The dice were probably made of clay, and Olaf took the dice and he threw them. And one of the dice broke two. And so he had a six on one and the other one, he had a four and a three. So he got 13. And so he declared himself the winner.

Robert Marks:

So what he did, and this is one of the ways to win in such situations, is to take the assumption of uniformity of results and go in and game it some way in order that it's advantageous to you. Breaking the die was advantageous to King Olaf, and crumpling up my entry for the sweepstakes was a way that I destroyed the uniformity assumption of the lottery. So anyway, those are some things you can take with you, and add them to your arsenal.

Sal Cordova:

Yes.

Robert Marks:

For future use. Now there have been a few movies made about card counting. One is 21, with Kevin Spacey. If I remember the movie right... it's been a long time since I've seen it... if I remember the movie right, he was a professor and he was training some people on how to card count. He had discovered how to card...

Sal Cordova:

Yes.

Robert Marks:

Are you familiar with the movie?

Sal Cordova:

Yes. And it's loosely based on Bringing the House Down. There is a true story where the professor... actually, there might have been a manager, but there's some MIT guys. And I think that they formed a corporation called Strategic Investments.

Robert Marks:

Oh, okay.

Sal Cordova:

And they pulled a substantial amount of money. They got people from MIT, and also a Harvard school of business, to be card counters, and they'd had the bank roll. So the idea is one, if you have numerous people bending smaller, the law of large numbers helps you. Again, the Kelly criterion applying it.

Robert Marks:

Yes.

Sal Cordova:

But it was also to disguise their betting patterns. So that was one...

Robert Marks:

Oh.

Sal Cordova:

Yeah.

Robert Marks:

So that they were more stealth in what they did.

Sal Cordova:

Yeah. Oh, this was clever. It was the big player model. And so what would happen is you'd have some guy who would sit at the table and his job was to count. And when the count was very high, when the shoe was hot, he would signal that the shoe was hot. So you have these big card... You know, these are actually nice multi-deck shoes. And so when the shoe was hot, it was loaded. And so this big player that would be looking for the signals would walk around and he would see it. And it's like, wow. And so, you had the card counter sitting there...

Robert Marks:

And he's not winning anything. He gets up and it looks like he's...

Sal Cordova:

Maybe he's betting 25. And then so the big player comes in and just throws a \$20,000 bet.

Robert Marks:

But because he is new, there's no track record of what he bets. And so they think, "Ah, this could be normal..."

Sal Cordova:

Right, right. He just wandered in the table. Again, you have to be a good actor. But he'd wander in the table and just said, "Oh, you know," and if he is a good actor, he'll just be throwing all this money. And the law of large numbers would start... you'd have to do this process quite a bit... but it started to rake in the money. And so they kind of avoided the problem of surveillance at one level, because what they would do would be focusing on the guy that was just sitting there the whole time. And that was one form of team play.

Robert Marks:

Now, have you ever participated in team play?

Sal Cordova:

Not at that scale, not at that scale. So, because I was a marked man, I had a female team player and I would be signaling to her.

Robert Marks:

Now, is this when you were dressed up as a pimp and she would play... She was one of your girls?

Sal Cordova:

Yes.

Robert Marks:

Okay. Okay. Okay. So here comes the pimp and his girl. Okay. So...

Sal Cordova:

Okay. And there are other advantages to that, because surveillance cameras are from the top. Yeah. And, not that I ever got her to do this, but...

Robert Marks:

Well, if you were a pimp, you had a big hat. Right?

Sal Cordova:

Well, ideally you would have one that would like to kind of have her a very low cut dress. And you hope that the surveillance guys would be made...

Robert Marks:

Distracted. Are you serious? There's lots of psychology in this, isn't there?

Sal Cordova:

Yeah. Yeah. And, so one time I was at a table once and this woman that was practically showing really too much, it was the talk of the pit bosses, especially a female pit boss was like, "Did you see that girl sitting there?" And I was like, hey, I could just kind of just blast away. I'd be the invisible man. But I was just like, this is great. You know?

Robert Marks:

Really. So, it was like a magician and she was your distraction.

