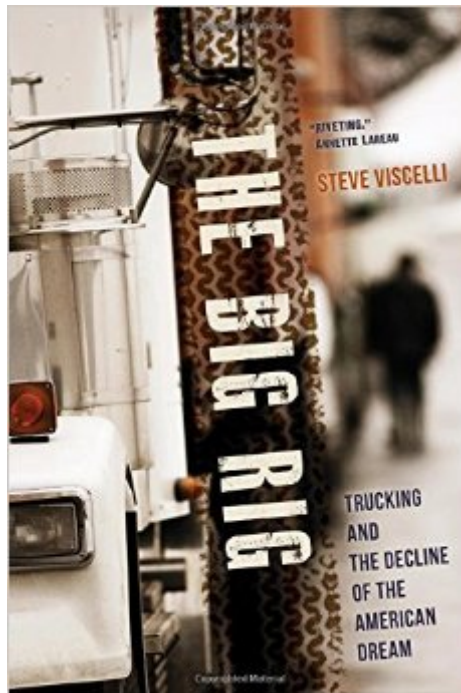


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The Big Rig: Trucking And The Decline Of The American Dream



Synopsis

Long-haul trucks have been described as sweatshops on wheels. The typical long-haul trucker works the equivalent of two full-time jobs, often for little more than minimum wage. But it wasn't always this way. Trucking used to be one of the best working-class jobs in the United States. *The Big Rig* explains how this massive degradation in the quality of work has occurred, and how companies achieve a compliant and dedicated workforce despite it. Drawing on more than 100 in-depth interviews and years of extensive observation, including six months training and working as a long-haul trucker, Viscelli explains in detail how labor is recruited, trained, and used in the industry. He then shows how inexperienced workers are convinced to lease a truck and to work as independent contractors. He explains how deregulation and collective action by employers transformed trucking's labor markets--once dominated by the largest and most powerful union in US history--into an important example of the costs of contemporary labor markets for workers and the general public.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is the most important, and in depth, study of American truckers in the past twenty-five years. Read this book before you, or anyone you love, gets a CDL or before you or anyone you love decides to leave a company driver's job to "invest" in themselves by leasing a big truck and becoming a contract driver. You may still decide to take the risk, and with luck, you may succeed. But having read this book you'll be better prepared because you'll know the rest of the

story. This book could have easily been called the Road to Ruin. Almost daily, the mainstream media chronicles the motor carrier spin that there's a looming huge truck driver shortage and that this shortage is the gateway to the American Dream through independent ownership of a big truck. As a truck driver for eight years and an owner operator for six years, I can vouch for the rigged system that Steve Viscelli describes. This is an accurate portrayal. Steve Viscelli has a CDL. He pulled freight. He filled out a log book. He scrambled for parking. He experienced the indignities and dangers that truck drivers are forced to endure daily for, in many cases, less than minimum wage. His ten years of research pulls the curtain back on this exploitive industry, exposing the forces that have turned a good job into something worse than a terrible job — debt peonage. The carriers, and by extension the shippers of all the goods that Americans use, have transferred their costs and their risk onto drivers, ripping off the American taxpayer in the process.

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