

ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS: REFLECTIONS ON THE FOUNDATIONS AND FUTURES OF THE STUDY OF GAMBLING

Bo J. Bernhard

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Bo Bernhard was invested as the Philip G. Satre Chair in Gaming Studies and delivered the Robert D. Faiss guest lecture on gaming law policy on April 5, 2018. He was invested by William S. Boyd School of Law Dean Dan Hamilton, University of Nevada–Reno Provost Kevin Carman, and University of Nevada–Las Vegas’s Vice President for Research and Economic Development, Dr. Mary Croughan.

The annual Faiss Lecture is named for the late Robert D. Faiss, one of the nation’s foremost authorities on gaming law. Faiss was a shareholder with the law firm Lionel Sawyer & Collins and an adjunct Professor of Law at Boyd, and he played a key role in the evolution Nevada’s gaming industry during his career.

The Philip G. Satre Chair was established in honor of one of the greatest civic leaders and lawyers in Nevada, in recognition of his contribution to the gaming industry. The Chair recognizes the greatest scholars in gaming studies in Nevada and the nation. The first person appointed as Satre Chair was Bill Eadington, an economist and one of the first academics to study gambling, and founder of the Institute for the Study of Gambling and Commercial Gaming at UNR. Eadington held the title until his death in 2013, and the seat remained vacant until Dr. Bernhard’s appointment. As a result of Dr. Bernhard’s appointment as the Satre Chair, both of Nevada’s research universities will work in collaboration for the first time to offer the world’s most sought-after gaming studies program.

After growing up in Las Vegas, Dr. Bernhard attended Harvard University where he completed a thesis on the gaming industry. This thesis led him to UNLV to pursue a PhD focusing on the gaming industry. In his current role as the Executive Director of UNLV’s International Gaming Institute, Dr. Bernhard oversees the world’s largest institute dedicated to the study of the global gaming industry. He currently edits the leading peer-reviewed academic journal, *Gaming Research and Review*, and is on the Board of the American Gaming Association.

Provost Carman described Dr. Bernhard as the preeminent scholar in gaming studies in Nevada, and someone who would carry the Satre Chair with distinction. Dr. Croughan described Dr. Bernhard as passionate, curious, and generous with his knowledge; touting his cultivation of various gaming

education initiatives and his receipt of UNLV's Harry Reid Silver State Research Award in 2017. *Dean Hamilton introduced Dr. Bernhard.*

Bo Bernhard:

Wow. That was so incredible. Thank you, Dean Hamilton. Let me tell you the story of this day. The Faiss Lecture is the most special gaming law policy lecture in the world. I remember coming and hearing Kim Sinatra and Jan Jones deliver this lecture and being so inspired to do so much of the work that has since taken place over on the corner of Flamingo and Swenson, at the International Gaming Institute.

Dan Hamilton is a force of nature! Those of you who know Dan know that this is the case. I'm actually not even technically *in* your law school! I have lots of bosses on this campus— I actually have my Chair in Sociology, Robert Futrell here — I have a professorship over at the hotel school, where I report to that whole crew. Mary Croughan is my boss (as Vice President of Research and Economic Development). (To Dean Hamilton) I don't even *work* for you!

Dan Hamilton heard about the investiture of this Chair, and Dan says, "You know what, dating back hundreds of years" — Dan knows these things — "this investiture of a chair is still a very special moment for a University, and you *have* to have a big ceremony, you have to throw a big party for this — and just because UNLV is a 'baby university' that doesn't know you're supposed to do this stuff, this doesn't mean that we shouldn't do these things—that we shouldn't celebrate these moments." And so Dan, force of nature that he is, bulldozes his way through this and builds this tremendous, tremendous day. So thank you, Dan. I do consider myself working also for you and alongside the law school, and a member of this law school family, which has just been so special on so many levels.

I want to thank, too, my UNR family. It's interesting because I grew up here—I'm familiar with the cauldron that is the UNLV-UNR rivalry (*laughter*). I've heard a little about this. And in laying this out, this bold plan to work collaboratively with UNR—I mean, it's not like there was a road map for us, right? It's not like there was this long list of long-standing UNLV-UNR partnerships that worked out so well! And in the beginning, we were sort of thrown together into this cauldron, and together we run this program in Lake Tahoe (Editors' note: The Executive Development Program in Lake Tahoe), which is a great illustration of this teamwork: it takes place over ten days, it's UNLV, it's UNR, it is a joint, fifty-fifty partnership, and you spend ten days together up in the mountains, with long days and long nights working together. In this environment, it's either going to go well or it's going to go horribly wrong. And it's gone just tremendously, tremendously well.

