

# FIRST GEAR

## NEW DRIVER NEWSLETTER

Presented by  ROADPRO

FAMILY OF BRANDS

FEBRUARY 2021



## A Driver's Journey – Part 2

*How one driver lost everything and made her way back to success*

By Brita Nowak

The German TV program “Abenteuer Leben”(Adventure Life) sent their cameraman Uri to Florida. He arrived soon after I had returned from Michigan to make sure that he was there to film everything that would happen in the coming days and weeks. As mentioned in Part 1 of my article, they contacted me to be part of a documentary about women in trucking. Eager to pick up my new truck from Penske, I excitedly gathered gear, sheets, cups, and more - Uri documented everything. He also wanted to film the first time I saw my truck and then wanted to travel with me to see what it was like to be a women trucker. I was thrilled and honored to be a part of this project. After everything I had been through in the last several years, things had turned a corner for me, and I was excited to have it documented and then aired in my home country.

After Penske arranged for a trailer as well, it was time to book my first load. I got quite the surprise when some brokers, who had loaded me for years, explained that they couldn't load me because my MC number, although an old one, showed up as brand new. I would have to wait 3-6 months. Ugh. But there were also a few who honored our long-standing relationship. I want to give credit where credit is due. TQL loaded me immediately, so did Harbor Transport and UBER freight.

*So I simply decided to become a “freight chaser.”*

My first few loads didn't pay that great since I had to take what I could get with my newly reinstated MC number. I had to just hang in there for 3 to 6 months. Since it was May, that meant all through summer. Which is hard for Florida freight already, and COVID added to that. So I simply decided to become a “freight chaser.” I bought a monthly subscription with DAT Loadboard (still haven't utilized all of their amazing features) and went anywhere that paid good and the broker was willing to book me. Things escalated quickly and exponentially financially. I literally jumped for joy when I booked my first \$2 a mile load. So I started eyeing those \$2.50 a mile loads out of Nogales and Yuma. I noticed that loads to and out of Chicago paid well. The loads from East to West paid crap, but the loads West to East paid my truck, trailer, and insurance in one load!



Idaho, Utah, Washington, and Oregon became my playground. I wasn't scared of Wyoming anymore, and thoroughly enjoyed it's sunsets and sunrises. Easy to say during the summer months. Loads to Florida paid a fortune, but coming back out was difficult.

I developed a little system for myself. I found smaller, higher-paying loads to Georgia, noticing that loads originating in Georgia also pay more. From there, I would shoot out west like a ball in a pinball machine, staying out as long as possible bouncing back to Florida. To do that, I had to take my cats along.

Checking in with my brokers before they would call me, letting them track me, showing up at least an hour before my appointments became my signature. Three times I tried to deliver a whole day early, each time, I succeeded. I was always happy and approached shippers, receivers, cashiers, people in general with a smile and fun attitude. In return, I enjoyed permission to drop my trailer where it usually was not allowed, unloaded or reloaded earlier, got free coffee here and there, or was given the best bathtub at the Little America, Wyoming truck stop! Brokers called me just to chat or to offer me a load weeks in advance. I also learned to ask for more money, which I got.

*I love trucking. I love my life.*

Soon my average load pay reached \$3.25 with many mid-range (700 to 1200 miles) as high as \$4 a mile. All one pick, one drop, and/or even dry loads. Beer loads and Coca-Cola loads paid great. Produce loads out of the Pacific Northwest, and Idaho are gold. My only multiple stop load was a nursery load out of Oregon, having me enjoy the most breathtaking places all over Colorado. I had a blast.

It made me giggle and shake my head when I discovered that Jupiter, Florida, where I live, had Niagara Bottling Company. UBER freight offered nightly loads for Niagra Bottling for \$300 from Jupiter to faraway places as Riviera Beach or Jensen Beach, which I consider down the street. I would book them after I got empty somewhere in South Florida and before heading out again.



