



# One of a Kind: The Rise and Fall of Stuey ',The Kid', Ungar, The World's Greatest Poker Player

*Nolan Dalla, Peter Alson*

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Stuey Ungar, the son of a Lower East Side bookie, grew up in a New York of the 1950s and '60s that was straight out of Damon Runyon. By his early teens, he had dropped out of high school and was spending most of his time in the city's under-ground card rooms. So prodigious was his talent for playing gin rummy that he soon found himself bankrolled by members of the Genovese crime family. After thrashing every top gin player on the East Coast, he was forced to broaden his horizons--traveling around the country to find opponents and also learning other card games, including poker.

At twenty-one, he moved to Las Vegas for good and quickly found mentors in poker legends such as Jack "Treetop" Straus, "Amarillo Slim" Preston, Doyle Brunson, and Chip Reese, who embraced the skinny five-foot-five kid with the Rimbaud aura. Soon enough, Ungar was playing in the biggest games at the famous Dunes poker room, learning the finer points of the game at incredible speed.

In 1980, competing in his second tournament ever and playing a game--no-limit Texas Hold'em--he'd just learned, he shocked the poker universe by winning the World Series of Poker. He would go on to win the event a record three times. In *One of a Kind*, authors Nolan Dalla and Peter Alson tell the startling tale of a man who managed to win millions of dollars and live the highest of high-roller lives without ever quite understanding or respecting the value of money. Whether tossing away his winnings at the racetrack or on a single roll of the dice, Ungar was notorious for gambling every single dollar in his pocket on a daily basis. The risk that he embodied in his gambling carried over to his personal life. He had no concept of night or day. He didn't own a wristwatch, didn't have a bank account, and for years had no home address or personal possessions. For all his gambling successes, at the end of his life he bounced between hotel rooms, casinos, and crack houses, dependent upon the kindness of friends and strangers.

This intimate, authorized biography illuminates the dark genius of poker's most charismatic and mysterious star, who could ruthlessly peer into and read other men's souls but seemed baffled and powerless when confronted with his own.

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