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SPORTS, 1B

# RENO GAZETTE JOURNAL

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The Tri-Properties – Silver Legacy, Circus Circus and Eldorado – in downtown Reno are among the casinos included in the Caesars purchase. JASONDOIY/GETTY IMAGES

# Tilman Fertitta to buy Caesars in \$17.6B deal

Anshuman Tripathy  
Reuters

Tilman Fertitta-owned firm will buy Caesars Entertainment in a \$17.6 billion deal, the companies said on Thursday, as the hospitality billionaire seeks to expand his leisure empire.

The deal, which will take one of the Las Vegas Strip's most prized casino operators private, includes about \$11.9 billion in assumed debt, the companies said.

Shares of the casino operator rose 2.5% in premarket trading and have gained about 16% since the deal was first reported in February.

Caesars faces mounting pressure as fewer visitors to Las Vegas — its core market — dent revenue at resorts, hotels and casinos, while its online betting arm trails larger rivals like FanDuel and DraftKings and faces growing competi-



Eldorado Resorts acquired Caesars Entertainment in 2020. Caesars is now set to be sold to Tilman Fertitta in a \$17.6 billion deal. RGJ FILE PHOTO

tion from prediction markets.

Fertitta, the U.S. ambassador to Italy and San Marino and owner of Fertitta Entertainment, offered \$31 per share — a nearly 50% premium to the stock's

closing price before the deal was first reported and about 8% to its last close on Wednesday.

Fertitta Entertainment, owner of Golden Nugget Hotel and Casinos and the basketball team Houston Rockets, had approached Caesars in 2018 about a merger with its gaming empire, Reuters had reported.

Through his restaurant and hospitality company, Fertitta owns more than 600 properties across 15 countries, including casual dining brands such as Rainforest Café and Bubba Gump Shrimp.

Top executives, including CEO Tom Reeg and CFO Bret Yunker, are expected to stay on. The deal includes a "go-shop" period through July 11, allowing Caesars to weigh alternative proposals.

See CAESARS, Page 2A

# Attorneys, citing complexity, ask for 6-week trial in Loving murder case

Siobhan McAndrew  
Reno Gazette Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

The murder case against Andrea and Nicholas Loving, accused of killing their 5-year-old daughter, is expected to take six weeks, according to defense and prosecuting attorneys.

During a 30-minute status hearing

Wednesday, Nicholas Loving asked to sit after appearing to sway. At times, he rested his head against the back of a chair between his two attorneys.

Andrea Loving stood with her head down, flanked by her attorneys to block the television camera.

Both parents are charged with first-degree murder and child abuse after their daughter, Izabella, was found dead

April 3, 2025, at the family's home in Cold Springs.

The district attorney's office has said it will ask for the death penalty against Nicholas Loving. It cited aggravating factors including a previous child-abuse conviction and allegations that he tortured Izabella.

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ELECTIONS 2026  
RENO MAYOR

# Judge calls 'Breaking Bad' meme a threat to candidate

Mark Robison  
Reno Gazette Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

A judge extended mayoral candidate George "Eddie" Lorton's protection order against blogger Michael Leonard on May 27 in Reno Justice Court.

Leonard was ordered to keep 150 yards away from Lorton, Lorton's wife and their house. It'll last through Dec. 31.

Judge Pierre Hascheff carved out an exception of 25 feet if Leonard and Lorton both show up at the same public event that Leonard is covering for his blog, Mike's Reno Report.

A falling out between the two men had been going on for weeks when Lorton's attorney, Richard Salvatore, sent Leonard a cease-and-desist letter Feb. 20 over what was described as attempted extortion related to campaign finance reporting.

Afterward, Leonard texted Lorton a meme from "Breaking Bad" saying "I am not in danger I am the danger" along with a photo of himself in a similar pose to the TV show character Walter White.

Lorton sought and was granted a protection order in March. A hearing was held in April on whether to extend it for up to two years, but the testimony went long and was resumed Wednesday in order to allow cross-examination of Leonard about his intent in sending the meme.

The main question facing the judge was whether it constituted a threat, as Lorton claimed, or was simply rough-and-tumble banter, as Leonard claimed.

On Wednesday, Hascheff said the meme — sent so soon after the attorney's letter — "gives me some indication that he (Leonard) cannot control his actions."

He said he didn't believe it was intended as merely a common catchphrase as Leonard portrayed it.

"I believe it was intended to communicate to Mr. Lorton that, as the meme indicates, he (Leonard) is the danger," Hascheff said.

Lorton told the Reno Gazette Journal he is grateful to the judge for granting the extended protection order.

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