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The book inspiring HBO's much-anticipated Atlantic City series...

***Boardwalk Empire:*
The Birth, High Times, and Corruption of Atlantic City
By Nelson Johnson**

**ATLANTIC CITY:
A MECCA OF POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND ORGANIZED CRIME**
—Atlantic City historian's book about the legendary "naughty" resort town is the
inspiration behind a Martin Scorsese-produced dramatic series now in production for HBO—

During the Roaring Twenties, with Prohibition under strict enforcement and the American worker dutifully laboring for the Industrial Revolution, people sought a retreat—a place where they could cut loose. And, from piles of sand, the seaside resort of Atlantic City, New Jersey, was born.

Boardwalk Empire, by historian and New Jersey Superior Court Judge Nelson Johnson, documents the rise of the resort that offered "a naughty good time at an affordable price." Adapted for HBO by Executive Producer Terence Winter (*The Sopranos*), the book is the inspiration for a recently announced dramatic series, with a pilot episode directed by Martin Scorsese and starring Steve Buscemi. Executive-produced by Terence Winter, Martin Scorsese, Stephen Levinson, Mark Wahlberg, and Tim Van Patten, *Boardwalk Empire* is currently in production for HBO.

"Liquor flowed freely, almost as though Prohibition didn't exist, prostitution was celebrated, and gambling was a way of life," says Johnson. "Resort owners made their money by giving people what they wanted—whether it was legal or not—and visitors were their only source of income."

In *Boardwalk Empire*, Johnson describes the political and social forces that set Atlantic City on its unique course. Throughout the first half of the 20th Century, the town's political bosses cheated their candidates into office and systematically ignored any illegal activities that would keep resort visitors coming back for more. Through multiple elections, the well-oiled Republican political machine, funded by payoffs from gambling rooms, bars, and brothels, was firmly entrenched and the big players were untouchable.

Enoch “Nucky” Johnson—the host of the first national convention of organized crime figures—was the powerbroker who pushed Atlantic City into history. He took the resort town to the next level by securing a statewide and, later, national presence. As a result of Nucky’s reign, Atlantic City came to be known as the “entertainment mecca where anything goes.”

Irresistibly told, with characters and pacing worthy of a well-crafted novel, *Boardwalk Empire* is the true story of a colorful city and its unique political culture. In the book, Johnson offers a startling look at the key factors in Atlantic City’s improbable rise and fall, including:

- Nucky Johnson—the powerful Republican boss who dominated AC politics for over 40 years and rubbed elbows with the likes of Al Capone and Lucky Luciano.
- How bending the law and creating a unique political structure were critical to the town’s success.
- Why Atlantic City was and remains an “experiment” in social planning. It was the first city *founded* for the singular purpose of providing leisure time activities for vacationers.
- Why critics and do-gooders like Woodrow Wilson could complain, probe, and indict corrupt leaders but never clean up AC.

Nelson Johnson is a life-long resident of Hammonton, New Jersey, whose family’s presence in Atlantic County predates the founding of Atlantic City. Johnson practiced law for 30 years and was active in both Atlantic County and Atlantic City politics through most of that time. He was attorney for the Atlantic City Planning Board at the time of the approvals for many of the casinos, and it was during those years that he became interested in trying to make sense of Atlantic City. The interviews and research he conducted for *Boardwalk Empire* spanned nearly two decades.

Currently a Judge of the New Jersey Superior Court sitting in the Civil Division of Atlantic County, Johnson continues his work as an historian and writer.

For more information, visit www.boardwalkempire.com.

***Boardwalk Empire* (Sept. 1, 2009) is a Medford Press Book from Plexus Publishing, Inc., available for purchase at PlexusPublishing.com, Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com and other leading online booksellers, and through bookstores nationwide via Independent Publishers Group (IPG).**

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