

1 we have an addiction. It's like any illness, any  
2 other illness. We don't have to be down here, but I'm  
3 not saying that people that can gamble -- that's fine  
4 for them, but don't make it so glorified. It's not  
5 that glorious. It's not that gorgeous. It's not that  
6 shimmering like you see in the casino. For a lot of  
7 us it's tragedy.

8 I'm talking about your life, your  
9 education going down the drain. That is horrible, and  
10 that means a lot.

11 And I think that you should all be aware  
12 of also the downfalls, not only all of the glories,  
13 because you can have a good life. You can have a home  
14 with a picket fence just being in a program and not  
15 gambling.

16 Thank you very much.

17 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Thank you.

18 Joel R.

19 JOEL R.: I'm Joel R., and I'm a deeply  
20 disturbed, compulsive gambler.

21 I walked into a racetrack first about 40  
22 years ago, and from the moment I walked in, I knew I

1 was home. I remember what it sounded like, what it  
2 looked like, what it smelled like, and I don't know  
3 why. I knew I was home though.

4           And I spent well over the next 30 years  
5 destroying that home and all the real homes that I  
6 should have had.

7           I really was a pretty lucky guy. You  
8 know, I had a decent education. I had a good family.  
9 I did all those things that seem normal. You know, I  
10 graduated college. I got married. I had a good job.  
11 At one point in my life, I was on the board of  
12 directors of a publicly held company, but none of  
13 those things meant anything to me. The only thing  
14 that meant anything to me was gambling.

15           I was in action identifiably every single  
16 day for 30 years of my life. That's without  
17 exception. People died; I was in action. People got  
18 married; I was in action. Children were born; I was  
19 in action.

20           I was once wheeled into an operating room  
21 on an emergency basis, and I didn't have any action  
22 in, and I waved at a guy who I saw standing there in

1 a uniform, and I asked him if he could get a number in  
2 for me, and he said, "Yeah."

3           And I came out of the operation, and I  
4 still had the anesthesia. So I couldn't talk, and I  
5 saw him, and I went -- I put my thumb up, and he put  
6 his thumb up, and I was fine. I had something to look  
7 at the next morning in the paper.

8           I did that for, as I said, over 30 years.  
9 My gambling escalated. The numbers got bigger. The  
10 lying got more constant. I completely lost the  
11 ability to tell the truth. I stole from my family and  
12 justified it, by the way, by saying that they're the  
13 ones who are going to benefit when I make this big  
14 score, you know.

15           I once bought four weeks with my children.  
16 I promised them something I couldn't deliver on. I  
17 bought time by telling them that I'd won the lottery,  
18 but they knew that I owed a lot of people money. So  
19 I couldn't cash it. So you had to give me a little  
20 time to sell the ticket privately, and we'll be cool.

21           And my poor son, who was an honest child,  
22 wrote it in his diary in school because they were

1 keeping a diary in school.

2           Of course, I didn't win the lottery, and  
3 my son got congratulated by his teacher in school, and  
4 when I disappeared after I couldn't hide any longer,  
5 you know, my son didn't talk to me for months.

6           Anyway, I did that, as I said, for 30  
7 years. On July 31st, 1990, I had no place left to  
8 hide. So I went into the men's room of the New York  
9 public library, and I slashed my wrists because I  
10 didn't think there was anything else I could do, and  
11 they put me in a mental institution, obviously where  
12 I belonged, and they didn't know very much about  
13 gambling there, but they suggested I go to Gamblers  
14 Anonymous.

15           And I got lucky. It stuck with me, you  
16 know. I'm over seven and a half years now without a  
17 bet.

18           I was asked last week by someone, "Weren't  
19 there any warning signs? I mean, could you tell?"  
20 And obviously the thought was -- somebody said it to  
21 me and my family once. "You don't want to gamble?  
22 Don't gamble, you know. Can't you see what's going

1 on?"

2 I couldn't. The signs were all around me.  
3 They were invisible to me. Everything I wanted from  
4 gambling though I have now from not gambling.

5 Thanks.

6 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Joel, thank you very  
7 much.

8 Harvey G.

9 HARVEY G,: Good evening, ladies and  
10 gentlemen.

11 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Harvey, would you pull  
12 that --

13 HARVEY G.: Sure.

14 CHAIRMAN JAMES: -- so that we can --

15 HARVEY G.: You look so scary up there.

16 I --

17 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Please, not this group.

18 HARVEY G.: Not this group.

19 My name is Harvey, and I'm a compulsive  
20 gambler, and I haven't gambled for a long time, but I  
21 remember.

22 I remember when I was young the only thing