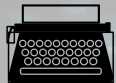


Table Games Protection Series

No6



By Richard Marcus | Casino Table Game Protection Consultant/Trainer and
Founder of the Global Game Protection and Table Games Conference

**TABLE GAMES
DIRECTORS AND
SURVEILLANCE DIRECTORS.
SOME REALLY KNOW
GAME PROTECTION. SOME REALLY
DON'T**

More overleaf >>>

No matter what industry you traverse, you will find people in high executive positions who are qualified to be there and people who are not. You will find extremely sharp people at the top as well as those not so sharp, even some who have such little idea of what's relevant to their job function you wonder how they ever made it to the top.

The casino industry is no different, neither are its departments most concerned with game protection, mainly Surveillance and Table Games. When I am hired by casinos to give game protection training seminars onsite, it's almost always at the behest of a table games or surveillance director. Then when I arrive at the properties, they are the first people from the casinos I meet. We generally discuss some details of the upcoming training before it begins. During these initial conversations, I can more or less gauge the degree of game protection knowledge and intelligence I'm dealing with. When you've been around casinos and cheating for so long, you develop an ability to distinguish between those who just talk game protection and those who know what they're talking about when they talk game protection.

In this article, I am going to try and give you my overall opinion of table games and surveillance directors in North America and make some suggestions to how they can increase their knowledge on game protection, which naturally would improve the performance of that part of their jobs. I am also going to share with you how some of them have increased my knowledge in game protection. It's been a two-way street.

Now, I have to be careful here. I do not want to upset or anger people. I have learned a lot since writing articles on the game protection sector of the industry. People can be sensitive. Therefore, I will of course not mention names. I will not mention particular casinos. But I will recount my

experiences with these directors. Some of them were very informative for me. Some were shocking for me, in a negative way. Some were funny. Some were embarrassing. They were all memorable.

The first part of this article will discuss some weaknesses of TGs/Surv directors I've discovered over the last two decades. I will start with what I believe to be the most common deficit in their game protection/cheating knowledge I find it to be with craps.

I believe the proliferation of dice-sliding scams is evidence of this, as are other scams such as the major \$1.5 million "hopping" scam that went on more than a year at the Bellagio in Las Vegas between 2012 and 2014. I am also dumbfounded by the near extinction of craps box men in that very same casino mecca. How can casinos do away with box men, who invariably know more about craps game protection than any other casino department including surveillance? They watch craps games all day and night. They see the total ball of wax of craps scams, the bet-caps, pastposts, pinches, betting-confusion scams, misdirection scams, the list goes on. Surveillance has many other functions besides game protection so you cannot expect them to know as much craps game protection as box men do. I would like to think some of those box men who were let go in the "great box men elimination offensive" ended up in surveillance departments. Most of them would be a great asset in surveillance game protection operations.

Now, this is just a generalization. There are of course many surveillance directors who know loads about craps game protection, even more than me and other game protection consultants. One who comes to mind is a recent retiree who released a craps game protection video a few years

back, and it is no doubt the best compilation of craps cheating and protection knowledge I've seen out there. It should be required viewing material for all surveillance departments in casinos that have craps.

During craps sessions, I have noticed that a fair percentage of surveillance directors lack even basic knowledge of the game itself. Given craps is by far the most difficult of the four main table games to master, both for dealers and those who play it, this is not surprising. But the extent to which some surveillance directors don't know the game certainly is.

