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 grassroots 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!
- 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 Gilberg, 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 smear sheet. The complaint noted that in the past two weeks the smear had popped up all over the country and cited the results of his investigation:
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.
Ron Carey is sworn in on February 1, 1992, as the new General President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Jim West/Impact Visuals

The Tortoise and the Hares

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."