Six months flew by, and I had the time of my life. I wondered WHY I had stopped and HOW I could have given all of this up two years earlier. But after two surgeries for breast cancer, my mind had followed my body instead of the other way around. The body should follow where the mind tells it to go. I had to retrain my mind to tell my body to “shut up and drive.”

I love trucking. I love my life. I love the wide-open roads, the big cities, the rain, snow, mountains, badlands, bridges over rivers, dropped phone calls at state lines, bathrooms at Sapp

Bros., CB radio chatter, downtown skylines, local radio stations.... ALL OF IT! ●

[Click here to read Part 1 of Brita's story.](#)



Born in Berlin, Brita worked as a model and actress in Hollywood before starting her trucking career. She owns her own trucking company, BratCat Express. In addition to all things trucking, Brita is multilingual and has a business degree. In the same week that she was voted Overdrive Most Beautiful 2016, Brita was diagnosed with breast cancer. She opted for immediate bilateral mastectomy WITHOUT reconstruction and is trying to bring awareness to the practice of selling vulnerable women on this unnecessary surgery. You can follow Brita and her success story on her Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/bratcatexpress>.



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A YouTube video player interface. At the top left is the "ROADTRUCK" logo and the text "Dezl OTR GPS". At the top right are icons for "Watch later" and "Share". The video content shows three overlapping Garmin truck navigation screens. The top screen displays "0.4mi" and "South 35 Kansas Tpke" with a "1% Steep Descent Ahead" warning. The middle screen shows "4.0mi" and "95th Street" with "Displaying Popular Truck Paths" and a "Select" button. The bottom screen shows "85m/h" and "1:09h" arrival. A large red play button is centered over the screens. At the bottom left, there's a "Watch on YouTube" button. At the bottom right, the text "DÉZL™ TRUCK NAVIGATORS" is displayed.



# Fat Keeps You Running Smoothly

By Casey Hayes, RDN

Fats ...to some, it is a 4-letter word.

“Watch your fat intake.”

“Good fat vs. Bad fat.”

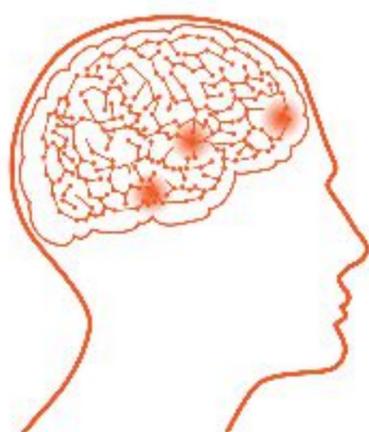
“If you eat fat, you will be fat.”

But let us clarify something, fat is just a lubricator that helps our bodies and keeps it running smoothly – just like adding oil to your truck’s engine. Oil is the tool that keeps the engine purring and running smoothly. Without oil, the engine would seize up. Metal would grind on metal; the engine would overheat.

Oil is added because it is necessary. The right kind should be put in, too, right?

*Fats are there to protect our engines...our bodies.*

A truck driver would never put 2-stroke oil in their diesel. You wouldn’t put dirty oil in either, and all that debris could ruin the engine. Lastly, you wouldn’t put oil where it doesn’t belong... in the windshield wiper reservoir, in the radiator, with the transmission fluid. That would just cause more problems.



So, oil belongs where it is useful, we want to use the right kind, and we want to keep it clean, right? This is the same with fats. Fats are there to protect our engines...our bodies. Fats feed and lubricate our brains. This allows the electrical impulses in our brains to be sent efficiently to the right places. Fats can also feed our brain when there isn’t enough glucose available. Without these fats, there becomes memory issues, Alzheimer’s, and dementia, and the brain starts to shrivel up.

Fats also protect our organs, bones, and muscles. It keeps metal from rubbing on metal, and it insulates us from damage. Our knees and joints need lubricant, and organs use fats to move around hormones and vitamins. Without these, your joints will creek, pop, and grind.