Sal Cordova:

Oh yeah. I didn't worry about being surveilled. So sometimes, if you're a card counter, you don't want to display your skill level.

Robert Marks:

Yeah.

Sal Cordova:

So sometimes you deliberately not play to your full maximum.

Robert Marks:

Gotcha.

Sal Cordova:

Just because you didn't... the guy playing at his full maximum would be going to be betting from five to \$1,500 and it's going to be so obvious you're skilled.

Robert Marks:

Yeah.

Sal Cordova:

And so sometimes you tried not to be that way. So I had the female partner there and usually... Okay, so I'm an Asian male. I look scholarly. Yeah, I'm going to be target. She looked just like an ordinary person. And I'd signal her discreetly. I was trying to remember... Oh yeah. It would be a verbal cue. I would just, depending on what I would say, she'd know to raise or, or lower her bets.

Robert Marks:

Oh, was she playing simultaneously with you?

Sal Cordova:

Yeah. Yeah.

Robert Marks:

Okay. So it wasn't one after the other, like in the Kevin Spacey movie, it was both of you playing?

Sal Cordova:

Right, that's the big player model.

Robert Marks:

Right. Gotcha. That's the what model?

Sal Cordova:

That's the big player. That's...

Robert Marks:

Big player model.

Sal Cordova:

So there's a book called The Big Player...

Robert Marks:

Yeah?

Sal Cordova:

...by Kenny Uston. And Uston was also the executive of the Pacific...

Robert Marks:

How do you spell that?

Sal Cordova:

U S T O N.

Robert Marks:

U S T O N. Okay.

Sal Cordova:

And he wrote the book. He was an executive of the Pacific Stock Exchange. So there again, you have that connection to what we call the real casino, which is the stock market versus the brick and mortar. And so he was the one that started the big player model, and then the MIT team started to copy it.

Robert Marks:

But how did they know that she wasn't card counting? If you were sitting at the same place?

Sal Cordova:

They would eventually. They'd eventually figure it out, but a woman is usually... I know this sounds so sexist, but she's usually not suspected of card counting.

Robert Marks:

Seriously.

Sal Cordova:

Yeah.

Robert Marks:

Okay.

Sal Cordova:

Because women are known to be intuitive and most of the card counters are almost dominantly male.

Robert Marks:

Ah.

Sal Cordova:

So she didn't fit the demographic profile.

Robert Marks:

Yes. Interesting.

Sal Cordova:

So yeah, I'd be signaling her and it was fun because then... I didn't worry about... they never got her on it, so that was...

Robert Marks:

But they got you.

Sal Cordova:

Oh, they got me as a solo player.

Robert Marks:

So yeah.

Sal Cordova:

So I didn't get to have that partner very often, but it was fun.

Robert Marks:

Isn't that in...

Sal Cordova:

And there was also... We did this with craps, where they have the pass line and then they have the don't bet. And they basically negate each other unless the dice were rolled like a 12. But the idea is your limited variance.

Robert Marks:

Yeah.

Sal Cordova:

Even though it was a negative game, but had so little variance, so I'd play like the boy from the hood. And she's the sophisticated...

Robert Marks:

Variance, by the way, you can say that as risk, right? The bigger the variance, the bigger the risk.

Sal Cordova:

It's volatility.

Robert Marks:

Okay.

Sal Cordova:

You might say. But we had ended up having very stable expectation. You know, the expectation was very much in line with the... the variance is very, very little. But the trick was we had all these marketing



coupons. And so the marketing coupons would be much larger than our disadvantage. And so that was one of the advantage plays we would use. And so that's where I was getting these 20% loss rebates, but those are toward the ends of my casino days.

Robert Marks:

I see. You know, there was another movie about card counting called Rounders, with Matt Damon and Edward Norton. And they got caught card counting and some thugs took them out in the back and beat them up. Did you ever get beat up or do you know of anybody that got beat up? Does that happen or is that pure fix?

Sal Cordova:

It doesn't happen this much in this day and age...

Robert Marks:

This much. Now you left the door open for it possibly happening.

