

ALSO BY KENNETH C. CROWE

America for Sale

COLLISION

How the Rank and File
Took Back the Teamsters

KENNETH C. CROWE

Charles Scribner's Sons
NEW YORK

Maxwell Macmillan Canada
TORONTO

Maxwell Macmillan International
NEW YORK OXFORD SINGAPORE SYDNEY

MAIN
05347506

Copyright © 1993 by Kenneth C. Crowe

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the Publisher.

Charles Scribner's Sons
Macmillan Publishing Company
866 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Maxwell Macmillan Canada, Inc.
1200 Eglinton Avenue East
Suite 200
Don Mills, Ontario M3C 3N1

Macmillan Publishing Company is part of the
Maxwell Communication Group of Companies.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Crowe, Kenneth C.

Collision : how the rank and file took back the teamsters /
Kenneth C. Crowe.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-684-19373-6

1. International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs,
Stablemen, and Helpers of America—Elections. 2. Trade-
unions—United States—Elections—Case studies. I. Title.
HD6515.T3C76 1993

331.88'11388324'0973—dc20

92-27881

CIP

Macmillan books are available at special discounts for bulk purchases for sales promotions, premiums, fund-raising, or educational use. For details, contact:

Special Sales Director
Macmillan Publishing Company
866 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10022

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America

HD6515
T3 C76
1993
MAN

To
my three sons, Ken, Roy, and Dan,
and my brother, Bill,

and

to

the courageous leaders of
Teamster Local 282's FORE

(Fear of Reprisal Ends),
working-class heros, all:

John Kuebler (dec.), Ted Katsaros, Larry Kudla,
Charlie Curd, Walter (Tex) Kudla,
Bobby Trott, Richie Van Romer, Lee Olsen,
Mario Marino, John Capolino,
John Nowak, and Joe Liss.

This book
is inscribed with esteem and affection.

While Eddie Burke was traveling the country in the summer of 1990, creating a network of local organizations for Carey's grass-roots campaign, Teamsters general counsel James Grady was still fighting the consent decree. On July 31, Grady sent Otto Obermeier, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District, a letter saying that the IBT believed the delegates to the 1991 convention should be free to vote on whether to accept or reject the amendments to the Teamster constitution imposed by the consent decree. The assumption was that the delegates would reject the rank-and-file election and, following tradition, sweep the incumbent hierarchy back into office.

The Justice Department was having no part of that. Obermeier warned the IBT that the government was aware of the widespread speculation that there might be an attempt to derail the rank-and-file vote.

While members of the oligarchy spent their energies fighting one another and the implementation of the consent decree, Carey was rallying his forces for his next major test: the delegate elections.

THE DIRTY CAMPAIGN AGAINST CAREY

By the fall of 1990, Ron Carey's candidacy couldn't be put in a box and denied anymore. His page in the October *International Teamster* was topped by a simple headline: "RON CAREY'S ANGRY!" His political ad, well laid out and written in precise, direct language, told the magazine's mass audience that the handful of men at the top had sold out the Teamsters, first by inviting the government into the union and "then spending \$12 million of our money trying to block the members from electing top national officers." Those at the top, the ad said, had given themselves multiple salaries, supported politicians who served the interests of greedy corporations, and negotiated concessionary contracts with two-tier wages, inadequate pensions, and kangaroo-court grievance procedures.

The counterattack came early in December in the form of a colorful four-page tabloid, *Teamster Election News*, designed to

muddy Carey's impeccable reputation. Volume 1, number 1 used the John Long case as the basis for inflammatory headlines:

GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATION REVEALS ORGANIZED
CRIME, CORRUPTION AND "SWEETHEART CONTRACTS"
IN RON CAREY'S LOCAL 804!

and

EVIDENCE IN U.S. V LONG
SHOWS MOB INFILTRATION
OF TEAMSTERS LOCAL 804

TDU's endorsement of Carey was used as the basis of a headline:

RON CAREY'S TDU BACKERS HAVE ACCEPTED OVER ONE
MILLION DOLLARS IN EMPLOYER-LINKED CONTRIBUTIONS!

A front-page profile of Carey in the *Wall Street Journal* of November 12, 1990, was used to illustrate a fictional connection between Carey and the lords of Wall Street. The lead of the story in the *Teamster Election News* said: "The official newspaper of Corporate America, the *Wall Street Journal*, has given its unmistakable endorsement to Ron Carey's campaign to take over the Teamsters." The headline in the *Teamster Election News* said:

BIG BUSINESS SAYS:

"CAREY'S OUR MAN!"

The stories under the headlines were a mix of facts, falsehoods, and innuendos in an attempt to make Carey appear as corrupt and vile as so many other Teamster officials whose sins invariably were condoned by those who led the union.

None of the articles were signed, although the front page said, "Published by Teamsters for an Informed Membership." No further information was provided on this organization, but anyone who wanted additional copies was advised on the back page to write to a post office box in Washington, D.C. Those who inquired were told they could order more copies from RL Communications Inc. of Detroit, Michigan.

Richard Gilbert, Carey's attorney, filed a complaint with Holland, the election officer, on December 27, 1990, demanding an investigation into origins, financing, and distribution of the smut sheet. The complaint noted that in the past two weeks the smut had popped up all over the country and cited the results of his investigation:

COLLISION

RL Communications is the brainchild of Richard Leebove, a former associate of Lyndon LaRouche, and a longtime dirty trickster, propagandist, and smear artist who has frequently been hired to attack union reform efforts, including in Detroit-area Teamster locals.