**Protein**



**Carbohydrates**



**Fats**

Fats are one of the three nutrients your body fuels with each day. In the nutrition world, we call these fuels MACROS. These macros are Protein, Carbohydrates, and Fats.

Our bodies use fats in hormones that are messages that our brains send the organs and muscles in our bodies. Without these hormone messengers, our bodies can start to go out of whack in the form of stress, depression, weight gain, hair loss, thyroid problems, and gall bladder issues. Fats also carry your fat-soluble vitamins through your bloodstream.

Fats also are a form of satiety. They help keep us full and give us good energy. However, this is where they get tricky. You have to eat good ones; otherwise, it is like filling your engine with dirty oil. You don’t want to add oil that will do damage. These fats and oils are trans fats from fried and processed foods and saturated fats from eating too many animal fats. These make your cholesterol go up and clog your arteries. Nobody wants a seized-up engine or heart attack or stroke.



The good clean fats are fish, nut oils, avocado oil, and olive oil. Eating avocado and nuts can be a good thing too. They are all great on salads too. Eating baked or grilled fish a couple of times a week is very good for you. Making choices like lean meats, fish, eggs, salads, and cooking with olive and avocado oil are all good choices. Some foods to stay away from is fatty meats, gravies, fried foods, cream soups and sauces, packaged cookies, chips, and French fries.

Be mindful to put good oil in your engine and stay healthy...One Mile at a Time. ●



Casey Hayes, RDN, is a wife, mother, and sister-in-law to a truck driver. She has worked the last 11 years on the dock of a wholesale warehouse while achieving her degree as a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist. You can find her at [www.CaseyHayesRDN.com](http://www.CaseyHayesRDN.com) and testing recipes in her 12V appliances or finding better food to eat on the road. Her passion is to help truckers choose healthier food on the road...One Mile at a Time.



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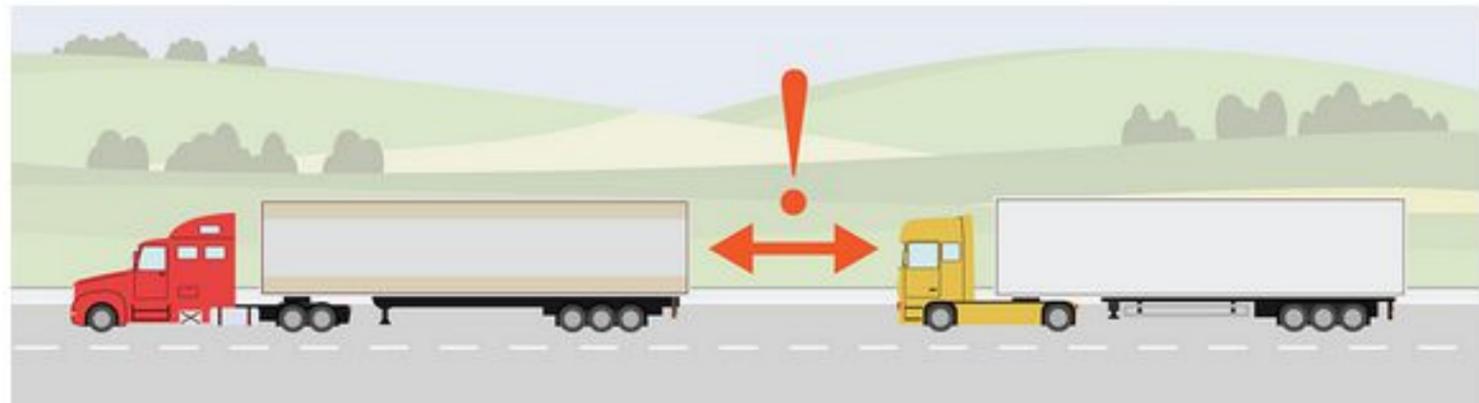
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## Back Off! – Following Distance Matters

By Craig Daniels

What we do is one of the most dangerous jobs in the country. According to the Department of Labor, truck drivers like me are ranked between second and fifth, depending on how they arrange the categories of causation, as the most “at-risk” employees in the nation. Transportation incidents rank as the highest category, followed by violence, falls and slips, contact with objects and equipment, and exposure to harmful substances.

