

**Interview: Diana Kilmury (DK)**  
**Interviewer: Rod Mickleburgh (RM)**  
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**Transcription: Jane Player**

**RM** [00:00:04] Diana, it's so great to see you again.

**DK** [00:00:07] Yes, you too.

**RM** [00:00:08] Boy, you've had a life.

**DK** [00:00:10] Well, and so have you. My goodness.

**RM** [00:00:13] I think you're—no one's made a movie about me.

**DK** [00:00:17] They could have, though. (laughter)

**RM** [00:00:18] Well, (laughter) I'm not sure about that. I put people to sleep. Anyway, let's go right back to the start. You've had an amazing life. Tell us, where did you grow up? What was that like?

**DK** [00:00:28] Well, I was actually born in Montreal, and my father, who was a doctor and a research scientist, a professor of medicine, etcetera. That was the time of the FLQ [Front de liberation du Quebec] and all of that, and the separatists. Although my Dad was fluent in French, he just said, 'I'm not going to be a second-class citizen in the province of Quebec.' We came out here in 1954 and I was like eight or something.

**RM** [00:01:05] That was way before the FLQ.

**DK** [00:01:08] Yes, but you know, the separatists have been at it forever.

**RM** [00:01:13] Yeah. You already felt it coming?

**DK** [00:01:15] Yes.

**RM** [00:01:17] You ended up in Vancouver?

**DK** [00:01:18] Yes.

**RM** [00:01:19] What was that like growing up?

**DK** [00:01:21] Well, astonishing, really. We lived in a place called Elgin Terrace. It would be comparable to a row of townhouses, but it had this enormous lawn. In the wintertime, all the parents would get together and they'd made us an Olympic-sized hockey rink. I could ski when I was three. I could skate when I was two and a half. Then we came out to Vancouver, and I can remember dull and damp and [unclear] rain, you know.

**RM** [00:02:03] You went to private school?

**DK** [00:02:04] I did in Montreal. Trafalgar School for Girls, no less. My brother went to Lower Canada College, but not out here. Then we moved out to the Endowment Lands so the school there was mostly sons and daughters of people attached to UBC [University of British Columbia] or the odd commercial person.

**RM** [00:02:35] I also read, though, that you dropped out of school at 16.

**DK** [00:02:38] I did. Yes, I was—.

**RM** [00:02:41] What was all that about?

**DK** [00:02:43] Oh, what do you think? (laughter)

**RM** [00:02:48] Were you a hippie?

**DK** [00:02:49] Oh, no. Proper. Doctor Evelyn's daughter will be proper, you know. No. I fell in love as young girls are wont to do and predictable things happened.

**RM** [00:03:14] You really dropped out of school to be with this guy?

**DK** [00:03:17] Yes. We got married and had two more children.

**RM** [00:03:23] How old were you when you got married?

**DK** [00:03:26] Sixteen.

**RM** [00:03:26] Wow. What did your parents think of that?

**DK** [00:03:29] Not impressed as you can imagine.

**RM** [00:03:34] At that young age, were you a stay at home mum, or how did that work?

**DK** [00:03:39] Yes. There was a year and 12 days between baby one and baby two.

**RM** [00:03:51] What happened? You obviously didn't last together.

**DK** [00:03:53] No. Who you are at 16 and even by the time you were 19, which is when I got divorced, who is this person.

**RM** [00:04:07] Were you a single mum?

**DK** [00:04:09] Yes, although there was sort of a joint custody arrangement. By that time, I had just—well, I was going to Langara College trying to pick up on my education and happened to be going out with this guy whose father owned a trucking company. I used to go with him running around in his dump truck. Everybody in the place was an alcoholic, just—. One day, Jim, this is the owner of the company, he's swearing up a blue streak saying that the driver didn't show up again. I said, 'Well, I could drive that.' This is back in like the early seventies, '71 or '72, or some such.

**DK** [00:05:30] I figured I could. I took the truck out for a boot and ran up to the dump and did what was necessary there. I actually owe my trucking career to the alcoholism of the employees of Jim's Trucking.

**DK** [00:05:49] It wasn't very long before the single axel guy didn't show up, so I ended up with his truck. Then a little while later, the tandem guy didn't show up. Meanwhile, Trevor, the guy I was going out with, was not impressed. He didn't didn't want to date a female truck driver. I said, 'That's fine. I'll take the truck. See you later.'

**RM** [00:06:14] You liked it?

**DK** [00:06:16] Oh, I did.

**RM** [00:06:21] What did you like about it?

**DK** [00:06:21] Oh, just being out and about. Trucks, if you treat them right, and you get one with the machinery, you can really make them sing.

**DK** [00:06:33] Every day is different. I was hauling—Jim was digging up his backyard, which is like 50 feet of peat out there in Richmond, and selling it as topsoil and then sand and gravel and whatnot. I was actually going to buy my own truck, but the contract I was after came with some bulldozing and the like. I put my name in for the heavy equipment operators' course, and I became the first woman in B.C. to take that course. Then on the day that we graduated, United Contractors that was building the Upper Levels Highway, said they would take any or all of the graduating class. On my way back from Nanaimo, this course was being held at Malaspina. We dig up the Indian reserve there over and over again. Well, eventually they got a road out of it, but you know—.

**RM** [00:07:46] Yes, exactly.

**DK** [00:07:47] Yeah.

**RM** [00:07:50] Things were different then.

**DK** [00:07:50] Yes.

**DK** [00:07:52] Then on my way back, I got off the ferry at Horseshoe Bay and stopped at the United Contractors shack there. I said—and I had my newly minted heavy equipment operator certificate, and I already had my air ticket and Class 2 license. I got my Class 1 over there in the course. He says, 'My God, you're a broad.' I said, 'Yes, well, I'm aware.'

**DK** [00:08:30] He says, 'Well, honey, think you can drive that?' I look over and it's the biggest truck I've ever seen, an offroad, they're called cat wagons. You got to go up a staircase to get in the thing. In for a penny, in for a pound. I get in this frigging thing and I'm looking around, hmm. No clutch. I'd never heard of a truck without a clutch. There's a gearshift and it says R and D1, 2, 3, so I put it in gear. Go get a load of rock out of the screening machine, go up the fill. In a standard dump truck, you have these levers you pull and a tailgate. Of course, in a cat wagon, there is no tailgate. I'm looking around. I wonder what puts this thing up. There's this really big lever down there, and I thought, 'Hmmm, well, let's see if you're an ejection seat.'

**DK** [00:09:44] I pull that up and [explosive like sound] and this load of rock thunders off—and, of course, kind of relieved that I had figured out what made it go. I go like this [smacking sound]. Just about broke my neck on the roof.

**RM** [00:10:07] It was an ejection seat?

**DK** [00:10:09] Almost. Anyways, I come back down and he says, 'Well, I'll be God damned.' He says, 'Well, get your ass down to the Teamster Hall and if they'll take you, I'll take you.'

**DK** [00:10:24] I go down to 490 East Broadway, the Teamsters' Hall, and there's this guy from Central casting behind the little wicket. He says, 'Yeah, what do you want?'

**DK** [00:10:41] I'm going—well, I was just at United—you know, I'm nervous. This guy has got a stogie stuck in the corner of his mouth and looks like he's 8,000 years old. I've got my hair up in my little ponytails—you can't imagine. I tell him that United has hired me on. Slam goes the window. 'We'll see about that.' Then these enormous business agents come in and there is great consultations and consternation. They'd screwed up because under the contract, they had 72 hours to supply and for whatever reason, they hadn't supplied. United could hire off the bank, as they call it.