One of the things I'm proudest of here is that when those state legislators come to us, as they often do, and they say, "Well, this stuff you're doing at UNLV is great, but tell me what are they doing up north in Reno — and tell me how much

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duplication there is and therefore how many tax dollars of Nevadans are being wasted here because you're duplicating these services." And we get to say, "No. No, this is not that kind of program. This is a program where we actually are working together, where we have aligned behind one University of Nevada system." So, my UNR family has been just a tremendous, tremendous addition to my own academic family.

As has my UNLV family. I'm looking at so many of you here, so many that you are too many to name.

As has my *family* family, which is here in the second row. And as I look at this row, I'm realizing – well, actually, two of them (*points to his two daughters*) are too little to be teachers – but everybody else in my family, literally without exception, has been a teacher. Teaching is a family calling for us, and it is to them, and to *my* teachers, that this presentation is dedicated.

I. ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS

The title, *On the Shoulders of Giants* reflects, of course, on the idea that we see farther when we stand on the shoulders of giants. In fact, that's the very theme of the talk here today. The subtitle is *Reflections on the Foundations and Futures of the Study of Gambling*, so part of what we're going to do is talk about some of the yesterdays, today's, and tomorrows of gambling research. This is apparently, Dan (Hamilton) told me, what we do when we invest a chair. We provide a state of the field; a macro, big-picture overview. I didn't know any of these things, Dan knows all of these things.

So this is what we're going to try to do here. We will start with some foundations and in particular we'll start with this great quote. I've always loved this quote. It's from Sir Isaac Newton: "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." This speaks to those of us who are very proud to have been standing on the shoulders of our teachers. But here's what's interesting about that quote: This quote *itself* was very much derived from an earlier thinker. In other words, Sir Isaac Newton himself is standing on the shoulders of a giant named Priscian, who was a philosopher in the 6th Century, who said something similar. Priscian's quote in the 6th century was, "The younger the scholars, the more sharp-sighted."

Now I'm looking at some of my younger scholars here in the front row. What he meant, for you, was this: "How *lucky* are today's students?" Because you get to learn from *all* of those books that have been written, *all* the thinkers who have come along, and stand on all of *those* shoulders. So, the younger the scholars, the more sharp-sighted you are.

Having talked a bit about my teachers, now I want to talk a little bit about my students. I want to talk about one student first. One of my favorite things about teaching at UNLV – and this is not something that I anticipated – is the non-traditional student population. You've heard that before: what it means is that we at UNLV get a whole lot of folks who come back to school later in life.

And I'll tell you, when I started out here as a young professor, I really was intimidated by this class of students, by this group of experienced people, because, well, *why would they listen to me?*

A. *Slide of Jonathan Helmbold*

Jonathan Helmbold was an executive on the Strip. He was doing very well in his role, but he had a thought that perhaps he wanted to elevate himself a bit. He was in a classroom of mine two semesters ago, and he came into my office hours and we talked at length about the ways in which Jonathan Helmbold wanted to elevate his life, and how he wanted to do so with *us*, here at UNLV. So Jonathan enrolled in our master's program, and in doing so, he knew he was going to be making his life *harder* to make his life *better*.

Those of you who work on the Strip know this: to accomplish this educational goal, Jonathan was going to have to take all sorts of awful, awful shifts. Specifically, and we talked about this on that particular day, he was going to have to take a lot of graveyard shifts (to study at UNLV during the day).

On March 18th, 2018, Jonathan was driving home from one of those graveyard shifts when his life was taken by a drunk driver.

It was of note, of course, that this was at 3:40 a.m., as Jonathan was making his life better, by making his life harder. And I think many of us faculty members – and I speak to our fellow teachers here – sometimes we forget that virtually all of our students are doing exactly that: they are making their lives *harder* to make their lives *better*. And they're choosing to do it with *us*. All of the faculty meetings we sit through where we gripe about our students, and yet all of our students are *giving* us that. They are making their lives harder to make their lives better: this is the lesson of my student, and indeed my teacher, Jonathan Helmbold.

B. *Slide of Dr. Rob Hunter*

My most important teacher was my good friend Dr. Rob Hunter. I met Rob Hunter when I was an undergraduate writing that paper that Dan referenced, on the impacts of the gaming industry around the world. And I actually thought of this when I was driving in today: while doing this paper, I also met Shannon Bybee, the great UNLV gaming law professor who was very much a founding figure of this law school, and he said, "If you're doing this research report, you should talk to the problem gambling guy. You need to talk to Rob Hunter."