Sal Cordova:

I haven't known of anyone in Las Vegas because of all the surveillance cameras. I've not heard... and they don't need to. They don't need to hurt anyone. They just ban them from the casinos. Now it's facial recognition.

Robert Marks:

Right.

Sal Cordova:

They could just make sure they never come through the doors. So that's how they're able to deal with them. But in the old days, when the mob owned the casinos...

Robert Marks:

Oh, this would be like in the thirties and forties. And fifties...

Sal Cordova:

Even in the early sixties.

Robert Marks:

Early sixties? Okay.

Sal Cordova:

Yeah. You did not want to be winning too much or they'd be on to you. If you were doing something, they could beat you up, then. Now the one time, one incident I know of Kenny Uston getting beat up, it was...

Robert Marks:

Did you mention him before, Kenny Uston?

Sal Cordova:

Yeah. Just now. He's the big player. The...

Robert Marks:

Oh, the big player. Yes. Okay. Thank you.

Sal Cordova:

It was when he was insulting a dealer, and the mob actually took offense to that.

Robert Marks:

Oh.

Sal Cordova:

And they beat him up for that.

Robert Marks:

Okay. But not for card counting, or cheating?

Sal Cordova:

Not for card counting.

Robert Marks:

Okay. I'm sorry. I keep using the word cheating. If you play the game by the rules, you're not cheating.

Sal Cordova:

You're an advantage player.

Robert Marks:

You're an advantage player. Okay.

Sal Cordova:

Now I will tell you this. I can't speak for the other countries, how the casinos are run there.

Robert Marks:

Ah.

Sal Cordova:

There's some places that are nice to play on, but you may not want to be there, because you don't know how you'll be treated. I do know, I've heard instances like some of these these boats, these gambling boats that go out, the captain is the law out in the sea. And I heard that they'll threaten to throw you overboard with it.

Robert Marks:

So it's like the old pirate movies. You got to walk the plank.

Sal Cordova:

You got to walk the plank.

Robert Marks:

Or they'll keel haul you. Have you ever heard of that? They take you and they put you on one side of the boat, and drag you under the boat to the other side, so...

Sal Cordova:

So one advantage player at a boat, I love playing and I made money on that boat. Now I'm kind of realizing I was kind of in danger there, was that they've discovered this guy was an advantage player. They may have flyered him, meaning... that's another term there... they circulated his photos. It got to the surveillance team. So they have sometimes these things where you're flyered, they'll go through this photo album, say, "Okay, if you see this guy, he's a bad guy." Well actually, we tend to think of ourselves as good guys. But anyway, he won a lot of money and they said, "No, we determined you're a card counter. We're going to take all your winnings and all your chips."

Robert Marks:

Oh boy.

Sal Cordova:

And he protested. And the captain said, "You protest, we're going to throw you overboard."

Robert Marks:

Seriously.

Sal Cordova:

So they took all of his money that he won legally. But because they took the money when he was out in the open ocean....

Robert Marks:

So it's international law, probably a law of their own.

Sal Cordova:

Right. A law of their own. He got back there. He didn't have any of his money. So that was one example of kind of using force of violence against a patron.

Robert Marks:

Now, both you and I are Christians. We're followers of Christ. You did some consulting on another card counting movie called Holy Rollers, which was about Christians that card counted.

Sal Cordova:

Yes.

Robert Marks:

Could you give us first of all, kind of a summary of the documentary, Holy Rollers, and then your involvement, and whatever...

Sal Cordova:

Well, actually I wasn't a consultant. I was part of the crowdfunding donors. And so...

Robert Marks:

Oh, you were a donor?

Sal Cordova:

Yes.

Robert Marks:

Okay.

Sal Cordova:

Yes.

Robert Marks:

But, well, the reason I know, you're listed on the end credits.

Sal Cordova:

Yes.

Robert Marks:

I saw the end credits and I saw "Sal Cordova." I know the guy. Okay? So I knew immediately that you had something to do with it.

Sal Cordova:

Well, I put my first and last name, but they only put my first name. So I'm amazed that you're watching the credits and you saw my name and you knew it was me...