**RM** [00:11:46] Non-union?

**DK** [00:11:47] No. They're a union contractor.

**RM** [00:11:51] They could hire whoever they wanted?

**DK** [00:11:52] Yes. Yeah. Anybody off the street because there's a dispatch system. That's how I became a Teamster. (laughter)

**RM** [00:12:05] Had they seen a woman in there before?

**DK** [00:12:08] Oh, no. The guys—I don't know why it's so astonishing. Who drove all the trucks during World War II with the bombs?

**RM** [00:12:22] The Queen!

**DK** [00:12:23] Yes, and she was a mechanic, no less.

**DK** [00:12:34] I made the usual rookie mistake. I thought something was wrong with his truck because he was going so slow. So I passed him. We're lined up to get a load, comes along bashing on my door. I go, 'Yes?' 'You don't ever pass another Teamster!'

**DK** [00:13:05] I said, 'Oh, so sorry. I thought there was something wrong with your truck because you were going so slow.' Of course, the other guys just collapsed laughing because this guy was a fog decker if you—anyways I got the hang of that, and they got used to me.

**RM** [00:13:28] How long were you doing that on Upper Levels?

**DK** [00:13:31] About four months. Then I paved half the highways, and I worked up at Prince George Pulp and then I got a dispatch up to Site One, which is the second big hydroelectric project on the Peace River. So, 2,500 guys and me. Like the whole—

**RM** [00:14:00] Like a novel—2,500 guys and me.

**DK** [00:14:02] Yes. Exactly so.

**RM** [00:14:05] I'll stop you there for a sec. One of the things is that when you joined the Teamsters, you noticed a big change in your wages.

**DK** [00:14:14] Oh, my, yes!

**DK** [00:14:18] My first paycheque—never mind the cheapo groceries or whatever. Nice roasts. Then I bought all new furniture and got a car. I was, at that time, I was making \$2.50 an hour as a non-union tandem dump truck driver. The day I became a Teamster, I was making \$5.40 and double on double time. Pensions and health and welfare plans. I thought I had arrived in heaven.

**RM** [00:14:56] You had a union job, and it made a difference.

**DK** [00:15:00] Oh, yes. Huge.

**RM** [00:15:02] All right. You ended up North, 2,500 guys—

**DK** [00:15:07] —and me.

**RM** [00:15:08] What was it like?

**DK** [00:15:10] You know the scenes in Western movies—the guy comes into the saloon and the whole place goes quiet. A first shift, there was about 1,500 people on day shift. Anyways, I'm 'don't trip over your feet. They're just people. A lot of people. All guys, but you can do that.'

**DK** [00:15:47] I've always respected men and especially the blue collar guys. The work they do is just amazing. If you've ever seen the ironworkers, there's not enough money in the world to pay me to do that. They're just so good at what they do. Yeah, academically, they can't spell and—well, I'm sure they're better at it these days. Back in the day they were pretty raw.

**RM** [00:16:20] Weren't you intimidated, nervous or?

**DK** [00:16:24] No. I'll tell you what happens. As long as you do your work and you're competent, like you're not trying to get special privileges or be treated different. My dispatch up there was the water truck. There's like 40 huge belly dumps, which are semi-trailer things, and these other godforsaken things that hauled the concrete buckets. They're like a converted scrapers. It's on the haul roads; every time a truck goes by, of course, there's dust everywhere to the point where you can't see. My job was to keep the haul roads wet. Where I would fill up with this gigantic pipe, and it had a little, tiny, wrench affair on it as a valve to open and close it. I go to the mechanic shop and I said, 'I need a pipe about yay big.' 'What do you need that for?' I said, 'Well, because I'm not going to break my wrist and my back pulling this frigging rusted valve on the water fill.' 'Ah, we'll bring it down for you.' Of course, they found a pink rag and put a bow on it for me. We got on.

**RM** [00:18:13] It wasn't difficult for you?

**DK** [00:18:15] No, there's the odd—I'm trying not to swear—person who stays forever [unclear]. Casual conversation, believe me, I talk like a truck driver. At coffee break, all the trades have a shack, where you can pull in and have coffee. I go in there—actually I was staying out of there because I like to read. Coffee break, turn off the frigging motor for 10 minutes and I'd be reading. One of the guys comes over and said, 'Yeah, Kilmury, you too good to sit with us?' I said, 'No, I don't want to invade your space, actually. Sure, I'll come have a coffee. I don't actually drink coffee, but I'll come and spend coffee with you.' I go in there and obviously they had it all planned because we're not talking Playboy.

**RM** [00:19:32] Pinups?

**DK** [00:19:33] Posters, pinups. Yes. Thank you. You know, we're talking deeply-disgusting penthouse stuff. I don't say anything. Coffee is over, but then I sneak in there on graveyard and got some pictures from Playgirl (laughter) and put them up there. Next day, no posters. Of either kind. It's a matter of how you handle it. You can't go to Rome and insist that they start speaking Spanish. When in Rome do as the Romans do, but you got to defend your two square feet, hmm.

**RM** [00:20:26] Where did you stay up there. Did you have your own bunkhouse?

**DK** [00:20:29] Yes. I was in the bunkhouse for a while, and, whilst my older two were with my ex husband and Sean, who I had with the guy I was living with, Sean started, 'You're going to be gone forever. I'll never see you again.' Guilty mum, etcetera. I said, 'Well, okay, when you finish the school year, I'll buy something for us to live in.' I had a great friend, Donna. She and I had been pregnant together and had our children together. Did the stroller thing together and so on and so forth. She was betwixt and between. I said, 'Well, I'm going to buy this trailer'—because this is like a five year—

**RM** [00:21:40] You were way up north, isolated and didn't have everybody [unclear]

**DK** [00:21:43] No. The camp was like eight miles away from this little village called Hudson's Hope.

**RM** [00:21:52] Right. I see. You were in Hudson's Hope then?

**DK** [00:21:55] Yeah. I bought a brand new three bedroom trailer and Donna came up and brought her daughter. Sean was just in seventh heaven because the guys missed their kids. His dance card was always full. Guys would take him fishing or playing hockey on the Hudson Hope hockey team.

**RM** [00:22:26] When you arrived there, it must have been like you were from Mars though?

**DK** [00:22:30] Oh yeah. Like I say, don't let me trip 'cause you know everybody is looking at you and I'm not given to being overly self-conscious.

**RM** [00:22:46] You were basically supportive and supported. The guys looked out for you and the bosses—.

**DK** [00:22:50] Yeah. After a bit, after they saw that I could drive, after they saw that I was a good Teamster. I ended up being the assistant steward up there because I could spell and construct a proper paragraph.

**RM** [00:23:07] Is that when you started to think there might be something wrong in the union, was it up there or was that—.

**DK** [00:23:12] Well, yes. At the time, Local 213 was the twelfth largest local in the whole of the Teamsters Union, which at the time had about 750 locals. I think in our heyday we had 11 or 12,000 members. Whatever, it was a big local, but the heavy construction and road building and pipe liners, were the cream of the crop. There was this really good business agent named Jack Vlahovic and he decides to take on the principal officer, a guy named Al Medley. Medley was given to excessive drinking and was just lazy. Anyways, this is 1976 now. Vlahovic wins, runs and wins. Then Lawson, the great senator, Ed Lawson. At the time, Lawson was a trustee of Local 213, president of Joint Council 36. He was the director of the Canadian Conference of Teamsters, the eighth vice-president in the International and a Canadian Senator, insofar as that means anything. He took exception that his boy Medley had been usurped by Vlahovic. They drum up a bunch of phoney charges and they remove Vlahovic from office. By this time, I'm heavily into the union. We just went crazy. We picketed the hall. We were going to shut down every construction site in B.C. People were punching each other out. Vlahovic goes to Washington, D.C., which is where the IBT [International Brotherhood of Teamsters] headquarters are, their Teamster headquarters. He comes back and he says, 'Wow, I ran into these guys. They're with something called Teamsters for a Democratic Union.' He said, 'The most amazing people I've ever seen.' Pretty soon, we're all members of TDU [Teamsters for a Democratic Union]. We had one of the biggest chapters of TDU at the time because all the construction drivers were supporting Vlahovic joined TDU.

