

## A NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE I ONCE HAD

My Bike, a Dumptruck, the Ditch, the Driveway, and my Back  
(An incident that makes me shudder every time I recall it.)

by Ron Myers

At age 20, I had a near-death encounter while riding my shiny black 1962 900cc Harley Sportster; one of the quickest bikes on the road at that time. God's guardian angel was watching over me that day. One moment I was enjoying myself, riding carefree down the road; the next moment a slow-moving old farm truck abruptly crossed into my path as I was overtaking him, turning into a driveway without warning—no brake or signal lights! With no time to think or act, I should have died at that moment had I not instinctively braked hard, dropped a gear and leaned my bike down hard to the right, swerving sharply at a near-horizontal angle as I sliced under the overhanging rear frame of the old truck.



1962 900cc XLCH Harley Sportster like I was riding that day.

With no other feasible alternative, I swerved hard-right, leaned at an angle as flat as the bike would go, hoping it would not lose grip with the pavement. Miraculously, I cleared the rear frame rails of the old truck as I shot underneath. This all occurred in a split-second and at speed. Had my tires broken loose, I would have slammed into the rear of the old farm truck's dual tires or under the differential. My helmet, gloved left hand, and leather jacket clad shoulders barely cleared the truck's overhanging rear frame rails, as did the mirror as I shot by underneath. Upon clearing the truck, I faced a new challenge—the ditch.

I shot across the road at a near-perpendicular angle straight towards an open ditch. By then, I had managed to slow down below 50 mph from over 60 when the truck first crossed into my path. I yanked the leaning bike hard to the left to realign myself with the road as I slammed down into the open ditch. Now I was bouncing along the roadside ditch, still firmly astride my hurtling 550-pound Harley Sportster.

I breathed easier as I felt the sweet surge of life—fully aware that death had just been cheated of its prey. (*Mere nanoseconds had passed from the moment I first encountered the challenge until I cleared the truck and slammed into the ditch.*) I wrestled my bike back up the ditch's sloping bank, eyeing the awaiting pavement. I was aware of a dirt bank driveway into an open field ahead, but figured I'd miss it as I man-handled the jouncing bike back up out of the ditch. Wham! I missed most of it but collided with the upper portion of the dirt driveway! (*This was across the road from the cement culvert and driveway where the old dump truck had almost splattered me as it cut into my path. The cement culvert would have surely ended things had I chosen that path.*)

Still astride my bike, legs clamped tightly to the tank, the explosive force of hitting the dirt bank of the driveway launched my bike up into the air with me astride. I did a literal handstand with my body fully vertical. My hands gripping the handlebars was the only contact I had with the bike, legs pointing skyward. My bike and I were fully airborne, having been launched upwards when I collided with the upper part of the driveway on the opposite side of the road from the cement culvert.

Arching through the air for quite a distance, my Sportster came slamming down on its wheels with me still astride, having plopped down on it. I was now barreling along the shoulder of the road, my chin resting on the headlight, eyes peering down at the pavement racing by underneath. My chest was cradled on the handlebars while my torso was sprawled across the bike's tank and seat, legs and feet dangling. Still gripping the handlebars, which were then near my waist, I managed to regain control of my bike as it wobbled back and forth.

Working my way back onto the seat and foot-pegs I was able to regain control, yet now my back was on fire. Continuing on to Ithaca, I completed my business at the DMV, then rode the 20-some miles back to the construction site where I was employed as a carpenter. My lower back was increasingly tight and painful by then due to the severe compression it had just undergone, having been propelled up off the seat into a vertical handstand. It was weeks before I began to feel better. However, I continued to *work it off*, like the toughened farm boy I grew up as. Now, years later, I'm under care for lower back problems, causing weakened legs and difficulty walking. This was most likely due to that farm truck incident, but way better than the alternative.

I have had many other hair-raising experiences since then, but this one is at the top of my scary list. Death was heavy in the air that day and could have easily snuffed out my life. I was a pretty skilled rider, having ridden my Sportster on the wild side most of the time, including competing in AMA sanctioned hill-climb events. Yet, someone much greater than I was watching over me that sunny summer morning in scenic Upstate NY, 1962. I didn't come to know Him personally until the following year. I'm speaking of my Savior of course, The Lord Jesus Christ! On that day, He saved me from a grizzly *physical* death. Later, when I received Him into my life as my personal Lord and Savior, He forgave me of my sin and saved me from an eternal *spiritual* death. That was on Saturday, August 17, 1963 when I was 21 years old.

(*I'm composing short biographical sketches of my life's experiences as a missionary to Thailand; I believe this will be included, as one of the ways God was watching over me, knowing I would come to serve Him later on.*)

Ron Myers

Avoiding Truck's Frame Overhang



Aligning With Road To Enter Ditch



Intersection of NY State Route 34 and 34B, Looking Westward

