

InsideOUT

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MAMA HATED DIESELS

BY RANDAL MYLER & DAN WHEETMAN
WITH ADDITIONAL MATERIAL
BY CHARLES WELDON

HOW CAN YOU
CARRY A
PAYLOAD IF
YOU CAN'T
CARRY A TUNE?



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InsideOUT

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Synopsis

*"YOUNG WIFE: My momma always
said "truckers were a symbol
that America looks up to."
—Mama Hated Diesels*

In *Mama Hated Diesels: Songs and Stories of the American Truck Driver* we learn about the group of men and women who bring us most of the materials we need for daily living. We learn about their work and their lives. We find out about "chews and spews" (good truck stops), Christmas cards (speeding and parking tickets) and why New York City is called "the dirty side." We hear stories of what truckers witness from their cabs as they pass passenger cars. We understand why truckers avoid the "bears" (police cars) and need so many cups of "mud" (coffee). So "truck 'em easy" (drive safely), ole buddy and 10-4 (over and out).

The Diesel Engine and its Inventor

Virtually every one of the mammoth trucks one sees on the highways is diesel powered. So are some city buses, the trucks that collect trash, clean streets and are parked in firehouses.

Times and the diesel engine have changed. Today the emphasis is on fuel economy and, except for the hybrid vehicle, the diesel's fuel economy is significantly greater than that of a comparable gasoline engine. The diesel gets better mileage than other types of engines because it is extremely efficient, producing greater horsepower output for fuel input. However, diesel vehicles also are one of the major sources of air pollution on the road.

Diesel fuel is highly compressed by a piston within the cylinder of an engine. Compression alone will increase its temperature to the "ignition point"—a temperature at which an injected fuel will spontaneously ignite. The resulting combustion, further heating the air, causes it to expand and the gigantic pressure of the expansion itself becomes a working force, driving the piston downward. Ultimately, through a crankshaft and gearing, the vehicle's wheels are powered. Thus, the diesel is an internal combustion engine, a heat engine and an engine whose fuel ignition is spontaneous, created solely by the heat of compression.

Rudolf Diesel was born in 1858 to German parents living in Paris. In 1870 he and his parents were forced to flee to London because of the Franco-Prussian War. Eventually he went to live with an uncle in Augsburg, Germany. He attended Augsburg's School of Industry, a renowned technological institute, where he saw one of the most intriguing devices of its time—a "pneumatic tinderbox." "Resembling a glass bicycle pump, the device could ignite a piece of paper merely by compressing the air within its cylinder to the heat of ignition."¹

Its principle was identical to that behind Diesel's later rational heat engine.

Diesel later encountered Professor Carl Von Linde, one of his university instructors, who had invented refrigeration and was the first to liquefy air. Linde's refrigeration company was in the forefront of gas compression technology, the science of Diesel's eventual engine.

Backed by the Krupp engineering firm, Diesel began full time work in 1893 to develop his rational heat engine. A year later he had it running. His invention was so successful that it prompted a rash of lawsuits, all of them attempts to break his original patent. In 1897, three years after Diesel's success, Adolphus Busch, chief of the brewery empire, negotiated a million dollar deal with Diesel for exclusive United States rights to manufacture the diesel engine. Although poor investments and swindles reduced much of Diesel's new fortune, he was honored everywhere in the engineering world.

Diesel died mysteriously at the age of 55 in 1913. He had boarded the steamship Dresden for the overnight Channel crossing from France to England. When the ship arrived the next morning, Diesel was missing. Eleven days later, a body was found floating in the Channel and personal items (pill case, wallet, eyeglass case) identified the corpse as Rudolf Diesel. Was it suicide? Or was it murder? Some speculate that Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, nearing conflict with England in World War I, feared that Diesel was about to put in the United Kingdom's hands a powerful potential instrument of war.

Joseph, James. *Chilton's Guide to Diesel Cars and Trucks*. Radnor, PA: Chilton Book Co., 1983.

1. Joseph, p. 4.

http://www.Germanculture.com.ua/library/weekly/rudolf_diesel.htm.

White Line Fever

SINGER: *White line fever/A sickness born down deep within my soul.*
—Mama Hated Diesels

White line fever is a kind of highway hypnosis. “It is a mental state in which an individual can drive a truck or automobile great distances, responding to external events in the expected manner with no recollection of having consciously done so.”¹ In other words, one stream of consciousness is driving the rig while the other part of the mind is dealing with other matters. The phenomenon is called white line fever in reference to the white lines painted on the asphalt.

1. en. Wikipedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Highway_hynopsis

Dave Dudley

YOUNGER TRUCKER: *Yep, it was that ol' Dave Dudley song that got me started in this business.*
—Mama Hated Diesels

Dave Dudley (1926-2003) was an American country music singer. He is best known for his truck-driving country anthems of the 1960s and 1970s such as “Six Days on the Road,” “Truck Driven’ Son-of-a-Gun,” “Me and ol’ CB” and “Looking at the World Through a Windshield.”