**RM** [00:26:12] What attracted you to the Teamsters for a Democratic Union?

**DK** [00:26:17] Oh, because you go in there and you think, oh my God, this is the labour movement. I always thought it should be—I was so incensed that our democratic vote could just be high handedly ignored. Oh, we don't like Jack Vlahovic so off with his head. I was just outraged.

**RM** [00:26:49] What was wrong with Local 213? Why was there even any opposition to the leaders?

**DK** [00:26:58] Again, Medley wasn't much of a business agent and things were changing. I don't know if you recall, but it used to be that government contracts would be let to union companies, and then all of a sudden they weren't. Then it gets into an unholy race to the bottom. We wanted people to stand up for us. The trouble is, some of these old guard people, they get ensconced in their cushy jobs and then they just don't do them. Heaven help you if you challenge them, or you threaten their—meanwhile, they're paying themselves. They're all, except for Lawson. Lawson must have had healthy habits, but—.

**RM** [00:28:04] He never touched alcohol. He only drank milk.

**DK** [00:28:08] I believe that. [unclear] Very smart guy.

**RM** [00:28:13] Very smart.

**DK** [00:28:14] But evil.

**RM** [00:28:18] Before we go on. At some point, you had this terrible accident. Do you want to talk about that?

**DK** [00:28:24] Yes. Donna was there. It's December 15th and—.

**RM** [00:28:31] What year?

**DK** [00:28:34] 1978, December 15, 1978. Sean and I are going to head down to the Coast and see my parents and the other kids. It's a blizzard but you're pretty used to blizzards if you're going to live up North in the winter. We set off and they closed the Pine Pass behind me. It's about four hours between Hudson's Hope and Prince George. I'm in this twisty spot by Bear Lake and the snow, it's like driving through a tunnel. The snow is piled up higher than the car. I come around the corner and I'm just frigging blind. I haven't seen anything come or go for a long time. I followed behind a plough until he turned off at Moberly Lake. I'm driving along and I'm not going real fast because it's ugly out. When I come around the corner, I am just blind.

**DK** [00:30:06] I thought it was someone coming head on to me. I'm on the horn. I try to dump it to the left, but I don't make it. What it is, is this guy in a tow truck who's backing around some car he's pulled out of the ditch, and he's got his big spots on. My eye is for having driven through the dark and whatever. I can see nothing. At the last moment I threw my—Sean was reclined in a big heavy sleeping bag, sleeping. The last thing I did was throw myself over top of Sean and I buck the gearshift about this far from the floor with my knee, which is about like getting dropped out of a four story window on one knee. Sean got his mouth—we all slid—got his mouth hooked on the window winder and tore his face back to there. He had what they call a deceleration injury like your brain is going 40 miles an hour and comes to an abrupt halt against your skull.

**RM** [00:31:40] It's had an enormous impact on your life.

**DK** [00:31:42] Sorry?

**RM** [00:31:43] It had a big impact on your life, this terrible accident.

**DK** [00:31:46] Oh, yeah. The people we were before died out there.

**RM** [00:31:55] Sean was very badly hurt, and you couldn't walk for a while.

**DK** [00:31:58] Oh, yeah, like three years.

**RM** [00:32:02] Is this true that they denied you long term disability benefits?

**DK** [00:32:06] Yes.

**RM** [00:32:08] Tell me about that.

**DK** [00:32:14] There's two kinds of insurance. You g///et weekly indemnity, and that's good for 38 weeks or whatever it is. Then if you're still injured, long term disability kicks in. By this time Vlahovic forces TDU and we're not giving up. We want Vlahovic reinstated. I'm very much part of this contingent and by this time I've become a steering committee member of the national TDU. How they decided to pay me back is to deny me my long term disability. I thought, you miserable—here I am. I have three kids to support. One of



them's been in a coma for six weeks, was paralysed on his right side for six weeks, and can't remember what he had for breakfast. You do this to me? I just swore a blood oath. I'll die before I give up trying to get you people. Anybody that's capable of doing that. They built me brick by brick.

**RM** [00:33:57] Did you ever get them?

**DK** [00:33:59] Oh, yes. Five years later. A week before we were going to court. You know how long it takes to run thru. Yeah, they folded.

**RM** [00:34:12] Then you got all this money retroactive I assume?

**DK** [00:34:15] Yeah, but by this time I'm back to work and—I sold everything I owned. I had to move in with my parents, unfortunately. They had a big house and, you know, blah, blah.

**RM** [00:34:36] That Lawson not a very nice guy.

**DK** [00:34:38] No. This was all Lawson. This is how the old guard maintains power. Blacklist you. Some places beat you up. They're really bad, you know. I'm not sure I'd have been quite so mouthy if I lived in New York and New Jersey or some of the places where the mob really held sway. This guy on a loading dock in New Jersey somewhere phones up TDU, and he says, 'You know, there's a ghost employee scam going on in my local.' This is a big thing with the mob. They have all these people that are on the payroll, but they don't actually work. You couldn't imagine the number of scams. Anyway, TDU says, 'Don't tell us, tell the FBI and don't be blabbing about it in the meantime.' They came up behind him and 'Pst, pst, pst' [holds hand in the shape of a gun] right in the loading dock in front of everybody. Think that doesn't have a chilling effect?

**RM** [00:36:00] I think so. Was there anything like that in Canada?

**DK** [00:36:08] I had this motor home, like after we won the right to vote, I travelled across Canada and the United States in this motor home, telling people about Ron Carey and that they had the right to vote.

**RM** [00:36:24] That's later but keep going.

**DK** [00:36:25] Yeah. I'm in Toronto with my map of these places, no clue where I'm going. One of the guys—I go up on a loading dock and say, 'Hi. I'm Diana Kilmury from Local 213 and did you know you have the right to vote?' 'Vote on what?' No clue. I was carrying around—every night, I'd make a gazillion copies of chapter five from Steven Brill's book, "The Teamsters", which happened to be about Ron Carey.

**DK** [00:37:11] I would make some supporters. The guys come over and said, 'Oh, you'd better be careful, they're going to get you.' Statute of limitations, but I was running around with a shotgun right handing. You're not going to miss in a motor home. You come through that door, snick, snick. There's a scene in the movie of me driving the motor home around—.

**RM** [00:37:47] I saw the movie last night.

**DK** [00:37:48] Oh, yeah. Around Joint Council 52.

**RM** [00:37:51] Did that really happen these two guys tried [unclear].

**DK** [00:37:52] Oh, absolutely! The guys were saying, 'Charlie Thibault is going to get you.' I said, 'Charlie Thibault isn't going to do' [presses lips together and nods head]. So [grimaces and sticks out tongue] in the motorhome [blows air through pursed lips] you could drive it right around the building. I just said, 'Yeah, come ahead.' Meanwhile, I'm on the phone to the OPP and say, 'People are threatening my life. You might want to have a little chat with them.'

**RM** [00:38:29] Did they? So, what happened? Anything? Did anything happen?

**DK** [00:38:33] No. They succeed because they scare people into quietness. Like I say, there is a limit to that, fewer in some areas of Chicago, New Jersey, New York. Basically, the people that threaten you aren't the people you worry about. You worry about the people that don't phone.