Most of these categories are within our control to minimize the impact. The first one is transportation incidents. The overwhelming majority of these have the same contributing factor, following distance. It seems that in every sizeable Talladega-like accident on the road, some people point to things like not having a CB or that their ELOGS are creating a hurried atmosphere or some other causation option. No matter what the weather is, any multiple vehicle accident can be attributed to following distance.

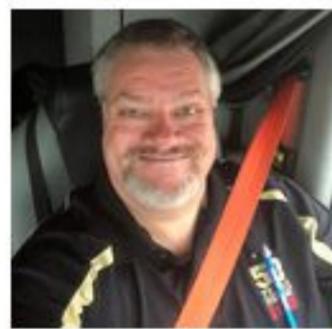
*Maintain your following distance and keep the one safety buffer zone that is easiest to control, the one in front of you.*

Bad weather dictates a more considerable following distance, of course, and so few do it. Following distance has been such a problem for so long it has almost become commonplace to run as close as you can to the truck in front of you. The ATA has said that a minimum of 4 seconds following distance is a starting point. This is not enough. As a company driver of a governed truck with installed collision avoidance radar, I know this makes it a challenge to pass another slower truck. You have to weigh the options of getting too close to make a slow pass or waiting for a large opening of upcoming traffic that seems to take hours.



Do the math - If you are running one mile per hour slower, it will cost you a massive 8 minutes if you are stuck behind the slower truck for 8 hours. Is 8 minutes worth getting so close that you can't see what is happening in front of them? Is it worth holding up faster traffic for 2-3 minutes so that you can arrive at the fuel island 4 minutes ahead of that truck to wait behind someone else? Maintain your following distance and keep the one safety buffer zone that is easiest to control, the

one in front of you. Be safe and courteous, and don't get caught up in the rush. Ten minutes a day, one way or the other, will not make the difference in one way or the other as to if you deliver on time or not. If it does, you need to make better trip plans and/or refuse the loads that are too tight for safety reasons. This one act alone can absolutely prevent you and me from ending up like 2020's “big one” on I-80 in Wyoming. ●



Craig “1oring” Daniels has been driving for Crete/Shaffer/Hunt for the last seven years. Daniels is an Army veteran who went into heavy equipment repair after serving, and that led to almost twenty years of building roads by running asphalt plants, rock quarries, and paving crews. He tried his hand at his own business as a subcontractor, but he started driving truck when the economy tanked in ‘09. He has been led to help and guide others along the way in what he calls divine intervention. He has trained and mentored other Crete/Shaffer/Hunt drivers, helping new family members with policies and procedures unique to the company. He has been exposed to some special people who have taught and continue to teach him the force's ways and is proud to call a few good friends he values and takes their knowledge to heart.





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1. Purchase one of the items above at a participating travel center between now through February 28, 2021.
2. Visit [www.roadprorewards.com](http://www.roadprorewards.com) or text keyword ROADPRO to 80160.
3. Follow instructions to register and submit your receipt image.
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5. Redeem for a digital Visa® gift card, other digital rewards, or keep earning.
6. You must submit receipt within 30 days of purchase.



## The Perfect Gear when Winter is Here

By Kim McDonnell, RoadPro Family of Brands

Winter is upon us, and being prepared for the conditions you will encounter is a must when you are a truck driver. Whether it be to have the right gear for your truck or the right gear for you, RoadPro Family of Brands has you covered.

### WeatherAce Wiper Blades

Nothing is more important than having a clear view out of your windshield, and winter weather can undoubtedly impact visibility.

WeatherAce offers a comprehensive line of wipers meant to keep your windshield not just free of snow or other precipitation but also keep it clean and free of streaks that can impair your view of the highway. Their blades' aerodynamic frame provides enhanced performance regardless of the conditions. Made of natural rubber, WeatherAce blades also provide smear-free wiping, important when you're navigating through demanding conditions and locations.