Now Shannon Bybee and Rob Hunter over the years had had some interesting intellectual battles, but the respect that Shannon had for Rob was such that he said, "You've got to go check this guy out, he's up on the corner of Spring Mountain and Rainbow, and he runs the Charter Hospital system, where he is the voice of the great ad" – those of you who have been around for a while remember

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this – “If you don’t get help at Charter Hospital, *please*, get help somewhere.” Rob had this inimitable baritone that spoke to a community of individuals who would walk into treatment in tears of sorrow and pain, and walk out in tears of laughter, healing, and hysterics. Such was the magnitude of the sense of humor and humanity of this individual.

So, as I was doing this undergraduate paper, Rob invited me out to Charter Hospital, and I walked in there as an undergrad doing a paper, and he welcomed me as he did everybody—with open arms. And he said, “Why don’t you come to group tonight?” And I went to treatment group that night and I got to meet individuals that I have since been studying for the rest of my career, and I’ve been very honored to be in the presence of all of them. I watched what Rob gave them as a teacher. Rob Hunter was very much a clinician, but I want to focus on the fact that this was also a tremendous, tremendous teacher who would *teach* these individuals a way of looking at their lives that suddenly liberated them from a whole lifetime’s worth of pain.

Rob delivered lectures on the neurobiology of the gambler that would allow people who had, for their entire lives, been self-diagnosing as uniquely flawed and *evil* human beings to think that maybe, just maybe, they were folks who had a neurobiological phenomenon in their brain that sort of gave them, well, a different “hand” at the outset of the poker game of life. Rob was so great at this. He would say “It doesn’t mean your brain’s broken and that you get to say, ‘Well, my brain’s broken and there’s nothing I can do, I’m helpless.’” It actually became this *empowering* lecture, this empowering teaching, that enabled people to walk out of there with the tools and the energy to transform their lives. I don’t know that anybody healed more hurting Las Vegans than the father of problem gambling treatment in Las Vegas.

We lost our good friend Rob Hunter on March 9th, 2018. On March 6th and 7th and 8th, Rob and I did all-day teaching programs together. That means that in the three days prior to his passing, I got to introduce my friend Rob Hunter, and I did so differently each day, because one of the things I learned from Rob Hunter was – and I think anybody who knows Rob would recognize this instantly – *nobody* understood the value of a well-placed, loving, authentic compliment better than Rob Hunter. So many of us leave beautiful, loving words holstered in our quivers – words left unsaid, left unexpressed. Rob Hunter never did that. And so I didn’t do that on March 6th, and 7th, and 8th. I learned this from Rob Hunter: “Never leave kind words in your quiver.” This is the lesson of Rob Hunter.

C. Slide of Dr. Bill Eadington

Here is Dr. Bill Eadington, the founding figure in the gaming studies field. Here’s a picture of Bill and Margaret Eadington arriving on the UNR campus in 1969. In 1969, Bill marched into a respected economics department up north and announced he’s going to study gambling. I don’t know if you know economists; they can be a little bit . . . “self-confident,” (*laughter*) and Bill was laughed out

of the faculty meeting, because this was so ridiculous, to study gambling. “We’re economists, for crying out loud. Gambling is a superfluous activity. That’s not an academic activity, that’s just for fun. You don’t *study* that.” Well, Bill eventually won the hearts not only of that economics department, but of course of his entire university, and not just that university, but an entire field that he then launched and that we now share custody of at the University of Nevada Las Vegas and the University of Nevada Reno.

One of the things that cancer gives you – and of course it takes away a whole lot and it gives you a whole lot of awful – but one of the things that cancer can give you is some time. And Bill got the worst of cancer diagnoses. I’ll never forget where I was when I got the call. Bill said, “I need to ask you a favor.” I said, “Bill, it doesn’t matter what you are about to ask me right now; I’ve asked you for a billion favors and you’ve always said yes, and you’ve never asked me for a favor, so here is the answer: ‘yes.’”

Bill said you’re going to want to sit down. He shared with me the news. And he asked if I was interested in joining forces to build this bridge between UNLV and UNR. Have you ever read that story *Tuesdays with Morrie*, where he starts going back with visits with his beloved Professor? That started “Mondays with Bill.” I was continually hopping on one of the Southwest flights up to Reno. I remember one of the last meetings I had with Bill lasted so late into the night that I missed my flight and slept on the floor at the Reno airport. That was the last time I hugged Bill.

On that last night, he actually made an interesting “economist” statement. He said, “You know, I am a classically-trained economist” – and he was – and then he said, “and with that came a whole lot of self-belief. Too often, I thought that ‘I don’t know that I trust anyone else to do the job that I would do.’ And as a result, I didn’t partner with a whole lot of folks, and I didn’t build bridges, and look at me now. Build bridges, Bo. Build bridges.”

