

THIS IS HOW IT ENDS

The bridge offered nothing in the way of a shoulder, aside from a five-inch gap between the solid white line and the concrete wall. On the other side of the concrete wall was a fifty-foot drop into the Truckee River.

The road was clear behind me, so I started across, unaware of what the next few moments had in store for me.

Halfway across the bridge, the sound of semitrucks rumbled up behind me. I looked back and—with what could only be described as a feeling of pure terror—saw two Peterbilts closing in on me. Side by side, no room for either truck to change course.

I guessed it would take my friends and family a week to place a ghost bike¹ at this location to commemorate my final stand.

39°22'05.9"N 120°06'54.1"W

I considered jumping over the bridge into the shallow Truckee River below. But as the saying went, it wasn't the fall that would kill

1 A bicycle painted all white and placed at the location where a cyclist was killed by a vehicle.

you, it was the landing. I couldn't bring myself to leap, and I doubted I would survive the fall...err, landing.

A loud, long belch of horns echoed around me. Jumping wasn't an option. I turned my attention to the end of the bridge and pedaled as fast and hard as I could. The two broken spokes and the weight of my gear caused the bike to wobble viciously from side to side.

Only ten feet to go, I looked back and could see the hula dancer on the dashboard of the semi in the right lane—another long belch of the horn followed. In what I expected were my final moments, life was now moving in slow motion. As if this nightmare couldn't get any worse, two metal drainage grates found themselves right in my path. I couldn't go around them, I couldn't ride over them as the openings would have sucked in my front wheel and sent me head over tea kettle.

Just ten feet beyond the grates was the end of the bridge. I looked back again. The trucks were halfway across, just one hundred feet behind me, neither slowing down, both fighting for pole position. Another belch from the horn shattered my final nerve. I jumped off my bike, lifted it over my shoulder, and ran as fast as I possibly could.