**RM** [00:39:03] Yeah. Back to Vancouver. You campaign. Vlahovic never did get his job back, did he?

**DK** [00:39:11] No.

**RM** [00:39:12] Okay. You campaigned to be delegates to the 1981 international convention in Las Vegas.

**DK** [00:39:20] Right. See, it is because they removed Vlahovic. First off, the number of delegates a local gets is predicated on the number of members. You get a delegate for the first 750 and another one for each thousand thereafter. We had more delegates than there was elected people to go because the U.S. labour law controls the international union because obviously it's in the U.S. It's the Labor-Management and Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, better known as Landrum-Griffin after the two senators that promoted it. What it says is if you're going to vote for the top officers, you yourself must be elected. The flaw in the law is that it doesn't say when. For example, the Provenzanos, who were made many members of the Genovese crime family, would get elected in 1952 and they'd still be the frigging delegate in 1981 because they, you know, nobody's going to run against them. Bad things would happen to you. Because they had removed Vlahovic, we actually got to have an election, and we won all the spots that we could compete for.

**RM** [00:40:58] Teamsters for a Democratic Union won all the spots.

**DK** [00:41:02] Yeah, the B.C. and Yukon chapters, so it was me, Vlahovic, George Fennell and a whole bunch of others. TDU is decided that they're going to have a protest candidacy. Jack Vlahovic from the Local 213 is going to run for general secretary-treasurer and a guy out of Hoffa's Local 299 in Detroit, Pete Camarata, is going to run for president. Off we go into the lion's den—.

**RM** [00:41:40] Las Vegas.

**DK** [00:41:41] Las Vegas, where else? Where the Teamsters come to visit their pension money.

**RM** [00:41:48] Twenty-five hundred Teamsters.

**DK** [00:41:49] Yeah. We show up at the door. You got to get your credentials and the like. Vlahovic said, 'Hey, Kilmury, you go first. They won't hit a woman.' (laughter) 'Thanks a bunch.' I go to the big— what do you call it—Convention Centre.

**RM** [00:42:18] Yeah.

**DK** [00:42:19] The usual doors. I'm Looking right at this guy's belt buckle. He's like seven feet tall.

**RM** [00:42:30] I think I can remember that guy.

**DK** [00:42:36] I look at his badge. Everybody has a name badge, and he's one of these people that had disappeared a few. Never got convicted. People go and people know who did it. I said, 'I'm Diana Kilmury, duly elected delegate from Local 213.' My fellow delegates, Jack Vlahovic, you know, introduce them. I said, 'Would you mind stepping aside? We want to register. Get our credentials.' He says, 'Why sure little lady.' He moves just enough. I'm sucking in my gut and other body parts so I can get by this frigging monstrosity of a human being. Just unbelievable.

**RM** [00:43:41] You got your credentials?

**DK** [00:43:42] Oh, yes. Like I said, they're not going to whack you in front of God and everybody.

**RM** [00:43:51] I was there. What I remember is this very small group of Teamsters for a Democratic Union delegates opposed to everything the Teamsters had stood for, for 30, 40 years. They are not small and you're in this hall where everybody is shouting and so on. What was that like? Were you're not intimidated?

**DK** [00:44:16] Unbelievable. Each joint council, like the four B.C. locals are in Joint Council 36. You have a mike with a number on it. We were at the infamous mike 12. Under the rules of the IBT Constitution, you can submit amendments to the Constitution prior to the convention. Then they're adjudicated by the Constitution Committee and either approved or rejected but you can still raise them from the floor as long as they been previously submitted. I had about had it up to here with mob and whatever. I'd worked for six months getting the language just right for an ethical practices committee.

**DK** [00:45:13] You wouldn't think you'd even have to have such a thing in a union. They just went absolutely bananas. (laughter) I lost my temper as I am wont to do. All of it came together. The removing of Vlahovic, denying me my long term disability. All this stuff that had gone on. By this time, the whole history of the Teamsters and every member that was blacklisted, beat up, etcetera. I'm standing on the floor of the lion's den. I just thought [raised, clenched fist gesture], so I let them have it.

**RM** [00:46:19] I have here what you said. See if I'm right. "When I sit here in Canada and pick up a newspaper indicating yet another Teamster official in a newspaper indicting yet another Teamster official, what am I supposed to believe? Am I supposed to believe that the 2,000 people here are the only good people in the world and everybody that works for the government is full of B.S.? That is not even remotely believable. I didn't indict you all. I didn't say you were a bunch of crooks. But if you're too damn scared to have an ethical

practices committee that you yourselves will control, then, my God, you must be up to something."

**DK** [00:47:02] Yes.

**RM** [00:47:04] Had they ever heard anything like that?

**DK** [00:47:06] I don't think so because they were stunned into submission. I was just doing my usual Kilmury thing when I've had it up to here with some nonsense. It's not exactly an endearing part of my personality.

**RM** [00:47:29] What was the reaction?

**DK** [00:47:32] Well! The best one is the TDU had a caucus room. We had rented a ballroom because there was, I think 15 of us on the floor among 2,000 of them. Of course, all the other members had come to watch. There's like three or four hundred people in there. I walk in and I think Ken Paff organiser, actually runs TDU. I think Paff is going to go off on me for mouthing off to these people. I go in there and there's a standing ovation and they're screaming and hollering. I'm going, 'I just lost my fricking temper.' Roy Lee Williams was the general president of the time. This whole bookcase would be full of the organised crime. I mean, documented money out of the Central State Pension Fund, beating people—the guy on the loading dock. Charge, because eventually the RICO [Racketeer Influenced Corrupt Organizations Act, 1970) case that was brought in 1988 followed on the—what do they call it? Starts with a C.

**RM** [00:49:16] Don't worry about it. You got a standing ovation in the caucus room?

**DK** [00:49:19] Yes. Then all of a sudden, Nightline and everybody else wants to have an interview. I'm thinking, 'Oh, my God. What did I do?'

**RM** [00:49:37] That was your moment, wasn't it?

**DK** [00:49:39] Yes, but it just by happenstance, just me losing my temper.

**RM** [00:49:46] You hadn't planned that?

**DK** [00:49:48] Oh, no. I had a very respectful, staged speech highlighting how beneficial it would be, an ethical practices committee and how it would improve our reputation and help with organising and blah, blah, blah. I'm listening to these organised, mobbed-up twits up there on the podium.

**RM** [00:50:19] You know, it really—they didn't have that expression then—but it went viral, didn't it?

**DK** [00:50:24] Yes, and that was before the Internet.

**RM** [00:50:29] You became famous.

**DK** [00:50:31] I did. I think a lot of it had to do with the fact that I was young and female and a truck driver and, if truth be known, a little busty. It was hot in Las Vegas and I had this yellow cause for trucking for TDU t-shirt on. They seemed to like that. You know, whatever.

**RM** [00:51:00] Did that change your life?

**DK** [00:51:04] Yes, although I was heavy into TDU. By this time, I'm co-chair of TDU. I'm spending more and more time in the United States. I've always been kind of TDU's lead cheerleader.

**RM** [00:51:26] Because you're good at it.

**DK** [00:51:28] Well, because I believe, you see. People can tell the difference between the people that are just mouthing the phrase and what you really believe. Then, of course—'Hey, this is the broad who told them off in Las Vegas!'

**RM** [00:51:48] Did it go to your head at all? Did you get a little pleased with yourself that all this attention was being paid to you?

**DK** [00:51:56] Well, yes. I keep my head well shrunk because there's so many people that have fought the fight in just terrible places that had been beaten up and blacklisted and whatever. I'm from relative safety in Vancouver, B.C. go to Las Vegas, and to the mob. All of a sudden, I'm a big hero. Meanwhile, the people that, you know—so I never took it real seriously, but it was handy.

