

**Truck Stop Christmas**

**By Tom Hale**

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This is a true story. It was told to me by a guy I met on a Riverboat. That's how I know it's true; who could doubt the veracity of a River Rat? He didn't use any backup singers when he told it to me, but I thought since this is going out on the Internet and all, I should shine it up a bit.

I spared no expense to fly these women in from Nashville. They are, I am proud to tell You, the same backup singers who did all that "Wah-ooo" stuff on C.W. McCall's records.

I am laboring under a serious deadline, so the singers and I haven't had much time to practice. We will do the best we can. I'll play the part of the Trucker (imagine a Red Sovine-ish, Tex-Ritter- On-Acid kind of thing). It goes a little somethin like this:

Singers:

It was a Truck Stop Christmas,  
With a light snow fallin down,  
In Penciltucky, but it could have been  
In any other town.  
The miracle that happened  
We may never understand,  
But, here to tell the story  
Is a Truck Drivin Man...

Trucker:  
Well, I'z—

Singers:

A Truck Drivin Maa-aan. Wah-ooo.

Trucker:

Skewz me. I'z drivin down a stretch of Interstate, an' I'z really gettin hungry. Every time I'd hit them airbrakes, I'd hear 'em sayin, "Peeech Pie!" And my air horn was tellin me how I like my coffee: BLAAAAAK! BLAAAAAK! Oh, I know I shouldn of been barrelin

down the Interstate, hittin my airbrakes and blarin the horn like Judgment Day—that's what too much marijuana'll do to a man. Prob'ly why I was so hungry, too. Yeah, I'd of given a month's pay for a big ol' piece of "Peeech Pie!" I was tryin to remember if there was a Truck Stop on this p'tickler stretch of Interstate; that big diesel motor kept tellin me that there "Wudden! Wudden! Wudden-Wudden-Wudden!"

Singers:

Just a homesick gear jammer  
Runnin low on love and luck,  
Thinkin 'bout his woman,  
And talkin to his truck...

Trucker:

I was 'bout to—

Singers:

Talkin to his truu-uuck. Wah-ooo.

Trucker:

I'm sorry...just kind of wave at me or somethin when it's my turn, okay? I was 'bout to wet my pants when I came whizzin into town; the lights of an unfamiliar Truck Stop caught my eye. When I walked in, there was this old waitress draggin a dirty rag across the novelty mud flap display. She smiled at me and said, "Merry Christmas, Son." I said, "Lordee, ma'am, is it Christmas already?" She said that yes, yes it was, and I bet my jaw must of hit the floor. Seemed like only yesterday it was October—that's what too much crystal methadrine'll do to a man.

She looked at me for a long time, then said, "You know, I had a son who'd be about your age. He took off drivin trucks and I never did hear from him again. I kept hopin he'd stop in here one day—preferably at Christmas, so I'd get a double dose of the willies."

Well, I put my coffee back in the cup and said, "Ma'am, you can call it coincidence if you want to, but I had a mother who'd be about your age. I talked to Daddy the day before he died, and he told me Mama had missed me so bad, she went out and got a job at a Truck Stop, hopin someday I'd stop in."

Singers:

A Truck Stop Christmas—  
Don't it make you weep?  
The snow continued fallin;  
It was really gettin deep...

Trucker:

She said she—

Singers:

Really gettin dee-eeep. Wah-ooo.

Trucker:

Damnit! She said she knew her boy was never gonna walk in at Christmas or any other time, for it was on this p'tickler stretch of Interstate, ten years ago, that her son was toppin a hill and had to swerve to miss a bus load of kids. After he'd plowed through a ditch and nearly turned over, he stuck his head out the window to cuss at the bus driver and his hat blew off. So he jumped out to get it. He should have stopped the truck first, because he was goin 90 miles an hour when he jumped out. Yeah, he was in movin violation of the law of gravity.

She said she hoped I wasn't too disappointed about her not bein my mother, and I said, "Naw, I figured as much since I was only four years old when my mama started workin at a Truck Stop." I told her about a driverless truck that had passed me a few miles back: it was goin 90 miles an hour. I didn't think much about it at the time—that's what too much Night Train'll do to a man—but, after hearin her story, I got a case of the hee-bee-gee-beez like you wouldn believe. I leaned across the counter and held onto her tired old hand. I said, "Ma'am, you may not be my mother, but I'll bet you five dollars against the price of the pie and coffee that you can't name all 8 reindeer."