For example, at a training in a large American casino, I was showing how pastposters and bet-cappers use the don't pass odds to camouflage bet-caps on their original don't pass bets. I was using a point of 10 to demonstrate the mechanics of this particular form of very effective bet-capping. As I was doing it, the surveillance director interrupted to tell me I had made a mistake. Now, I am human and do make mistakes, even in matters of casino cheating, but this surveillance director was telling me I'd made a mistake laying the odds on the original \$10 don't pass bet. As the point was 10 and my don't pass bet was \$10, the correct odds to lay against the shooter rolling another 10 before a 7 are 2 to 1. So for single odds, you would lay \$20 to win \$10, which is what I did. But the director insisted I needed to lay only \$5, not \$20. At first I was completely confused...what was he talking about? He said that the odds of the shooter making the 10 were one in three. I thought about that for a second. One in three is the same as 1 to 2, isn't it? I double-checked it a few times in my brain because stating it as one in three can be confusing, just like in baccarat games that say ties pay 9 for 1 instead of 8 to 1.

So finally, I said to him, "Right, so if there's a

one in three chance that the shooter will make the point, the correct odds to lay against him making that point is two to one, so since I bet \$10 against the shooter on the come-out roll and he rolled a ten, now I lay \$20 odds to win \$10 that he will not roll another ten before a seven because the odds are two to one against him doing so."

"Right," the director said, "that's why you lay \$5 and not \$20." And he said this with cocky confidence.

I was baffled. I had no idea where he was coming from. But after a fifteen-minute very frustrating back and forth, I finally realized why this surveillance director was arguing so intently. Believe it or not, he didn't know the difference between pass line bets and don't pass bets, therefore he couldn't understand that you lay odds on the don't pass bet, not take them. He was thinking that you take the odds on the don't pass line like you would correctly do on the pass line. This lack of knowledge exhibited by a surveillance director at a major casino was incredible.

He is not the only surveillance director I've encountered who lacked a sufficient understanding of craps. Many have problems differentiating place bets and buy-bets. Some don't understand all the proposition bets. Others have difficulty following how bets are paid by the dealers, meaning the physical action of paying out, proper alignment of chips for specific payouts and odds payouts, which can be difficult to follow if you're not really in tune with fast-paced craps games. Even if surveillance directors are usually not on the front line of watching the action, those who do not understand craps as surveillance directors also did not understand craps while they were on the front lines watching craps games. So this lack of craps knowledge can rise up right through the surveillance ranks to the top.

The summation is that if you don't thoroughly understand craps, you cannot game-protect it.

In recent years, one craps scam seems to expose this overall weakness in craps game protection, although this one is more on Table Games than Surveillance. As you may have already guessed the scam I'm about to talk about, it's the dice-sliding scam. I find it quite remarkable how dice-sliding still proliferates in US casinos, even in Las Vegas which boasts some of the most well-known and experienced surveillance directors in the industry. If they hadn't gotten rid of the box men, perhaps they would be doing a better job protecting against this and other craps scams. The Bellagio hopper scam is a perfect example of this, as the stickman and two base dealers accepted hopping bets for specific dice combinations but then just placed their cohorts' chips on the winning dice combination, whatever it was. There was no box man to interfere with this incredibly flagrant cheating scam that went on for more than a year and more than a million dollars.

I ask myself, "What is it that US game protection doesn't get about dice-sliding?" It is the most heralded craps cheating scam in recent memory and as well it is so easy to eliminate. Yet casinos just don't do that.

The dice-sliding epidemic has a cousin in roulette cheating, although casinos have begun to wise up and defend against that roulette cousin the past few years. Of course I'm talking about the color-up roulette scam where one cheat buys into the game for a color at the minimum table value usually \$1, and then holds out several of his chips when he colors out, only to pass them off to a second cheat who buys the same color chips at the same roulette table but at a value of \$25, then mingles the chips he bought with those received from his

partner and colors them all out as \$25 chips. This scam went brick and mortar viral for a solid five years and was caught a few times but nevertheless continued to plague American casinos for significant amounts of money even though it was quite easy to prevent, just like the dice-sliding scam.

So I will play that worn-out record one more time. To protect against dice-sliding, three integral rules must be in your game protection manual and must be followed.

1. The shooter must release both dice in one hand together.
2. Both dice must tumble (not spin) across the length of the table.
3. Both dice must hit the back wall and tumble back.