“Build bridges,” is the lesson to be learned from Bill Eadington.

D. Slide of Joanna Franklin

Joanna Franklin was very much the mother of the problem gambling field, probably lesser-known perhaps in this room than she was worldwide. Joanna was very much the trainer of the universe of problem gambling clinicians. On February 12th, 2013, the day after Bill Eadington’s passing, I got an email from Joanna. We were about to launch what we called “Bill’s conference,” as Bill had given us this gift that is the “International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking,” which convenes 600 academics from Harvard Medical School, from Oxford, from Cambridge, from UCLA Medical School, all coming to Las Vegas for the world’s largest gathering of academics who study gambling.

And we were planning Bill’s conference at that point, and Joanna wrote me this note:

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“Bo, I looked into the cost of flights from Reno” – she was in Baltimore at the time, on an appointment at the University of Maryland – “I looked at the cost of flights to attend Bill’s funeral, and I found that they amounted to \$1,000. I decided I would like to put those funds toward something for Bill, for his memory, and for his legacy in learning. So here’s what I would like to do: I would like to ask you to put that \$1,000 towards a conference scholarship to build this beautiful, beautiful conference, for someone who really needs those funds to attend, just as I needed those funds so many times over so many years.” (This conference dates back to 1974.)

“For the first time in my life, I actually have a really great job, and money is not an issue. This means that it is time for me to pay it forward. God willing, I’ll be able to do the same thing for the next conference, and the one after that, and the one after that, and the one after that. Let me know who to make the check out to, and where to send it, and thanks so much for your efforts carrying on in Bill’s stead. During so very sad a time, yours is the perfect team to do so, actually. In Bill’s spirit then, I send you a small token of heartfelt appreciation. Love and prayers, Joanna.”

The conference took place about four months later. And three young scholars – the brightest of scholars; after all, they’ve been on the most shoulders and read the most books and learned from the most people, right?– went to that conference thanks to Joanna’s financial assistance. And during the conference Joanna grabbed me and she said, “Could you just . . . *point them out?*” And over the course of five beautiful conference days, I would say, “You know what, Joanna, there’s one. . . there’s one. . . and there’s the other one.” And the look on her face, again, it was something special.

Later the same year, we lost Joanna too, but her lessons, as a teacher, remain in our hearts.

“Pay it forward.” This was the lesson we learned from our teacher Joanna Franklin.

E. *Slide of Bob Faiss*

My final teacher that I’ll reference today, though certainly there are millions more I could name, is our good friend Bob Faiss, who we are all here today to honor with the Faiss Lecture.

The first lessons I learned from Bob Faiss I learned in his car, because believe it or not, Bob Faiss lived right behind us growing up, and he drove me to high school every day until I got my driver’s license and I was legally allowed to drive myself. And here, of course, was this *towering* giant. I didn’t know much, but I knew enough to know *that*.

In getting to know Bob, and of course in ultimately joining him on the faculty here at UNLV, I learned many, many lessons, most of which were delivered at the Las Vegas Country Club over lunch. (*laughter*) I’m getting big nods from

many of the folks in attendance here, as so many of life's lessons were articulated by Bob Faiss at that great, great table.

I remember one lesson in particular. I remember lunching with him right after I worked with the Singapore government on their new casinos they were opening in the early 2000s. And I was telling Bob the story of what had transpired as Las Vegas's casino companies presented to the Singapore government – each of which, in a sort of casino beauty pageant, were saying, “Pick me! Pick me! Pick me!” – to build a huge mega resort on this marshy land called “Marina Bay.” It was so marshy, it wasn't even technically land at that point.

So, I told Bob about one of the presentations, and without giving any revealing details, this gentleman led the presentation for one of the major companies in a way that can really only be characterized with a great word that's come into being recently: “mansplaining.” It's one of those words you hear for the first time and you think, “Oh my gosh, the Germans totally must have a word for that.”

And this gentleman *lectured* to the Singapore government, and made very clear very quickly that he was the smartest person in the room. And here's the thing about Asia: The proper approach is actually the opposite – the *photo negative* of that approach: “*You* all, I defer to, as clearly the smartest people in this room. I am honored to be here and to be learning from *you*. I'm so lucky to be taught by *you*, to hear about *you*, what *you* want here in Singapore, so that we might be wonderful neighbors for *you*.”