Pre-installed universal adapters make for fast and easy installation, which can be appreciated when it's cold outside. WeatherAce's stainless steel blade backing provides the kind of durability you need while on the road. WeatherAce blades are available in 16", 17", 18", 19", 20", 22", and 24" sizes. They come with a 30-day warranty. Look for them in travel centers.

### Weighted Blanket

BlackCanyon Outfitter's weighted blanket is perfect for relieving the tension of winter driving. After a long day, weighted blankets have been proven to provide therapeutic effects and to improve sleep. They can help people who suffer from anxiety, restless leg syndrome, depression, insomnia, and pain by mimicking deep pressure stimulation. BlackCanyon Outfitter's weighted blanket is 48 inches x 72 inches and is made of micromink fabric, weighing 12 pounds. If weighted blankets aren't your thing, check out the other blankets and bedding from the BlackCanyon line, sure to make your bunk nice and cozy for those cold nights. Available at most travel centers nationwide or online.



### RoadPro Tactical Tools

During the winter months, the days are shorter with fewer daylight hours. Having a good flashlight available is a must, as is a good option for roadside lighting and tools should you need to make a roadside repair.

RoadPro has developed a great line of tactical gear sets that provide a great selection of lighting, multitools, and other accessories with relevant capabilities and functionalities to keep you safe on the road. The collections include several lighting options, including various sizes and styles of flashlights, headlamps, lanterns, and work lights. There is also a flashlight with a multitool that includes nine tools: a glass breaker, Phillips head screwdriver, flat-head screwdriver, hex wrench, bottle opener, and scissors, and a knife. Make sure to also check out the survival watch with a compass and emergency whistle that also has a paracord and firestarter.



### Winter Weather Apparel

Retaining your body's heat is essential in the winter months, especially if you have to be in and out of your truck to fuel, check on a tire or when you are at the receiving dock. BlackCanyon Outfitters has a great variety of winter weather apparel to keep you warm, including a large selection of winter hats. One of the most practical is the four-in-one hood balaclava. It provides almost complete coverage of your head and face, made of soft polyester, ideal for when you're outside.



Or check out BCO's faux fur-lined troopers hat, which provides almost complete coverage of your head, neck, and face. It's made with a 100% polyester black outer shell, soft inner lining, and soft faux fur lined earflaps and accents. The ear flaps can be buttoned up or snap-locked when down. Make sure to check out the knit hats with a full face mask when the winter weather is really at its worst. This 100% acrylic knit hat provides complete coverage for the face with openings for your eyes, nose, and mouth. An extended bottom covers the neck for added warmth and protection from the elements.



### RoadPro 12-Volt Appliances

Don't feel like making that trek across the parking lot when it is cold outside to get that roller grill hotdog or fast food? Try one of RoadPro's 12-volt appliances and make a delicious meal right inside your cab. There are several options to choose from, including the ever-popular RoadPro 12-volt portable oven, affectionately known as the "Lunch Box." Just place the ingredients inside, close the lid and have a wonderful home-cooked meal in under an hour. If slow cooking is your thing, check out the RoadPro 1.5 quart slow cooker. Or make yourself a few eggs, or cook up a burger in RoadPro's non-stick frying pan. The RoadPro non-stick saucepan is perfect for warming up or making soup on a cold winter's night.



These are just a few of RoadPro Family of Brands product line up – make sure you check out all of our products at [www.roadprobrands.com](http://www.roadprobrands.com) or whenever you visit your favorite travel center or truck stop. Stay warm, and Spring will be here soon. ●



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BlueParrott B450 XT

UP TO 24 HOURS TALK TIME

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The image shows a YouTube video player interface. At the top left is the 'ROADTRIP' logo. The video title is 'BlueParrott B450 XT'. In the center, there is a large graphic that says 'UP TO 24 HOURS TALK TIME' with a red play button icon over the number '24'. At the bottom left, it says 'Watch on YouTube'. At the top right, there are icons for 'Watch later' and 'Share', and a small blueparrott GN logo.

