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CoNFESsIoNS oF A CoIN-oP ADDiCT

Subject's Name: ANDY CARRAWAY

Case File: MILA 7 GROSA

Occupation: Mr. Mom

First Coin-Op Addiction: Gottlieb Hi-Diver Pinball

First Coin-Op Owned: Gottlieb Keep 'Em Flying Pinball

READ ANDY'S COIN-OP CONFESSION BELOW!





My name is Andy Carraway and I am a coin-op addict. Yes, I admit it to the world in the hopes of bonding with others having a similar dysfunction. I always seem to feel somewhat better when my copy of *GameRoom* magazine arrives and I see the articles and letters sent in by folks with my strange malady.

It all started when I was a young boy growing up in the suburbs of Washington, DC. My pals and I took every opportunity to escape from our dull suburban Maryland neighborhood by riding our bikes to downtown Bethesda. Since my best friend had an older brother, we tended to gravitate to places with an adult flavor. Our favorite hangout was the local billiard hall, where tucked in the back were always five or six pinball machines. I grew up playing great woodrail games like **Hi-Diver** and **Harbor Lights**. I also learned that I had to time my visits to the billiard hall to avoid me and/or my bike being seen by my father as he returned home from work in Washington DC.

I was usually successful in avoiding him, however one unlucky day I was too busy playing off my replays on **Hi-Diver** to notice that it was later than usual. Then to my shock and horror, I spy my father heading back between the pool tables toward my beloved pins. I was banned from the billiard hall forever.

My dad realized that the only way I could be cured of playing pinball machines in places he deemed unacceptable was to finally cave into my constant whining for one of my own. We looked in the paper for months but rarely saw any advertised. Finally on a Saturday there it was in the *Washington Post* 'want ads.' A used pinball machine located in a house just 3 miles away. My dad and I drove over, looked at the game and agreed on the purchase price of \$10. Yes, ten dollars. The machine was old but it worked. It was a Gottlieb **Keep 'Em Flying**. The thing was so old (Feb '42) that it didn't have flippers (which bothered me but not enough to turn it down). And it had a push chute that accepted a nickel thereby manually resetting the machine rather than the "modern" way I was used to.

Anyway, I loved **Keep 'Em Flying** even if it was old and flipperless. I kept it for many years and worked on it constantly. Finally, when I left for college my

parents heaved it out to the junk man along with my baseball cards. I have been addicted ever since. But it was college time and I was off to Arkansas.

There I was introduced to a totally new kind of game, the bingo pinball. Several of my frat brothers played the same game at the local barbeque restaurant on a daily basis. As we dropped rolls full of nickels into the machine and cut classes, I knew my addiction was getting stronger. The noises the bingo machine made and its almost unfathomable play rules fascinated me. I knew someday I had to have one!

Several years after college I was at the beach visiting Ocean City, Maryland and decided to check out one of the boardwalk arcades. There I found a pinball machine that renewed my formant interest. It had several levels, talked and had a bell that rang loudly from time to time. It was **Black Knight** and I knew that someday I had to have it. Over the years I purchased several pinball machines and set them up in the basement in our house in Northern Virginia. Among them was **Black Knight**, which I purchased at a home amusement company in 1982. My addiction was partially fulfilled.

Next came that dreaded telephone call. No, not from the IRS (my former employer, by the way) but from the military, transferring my wife, my son and me to Spain for two years. No transportation of pinball machines was authorized so my beloved gameroom went into storage while we lived in a Spanish beach town, not far from Gibraltar. While in Spain I played a number of European machines and found some interesting solid state bingo games at the local bar. However, none could compare to my beloved pins in storage back in the good old USA.

Fast forward to the United States. When we returned from Spain my pinball addition is very strong and as a present to myself for "surviving Spain" I bought a nice **The Addams Family** pinball. It's definitely the favorite of my wife and neighbors.

I am currently Mr. Mom to my 4½ year old son while my wife works as a Navy officer in the Memphis area. Our house has a gameroom on the second floor that is the talk of the neighborhood. I now have enough pinball machines to keep my addiction in check for the moment, but probably not for much longer.

When we built our house in Memphis, we asked our builder to modify the plans for the second floor gameroom by adding additional floor supports and making electrical and other structural changes. When he asked why in the world these changes were necessary I told him it would be easier to show him once we moved in.

The house is now complete and the games in our game room consist of **Evel Knievel**, **Black Knight**, **Nip-It**, **Gorgar**, **The Addams Family**, **Base Hit** and yes, that bingo I always wanted, **Tahiti**. We also have a **Nugget** puck bowler, a Seeburg Model **Q100** jukebox along with a number of neon beer signs. Out back is the Pepsi machine.

Well, that's my story and I feel better now that it's off my chest. I've truly enjoyed collecting and working on all my coin-op games and look forward to passing

along the hobby to my sons. I hope my story inspires
others to "go public" with their addiction

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