Bob listened to this – and I can be a little long-winded. (*laughter*) Students, you're not allowed to laugh! I was talking to (Boyd School of Law's) Nakia Jackson-Hale once, and I said I could be a bit of a wordsmith. She thought for a bit and said, “More like a *wordy* smith.” (*laughter*)

So here I am pontificating long-windedly to Bob Faiss and he says, very quietly and briefly, “You know, you can summarize how to approach Asia in two words. . .

“Be. Nice.”

Be nice. And again it was just a fantastic lesson, encapsulated in a short sort of mini-sentence: “Be nice.” That is the lesson taught to us by Bob Faiss.

I learned from this as we work over at the International Gaming Institute. We've just grown and grown and grown and grown, and one of the guiding principles for hiring new team members is going to be my “Oprah Book.” Don't steal my Oprah Book! It's called – and this how you have to say it (hushed tones) – it's called, *The Quadrant*, and it ties directly to the lessons of Bob Faiss.

F. *Quadrant Slide*

So, here's a quadrant (shows slide of a quadrant). This is the part of the lecture where it turns into an actual research presentation kids, so buckle up.

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We've got an actual X-axis and a Y-axis up there!

Let's start on the Y-axis. I've got "kind" on one end of the spectrum. On the other end of that spectrum there's . . . what? (*laughter*) Ok, let's just call it, "not so kind." Now on the other axis, the X-axis, let's call one end, "skilled." And similarly, the other end is, "not so skilled." (*laughter*) Think about your world, and your workplaces now, and the people who live in them. We can divide the whole world up and cast them up against these quadrants.

And here's the deal, I just talked to you about five teachers, five students, five people, and I think about where they lived. They all lived exactly where you want to live, in the same quadrant (the "nice-skilled" quadrant). When I think about where they *hired*, it's exactly where you want to hire. When I think about how their kids turned out, it's exactly where you want your kids to turn out and it's right. . .there (Professor Bernhard gestures to the slideshow presentation, where a star appears in the uppermost, rightmost corner of the graph, in the "nice-skilled" quadrant).

Look down here at "not so kind, not so skilled" quadrant – I mean, what are you doing hanging out here? (*laughter*) Then, the "Not so kind, but *really* skilled" quadrant? Now I know I've got a lot of professor friends in the room – (*whispers*) that's a lot like our hallways sometimes. (*laughter*) In academia, there are a whole lot of really smart people, some of whom are not always too good at navigating the social universe.

Next, over here in the "not so skilled, but kind" quadrant, these are kind of like friendly meatheads – like my high school buddies who are in the back row right over there! (*laughter*) I mean, I love you guys, I grew up with you guys, and yeah. . .they try. I'm just kidding, they're all smart.

But this (gesturing to the star), the upper right, *this* is where you want to build a team. And guided by the great Katherine Jackson, who is our chief operations officer at the International Gaming Institute, we have built this beautiful, beautiful team, and you know where our team lives? I'm looking around at you guys. We live right here (pointing again to the star in the upper right "kind-skilled" corner of the quadrant). We've got a wonderful hiring process. I truly believe we've hired folks who are as kind as they are smart; as decent as they are brilliant; as sweet-hearted as they are geniuses. We've hired people who are really *good* (at their jobs), and who are also really good (inside; pointing a finger his heart). And this quadrant, of course, is where our forefathers, our foremothers, our founding figures, and our teachers have taught us to live.

II. REFLECTIONS ON THE FOUNDATIONS AND FUTURES OF THE STUDY OF GAMBLING

So now we're going to move on to the second part of the presentation. This one is going to go relatively quick because it's new research, but I promise it will

have some relevance to our broader world. Today we're going to unveil a new study called, "Are we WEIRD?"

And here's what I want to point out about this slide. Dr. Brett Abarbanel, our great research director who left UNLV to go be on the UCLA Medical School faculty – after which we immediately went to work at getting her back! We finally got her back. She's back home at UNLV, and she's running programs all over the place in a phenomenal way. Shekinah Hoffman, who we stole from the American Gaming Association, was working in D.C., wanting to pursue a graduate degree, and we brought her back to Las Vegas, we imported her into the Las Vegas economy – and I kind of feel like (former) Governor Sandoval's Office for Economic Development should give me something for that. Now I think I'm going to look into that, actually. Angelica Jardine, Madeline Dale, those are two of our newest student researchers, and guess what? Those co-authors of this study are all female.

The future of this city, of this industry, of the tourism industry at large, *has* to be more female. It has to be female. And we at the IGI very proudly hope to be leading that charge with a whole lot of female leaders. So thank you, thank you, thank you, research team.

