

Then, B.A.M, out of nowhere this eighteen wheeler hits me from behind. He later told the police officer he was doing about 65 MPH which was the posted speed but his skid marks and damage to the truck suggested faster. It was a White Freightliner cab over (or snub nose) running empty returning to the terminal just down the road from finishing up a three day run and anxious to sign out and go home. The entire left rear side of my body made contact with the right front quarter panel at the curvature of the corner. FYI, curved metal is far stronger than flat metal. My left leg however, front the bottom of my buttock to my ankle, came into full contact with the right front tire as it had one of those mini bumpers which enabled the front tires to stay cooler on long runs. Thank God the impact was great enough to keep the tire from pulling me under all 9 tires of the right side of the truck. In fact so great was it that it catapulted me upward at a 45-50 degree angle to the point I looked straight into the eyes of the driver who turned his head to the right looking straight into mine in total disbelief. Pete had careened off to the right to avoid my bike and crashed in the ditch parallel to the highway, he was unharmed. Bruce, who was a few hundred yards behind us never heard anything until the truck passed him and from there he just watched in utter amazement as he could do nothing.

The driver panicked when he saw me and locked up every tire on the rig. This put him into a severe jackknife scenario and had his rear tractor tires not hit a driveway crossing the six foot deep ditch throwing the rig back up onto the road into the on coming lane he'd have probably rolled it totaling the entire rig and probably killing himself. Meanwhile gravity saw to it that I did not stay airborne and I proceeded to skip like a rock across water on my backside down the fresh asphalt for about 70-80 yards. My undershirt and shorts were torn off as was two layers of underwear as I was breaking in a brand new saddle on this ride. But the surreal part was from the impact itself.

What was a 8 inch convex radius corner on the right side of the cab from windshield to bumper became a 12 inch concave radius from windshield to bumper which equaled the distance from my buttock to my shoulder. The entire headlight assembly was completely caved into this radius breaking none of the glass. However the 8 inch chrome ring around the glass functioned like a cookie cutter and removed a perfect circle of all three layers of material directly behind my left butt cheek. My back and this butt cheek took the bulk of the road rash with some spots having no skin left just exposed muscle. As I said, fresh asphalt is worse than 10 grit sand paper. My left leg was imbedded from buttock to ankle with tire rubber burned right into my skin.

By the time I had come to a stop Pete was already running toward me. I jumped up, fearing another impact from any possible additional traffic, grabbed my bike so it didn't cause any additional issues, and ran to the side of the road where Pete met me. Pete was a para medic and kept me walking and talking to prevent going into shock. There were no apparent (will explain later) broken bones or major lacerations just severe road rash over 25-30 % of my body. After several minutes passed I had the cognizance to get the wounds cleaned as soon as possible so I walked up to the farmhouse, which the rig came to a stop in front of, and knocked on the door. Keep in mind I had to use both hands to cover my exposed butt cheek. A very lovely 18 year old young lady answered the door dressed to the nines. She explained she was about to be picked up to go pick out her wedding rings. From the front I looked fine, no visible damage. I turned to show her my backside and then as she gasped I ask if I could use her shower to clean up, she just stuttered and said sure. She pointed me to the bathroom. The pain didn't hit me until I turned on the water. I knew it was going to burn so I turned on the cold only, it felt like molten lead and it was everything I could do to keep from screaming at the top of my lungs. I rinsed off as best I could and by the time I rinsed off as best I could and by the

time I got back outside a highway patrolman had made it to the scene and was questioning the driver. The driver started to bold face lie to the officer as to what happened and Bruce, all 225 lbs of semi pro athlete of him, was about to attack the driver when I jumped between them to keep him from killing the guy. Moments later an adjuster from the truck terminal 3 miles down the road showed up to assess the damages to the rig. The officer took statements from all of us and offered to take me to the hospital. I said no thanks, the same God who saved me from the truck would also heal me. About then Windel Collinsworth arrived in his pick up to take us all home but first we went to the terminal to settle things there. The adjuster, as he sat on the other side of a massive conference table, was threatening to take me to court and make me pay for the damages to the truck. His ignorance was overwhelming. As I explained to him that I drove eighteen wheelers for 3 years in the military and would crucify him in court I was also crawling across the top of the table toward him asking him if he really wanted to mess with someone who just walked away from being hit by an eighteen wheeler. Windel grabbed me to calm me down. The adjuster cut me a check for \$600.00 and I signed a release form and we left. The three of us along with two other adults and three children all witnessed this accident. Other than the gal who let me in the house to clean up, I never met any of the other people. I currently have no idea where Pete is, Bruce is now a vegetable from another car hitting him on his bicycle 20 years later and Windel died from brain cancer two years ago.

I never went to the hospital or even saw a doctor. That night I was out playing Frisbee with Bruce, Pete, Windel and a few other men from our fellowship and three days later picked up my new bicycle and shortly after that was heading for IL in a pickup with a new bicycle to visit Bruce's home town. There's actually more to this story concerning my healing but it's in another tract called "Is Healing for Today".