

# [PDF] Havana Nocturne: How The Mob Owned Cuba And Then Lost It To The Revolution

T. J. English - pdf download free book

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**Books Details:**

Title: Havana Nocturne: How the Mob  
Author: T. J. English  
Released: 2009-06-09  
Language:  
Pages: 432  
ISBN: 0061712744  
ISBN13: 978-0061712746  
ASIN: 0061712744



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**Description:**

**From Publishers Weekly** Old Havana mambos on the brink of the abyss in this chronicle of Cuba in the decades before the 1959 revolution. True-crime writer English (*Paddy Whacked*) presents an empire-building saga in which the "Havana Mob" of American gangsters, led by visionary financier Meyer Lansky, controlled Cuba. Empowered by permissive gambling laws and payoffs to dictator Fulgencio Batista, the Mafia poured millions into posh hotels, casinos and nightclubs, skimmed huge profits and sought to make Havana its financial headquarters. The results: exuberant nightlife, a giddy Afro-Cuban jazz scene, sordid backroom sex shows and the occasional grisly gangland hit.

English revels in purple prose ("the island seethed like a bitch with a low-grade fever") and decadent details, including an orgy with Frank Sinatra and a bevy of prostitutes that was interrupted by autograph-seeking Girl Scouts and a nun. But his estimate of the importance of the Havana mob and its "showdown" with Castro's puritanical rebels seems inflated. More supplicant than suzerain to Batista, the mob focused on internecine feuds and paid little attention to the brewing insurrection. The casinos, hotels and nightclubs were all the mob owned-but they sure threw one hell of a party. Photos. (*May*)

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**From** The penetration of American organized crime into the gambling and entertainment industries in Cuba has been well documented. The actual process of this takeover is quite interesting, involving political corruption, mob culture, and the interaction of Cuban ruling elites and revolutionary figures. English, who teaches a course on organized crime at the New College of California, places Meyer Lansky and Lucky Luciano at the center of his narrative. As portrayed by English, these boyhood friends combine brutality, cynicism, and an expansive vision of creating a criminal empire with a protected base in Cuba. English writes eloquently about prerevolutionary Havana, where the glitter of nightlife and an "anything goes" facade covered up the widespread poverty and decadent political culture under Batista. As long as English sticks to organized crime he remains on solid ground. Unfortunately, when he ventures into the political realm, he oversimplifies, displaying an appalling ignorance of the complexities of the various groups opposed to Batista. Still, this is a valuable examination of organized-crime figures and their efforts to thrive in a seemingly receptive environment. --Jay Freeman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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