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dave_Dudley

Female Truckers

FEMALE TRUCKER: *So I turned on my CB to find out what was goin' on. And when I asked, some redneck driver, he says back to me: "Lady, truckin's a man's job! You should be home, makin' supper and havin' babies.*

—Mama Hated Diesels

According to federal estimates, women comprise five to six per cent of truckers. Most team with their husbands. Some couples live in the truck for months at a time driving 24 hours a day, but this lifestyle is not healthy for every relationship.

Some women choose to get a trucker's license after a year of course work. Female and male drivers usually receive equal pay for equal work. A qualified driver of either sex employed by a trucking company can expect a starting salary of \$30,000 to \$35,000 a year; that can increase to as much as \$70,000 a year as miles and experience mount up.

Many truck stops have finally added women's restrooms and showers and, in the last ten to 15 years, prejudice against females in a male-dominated industry has abated somewhat. Still, as trucking in a man's world,"¹ women drivers are sometimes subjected to unwelcome sexual innuendos from male drivers on their radios.

1. ladytruckdrivers.com

<http://www.ladytruckdrivers.com/moreladydriverstories.htm>

Trucker Rules of the Road

OLDER WIFE: *It can be a stinkin' business but these 'Asphalt Warriors', they take care of their own.*

—Mama Hated Diesels

Many truckers abide by an unspoken set of rules of the road. Many young drivers are unaware of these rules, but if they're lucky, veteran truckers will teach them.

Rule #1. Acknowledging other truckers on the road with a friendly wave or a message on the CB radio. If a driver ever needs assistance, this courtesy will pay off.

Rule #2. Sometimes on busy roads, truckers may not be able to keep an eye on all the traffic around them. Fellow truckers traveling in other lanes will often flash their lights or make contact by CB radio to tell another driver when they have safely passed another vehicle and it is OK to change lanes. This is called passing the pavement.

Rule #3. Know the code. If one wants to communicate with other truckers, one has to have a CB radio. With that radio come responsibilities and certain phrases that let other truckers know where there are police speed traps or the location of an accident. Frequent topics of conversation include vehicles, food, guns or sports.

Rule #4. Another unspoken common courtesy that truckers extend to other drivers has to do with headlights. When stopping for any length of time at a weigh station or fuel stop, truckers will turn off their headlights and put on their blinking hazard lights. Headlights are extremely bright and can blind another driver, causing a potential hazard.

http://www.motorpoint.com.au/trucker_road_rules.asp

Trucker Illness

OLDER TRUCKER: *There's a lot of stomach trouble in this business— lotsa tension.*
—Mama Hated Diesels

Common maladies suffered by truckers include strains and sprains, bruises, fractures, cuts and lacerations, soreness and pain and “multiple traumatic injuries.”¹

Some of these conditions can be alleviated by following some safety advice. Taking breaks, stopping, getting out of the vehicle and walking around can ease back pain and reduce tension.² Lack of proper blood circulation can create tremendous discomfort and result in health problems, so truckers should always wear comfortable clothing.³ The steering wheel, seat height and backrest should be positioned for maximum comfort so that the driver's movements are not constricted. A trucker should never jump from the cab to the ground. The impact of this action can cause fractures or, at least, bruising. “Two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand should always be used to support the ascent into or descent from within the vehicle.”⁴ Care should be taken when handling loads. Mechanized equipment should be used if a load is too heavy. Road vibrations can be harmful. If cab seats vibrate too much, the spine could be injured. By tilting the seat back a little, the amount of vibration and road shock can be reduced. Care should be taken when walking on ice, greasy or cracked surfaces. Finally, a trucker should always make note of when he or she is tired, as fatigue is the most prevalent cause of accidents.

1. osha.gov.
2. career-advice.monster.com
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/trucking_industry/safety.html

http://career-advice.monster.com.in_the_office/workplace_issues/trucking-safety-tips/article.aspx

Truck Stops

Truck stops (or “chews and spews” as truckers refer to them) are commercial facilities predicated on providing fuel, parking, food and other services to truck drivers and passenger vehicles. They are usually located on or near a busy highway and consist of a diesel grade fueling station with bays wide and tall enough to accommodate modern tractor trailer rigs and a parking area large enough to fit from five to 100 trucks. The truck stop originated in the US in the 1940s as a reliable source of diesel fuel not found at ordinary gas stations. Today there are approximately 10,000 truck stops in the US.

Large truck stops are often called travel centers. Besides fuel pumps under cover, they can have a restaurant as large as a suburban eatery. There is usually a large shopping area containing everything from road maps to toaster ovens. Even though long haul rigs have sleeping berths, some travel centers have motel arrangements with showers and a movie theatre.

Most travel centers have Wi-Fi since many long haul truckers want access to the Internet to keep up with the news and company information. They also want to maintain relationships at home and elsewhere through e-mail. Many travel centers have Christian ministries.

Truck stops are often depicted in films and novels as being somewhat seedy places, frequented by aggressive bikers, petty criminals and prostitutes. This is an outdated picture, as most modern travel centers are generally safe and clean.