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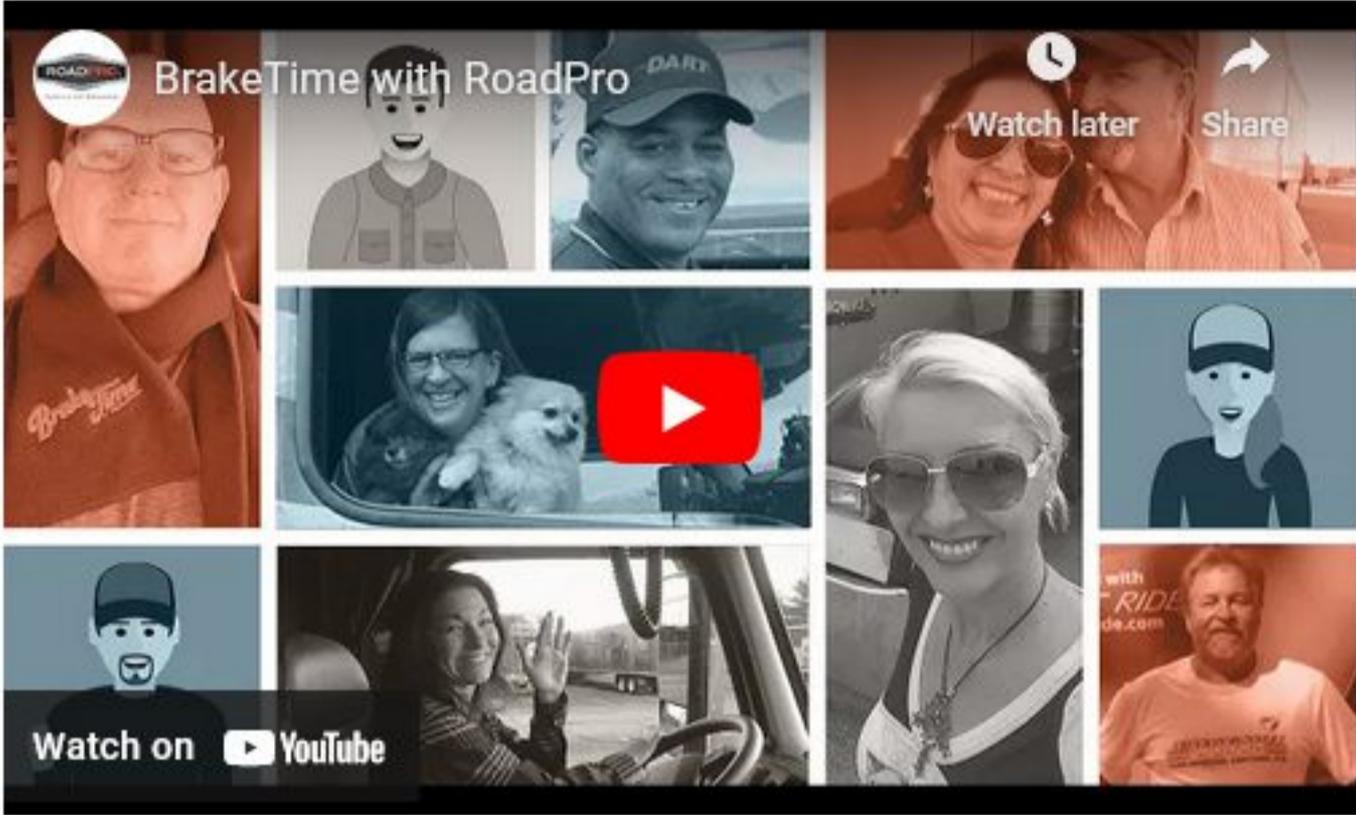


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