It is certainly fair to surmise that funding for this unprecedented nationwide effort to discredit the Carey campaign has been provided by Union officials (and possibly employers) opposed to the Carey candidacy.

Leebove, who ran for attorney general of Illinois on the right-wing U.S. Labor party ticket headed by LaRouche in the late 1970s, went on to become a public relations consultant for Teamster organizations. He produced newsletters, newspapers, and magazines for major Detroit locals. He traveled the country smearing TDU and also put out the *Rank and File Defender*, a newspaper for BLAST (Brotherhood of Loyal Americans and Strong Teamsters), the organization of bully boys formed by Jackie Presser to bash TDU.

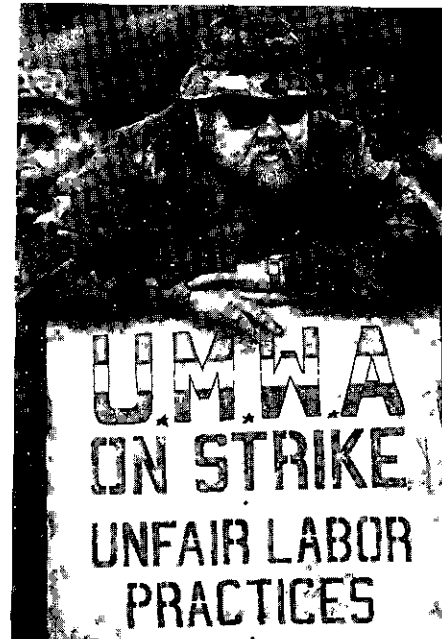
As Holland moved into his investigation, Gilberg kept adding complaints. There were allegations that Ralph Durham, son of the presidential candidate, directed a member to put copies of *Teamster Election News* in the lockers of UPS employees in Charlotte, North Carolina, and reports that International vice president Frank Hackett distributed the smut sheet at an executive board meeting of Boston Local 496.

Holland's investigation showed that Teamsters for an Informed Membership's only function was as a front for the Leebove operation. "Mr. Leebove marketed the publication by sending copies to a group of twenty-five IBT officials and by distributing copies at a charity dinner sponsored by Mercy Hospital honoring Jack Yager held in Chicago, Illinois, on December 12, 1990," the election officer's report said.

Approximately 70,800 copies of the tabloid, entirely written by Leebove, were distributed to sixty IBT members and officers in major cities across the nation. Leebove sent fifteen hundred copies without charge to two anti-Carey candidates for delegate in Atlanta Local 728 after they told him they didn't have the money—\$525—to pay. The smears didn't take hold in Local 728, a TDU stronghold, which had been wrested from the Mathis family.



During the Pittston Coal strike Eddie Burke (left, with bullhorn) leads a force of ninety-eight miners on a march to occupy Moss Number Three in Virginia on September 17, 1989. Burke became Ron Carey's campaign manager. *Don Petersen*



Rick Blaylock at Camp Solidarity in the hills of Virginia during the 1989 Mine Workers strike against Pittston Coal. Blaylock joined Carey as a campaign staffer. *Don Petersen*



Ron Carey at his office at Teamsters Local 804 in Queens, New York. Carey announced his candidacy for the General Presidency of the Teamsters on September 17, 1989. *Jim West/Impact Visuals*

Holland accepted Leebove's contention that he saw a business opportunity in smearing Carey and seized it. Leebove's books showed the project cost \$8,800, sales totaled \$20,000, and the profit was \$11,200.

Leebove was directed to pay the Carey campaign \$4,765, which was the value of either discounted or free copies given to some Teamsters. That ruling was later reversed on appeal.

While Holland didn't touch on the allegations involving Ralph Durham and Hackett, he said in his decision that penalties could not be imposed under the Teamster election rules for false and defamatory campaign statements. "The cardinal principle is that the best remedy for untrue speech is more speech, with the electorate being the final arbiter," Holland said.

Young Durham's father, R. V. Durham, said his son told him he had nothing to do with the distribution of *Teamster Election News*. He didn't care what Walter Shea or Carey did, Durham, Sr., said. He had no intention of getting involved in negative campaigning.

As the campaign heated up, Durham's good intentions soured under the pressure of the new Teamster politics. The nasty broadsides exchanged by Durham and Carey were a mix of the amusing and the downright dirty.

TWO HARES IN PURSUIT OF CAREY

The next deadline for accreditation under the election rules was December 15, 1990, almost six weeks after Shea mailed his letter to local leaders around the country announcing his candidacy and asking their help in collecting signatures.

He failed. Shea neither got the needed signatures nor realized that local Teamster leaders around the country weren't stirred to action simply because he had decided to run.

Shea offered his version of what happened: "I started too late," he said. "The locals unions that promised to get them in, got them in, but didn't get enough of them in. They were distracted. A lot of our people were going through the throes of election for delegates.

"I felt I could get those signatures even in that short period of time. But these people had another priority. So they didn't push like they would have or could have."



Ron Carey is sworn in on February 1, 1992, as the new General President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. *Jim West/Impact Visuals*



Ron Carey shaking hands with well-wishers outside the Marble Palace on his inauguration day. *Jim West/Impact Visuals*