And now let's talk about the project. This is one of my favorite movies. (Professor Bernhard shows a slide with a photo from the film *Stand by Me*). When we were growing up, I was roughly the same age as these kids, and in one of the film's great lines, Gordie says, "Do you think I'm weird?" and Chris, played by River Phoenix, full of confidence, says "Definitely." And Gordie goes, "No man seriously, seriously man, am I weird?" And Chris, again one of the Great River Phoenix lines of all time, says, "Yeah, but so what? Everybody's weird."

Everybody's weird. And it's this great reassuring line in the midst of a coming-of-age story where everybody was awkward, and everybody was hurting, and everybody was dealing with people who had died. It was just this heavy, heavy moment. And so, inspired by this in part, and inspired certainly by the individuals we talked about earlier (the co-authors), we decided to look into this: *Are we weird?*

Recently, scientists released one of those publications that was so important it ended up on the cover of *Nature*, and it basically asked this same question, "Are we weird?" It poses a huge challenge. This research has been so subversive that it has proven really smart people wrong – and a lot of people think professors hate to be wrong; *really* good professors love to be wrong. They love to be wrong, because there's all sorts of fun stuff and new directions at that particular point.

So, here's what "WEIRD" stands for: Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic. Here's what this means: There are some societies that are western, educated, industrialized, rich, democratic societies, but statistically they're weird, meaning they're very rare for the most part. One of the things that these researchers found was that weird societies are actually the *least*

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representative populations one could find for generalizing about humans. “WEIRD” people are only twelve percent of the world’s population. Why? Because China ain’t in there, India’s not in there, Africa’s not in there, right? There are these big, big populations that are not in there. Here is another statistic: ninety-six percent of our research populations (the populations that our research papers are actually conducted on) are “WEIRD,” because they’re all done on *you*. It’s probably gone on in this actual classroom, where professors have handed out surveys. We, as the world of researchers, do research in the United States, in Europe, and Australia, and New Zealand, and we *don’t* do it in other non-WEIRD places.

Here’s the worst part: two-thirds of psychology research is conducted on American undergraduate students. Now listen, I love you guys (referring to students in the audience), but is anybody arguing that this slice of life is representative of the rest of the world? Was *that* the time in your life where you were most like the rest of the human population? Was that the time in your life where you were handling say, risk, which is kind of important in gambling, in a representative way?

I’ll give you a hint: No.

As the authors say, these are some of the most psychologically unusual people on earth. Again: I love my students, but every year it seems we find out that the frontal cortex – something that was very central to Rob Hunter’s lectures, incidentally – the year goes up on when the frontal cortex is finally, fully developed. I think now it’s fully developed at something like twenty-five years of age – that is the year that your frontal cortex is fully developed.

And so, when I’m having a debate with one of my undergraduate students, and they say something that I disagree with, I will say, “You know, that’s interesting, but your frontal cortex, it’s not fully developed. When it becomes developed, you’ll see things my way.” That does not go over well, by the way. (*laughter*)

So, here’s some interesting stuff, we now ask the question: Is everything we were taught wrong because the research was done on WEIRD populations? Are the WEIRD populations undermining our research? Take, for example, the fundamental attribution error. If you’ve ever sat through a Psychology 101 class you’ve learned about the fundamental attribution error. Here’s what it means: Basically, if you’re at dinner and the waiter comes over and slams the plate on your table, you immediately attribute that to an internal characteristic rather than a contextual one. You immediately leap to, “That guy is a bad person,” as opposed to, “I wonder if that individual is going through a rough time back home. I wonder if that’s an individual who is really struggling to make ends meet. I really wonder if that’s somebody who is going through all sorts of life troubles.” This is thought to be a fundamental finding in psychology. We attribute others’ behaviors to flaws within as opposed to issues without. Here’s the problem: when they replicated these studies elsewhere, they found that they do not do this in non-WEIRD cultures. One of the observations those of us who observe gambling

cultures notice is that the Chinese immediately leap to community-level explanations: “Well there must be something in the community or the context that’s explaining this.” So again, this started to make us challenge some of our pillars.