Robert Marks:

Oh.

Sal Cordova:

I was like, "Wow."

Robert Marks:

I swear I saw your entire name. You don't think so?

Sal Cordova:

The version of the DVD I had, only had my first name and I was kind of disappointed because I was kind of proud of that.

Robert Marks:

You were kind of proud of that. Okay. First of all, tell us what the movie was about, and then your involvement.

Sal Cordova:

It's about again, one of the most successful card counting teams, blackjack teams. They took the casinos for multimillions of dollars. Now they didn't use the big player model. What they would do is they would just send players in there with a lot of cash. They'd be throwing down these \$10,000 bets or whatever. And if they got burned out and got kicked out, so be it, they'd bring another. It was a different style of play. It was just kind of, "We'll just keep playing until they kick us out" type thing. But the idea was they're going to use the law of large numbers, but to have a team like that to be successful, they had to be very honest, because you're going to give a guy \$100,000, you expect him to report that if he really lost \$100,000 versus just pocketing it, he was being honorable. And that's why the team was so effective, because everyone trusted each other and they were honest.

Robert Marks:

Now these were, to complete the story and why they called them Holy Rollers, they were missionaries to Seattle, I believe. Wasn't it Seattle?

Sal Cordova:

They were pastors and elders.

Robert Marks:

Pastors and elders. And typically they were on, well typically you have to work a second job for many ministry positions.

Sal Cordova:

Yeah.

Robert Marks:

And so I think that they figured, "Well, let's not work a second job and go out and toil, let's go to Vegas and card count." And that's a way that they earn their money. Is that right?

Sal Cordova:

Exactly. And again, it's the exponential law. They're able to leverage that. So they didn't start out with a lot of money, but because they kept reinvesting their bank, the collective bankroll got bigger and bigger and bigger till the point they were... I think their total winnings at the time, and this was some years ago, was three and a half million in today's dollars. Would that be like 10 million?

Robert Marks:

Wow.

Sal Cordova:

And they were called...

Robert Marks:

Do you know what they started with?

Sal Cordova:

The head of the team probably had \$700.

Robert Marks:

Oh, Jesus.

Sal Cordova:

So...

Robert Marks:

Boy.

Sal Cordova:

Yeah.

Robert Marks:

That is the power of the exponential.

Sal Cordova:

Now he was really lucky because that's kind of a smallish bankroll. But I think his story was he was on food stamps at the time, and that was the only thing he could do. And he had a baby to feed.

Robert Marks:

And plus he had a Christian ministry.

Sal Cordova:

Yeah. Yeah.

Robert Marks:

Okay.

Sal Cordova:

So they found me and I was just very moved by the story, because I'm a Christian, and it's really funny that the Christians have had a long history in advantage play. Partly because I think it's the discipline of following the book. And to be a good, successful gambler, you want to follow rules and play by the book, so to speak.

Robert Marks:

Sure. You want to be honest.

Sal Cordova:

Right. Well, you know, the Christian tradition, our book is the Bible.

Robert Marks:

Yeah.

Sal Cordova:

But that form of discipline extends to other areas of life. You play by the rules and you're disciplined and...

Robert Marks:

We're taught to submit to authority, and that's following the rules...

Sal Cordova:

Following the rules.

Robert Marks:

Part of submitting to authority.

Sal Cordova:

So if the computer says, "This is the optimal mathematical play," you do it. You don't... And so it was that mindset. You also live a clean life. You don't drink. And the idea really, honestly, you don't gamble. Meaning if you play by the rules, you're not getting a thrill out of throwing the money in there and kind of taking the risk.

Robert Marks:

Yeah.

Sal Cordova:

You're there because it's a job. You're doing this for the honor and glory of God, just like Father Fahey of...

Robert Marks:

Repeat that story. It's been a few years...

Sal Cordova:

Oh, yeah. Father Fahey was a Catholic priest. He was MIT graduate in economics and he taught mathematics and economics. And always his last class that was so popular, he would say, "Okay. Now I'm going to teach you how to card count." And he had...

Robert Marks:

A Catholic priest.

