

**Teamster Official
Convicted, Second
Acquitted in Sting**

By PAUL LIEBERMAN
Special Writer

The former transportation captain of New England's largest Teamsters local was convicted Thursday on federal conspiracy charges, but a former union vice president was acquitted in the trial that culminated the FBI's Dragnet sting, which had an agent pose as a film producer to smoke out organized crime influence over labor unions in the movie industry.

After a two-month trial in Boston, a federal jury found William Winn, 50, guilty on three counts, while exonerating James Meier, 63, the former vice president of 100-union Local 25.

Three New England mob figures were also indicted after the sting, conducted by the Los Angeles office of the FBI, which came within days of actually filming a movie. One pleaded guilty before the trial in return for an 18-month prison term, another was accepted in the witness protection program and the third became gravely ill.

Although the elaborate undercover operation drew some criticism for its limited results, Assistant U.S. Atty. Gen. M. Wynne Jr. called it Thursday as "a very successful investigation [that] identified some corruption in the Teamsters ... , resulted in a conviction of some members of the Patriarca (Mafia) family ... , and produced a very important witness."

That was a reference to New England mob leader Thomas Hilary, who was caught in the sting and then turned into a government witness. Federal prosecutors are expected to use Hilary to make the indistinct case against the leadership of the Patriarca clan—perhaps including its reputed boss, "Catt" Paul Sabatino.

The Dragnet sting—for "Dragna Exposure"—was based on the undercover work of Los Angeles Agent Clifford Schweickhardt, who studied film production at UCLA, was tutored by industry insiders and set up phony David Rudder Productions offices in Santa Monica, with a "Bible Study" at the ready to make him look authentic.

Posing as David Rudder—a fledgling producer looking to make low-budget films—he traveled across the country armed with scripts that demanded "locations" shooting in target cities such as New Orleans and Las Vegas. At each stop, he waved envelopes of cash before reputed mob figures and union leaders, bribes designed to buy "sweetheart" labor agreements allowing him to film with cheaper non-union workers.

Schweickhardt's New England operations generated criminal charges after he paid \$60,000 in bribes to get industry favors from 1989 to 1991. He will later help generate convictions from the Teamsters.

Schweickhardt testified that he set up a production office in Provincetown, N.J., and came within a hair of filming a romantic comedy there.

"To give us credibility, we had several scripts," he said. "We had all the hopes and intentions to do a movie."

Attorneys for the two Teamsters argued that their clients thought Rudder was a real producer and only agreed to allow use of union drivers on his sets because the film had small budgets—and they hoped that he would return with larger projects.

But Winn was damaged by his own statements on the FBI tape, and by evidence that he accompanied the reputed mobsters on trips to Nevada and New York on behalf of the show producer.

U.S. District Judge Robert Keenan sent Winn's case sentencing for April 10. Although this count carries a potential five-year prison term, sentencing guidelines call for him to receive no more than two years.

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