When we think about how this might apply to gambling, we might think about Ellen Langer, one of my favorite psychology professors at my undergraduate institution. I love Ellen Langer. Ellen Langer’s so famous that Jennifer Aniston has actually bought the rights to her life story. She’s since become part of a Nobel-prize-winning team thanks to her endowment theory, which she developed, and – this is great – playing poker as the only woman in her graduate program getting her PhD. And what she learned was, we endow things that we *choose* with more value than things that are *assigned* to us. For example, there’s another gambling illustration: the lottery. We might value a lottery ticket more if we’ve chosen the numbers – “Those are my five favorite numbers, I *chose* those” – and we will sell that ticket at a higher price than we will sell a lottery ticket where the numbers have been randomly assigned. This endowment theory has all sorts of applications where, for example, we might give young students’ choices – because if we let them choose things, they will endow these choices with more value. So, for example, when we give a second grader a choice: “Do you want to do your math homework tonight or your history homework tonight?” – if they choose the math homework, they endow it with more value, and they do it and they become great at math. Here’s the challenge: maybe they don’t do this in Hong Kong or Singapore. In fact, in those environments, you know what’s most valuable, in my experiences teaching there? What is most valued is when the teacher *assigns* it to you. Instead of it being, “If I choose my math homework, I will work harder at it,” if the teacher assigns you the math homework, you will work harder at it, because in those environments, the teacher is placed on an enormous pedestal of respect. So once more, we’re turning some of this stuff on its head. This is not a small issue. This is policy that has been invented here and then exported to places like China, where it doesn’t work.

Today, we live in a much smaller world. When I reference my great-great-grandfather who came out here to deal in a casino, all he had to know was his table, right? He didn’t have to find China on a map. Our leaders today and tomorrow do not have that luxury.

So, this is what my research team and I have done over the past year: we’ve looked at all the research studies over the past five years in the gambling field to find out if gambling is suffering from this exact same phenomenon. We did a nice content analysis of 1,030 total studies, and our question was, “Is our own research in gambling WEIRD?”

The answer: uh oh. If you remember, “WEIRD” people are only twelve percent of the world’s population, right? This is a photo negative of what it should look like (twelve percent of studies are of *non*-WEIRD populations). The vast, vast majority of our research is done on WEIRD populations. When we

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look at the breakdown, almost *none* of our research is done in Asia. I don't know if anybody in this room has heard, but there's actually a decent-sized gaming industry in Asia (*laughter*). And almost none of our knowledge lives there. That's a problem, right?

And if you still don't believe it's a problem, MGM made a little mistake – you may have heard about it. One of the great business school case studies of all time – or most embarrassing case studies of all time – happened in our own backyard. It's awesome. You remember this, right? MGM Grand opens in 1994, I believe the world's most expensive building at the time: \$1 billion. The Earth's first billion-dollar building. One problem: the lion *roared*, right? Its mouth was open. And in certain cultures, walking into lion's mouth is the equivalent of walking under a ladder, with a black cat tucked under your arm like a running back, and then you run under the ladder and you strike your skull on a mirror and it shatters into a thousand pieces, and then in doing so, you step on a crack. For many people, *that's* what walking into the MGM was like when it opened.

Ultimately, this billion-dollar building required a \$100 million renovation. You can fall anywhere on the “We-should-all-hold-hands-around-the-world-and-sing-Kumbaya” scale, and I think all of us could agree, it's not good to have to spend \$100 million because you have not generalized well from what you know to other parts of the world. And to show MGM that I'm not just picking on them, Rob Hunter and I in the late 1990s were invited by the government of Korea to present there as they were bringing on board Kangwon Land. Kangwon Land was, of course, the first casino in all of Korea that would allow the domestic population to gamble. In the past, the rule was that you could work, but not gamble, at South Korea's casinos.

And so, we marched out there to Korea. Rob opened the Problem Gambling Center of South Korea. Talk about an economic export, or a Nevada export: the center that was built at Charter Hospital was suddenly planted on the other side of the planet – and that treatment center is still going strong today. Unfortunately, Rob brought a young researcher along with him on that trip, and he made a *really* expensive screw-up—and it's a “WEIRD” one. I was that researcher. I was the one that was supposed to bring all the knowledge, all the data, all the empirical work. I arrived and testified in South Korea with a huge stack of manila folders, I felt like I was one of those John Grisham novels that I know you guys read in law school (*laughter*), like opposing counsel in *The Firm*. I came in with a huge stack (of research). I put all this data down and I said to the South Korean government, “Listen, we know things. I come from far away. I am very smart.” I practically was holding onto the lapels of my white coat, “Let me explain this to you. Here's what you need to do.” I told them, you need to build a telephone helpline in South Korea, because you're opening casinos and here is what we know. I have all this data, and this data, which came from the Nevada Council on Problem Gambling, showed that this telephone hotline really helps, “So here's what you need to do, build a helpline and it will connect people with folks like Rob Hunter, who will then save them (at the Problem Gambling Center).”

And the Rob Hunter part was awesome; the Bo Bernhard part sucked. Here's why: we turned on that helpline, with great pomp and circumstance, and it was like a really bad telethon. We actually literally turned the phones on, and they didn't ring – but they weren't supposed to ring right away. The problem was when they didn't ring six months later. And they continued to not ring – like *at all*.