Sal Cordova:

Being a Catholic priest, you have a vow of chastity and poverty. And so he gave all his winnings away and he was able to get computers for a particular school that he was a part of, part of the athletic facility in the library. So Christians have done well. I mentioned in one of the episodes, Keith Taft...

Robert Marks:

Yes.

Sal Cordova:

...who had the wearable computer, he was a Christian. And, and there are other Christians like Kevin Blackwood, and others. I don't know why that is, but then you have the Holy Rollers and their story. So...

Robert Marks:

It's a great documentary, by the way. I would really recommend that.

Sal Cordova:

Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

Robert Marks:

They do it so well.

Sal Cordova:

Oh yeah. And I could identify with these people. I mean, they're moral issues that you deal with. It's like, is this the right thing to do? And it's stuff that I dealt with. But for some of us, we felt like we're hurting the casinos and they're the bad guys.

Robert Marks:

Well, they are the bad guys. And also, I think one of the people on Holy Rollers said, "You know, the casinos say, 'Come in, have fun, get rich.' But if you go in, you have fun and you get rich, they kick you out. Right? Even, even by their own rules. And that just isn't consistent." So yeah, I thought it was interesting. I've been at a casino once and I went in and it struck me. All of these people were figuring out ways to game the system. And some of them were so stupid. One guy was there pumping, I don't know if it was quarters or tokens or whatever, into a machine. And every time he did it, he pulled the one-arm bandit, and then he put his hand across the screen, like that would increase his chances of winning. And it was clear he was doing that for some reason.

Sal Cordova:

Yes.

Robert Marks:

And you know that these...



Sal Cordova:  
Superstitions...

Robert Marks:  
Yeah. You know that these things have to happen all the time at these places.

Sal Cordova:  
Well, one thing that this influenced me on is, there's a theological thing called Pascal's wager.

Robert Marks:  
Yes.

Sal Cordova:  
And I began to conceive of life this way, at a personal level. And then also I realized everyday life also has... you're wagering on things where you have incomplete information and it's kind of the benefit to cost the reward-to-risk ratios.

Robert Marks:  
Yeah.

Sal Cordova:  
And I began to view things very differently in other realms of my personal life, because I'd done this kind of semi-professionally. And it did affect the way I looked at the world and how to live my everyday life, and how to invest time, et cetera, and money and resources and things. I would say it affected my personal life in a very positive way. Ironically...

Robert Marks:  
Pascal's wager by the way, is incredible.

Sal Cordova:  
Yeah.

Robert Marks:  
Blaise Pascal, by the way, was the guy that, well, the metric unit for pressure is named after Pascal.

Sal Cordova:  
Pascal.

Robert Marks:  
He invented one of the first computers called the Pascaline, which his father was in accounting or something like that. So he invented that and marketed it. That's the reason there was a computer language called Pascal.

Sal Cordova:

Pascal.

Robert Marks:

Yeah. Pascal.

Sal Cordova:

I actually program in that.

Robert Marks:

Oh, you do program in Pascal?

Sal Cordova:

Yeah, I'm giving away my age here. Now I used to program in Pascal. I think that BASIC was my first language. Pascal is my second.

Robert Marks:

Well, the other thing he did with Fermat was create the world of probability. There's a famous book called The Unfinished Game. And it's a series of letters between the great mathematician, Fermat and Pascal, going back and forth trying to figure out... this is not complete, but it's like somebody played the world series and it's the best of seven games. But they played five games and team A won three games, team B won two games, but they all got killed in a plane crash. The winner was to get a million dollars. So the question is, how is that million dollars to be divided up? So that was the unfinished game. And they put these letters back and forth and came up with probability. And in a few years they had things like actuaries. They had insurance, because people could forecast the future in a probabilistic sense. And it's so obvious to us now. But back then, the idea of talking about the future was just kind of ridiculous until Pascal and Fermat did it.

Sal Cordova:

And I would add one other thing. So it was Pascal of Pascal's wager that actually formulated a lot of the gambling stuff. So the concept of expected value, that was Pascal.

Robert Marks:

That was Pascal.