That's it. There is no need for speed bumps, wires or anything else embedded into your craps tables to prevent dice-sliding. Just train your staffs and stop it yourselves!

I will mention two more incidents of a lack of understanding the nature of game protection, one by a table games director and another disturbing one by a casino operations director. They are both minor incidents but do exemplify deficiencies in applying proper game protection to casino table games. Then I will move on to some very sharp table games and surveillance directors I've met and learned from on my casino travels.

In an earlier article, I quite emphatically added what I think is a must for effective protection of table games through proper casing of bets on the layouts. I mentioned that a lack of such enabled my infamous Savannah move to literally take millions of dollars out of casinos worldwide, a bulk of that from Las Vegas. I showed you on a roulette layout that by slightly jutting the

top chip of a two-chip column bet toward the dealer, the denomination and color of that bottom chip would be hidden from that dealer, and that the only way for a dealer to see that bottom chip was to take a step toward the bottom of the layout and examine the bets there to verify there are no hidden high-denomination chips. I stressed the importance of this and explained that it should be done right after the dealer waves off the betting. And done systematically.

In the training room of another large US casino, I was explaining the same thing. I gave the same display of one two-chip bet on each of the three columns. The top chip of each bet was a red \$5 cash chip. Two of the bets also had a bottom \$5 chip but the third bet had a bottom \$500 chip, which could not be seen from the dealer's position because the top \$5 chip was slightly jugged outward toward the dealer. I brought three people, one at a time, to the dealer position and each verified he could not tell the bottom chip was a purple.

Next I demonstrated the step I wanted the dealer to take toward the bottom of the layout after the wave-off by moving only one foot to the left, to facilitate proper casing of the bets along the bottom rim. As I mentioned before, the total movement and return to the normal position was less than a second. Everybody agreed the addition to the decades-old roulette case was a positive. Except the table games director.

"We can't do that here!" he said sharply, as if I were foolish to have recommended it. I asked him why not. He said, "Because that exposes the dealer's chip bank and somebody with quick hands can reach over and grab a stack of cash chips." Well, I'm not going to waste your time telling you what I told him in a fruitless attempt to make him understand his reasoning was invalid. This was a table games director!

Another incident happened during the same demonstration at a second casino. This time it was the casino operations director, who, I later learned, had been both a table games director and surveillance director on his way up the ladder. I made the mistake of asking him to be one of the three volunteers to occupy the dealer's position at the wheel to verify the hidden bottom purple chip wasn't visible.

He stepped into the position and shook his head. "I see that purple clear as day," he said.

Those words hit me like a ton of bricks! Imagine, I laid that bet down on roulette tables in real casinos for real money a thousand times! Not one dealer ever saw it. I had as well demonstrated it a hundred times in game protection training seminars at individual properties and sessions open to casino people from various countries. No attendee ever said he saw it.

But this casino ops director said he did. Okay. Maybe I misplaced it on the layout. Perhaps I had not jugged the chip out far enough or too much to one side. Maybe. I put that word in italics because it really was so unlikely I did either that "maybe" was impossible. After all, not only could I place that bet exactly as I wanted without looking at it, I did place that bet thousands of times without looking at it. Training myself for doing this move at ten and twenty thousand dollars a shot was something not taken lightly. I actually did practice placing that bet with my eyes closed.

So when I came up behind the casino ops director, I knew I was not going to be able to see the \$500 chip he said he saw. Of course I didn't.

Now I had a very delicate situation, and I ended up not handling it as delicately as

I should have. "Are you sure you see it?" I asked him as respectfully as I could. He shook his head distinctly and repeated that he was certain. I shrugged. I thought about having the two people who'd said they didn't see it take another look and reaffirm they couldn't see it but thought better of it. Maybe I shouldn't have...thought better of it, that is. Instead, I said to the casino ops director with no timidity, "You can't see it. It's impossible to see it because of the angle and the distance. I juttied the top chip at the perfect angle to prevent it from being seen."