<http://www.truckstopsacrossamerica.com>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/truck_stop

A Trucker's Home Life

OLDER WIFE: *Our parting ritual has become so routine over the years. I wonder why it still hurts so much.*

—Mama Hated Diesels

The impact of trucking on a family can be enormous. Just as it takes a special type of person to drive a big truck, it takes a special kind of family at home. A trucker's mate must be trustworthy and mature enough to stand up to friends who question what the spouse is doing on the road. Children must be secure enough to know the parent will be away from them for extended periods of time. Sometimes truckers can't get home in time during emergencies.

A trucker's mate is faced with serious challenges. Not only is he/she left with the responsibilities of maintaining the business of home, but also he/she must raise the children if there are any. It takes a strong, independent, understanding person to be a trucker's spouse.

http://www.lifeasatrucker.com/Truckers_Wives.html

CB Radio

Citizens' Band radio (or CB radio) is a system of short-distance radio communications between individuals on a selection of 40 channels within the 27 MHz (11m) band. The CB radio service is distinct from "ham" (amateur) radio. In many countries CB does not require a license and, unlike amateur radio, it may be used for business as well as personal communications. Like many other two-way radio services, CB channels are shared by many users. Only one station may transmit at a time. Other stations must listen and wait for the shared channel to be available.

The CB radio service originated in the United States as one of several personal radio services regulated by the FCC. These services began in 1945 to permit citizens a radio band for personal communication including radio controlled models, family communications and individual businesses.

In the 1960s, the service was popular with small trade businesses such as electricians, plumbers, carpenters as well as truck drivers and radio hobbyists. With the advancement of solid state electronics, the weight, size and cost of the radios decreased, giving the general public access to a communications medium that had previously been open only to specialists. Many CB clubs were formed and a special CB slang language evolved, used alongside 10-codes similar to those used in emergency services.

During the 1973 oil crisis, the US government imposed a nationwide 55 mile per hour speed limit, and fuel shortages and rationing were widespread. CB radio was often used to locate service stations with a supply of gasoline, to notify other drivers of speed traps, and to organize blockades and convoys, such as the 1974 strike protesting the new speed limit and other trucking regulations. Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, a phenomenon was developing over the CB radio. Similar to the Internet chat rooms a quarter century later, the CB allowed people to get to know one another in a quasi-anonymous manner.

The prominent use of CB radios in 1970 era films such as *Smokey and the Bandit*, *Convoy* and television programs like *Movin' On* (1974) and *The Dukes of Hazzard* (1979) bolstered the appeal of CB radio. Moreover, popular songs such as C. W. McCall's "Convoy" helped establish CB radio as a nationwide craze in the US in the mid-to-late 1970s.

Originally, CB required a license and the use of a call sign, but when the CB craze was at its peak, many people ignored this requirement and used nicknames or "handles." The many restrictions on the authorized use of CB radio led to widespread disregard of the regulations, most notably in antenna height, distance restriction for communication, licensing and the use of call signs, and allowable transmitter power. Eventually, the licensing requirement was dropped entirely.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citizens'_band-radio

Trucker Talk

Alligator station—a person who likes to hear himself talk. All mouth & no ears.

Beaver bait—money.

DX—long distance.

Full bore—traveling full speed.

100 mile coffee—strong coffee.

Kiddie car—school bus.

O.L.—old lady.

Rain locker—shower room.

Smokey—Highway patrol.

Use the jake—slow down.

Zzz's—sleep.

Drop the hammer—go as fast as possible

Eights—love and kisses.

Bear—police, highway patrol

Chicken coop—weigh station.

Eyeballs—headlights.

Go to 100—restroom stop.

Jewelry—lights on a rig.

M20—meeting place.

Play dead—stand by.

Skates—tires.

10-11—talking too fast.

Water hole—truck stop.

Dream weaver—sleepy driver.

Nap trap—place to sleep.

<http://www.cbgazette.com/slang.html>

Trucker Movies

1. *Smokey and the Bandit* (1977) Features Burt Reynolds, Sally Field, Jerry Reed and Jackie Gleason.
2. *The Wages of Fear (Le Salaire de la Peur)* Features Yves Montand, Falco Lufi, Peter Van Eyck and Charles Vanel. Directed by Henri-George Clouzet.
3. *They Drive by Night* (1940) Features George Raft, Ann Sheridan, Ida Lupino and Humphrey Bogart.
4. *Convoy* (1978). Features Kris Kristofferson and Ernest Borgnine.
5. *White Line Fever* (1975) Features Jan-Michael Vincent.
6. *Roadgames* (1981). Features Stacy Keach and Jamie Lee Curtis
7. *Duel* (1971) Features Dennis Weaver. Steven Spielberg's directorial debut.
8. *Sorcerer* (1977). Based on *Wages of Fear*. Directed by William Friedkin and the starring Roy Scheider.

9. *Big Rig* (2007) is a documentary from Doug Pray and Brad Blondheim.

10. *The Great Smokey Road Block* (1977). Features Henri Fonda and Eileen Brennan.

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Don't miss the exhibit in the lobby put together by the American Truck Historical Society. With photographs of trucks from 1934 to 1960, the display will give a good overview of the history of trucking in this country.