Sal Cordova:

Which now, it reverberated through all of physics because a lot of quantum mechanics is expressed in terms of expected value. You'll just see that the idea of notion of expected value. So this is kind of interesting how all this...

Robert Marks:

All this goes together.

Sal Cordova:

Oh yeah. Oh, absolutely.

Robert Marks:

But Pascal had, I guess what a Baptist would call a born-again experience. In fact, on his deathbed, they found some letters on him. Have you heard this? It was called the Night of Fire, and where he became a Christian. He recognized who Christ was and decided to follow him. And he wrote down a lot of his feelings from the Night of Fire, and they're preserved for history. We can go back and read them. So from that point on, he spent all of his time in apologetics.

Sal Cordova:

Yeah.

Robert Marks:

For example, in doing Pascal's wager, and just an astonishing man. And he died when he was 39.

Sal Cordova:

Unbelievable, yeah.

Robert Marks:

Yeah. What...

Sal Cordova:

The contributions.

Robert Marks:

Yeah.

Sal Cordova:

So theology-wise and then his contributions to mathematics, and then which now led to just big breakthroughs in physics, and then it comes back full circle. It got used in casinos, which is where it started.

Robert Marks:

Yeah. The probability that Fermat and Pascal... Well, let's get back to the topic. Final question. Somebody hearing this might go, I want to learn card counting and I want to go out and make big bucks. Do you have any advice for those sort of people?

Sal Cordova:

I'd say don't do it. Don't do it. Your time is better spent elsewhere. But if you just love it for the game, just get on a computer simulator and pretend you have. Because in a computer simulator, you could bet a million dollars and...

Robert Marks:

Nobody cares.

Sal Cordova:

Nobody cares...

Robert Marks:

Yeah.

Sal Cordova:

...that you could feel. So that's the advice I would give. There are a lot of gambles in life, if you really like gambling, which I hope you don't. But there are plenty of places you can take risks. And so I would say take risks for the things that are of value in your life.

Robert Marks:

Like the stock market.

Sal Cordova:

I don't know. You know, I can't tell you where to take risks, but for me, take risks for good causes. Take risks for other people, to care for them. That's where if I had to do it all over again, that's where I would say, okay, I might give money to this charity or that charity, and could be squandered, but that's a worthy risk.

Robert Marks:

Yeah.

Sal Cordova:

And there might be career decisions to take a risk. But again, if you feel that the outcome might outweigh your potential losses, then take the risk.

Robert Marks:

Are you ever going to card count again?

Sal Cordova:

I haven't, since I got kicked out.

Robert Marks:

Since you got kicked.

Sal Cordova:

Out, so I don't know.

Robert Marks:

But you just got kicked out at one place. There's lots of casinos. You could...

Sal Cordova:

But I'm on the SIN network now, the surveillance information.

Robert Marks:

Oh, is that right? Okay.

Sal Cordova:

Oh yeah. My...

Robert Marks:

You've been blackballed.

Sal Cordova:

I'd have to sneak in in my pimp outfit if I want to do that. You know? So no,

Robert Marks:

You need something else. It's out there now that you dress up as a pimp. So thank you, Sal.

Sal Cordova:

Oh, thank you.

Robert Marks:

This has been a great time. We've been talking to Sal Cordova. Sal has degrees in mathematics, computer science, electrical engineering, as an MS in applied physics from Johns Hopkins. I think your other degrees were from George Mason. Is that right?

Sal Cordova:

Yes.

Robert Marks:

And he's also done NIH work in biology. And he knows a lot about gambling and card counting. So thank you for sharing this with us.

Sal Cordova:

Thank you.

Robert Marks:

We appreciate it. So until next time, be of good cheer.

Announcer:

This has been Mind Matters News, with your host Robert J. Marks. Explore more at [mindmatters.ai](http://mindmatters.ai). That's [mindmatters.ai](http://mindmatters.ai). Mind Matters News is directed and edited by Austin Egbert. The opinions expressed on this program are solely those of the speakers. Mind Matters News is produced and copyrighted by the Walter Bradley Center for Natural and Artificial Intelligence at Discovery Institute.