**RM** [00:52:40] One last question about that convention because one of the things I remember and what made it such a good story was that you were surrounded by like 2,000 hollering, beefy teamsters, at the beck and call of this crime, this corrupted leadership. They were all on side, and so were you not, at least, a little bit scared or nervous or anything?

**DK** [00:53:02] I was more mad than I was scared. El Goono that they had—where do they get these people? I mean, Jesus! You know what I mean? I said, 'Turn that mike on right God damn now!' (laughter) When I lose my temper it's something to behold. I'm much more calm in my old age, but I tell you, back in the day.

**RM** [00:53:38] What happened after that?

**DK** [00:53:42] After the big thing, the TDU grew but it's a long, gruelling five years to—you could do anything about it.

**RM** [00:53:56] Were you working at the time?

**DK** [00:53:58] Oh, yeah.

**RM** [00:54:00] You did drive again?

**DK** [00:54:00] Yeah, I went back to work about June of 1981 and built Highway 91. Then one day I get a call from the hall and said, 'Kilmury, you want to go to the movies?' I said, 'The movies. What do you do there?' 'Same thing you do everywhere, stupid. Take something from point A to point B.' I said, 'I'll give it a whirl. Sure.' I go there. Never known anything to do with the movies and my God there's catered food. There's craft service. There's air conditioning. Never mind some godforsaken, dusty old truck, 8,000 degrees that—how about a nice limo, all air conditioned. I thought this would be okay. I became

the first one of the heavy construction drivers to work in the movie industry. 'Guys! Work in town. They have food and everything.'

**RM** [00:55:20] I think Vlahovic did the same.

**DK** [00:55:22] Oh, yeah, Vlahovic, everybody. Everybody came over.

**RM** [00:55:28] The wages were the same pretty well, weren't they?

**DK** [00:55:31] Yes. That contract—and it was built on Local 399. It's a big Hollywood Teamster local and it's been in operation for 95 years or some such. They had things like quadruple time. You'd make more money. Sure, you'd work 80, 90 hours a week, but you'd make more money in a week than you would in a month in heavy construction.

**RM** [00:56:03] Is this when you had your falling out with Jack Vlahovic? Did you guys have [unclear]

**DK** [00:56:08] I actually had the falling out with Jack before we went to the '81 convention.

**RM** [00:56:16] What was that about?

**DK** [00:56:18] Money.

**RM** [00:56:22] He liked it?

**DK** [00:56:23] Yeah. I caught Vlahovic dipping the TDU funds. I don't mean to be a stickler, but you know, God Almighty, we were fighting the mob, and you're dicking around with TDU's money—

**RM** [00:56:45] That's what you thought. We still have libel and things like that.

**DK** [00:56:47] Oh, he did it. I was the treasurer, trust me.

**RM** [00:56:51] He was never charged.

**DK** [00:56:52] Oh, no.

**RM** [00:56:53] Okay, but you saw stuff you didn't like?

**DK** [00:56:57] Yeah. The guys were pretty pissed with me. I said, 'I can't support this.' God Almighty, we just, you know, we were trying to get rid of this.

**DK** [00:57:14] Jack was a kick ass business agent. Really, he was. Very, very smart. Really good at what he did, but like you trade one crook for another, I'm—

**RM** [00:57:30] You still kept organising. You still stayed involved with the TDU?

**DK** [00:57:35] Yes. Although Vlahovic and I—of course the guys were—they liked the both of us, they liked me, but, Jack's a guy and Jack's a business agent and blah, blah, blah. It was messy.

**RM** [00:57:58] Yeah. Then in the 1986 convention, you had more delegates?

**DK** [00:58:04] Yes. [Coughing] Oh, I'm sorry.

**RM** [00:58:10] It's okay.

**DK** [00:58:10] I don't talk so much these days.

**RM** [00:58:15] Is that the election when you actually beat Lawson by 445 votes, or is that the 1991 convention?

**DK** [00:58:23] Well, I never—oh, in 1991. Yeah. We kicked their ass by 60,000 votes.

**RM** [00:58:31] Yeah. No, but so '86 did—so you were there as a delegate?

**DK** [00:58:36] Yes.

**RM** [00:58:37] Was that better or were you still outnumbered or how—?

**DK** [00:58:40] Oh, yeah. Still—maybe we had 30 delegates because TDU would take over a local or—

**RM** [00:58:53] You never wavered in your faith in the TDU?

**DK** [00:58:56] Never. It's the labour movement that I believe in. They have fantastic pro bono lawyers like Paul Levy of Public Citizen. I'm driving my movie truck and I get a call from Ken Paff, and he said they just brought a racketeering suit against the union. He said, 'Can you get to a TV.' Again, before the Internet and whatever. Of course, all the deluxe accommodations. TV is everywhere. There is Rudolph Giuliani, holding forth.

**RM** [00:59:45] Not the Rudy Giuliani?

**DK** [00:59:47] The Rudy Giuliani. I thought, 'Holy mackerel!' The front page of the indictment is the International Brotherhood of Teamsters General Executive Board. That's everybody, including Lawson and the Commission of La Cosa Nostra [LCN], you know, Matty the Horse [Mathew Ianniello], Tony Pro [Anthony Provenzano], Sammy Pro [Salvatore Provenzano]. You look at that and you think, 'Oh, my God!'

**RM** [01:00:26] It's really happened.

**DK** [01:00:29] Well, yeah. It's the commission case I was trying to talk about. Do you remember the Appalachian thing? The mob was having a big meeting of all the five families in Appalachia.

**RM** [01:00:47] I wasn't there.

**DK** [01:00:52] They took down a lot of the top mob bosses.

**RM** [01:00:56] They put the union under a trusteeship or something or they tried to.

**DK** [01:00:59] Well, that was the thing. The biggest fight that we ever had in the TDU because, of course, all of us are strong willed people. Me and Ken Paff are going at it. I

said, 'We can reach into this pack of shit and get—excuse my language—come out with the right to vote.' Paff is going, 'No, no, no, we're—'.

**RM** [01:01:31] The right to vote was important because always you had the president, and everybody elected at convention, and they controlled the delegates. This would be one member, one vote. The elections will be thrown open to the whole membership.

**DK** [01:01:46] Right. Since 1976, for 12 years, TDU had a Bill of Rights and on it is the direct election of the top officers and convention delegates. Paff is really—and Paff is a strategic genius. That guy is so smart, it's amazing.

**RM** [01:02:09] All right. I'm going to advance a bit here. You actually then in this tremendous decision, you got the right to membership vote. Therefore, every member had a right to vote for president. The TDU decided to run a candidate for president, right?

**DK** [01:02:32] Yes. The story of how we got the right to vote. Like you said, the Giuliani is saying that they're going to trustee the union. Well, no, you're not. Who's going to negotiate the "National Master Freight Agreement," for one? Government mostly can't run a popsicle stand. It certainly can't run an international union with 1.5 million members in Canada, the United States and Puerto Rico. No. I said, 'We can get in this thing and set as the remedy. The solution to this mob influence is give the members the right to vote and we'll vote them out.'

**DK** [01:03:23] A little while goes by. Paff phones me up again. 'How fast can you get to New York?' I said, 'Well, okay. Tomorrow, I guess.' Anyway, on the bird again. There's Ken Paff and I and we're bracing the inner workings of the Southern District of New York, the Department of Justice. There's a part in the movie where we're going through all the [unclear] all these people running around with little earbuds in and you think, 'I wonder if we're ever getting back out of here.' We don't meet with Giuliani, but we do meet with Randy Mastro and this whole herd of DOJ [Department of Justice] prosecutors and whatever.

