

Introduction

When I arrived at the Scotts Bluff County Jail on a bright, clear morning in September 1984, I had two goals to accomplish. First, I wanted to read the Bible for the first time in my life and to try to comprehend the power behind Jesus Christ and Christianity; second, I wanted to tell the story behind the conspiracy of the Cattle King/Nebraska Beef ordeal.

There are many rumors about the reasons for the downfall of Nebraska Beef and Cattle King. After extensive investigation, I now know who plotted the "elimination" of Rudy "Butch" Stanko and his meat companies. This book tells that story.

The Stanko family is of stout Polish Christian ancestry and for three generations, it has been involved in the meat packing business. Since 1912, our businesses serviced the small towns in Wyoming, and, in the 1960's we processed and sold most of the meat consumed in that state. In 1970, dad and I had decided that a new and better opportunity existed in the border town of Gordon, Nebraska, where a small, modern meat packing plant sat vacant. We recognized that there was a void in the market for the specialization of slaughtering and processing cull cows and bulls. The meat from cull cows and bulls is tough, but it is also lean and produces the highest quality ground beef. The new meat company was to be named Nebraska Beef. The plant was located at the intersection of the Rocky Mountains, the Sandhills, and the Great Plain States of America. These areas are famous for their cattle ranges, where vast herds of cattle are born and raised. It is, as they say, the heart of the cattle country.

In 1970, the company started slaughtering just fifty head of cattle per lay with plans, at that time, not to exceed the capacity of 100 per day. Thirteen years later, in 1983, Nebraska Beef and its affiliate, Cattle King Beef Company were dynamic businesses. The companies employed more than 600 workers, and slaughtered and deboned over 6000 cows and bulls a week that included an unique on-site steak cutting operation. Also, the companies purchased several loads of meat from outside sources for further processing. The two companies had grown into the largest boneless beef, and one of the largest ground beef, manufacturers in the world. Within twelve years, the companies were doing \$200,000,000 a year. The companies were, without a doubt, a real competitive factor in the ground

beef and boneless beef markets of the United States. They were highly profitable and respectable organizations that were able to ask premium prices for their brand name meat products from the professional wholesale meat buyers throughout the world. This is the main reason they were prosperous meat organizations and highly respected by the industry. Yet these prosperous organizations were forced to liquidate in less than a year, not because of financial reasons but because of a conspiracy.

I have always believed that I could become whatever I wanted to be. After all, this is America which is supposed to be a part of the so-called "free world." My upbringing through America's conventional school system, and the security and love of a close family relationship, confirmed this confidence and my dreams of future success. Such dreams included being a heavyweight wrestling champion, or one of the most successful businessmen in the meat industry in the United States or, for that matter, the world. Like all grade school children who are taught the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of their country on the first day of school, or who are shown the Statue of Liberty and told that it represents a free country with arms large enough to welcome even the most destitute of immigrants, I was made to believe that America was truly the land of opportunity, with freedom and justice for all. By the time I got to high school, I was taught that an American had certain inalienable rights: one could speak freely; one could choose an occupation and pursue business opportunities without interference from a monopolistic environment; one could become independently wealthy or even the president of the United States if one worked hard, was intelligent, and was lucky in his endeavors. This formula was supposedly the combination of America's successful capitalistic society. Finally, one could get married and have children without feeling that some individuals or a social structure would arbitrarily stymie their progress. I was again made to believe that, in this country, there was justice and liberty for all. I was wrong. I was definitely wrong. But I did not realize this for many years, not until I had become a monetary power threat to a monopolistic financial structure.