At the *Nevada Council* (on Problem Gambling), we get a lot of phone calls. The phone rings. But nobody called in South Korea because, as it turns out, to invoke a phrase that has come to characterize my hometown, *what happens in the Korean family stays in the Korean family*. You do not reach out to some stranger on the phone and start airing your dirty laundry about all of these horrible acts you committed in support of a gambling problem. It brings shame not just to you, but to your parents and grandparents, and not just your grandparents but *generations* of ancestors. I had made a very expensive, multi-million-dollar national anthropological mistake – because I hadn't paid attention to anthropology.

Before we dismiss culture as somehow insignificant, we should think about things like these.

So here are my lessons I've learned from our teachers: First, sample and generalize carefully, especially today. The world is getting a lot smaller than it was when my great-great-grandfather arrived in this community.

Second: Be skeptical and wonder; those are the twin pillars I borrowed from my good friend Carl Sagan who was probably better as a popularizer of science than anybody else. Wonder, but be skeptical; the twin pillars of scientific inquiry.

And nobody, nobody I know in this room, epitomizes that better than those two little girls who are sitting in the middle of this row – and are completely bored by their daddy's lecture. Both of these kids are incredibly, incredibly wondrous, and also skeptical. They'll call you on your stuff! And so, as I was driving in this morning, I was explaining to the girls what my final message was going to be in this presentation. I told them it was about the "beautiful math" of education, and of our teachers.

And here is the brilliant and beautiful math of a teacher: when you teach people, you don't just teach those people. You teach people, who then teach people, who then have kids, who then go on to teach people, who then teach people, who then teach people – and pretty soon it's impossible to know where your influence really ends. So goes the beautiful exponential mathematics of teaching, which is something that Bill Eadington would have appreciated – Bill was an economist, but he was a *quantitative* economist, and he was a mathematician as an undergrad.

I was explaining this to Audrey and Ava as we drove in today and I was saying that the great thing about teaching – it's awesome, girls, this is why teaching is great – you teach people who then teach people who then teach people who then teach people and pretty soon. . .

. . .and then Audrey interrupts and says, "Pretty soon the world?"

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And so I'll continue this conversation with my daughters, which will take place hopefully for many, many years, for who knows how long, because who knows where this influence will end. And I said, "Yes, yes, Audrey, probably the world." Thank you, Audrey and Ava. Thank you all for sharing with me this wonderful, wonderful award.

Dean Hamilton:

You have a captive audience here, why don't you tell us a little bit about the IGI (International Gaming Institute) and the International Center of Gaming Regulation. What does it do?

Professor Bernhard:

So, here's a cool thing, it's a fifty-fifty joint partnership with the law school, Dan Hamilton.

In pretty much in any field today, there aren't answerable questions that are answerable by single souls with single trains of thought. The answers are *all* multi-disciplinary now. There's no problem that doesn't have a legal component, that doesn't also have an economics component, that doesn't have a sociological component, that doesn't have a psychological component, that doesn't have a business component. This is why we put that dream team together with Mark Lipparelli and Tony Cabot (Boyd Law Distinguished Fellow in Gaming Law) to write this report about the possibility of a professional sports team relocating to Las Vegas – and all the complex phenomena that might inform that. It's actually kind of a good illustration that comes from all sorts of different backgrounds, but our economists work on that, Dr. Brett Abarbanel edited that, and all sorts of different folks worked together under one roof.

The idea of the International Center for Gaming Regulation is: Let's bring together the law school and the International Gaming Institute, and let's bring a whole bunch of smart people under one roof. People like Jennifer Roberts (Associate Director at the International Center for Gaming Regulation; Adjunct Professor at Boyd Law), who wrote so much of the curriculum and taught so many great gaming law classes here, people like Andre Wilsenach. Andre spent enough time in the UK to be embarrassed by statements of this nature: Andre's my only friend who the first line in his bio is "Selected by Nelson Mandela." So, Andre's my awesome friend who serves as the Executive Director of the new International Center for Gaming Regulation which is a fully joint venture between us at the International Gaming Institute and the law school. Dr. Abarbanel also serves a key role there, so we have a big, big team. And once more the idea and spirit here is, like Bill Eadington said: Let's build bridges. Let's get a whole lot of smart minds into one room and let's tackle the big problems. Let's go after them, with a *team*.

Dean Hamilton:

Once again, we've come here today to celebrate the partnership between UNLV and UNR. We couldn't be prouder of Bo, and everything he's accomplished.