



Near the end of his life last summer

Dennis N. Griffin, who has written several books about the Las Vegas Mafia, said a retired mobster told him before his last hospital trip that "the Vegas of his time is gone."

Cullotta died on August 20 at a hospital in Las Vegas from complications from COVID-19. He was 81 years old.

"I believe Frank's death marks the end of that Las Vegas era of history," Griffin told Casino .

Cullotta moved to Las Vegas in the late 1970s to help his Chicago boyhood friend Tony "The Ant" Spilotro run a criminal enterprise in Southern Nevada. Spilotro was the director of the Chicago Outfit in Las Vegas.

During this time, money that escaped from casinos was illegally sent to mafia crime families in the Midwest. This era was depicted in the critically acclaimed 1995 film Casino. Cullotta appears as a hit man in the film.

Griffin co-wrote three books with Cullotta about this period in Southern Nevada. Griffin is also a co-author of two books, including Frank Cullotta's The Great Kitchen hit: The Gangster's Cookbook, which was published after Cullotta's death. Cullotta once ran a pizza restaurant called Upper Crust in Las Vegas. It was located on the east side of the strip near the UNLV campus.

The second new book is "Drawing the Colotta," a story that David Bowman and Griffin's "Casino" couldn't tell you. The book comes out this month "Like there's no place on earth."

Griffin told Casino.org Las Vegas' aura and history "will last forever." It's really like nowhere else on Earth," Griffin said. "Casino movies, and all the other movies and books about Vegas, will keep it alive."

Nicholas Pilleggi, who co-wrote the movie "Casino" with director Martin Scorsese, told Casino.org Las Vegas is "ideal" these days. However, Pilleggi said he misses times like "seeing friends" when walking into a smaller casino on the strip

Filleggi said Las Vegas was once a gamblers town. Now gambling is just another amenity offered by larger casinos, he told Casino.

Several hotel casinos in Southern Nevada from this earlier period were demolished. Ownership of the company's casinos in Las Vegas led to a huge resort boom that began in the 1980s.

Griffin said he doesn't know if companies can go back to where they were.

"I'm not even sure they want it," Griffin said, "and I might say it's a completely different world, and some don't get better."

Age of Rat Pack

UNLV's gaming historian David G. Schwartz told Casino.org that casinos can regain some of the magic of the Rat Pack era by focusing on "personalized attention."

Rat Pack stars such as Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., and Dean Martin took their strides in Las Vegas in the 1960s, performing in the Copa Room of the now-devastated Sands Hotel Casino. The stars sometimes socialized with guests. Venice and Palazzo were built where the Sands family stood.

Schwartz has written several books about the game, including the recently released *At the Sands: The Casino That Shaped Classic Las Vegas*, *Breaking the Rat Pack Together*, and *Out With a Bang*. [동행복권파워볼](#)

"I think the brand overshadowed the experience, at least for Las Vegas," Schwartz told Casino.org . "Casinos will tell you how cool they are. But they don't always do such a good job of delivering what makes the experience in them unique and worth traveling."