She started to cry and said this was the first time in ten years that Christmas had any meanin for her—she hadn even bothered to put up any decorations. Now that it felt like Christmas, and she knew it would be her last one, all she wished for in the whole wide world was somethin to make it look like Christmas. Well, it just so happened that I was haulin a hot load of cheap, plastic Nativity scenes to Chicago for an eleventh-hour trainload sale. I made up my mind right then an' there that this old woman was gonna have one of 'em if it drove every dime store in Chi Town out of business. I said, "You wait right here, Ma'am; this is gonna be the best Christmas you ever had!"

Well...that's when I woke up.  
[military-drums-in-the-distance]

I woke up in a foxhole...about 15 miles from White Sands Missile Range. The First Sergeant was shakin me. When I looked up at him, there was a look of curiosity and concern in the narrow eyes that so resembled elongated lug nuts, chiseled into the weather-beaten leather that was his face—two eyes, one on either side of his nose. He told me that I'd been yellin in my sleep, somethin 'bout drivin a truck.

I said, "But, Sarge! I am a Truck Driver!"

The curiosity and concern melted into a combination of compassion and sarcasm—with just a touch of amused weariness. He said, "Son, you are not a Truck Driver, for you see, that would be impossible."

"Why do you say that, Sarge?"

"For two reasons," Sarge said: "One, you are a chimpanzee. Two, you don't even have a driver's license."

Well, I thought about that for a moment. My disappointment turned to resignation. I quietly asked Sarge, "If...if I'm not a Truck Driver, then what am I?"

Sarge said, "Speak up, son, I can't hear you."

So I says out loud, I says, "If...if I'm not a Truck Driver, then what am I?"

He said, "You are an Astronaut. You just got back from a 5-year trip around the Planet, Pluto. I don't know what happened to you up there, but I do know this: you are not a Truck Driver."

I sat there, chewin on that one for a good long while.

Sarge poured us both some coffee. The long silence was broken when I said, "Sarge, what month is this?"

He told me it was August.

"Well," I said, liftin my cup, "Feliz Nuevo Año, Sarge."

Sarge grinned, and raised his cup. "Happy Halloween, Kid."

I poured coffee all down the front of my flight suit—that's what too much weightlessness'll do to a man.

Singers:

It was a Truck Stop Christmas  
With magic in the air;  
It was the nightmare of a monkey,  
And a Mother's answered prayer.  
A mystery, a miracle,  
We'll never understand;  
But it's notarized and witnessed  
By a Truck Drivin Man...  
A Truck Drivin Maa-aan. Wah-ooo.

In God's Trombones, James Weldon Johnson tells of an old-time preacher who announces, "Brothers and sisters, this morning—I intend to explain the unexplainable—find out the undefinable—ponder over the imponderable—and unscrew the inscrutable." This author seeks to do all that, plus take it a step further and eff the ineffable. Tom Hale is a featured author at [wizardboys.com](http://wizardboys.com).

## How To Get Your Kayak From Home To The Water

By Niall Barco

Some people think only about buying their new kayak, not about how to get it from their home to the water. It can be a logistical nightmare transporting a kayak. Thankfully there are many good kayak racks available.

Finding the right system to attach your kayak to your vehicle may be easier than think. Kayak racks are 100 percent dependable and reliable. There are various styles that will fit every truck.

You will find that many kayak truck racks are able to load and carry more than one kayak easily and safely. You can buy such truck racks at any kayak store and will be able to find the precise one that you want. The companies that create these racks have reliable reputations. You won't ever have to worry about your kayak falling off while you are driving.

There are several different rack types. You can mount the rack on a truck roof or in the bed of the vehicle. Either of these options gives you the chance to travel safely with more than one kayak.

These rack systems are relatively easy to install and are quite sturdy after you install them! You do not have to be concerned about installing any of the systems wrong because they are just too easy to install! Anyone can do it and do it quickly.

They not only are easy to install but they are also easy to remove. The only hard work you will have to do is lift the kayak into the vehicle!

Some people feel better about traveling with their kayak in the truck because they think the kayak rack is more durable. In a truck, the system that you install is a little larger and has more to it than a car rack. They are both reliable and safe. Your vehicle of preference is the only difference.

Begin shopping for a truck rack now and get your kayaking adventures under way!

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