**DK** [01:04:25] They don't get it. 'Well, we don't understand why you're unhappy.' I said, 'Because it's a union.' Paff is kicking me under the table. Sort of like the mob. You know, there's 750 locals there. There's Canada, the United States. Do you think I as a Canadian, I would be happier—the Department of Justice of a foreign frigging country running my union? I don't think so. If you want to get rid of the mob, give us the right to vote and we'll vote these people out of office. Then enter Paul Allen Levy of Public Citizen, and he intervenes in the RICO suit on behalf of the 1.5 million members of the Teamsters Union. You got the government over here; you got the mob over there. Yes. Well, hello. The members—and we won. If I'd died that day—and then I thought, 'Oh, my God, what have we done?' We're up against the mob, the millionaire people with private planes, millions and millions of dollars. There's this ragtag band of activists. Enter Ron Carey. I end up being the first person that Ron Carey picks to run with him on his slate. I say to Ken Paff, 'Are you sure? 'You know what I'm like?' I'm sorry. I just can't help it. I can only take so much B.S. and then you're going to hear what I think. My tongue is frequently full of holes. Me and Carey meet. I explained to him that I'm a bit of a wild child so think about this. He says, 'Nah. Ever since 1981, I knew you were the right one.'

**DK** [01:06:53] Now we have two years to go to 750 locals, 8 billion loading docks, everything from San Diego's zookeepers to Mickey Mouse is a Teamster, all the truckers. I think, 'Oh, my God.'



**RM** [01:07:14] You went on the road.

**DK** [01:07:15] Oh, I did. Yes, bought one of the motor homes off the movies. There was this fantastic sign place. They had these reflective decals. Said Teamsters for a Democratic Union and big Teamster logo on it on a Canadian flag. Yeah, drove that from hither to yon and yon to hither.

**RM** [01:07:43] What was that like?

**DK** [01:07:45] Lonely. Often. I'd spend all night xeroxing chapter five of the Brill book and then not knowing where the hell you're going.

**RM** [01:08:00] What was it like meeting the members?

**DK** [01:08:03] Oh, I'm always cool with that. I can't do it anymore. At one time, I was a gymnast, so put your hand on the loading dock and up you go. Now I'd have to—. My standard spiel field is, 'Hi! I'm Diana Kilmury from Local 213. I'm a heavy construction driver. Did you know you have the right to vote?' Guys would be thinking, 'What is the broad doing on our loading dock? What's she talking about?' They listened.

**RM** [01:08:47] It worked.

**DK** [01:08:49] Yeah. I must have made a difference because every place I went you know—I won't say that we won every local, but there was—every place that I concentrated on—.

**RM** [01:09:07] Did well.

**DK** [01:09:08] Yeah.

**RM** [01:09:12] Voted TDU. You campaigned in the States, too?

**DK** [01:09:14] Oh, yeah. Everywhere.

**RM** [01:09:17] What was it like in the States?

**DK** [01:09:20] Scariest than hell. There's way too many guns in the United States. It's no wonder they're shuffling dead school kids left and right. Even TDUs. We'd go someplace and we've got to go back to the hotel room. They have the piece in the boot. I'm thinking, 'My God, what a society.'

**RM** [01:09:54] Were you frightened down there?

**DK** [01:09:56] Frequently.

**RM** [01:09:57] Wow. You did it anyway.

**DK** [01:09:59] Yeah, well, I had my shotgun. I thought they could blast—you know, in the Teamsters, they're very good with about running a little wire from the distributor cap to the gas tank. I'm thinking, 'Hmm, I'm sitting on this big tank of propane. Oh, boy. I'd go up in a flash.'

**RM** [01:10:23] Were you ever intimidated or threatened while you were campaigning in the States?

**DK** [01:10:27] Well, by that time I'm a co-chair and we have our own contingent of guys that were a creepy crawly gang, the Special Forces in Vietnam. We sorta had a mutual assured destruction pact. Whack Paff and see who we take out. There wasn't a doubt in my mind that they would do it and never, ever get caught. These guys were snipers.

**RM** [01:11:02] You won. Ron Carey became the president, general president of the Teamsters and Diana Kilmury, Local 213, Vancouver, B.C. was elected first vice president.

**DK** [01:11:16] Yes, I got the highest votes next to Carey.

**RM** [01:11:21] What was that like? Do you remember that night when you found out?

**DK** [01:11:23] Absolutely amazing. I have to tell you the story. It's a supervised election so, of course, the DOJ has got this—I guess it's an office building somewhere by DuPont Circle, if you know anything about D.C. Anyways, there's this [unclear] and there's more ballots than you can imagine exist in the world. Of course, we think we've got this local and that local, but we're not sure. It's hard to say. People tell you they'll vote for you, but do they bother.

**DK** [01:12:15] About halfway through the first day of the count, we're not only winning all the locals, we thought we were winning, we're winning quite a few other ones too. The old guard is just going batshit. They just—they can't believe that it's happening. They can't believe that this little band of TDU dissidents has knocked them off. My favourite story—so anyways, we get sworn in. That is the most nervous I've ever been because we got sworn in on the steps of the Marble Palace. That's what they called Teamster headquarters. There's actually a law that if you're in one mile of the Capitol, your building has to be faced with marble. We call it the Marble Palace. We're there getting sworn in and I think, 'Oh my God, they could knock the whole works of us off. Somebody can just brr brr and get us all in one fell swoop.' I was never so glad to get off the front steps of the palace.

**DK** [01:13:37] Now we're busy. We're now employees of the IBT, filling out paperwork. I'm sitting in a little alcove and it's a little more complicated with me because I'm Canadian. They thought maybe they would pay me in Canadian funds. I said, 'No. It says 75 grand in the Constitution and that'll be in U.S. funds. We're not going to pay the one female, 20 grand less.' I'm filling out all this payment and here comes Lawson and I forget who all was with him. The defeated and their—I guess getting their millions of dollars of pensions and whatever. He says, 'You know, we should have never fucked over Kilmury.' I wanted to leap out and say, 'You think! Game set match!'

**RM** [01:14:41] Lawson said that?

**DK** [01:14:42] Yes. (laughter) He didn't know I was there.

**RM** [01:14:50] Maybe he was right.

**DK** [01:14:52] Yeah. They built me brick by brick.

**RM** [01:14:55] Wow. You were another—the first woman, of course, vice president of the Teamsters, in addition to all these other firsts. Is this a full time job?

**DK** [01:15:07] Yeah. Oh, yes. You cannot imagine what all—

**RM** [01:15:13] You had to move to Washington and stuff?

**DK** [01:15:15] No. The Teamsters, it's all hooked up with this thing called Titan. It's an acronym for Teamsters Communication System. Now it looks like something that came over on the ark. Every time someone goes on strike, the general executive board has to vote on it. Then complaints from members—1.5 million members, Holy God—and they do everything. I'd be sitting there with my roster. You're from where? [unclear] I made a thing that I was going to respond to every single member that wrote.

**RM** [01:16:09] Lots did.

**DK** [01:16:09] Oh, yes.

**RM** [01:16:11] All these years of fighting against the mob and the power structure and everything like that, and then you're inside the gates at last. What was that like? Did it seem weird?

**DK** [01:16:25] Frustrating. I much preferred it being an activist because, of course, now I'm part of an establishment. Even when I think we should do X rather than Y, you got to bite your tongue. I think I wonder if this is how it starts, 'cause you want to support your guy. Yes, leaping ahead, we win the '96 election. Carey is going to strike UPS [United Parcel Service]. UPS is the single largest bargaining unit of any union in the United States. At the time, it was about 250,000; there's like 360,000 now. The strike fund is broke because we raise strike pay. Then the old guard, who controls all the locals and most of the delegates, refuses to fund it. The first few strikes at 200 bucks a week back then, wipe out the strike fund.

