

1 Shirley T.

2 SHIRLEY T.: Good evening, Madame

3 Chairwoman --

4 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Good evening.

5 SHIRLEY T.: -- and all of you panelists.

6 I'm Shirley T., and I'm a compulsive  
7 gambler. My last bet was June 14th, 1996.

8 I started gambling like normal people do,  
9 going down for a bus trip once or twice a year,  
10 occasionally going with family in the car maybe once  
11 a year. I live about an hour away.

12 I'm 60 years old, and I've been married 38  
13 years. I have two children and three grandchildren.  
14 My husband was an executive with a Fortune 500  
15 company, and he traveled a great deal, and I had time,  
16 and I had a brokerage account, and I started driving  
17 down to Atlantic City after two or three years.

18 We were having marital problems. My  
19 husband had had a series of affairs throughout our 38  
20 years of married life, and it was an escape. I never  
21 gambled for the money. I had the money. I could buy  
22 the cars, the fur coats. I gambled for the action.

1           I would drive down. I would valet park my  
2 car, and I would stay for 24 hour periods. In the  
3 beginning I used my Visa card. After a couple of  
4 years I learned about markers.

5           When I stopped gambling, I was up to  
6 \$20,000 in markers, which I could have increased to  
7 40, probably 60, because my markers had all been paid  
8 all the years that I gambled.

9           I didn't start gambling until I was in my  
10 late 40s, and my children were raised, and as I said,  
11 my husband traveled a great deal, and I had the  
12 freedom and the means.

13           I would take over a whole series of slot  
14 machines, especially late at night when the casinos  
15 would thin out, and I was a very nasty person when I  
16 gambled.

17           I would play the dollar machines, the \$5  
18 machines. They're very, very addictive.

19           I would carry my dinner comp. with me for  
20 the whole 24 hours without eating, without sleeping.  
21 The casinos would comp. me dinners. They would comp.  
22 me tickets for shows. They would comp. me trips to

1 the island. They would comp. me suites, and if I went  
2 up to the suite and stayed in that bed for half an  
3 hour, that was a long time because I had to be back on  
4 that floor. I had to be back where the action was.

5 About six o'clock in the morning I would  
6 start to get tired, and I would think that I'd better  
7 go and get a cup of coffee before I would start my  
8 drive home, and I would walk in, and the hostess would  
9 usually say, "The buses are coming in now. Do you  
10 mind sitting at the counter because we've got groups  
11 of four and six people that would like to have the  
12 larger tables."

13 And, you know, I didn't mind at all. I  
14 didn't want to look at these couples that had healthy  
15 relationships when I felt like a degenerate.

16 I went to --

17 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Shirley, thank you so  
18 much. I do apologize --

19 SHIRLEY T.: Surely.

20 CHAIRMAN JAMES: -- but the time is up.

21 SHIRLEY T.: That's all right.

22 CHAIRMAN JAMES: And I want you to know

1 that we are interested in hearing the rest of your  
2 story and ask that you may want to submit that in  
3 writing to the Commission.

4 SHIRLEY T.: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN JAMES: I think we have time to  
6 get in one final person. Mary Heineman.

7 MS. HEINEMAN: Good evening,  
8 Commissioners.

9 CHAIRMAN JAMES: Good evening.

10 MS. HEINEMAN: I, too, would like to  
11 address the issue of treatment, especially treatment  
12 of children.

13 What are the children of compulsive  
14 gamblers learning about gambling? Are they learning  
15 the value of big win? Are they learning that success  
16 requires no more than a dollar and a dream?

17 Have some of us abandoned the values that  
18 were passed on to us? Weren't we taught the value of  
19 a good book, of great music, and the wonders of  
20 nature? Weren't we taught the rewards of family  
21 togetherness, hard work, and personal accomplishments?

22 I believe everyone in this room would like