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'Seven Sins' aims to mix fiction with reality

By John Geddes, USA TODAY

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Fabrizio Boccardi is a man on a mission.

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The business investor speaks with great enthusiasm when it comes to his grand plans for developing a comic book series, launching a movie franchise, establishing an entertainment empire, and building a multibillion-dollar casino in the heart of Las Vegas.

The launch of this empire begins with a DC Entertainment graphic novel based on the best-selling novel he helped to create with author Jon Land, *The Seven Sins: The Tyrant Ascending* (Forge Books).

Boccardi worked with Land to create the story, which was published in 2008. The tale is a blurry mix of Boccardi's own life and that of the title antihero, The Tyrant (a.k.a. Michael Tiranno).

The Tiranno character is modeled after Boccardi, a self-made Italian businessman who rises to power in the Las Vegas business community and lives his life according to the motto: to dream, to dare, to win. That same motto is also emblazoned on the logo for Boccardi's real-life entertainment company, King Midas World.

"I came up with the concept of Tyrant in 2006," Boccardi explains. "At the time, I was involved in some gaming investments in Vegas. The idea was to bring a fresh new entertainment element to this town, but in a complex and inspiring new way."

Seven Sins contains all the elements that you would expect from a Vegas-based crime/action/adventure caper; gambling, violence, luxury, intrigue and some dark secrets. Without giving away any spoilers, Tiranno's mysterious past (which revolves around an ancient medallion) is the key motivating factor behind the why's and how's of the story.

"The Tyrant is a man of honor, in the sense that you can always count on his word," says Boccardi. "But he doesn't want to save the world, he wants to dominate it. He wants to live life to its fullest potential — by dreaming, daring and ultimately winning in everything he does."

Boccardi plans to harness that same mind-set as he launches what he hopes will become an entertainment empire based around the Tyrant character.

The publishing of the *Seven Sins* novel was the first phase in his immediate plans to establish the Tyrant character as an action/adventure franchise. A screenplay penned by Christopher Kyle is being pitched to "some of the best talent in Hollywood," says Boccardi.

His ultimate goal, however, is to blend reality and fantasy even further by actually building the Seven Sins Casino and Resort on the Vegas Strip, the fictional casino owned and operated by Michael Tiranno in the novel.

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"The casino will be a way for people to see that this idea of dreaming big can lead them to the best things in life," he says. "The Tyrant is an inspiring, over-the-top character and I feel that the Seven Sins Casino will reflect these same qualities."

DC Entertainment recently announced plans to translate the novel in comic-book form, although there's no word yet on whether this will be an ongoing or limited series. Creative talent and launch dates have also not been announced yet, but Boccardi is excited at the prospect of seeing the Tyrant in a comic-book series.

"He's going to be the first major hero based in Las Vegas," explains Boccardi. "(DC executives) told me that Vegas is a very appealing town for many reasons, the biggest being that this is something that's never been done before."

"I just want to bring a new element into this market. If you don't have something unique these days, you may as well not get involved."

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