**DK** [01:17:41] We did everything. We sold the planes, we cut out pension plans to the bone. Carey was even talking about taking every second fluorescent light fixture because the IBT is going broke. These people just raped and pillaged. Carey says we're going to strike UPS. Through the night before, he pulls the pin. I'm in the Washington Court Hotel, very nice hotel right adjacent to the palace. I'm sitting there all night. I am scared to death. What if we bankrupt the whole of the IBT? What about all the people that don't work for UPS? They're three quarters of the locals or in the high end of the old guard. Yeah, Carey has the membership, but he does not have the officers and they were quite prepared to scab on the strike. I'm thinking, 'Oh.' I was so glad that I wasn't Ron Carey, so glad, like when he said, 'It's on!' I'm not given to praying, but, you know, hmm hmm [holds her head] and we made it.

**RM** [01:19:19] You got a big loan?

**DK** [01:19:21] Yes, from the mine workers. God bless them. Richard Trumka.

**RM** [01:19:28] That's a different thing for you, isn't it, being on the inside and being responsible for these decisions?

**DK** [01:19:35] Yeah. From the cheap seats, it looks a whole lot easier, let me tell you. There would be a TDU contingent and the local and officers that were just awful, but they were going to support Carey on something he wanted to do, so mm hmm.

**RM** [01:19:58] No different. What about all the perks? Did you enjoy those?

**DK** [01:20:05] No, because we wiped them all out.

**RM** [01:20:07] No perks left?

**DK** [01:20:10] No. No private planes. You will fly economy and you will take whatever hop, skip and a jump is the cheapest flight.

**RM** [01:20:23] All right. You mentioned the election. How are we doing for time there?

[01:20:26] Well, we are about an hour and 10, 15 minutes.

**RM** [01:20:32] So we're good, I guess. Another 10 or 15 minutes?

[01:20:35] Maybe another 10.

**RM** [01:20:36] You mentioned the election of 1996 when Carey ran. I guess you ran again?

**DK** [01:20:44] Yes.

**RM** [01:20:46] It was a bitter fight because you were running against the son of Jimmy Hoffa—Jimmy Hoffa Junior.

**DK** [01:20:53] Yes.

**RM** [01:20:54] That was a much different fight than in 1961. This was a real nasty, bitter fight, was it not? There were a lot of allegations brought against Ron Carey.

**DK** [01:21:05] Yes. Well, here's what happened. I don't know if you've ever heard of Lyndon—

**RM** [01:21:12] Jimmy Hoffa Junior came to Vancouver.

**DK** [01:21:15] Lyndon Larouche—he's this far right guy. The United States has some really weird right wing people. He had a guy, Richard Leebove, and he'd be like Trump's dirty trickster.

**RM** [01:21:39] I don't think we're going to want a lot of details of this, but I'm just wondering what the atmosphere was like and how much more difficult that campaign was in 1996?

**DK** [01:21:49] Well, because all the officers—there's sort of a middle group. Ron will come and support you, but you got to get rid of these TDU. The '91 campaign and the '96 campaign is as different from day is from night. Then we get these people from the DNC, the Democratic National Committee functionaries, and they're the ones that brought the whole house down. Any officer that ever read the LMRDA [Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act] never mind someone like Ron Carey, who had been an officer for 20

years or more, would have dreamed up this scam. Right next to the general secretary-treasurer's office is the auditor from the DOJ. He looks at every penny, the IBT expense. Then there's the investigations officer. Then there's the campaign documents that Hoffa can scrutinise. They come up with this idiot plot that—what I refer to is trust fund babies will donate to the campaign and the IBT legislative department will support their causes, which we would do anyway. You know, good labour things. You couldn't have hoped to get away with it. Even if you were disposed to do something illegal, you couldn't have hoped to get away with it for 10 seconds, and predictably they don't. I'm in a GEB [General Executive Board] meeting and like after the '96 election, there was five Hoffa guys from the central states, central region and—

**RM** [01:24:04] Were you re-elected, by the way?

**DK** [01:24:07] Oh, yeah, I was re-elected. Same deal. Me and Carey. Yeah.

**RM** [01:24:14] Carey won?

**DK** [01:24:16] The three trustees were Hoffa people too.

**RM** [01:24:22] So that was different?

**DK** [01:24:23] Yeah. We didn't run trustees in '91 either. Anyways, this guy Bob Simpson sidles up to me and says, 'What do you think of all this crazy spending?' I go, 'What crazy spending?' The government's watching every penny. There's the trustees. The general secretary-treasurer has a staff of—I'm generally aware of how much money we've got and what we're doing with it, etcetera but I don't look after the books. He just gives me this Cheshire Cat grin and walks off. I thought, 'Hmmm. I wonder what that was about.'

**DK** [01:25:16] They're always playing with your brain and whatever. The next thing I know is they're going to overturn the '96 election because of this contribution swap scandal. It's so stupid that no officer would have done it—even a bad officer. You couldn't get away with it. It brought the whole house down.

**RM** [01:25:51] Did you last out your term?

**DK** [01:25:54] Pardon?

**RM** [01:25:55] What happened to you?

**DK** [01:25:58] By March of—we won in '96, took office in '97, and by March of '99 the rerun had occurred. Carey was banned for life. You only get one shot with the membership. You can't be the reformer accused of corruption. No, Carey didn't do it, but the election is being rerun without Carey.

**RM** [01:26:29] Did you run again?

**DK** [01:26:31] Yeah.

**RM** [01:26:32] Did you win?

**DK** [01:26:33] No.

**RM** [01:26:33] You lost this time?

**DK** [01:26:35] Oh, yeah. Hoffa just—

**RM** [01:26:37] Yeah, it was his time.

**DK** [01:26:39] Then for 23 frigging years. I will say one thing for Junior Hoffa, he wasn't mobbed up.

**RM** [01:26:51] No. I agree.

**DK** [01:26:51] Yeah, and you can imagine why. They killed his father.

**RM** [01:26:56] All right. What a wild ride you've been through, but we can get to some summing up at the end. We have yet to talk about—they made a movie about you.

**DK** [01:27:07] Yeah. First McLean's magazine put me on the cover. It was '92, the March '92. You know, 'Brave Teamster.' Like I say, I get way more recognition than I deserve. Honestly, really. Anyways, it's a great—it goes through all the Teamster presidents that been busted for this, that and the next thing and the whole sorry tale of woe. This fellow, Lazlo Barna, in Toronto, phoned me up and says, 'I want to buy the rights to your story.' I said, 'Well, I'll tell you what, TDU is in Detroit, so if you want to talk business, meet me down there and I'll see what the group thinks about it.' You want to be real careful whilst everybody is still living. Financing in the movies. Get this Hollywood hack screenwriter just—tits and ass specialist. He had me crying every second. You couldn't have gotten a character less like me, if you'd done it.

**RM** [01:28:53] You called it Betty Boop meets the mob.

**DK** [01:28:57] Indeed. I got script approval because I'm very jealous about our story. An awful lot of people worked very hard for almost 50 years—anyways, I get the script and I have my red pen. I write, 'You can't even do that in a truck!' I wanted to put, 'Moron!' I got so frustrated because I'm busy. I got stuff to do; I am a vice-president. I sit down one weekend and I write out what they call a treatment. I said, 'Here be the story. You want to make this movie, fine. I am not interested in this other drivel.' Sturla Gunnarsson, who's an amazing filmmaker, won awards for—he did the thing on Bosnia and—

**RM** [01:30:05] He's great.

**DK** [01:30:06] Yes. Amazing. He looked at the Hollywood hack thing. He said, 'not interested,' but he liked my little treatment. He said, 'I'll make this movie.' Then Anne Wheeler made it because I'm not a script writer. I'm not bad with written word. My four or five page treatment. That became the movie.