"I don't know what to tell you, Marcus, but I see it." His tone was curt.

The problem for me here was not that he thought or for some other reason said he saw it. The problem was he persisted saying he saw it, and I only exacerbated my own problem by persisting that he couldn't have seen it. I should have let it go, which I surely would have had the incident occurred today. But his denial of reality had a very negative effect both on my ego and credibility. For me to be assuring everyone in the room that Savannah was one of the greatest cheat moves of all-time and then having the highest-ranking person in the room refuting that to the point of saying the move was a failure in its inherent design was a disaster. He was not going to budge yet I couldn't end this with him coming out on top. Thankfully, I thought of a way to save myself without insulting him. But it had taken another ten minutes of discussion before that simple idea came to me.

"I'll tell you what, sir," I said. "Perhaps you are that one-in-a-million person who sees it..."

He cut me off and said, "I doubt it's one in a million." Maybe he was right because I'd only put the bet on the layout a few thousand times so the sample size was not big enough to say one in a million. So I kept my tone even and said, "Can I get you

to indulge me in another look?" He said, "sure," but never could have guessed what that look could be, and I had a built-in out for him in case he got embarrassed.

I asked him to recede from the table while I prepared my test. I took a green \$25 cash chip and a red \$5 cash chip and placed in on the first-column box with the red chip juttied off the green the same way I had done before. I then made identical bets on the second and third-column boxes, so each column box now had bets with the top red chip juttied outward. I called the casino ops director back to the roulette table. I indicated the three bets. "Okay, sir," I said, "as you can see, I placed a two-chip bet on each column box. You can see that each one has a bottom chip. The bets are placed at exactly the same angle as I'd placed the last bet where you were able to see the purple \$500 chip on the bottom. Can you tell me the denomination of the bottom chip of any of these three bets?"

He looked at them for a moment, then squinted before looking at them again. It was clear he could not identify the denomination of any of the bottom chips, and I had placed each one exactly as I'd placed the previous bet where he claimed he could see the bottom chip. Then he craned his neck to get a better angle on the bets and still couldn't see them. Same result when he craned his neck in the opposite direction. It started to become an embarrassing situation that I had to end. So I said, "Sir, with all due respect, you cannot see any of those bottom chips." He got very pissed off and said, "You placed them differently last time. I saw it last time but now you changed the angle. You cheated. That's what you do, isn't it?" With that, he stormed out of the room and I felt like shit. The rest of that day's training was definitely affected. Like I said, I should have left it alone. But I did learn a very big lesson that day. Similar situations came up after that

Table Games Directors and Surveillance Directors. Some really know Game Protection. Some really don't. Part One

By Richard Marcus | Casino Table Game Protection Consultant / Trainer and Founder of the Global Game Protection and Table Games Conference

and each time I backed off quicker and quicker.

Two major training points can be taken from this article to help you get the most out of game protection training: One; emphasize to your staff that they leave their egos at home when they come to the sessions. I find that lots of upper-tier executives don't want to admit in front of their staff that they "didn't see the denomination of that chip under there." It is necessary for table games and surveillance directors to show their staff that they are willing to learn along with them. Table Games expert Bennie Mancino has spoken about this. Two; come to the training sessions with a very open mind and be willing to believe almost everything. When I first began in the casino cheating business and my mentor explained how these cheat moves worked, I, as an ex-dealer, was absolutely sure that none of them could ever work.

Okay, please don't get me wrong because of this article. Like I've said before, the best game protection lessons I've received over the years have come from none other than Table Games and Surveillance directors.



To book Richard Marcus Training at your Property, contact:
richard@globaltablegamesprotection.com

Table Games Protection Page:

www.globaltablegamesprotection.com/game-protection-training-at-your-property/

Testimonials:

www.globaltablegamesprotection.com/gp-testimonials/