**RM** [01:30:34] What was it like to have a movie made of you?

**DK** [01:30:36] Oh, like being on acid. Honest to God. You know, really! (laughter) Look at the size of me. I'm sorta like you might imagine a female truck driver is. Barbara Williams, her waist is about like—she's very slender, delicate, responsive. I think part of your persona is how much space you take up.

**RM** [01:31:11] Barbara Williams played you?

**DK** [01:31:13] Yes.

**RM** [01:31:13] Right. Keep going.

**DK** [01:31:16] She'd sit there and study me. One of my worst habits is I smoke. I see out of the corner of my eye, she's practising how I smoke. It's not me; it can't be me. We're just too different. She did— she actually won a Gemini award. There's parts of the movie where she's facing off against some guy and it's just not believable. (laughter) I thought, anyway.

**RM** [01:31:58] Do you remember sitting in the theatre watching it for the first time, or maybe you saw it somewhere else for the first time?

**DK** [01:32:03] Yeah, well, they actually shot it out here in B.C. with the 155 crew, so I—

**RM** [01:32:08] Worked on the set?

**DK** [01:32:10] Well, no I was VPing at the time, but all the guys from my local worked on it.

**RM** [01:32:20] What did you think? It wasn't a bad movie.

**DK** [01:32:22] No, they got the parts right. The accident part was hard to watch. It took me a long time, before I could. I have that movie playing in my head for real.

**RM** [01:32:41] Did people resent all the attention you got?

**DK** [01:32:44] Oh, Vlahovic did. There's one scene in the movie where I said, 'It should have been you, Jack.' That really happened and I really meant it. It should have been him.

**RM** [01:32:58] As the top person?

**DK** [01:33:00] Yes. As the person that—.

**RM** [01:33:04] He was flawed?

**RM** [01:33:06] Very.

**RM** [01:33:09] We're a bit off topic and we got a couple more, just a couple more questions, but I thought Nicholas Campbell as Vlahovic was fantastic. It was Jack!

**DK** [01:33:17] Oh exactly.

**RM** [01:33:21] Let's just say it, Nicholas Campbell later went on to play Da Vinci—.

**DK** [01:33:26] Yes.

**RM** [01:33:26] In "Da Vinci's Inquest." He was fabulous in that.

**DK** [01:33:29] Right.

**RM** [01:33:31] How many labour leaders in B.C. have had a movie made about them.

**DK** [01:33:35] Yes. I don't know. The Teamsters have—is mystique the right—?

**RM** [01:33:45] Yeah.

**DK** [01:33:47] We've been so awful (laughter) and so good that, you know, and there's Hoffa disappeared. It's like a movie, isn't it? It just the whole thing.

**RM** [01:34:02] Well, they've made movies about the Teamsters, "Fist" and what was the other movie?

**DK** [01:34:07] Oh, "The Irishman." Spare me, dear God, it was a blockbuster movie, but it was bullshit from start to finish!

**RM** [01:34:17] We'll talk about that when the camera's not running, because I liked it. Anyway.

**DK** [01:34:21] Oh, it's a good movie, just nonsense.

**RM** [01:34:24] Yeah. Have you been forgotten? Do people still remember you?

**DK** [01:34:31] Yes, amazingly. Of course, a lot of it is because I run this page. After the whole house got brought down and the rerun, a million Teamsters didn't vote. That's what happens when people believe in you, and they become disillusioned. They just [waves hand], 'I've been hosed again.' Very hard to get them back. Took us 20 years.

**RM** [01:35:02] When you look back, do you have—is there anything you regret?

**DK** [01:35:10] In the union?

**RM** [01:35:12] Yeah, in the union. In the course of the way you led your union time.

**DK** [01:35:22] Well, I said, 'The hell with it.' When I came back, I got in my movie truck, and I still supported TDU and kept up. I sold my house that's now worth three and a half million dollars to get Ron Carey elected. I was so furious that three people took down this organisation that David against Goliath. I was just furious. Stayed furious for a very long time. I ran for office in my local and I was always a steward. Mostly, I just made movies and Sean was in dire trouble by then.

**RM** [01:36:25] All right. Looking back, what are you most proud of? Think you made a difference?

**DK** [01:36:37] I think running around with chapter five of the Ron Carey book. I look back at that now and I think, 'My God, you were insane woman.'

**RM** [01:36:45] Tell us what chapter five was again.

**DK** [01:36:50] Well, Brill separated out—

**RM** [01:36:52] Is this Steven Brill?

**DK** [01:36:53] Yeah. The team—



**RM** [01:36:54] Of "The Teamsters"?

**DK** [01:36:56] "The Teamsters." He had a chapter on Harold Gibbons, who was sort of this—

**RM** [01:37:02] I know who Harold Gibbons is. Sorry, I interrupted.

**DK** [01:37:07] Then there was Ron Carey, this Republican, ex-Marine, in Ground Zero and Joint Council 36. The mob left, right and centre, who is loved by his members and fought for them every day and had the best UPS contract. Each contract has a supplement or rider, special conditions in a local. Local 804, Ron's local. Ron is still revered just like Hoffa senior.

**RM** [01:37:48] Diana, where do you get your toughness? I think it's fair to say you're tough. You've had tragedies in your life and you just—but you never gave up. You kept going. What drove you? Where do you get that toughness?

**DK** [01:38:04] I don't know, but I've always been like that. I used to have this one year baby thing—they made dolls out of rubber, stuffed rubber. They had hard china heads. My brother is 18 months older than me. We're in Montreal. There was a kid a couple of years older than Ron and four years older than me. He was a terrible bully, and he just terrified the people. I come out to play and he's got Ron in a headlock. I just ran over there. I took Cynthia (the name off my doll) and I smacked him as hard as my little arms were doing, knocked him right on his ass. I didn't even think about it. You're hurting my brother. I don't know. Just like that.

**RM** [01:39:13] Were you ever tempted to give up?

**DK** [01:39:22] You know, in a group like TDU, the worst part was after the conventions. You think, 'five more years of these assholes' but you get little victories along the way. There was never a good time to quit. It needed to be done and we were the people that were going to get it done. I think it must be like the Ukraine army.

**RM** [01:39:59] So you defeat—the TDU overthrew the biggest, the baddest, the most corrupt, the largest, the most powerful union leadership in North America. The headquarters for a lot of that was right here in Local 213 in Vancouver. Do you think that's a fair statement?

**DK** [01:40:21] Well again, because we could because of the delegate thing and because the heavy construction people were the force in 213. It's not like you'd spend your life in J.P. Hogg and Company making widgets or something. We were boomers—beyond the pipeline on one job, we're building a dam on another one, paving the roads.

**RM** [01:40:55] The local 213 in Vancouver played a role—.

**DK** [01:40:59] Oh, yes.

**RM** [01:40:59] In overthrowing this huge corrupt organisation that was notorious—

**DK** [01:41:05] Because of Lawson and his power, because of the size of the local, because the local 213 folks were hardass boys. Let me tell you. It's when men were men (laughter) I got to say. The whole of the building trades is like that.

**RM** [01:41:27] And one hard ass woman.

**DK** [01:41:29] And one hard ass woman. Yeah. Well, because I respect them. I just do. Men are from Mars and women are from Venus. Trust me on this. I'm amazed that we can ever get together and make children. They're so basic. Maybe they don't say, I love you or bring flowers or whatever—

**RM** [01:42:01] Are we're getting off topic here?

**DK** [01:42:02] Yes, but they paint the house, or they mow the lawn or, you know.

**RM** [01:42:08] You must be enormously proud of what you were able—what you helped to accomplish?

**DK** [01:42:14] Yes.

**RM** [01:42:14] When you look back on it.

**DK** [01:42:18] We made a difference. I think if it's written on your tombstone, what you did made a difference.