



## Episode 2: Why We Drive Air Date: March 5, 2020

**“Long Haul” Paul Marhoefer** [00:00:00] When you picture a truck driver what comes to mind? A booted, bearded Bubba with one those caps that says, Peterbilt? [Sound of motor humming followed by simple, slow baseline] Or my personal favorite, those pearl-snapped plaid-shirted prodigies who were big rigin’ before they could even shave.

**Trucker 1:** [00:00:20] Been around trucks my whole life, third generation of truckers

**Paul:** [As narrator] Well yes, some people were pretty much born to truck.

**Trucker 2:** [00:00:27] I was born into it.

**Trucker 3:** [00:00:28] Third generation

**Trucker 4:** [00:00:29] My grandfather, father, and my brother–brother in law. Everybody. [Theme song begins]

**Paul:** [As narrator] But these days about as many types of folks drive trucks as drive cars. [Theme song continues] You gotchyer burnt-out retailers...

**Captain Tom Kyrk:** [00:00:41] And I had one of those days everybody in retail has where you want to put somebody either through the glass countertop or through a plate glass window.

**Paul:** [As narrator] Your adventurers...

**Linda Bryant:** [00:00:48] We went on a vacation and said it would be nice if we could do this all the time.

**Paul:** [As narrator] [Theme continues with the addition of percussion] You gotcher cultural immigrants, navigating their way to a new career after life changing events.

**Sandra Goche:** [00:01:01] Got diagnosed with colon cancer. I was in the hospital that I said let's go ahead and build a truck and that's where we went from there.

**Paul:** Then of course there are actual immigrants, like my old friend Debbie.

**Debbie "Dingo" Desiderato:** [00:01:13] And I said: "Look, I can't even drive on the correct side of the road you know but I'm not scared of trucks, right." [Laughs]

**Paul:** [As narrator] These days, truckers come from every corner of the world...

**Harun:** [00:01:25] I see job is going down, and then I always see big truck picture.

**Paul:** [As narrator] From every faith and background

**Carlos Rodriguez:** [00:01:32] I never thought I gonna be a truck driver. But at the time I was single, didn't have no kids, so I said what the heck, why not?

**Paul:** [As narrator] I'm Long Haul Paul, and today on the show: who drives and why. From PRX's Radiotopia and Overdrive magazine, this is Over The Road. [Theme song continues and then fades into silence]

You know there's nothing worse than somebody who walks up to you and tells you their whole life story 5 minutes after you meet 'em. But look, since you're here, I should probably tell you how I got into this business. When I was 14, I began begging my dad for a summer job. He was the CEO of a big meat packing outfit, and they had a fleet of about fifty trucks. That summer, he finally gave in, and put me on as a gas jockey. My job was to gas, wash and park the company trucks. [Sound of engine revving] One day, I asked one of the drivers, I think he went by Red, "What's it like to just drive down the road in one of them big ol' trucks?" And he goes: "Come on I'll show you." [Sounds of truck motor running followed by slow, bluesy guitar music] As we exited the lot, Red waved to the guard shack and lit up a camel [Sound of match striking surface] That transmission he had in there was like nothing I'd ever seen before. Every shift was accompanied by a whoosh of air, the clicking of gears all finding their own place. There was a sorcery to it all. Me and ol' Red riding high in that tobacco-and-sweat-cured cab. We must have been seven, eight, nine feet above the ground, [Guitar continues and harmonica joins in] awash in the rumble, the flutter, the roar. We got back, and I thanked Red. "Don't worry about it," was all he said. [Music ends]

But when I was nineteen, my dad and I had a falling out. The old meat plant had gone out of business, and almost overnight, our whole family was just kind of lost. My mom wound up in the psych ward in our local hospital for a while. Me, I wound up without a place to stay. My friend Hank's mom let me sleep on an air mattress on the floor of their house. Hank had four beautiful sisters, and I fell in love with the third, Denise. She was four years my senior, strikingly beautiful and completely out of my league. But I had one thing going for me. [Jackson Browne's *Running on Empty* begins to play]

**Paul:** It was 1979, and that girl was *all about* Jackson Browne. We would sit down with her turntable for hours and dissect every word, of song after song. [*Running on Empty* continues] It was Jackson Browne's *Running On Empty*, recorded entirely on the road, in buses, motel rooms, and on stage, that completely owned me.

There's a song on there called "Shaky Town"; I would sing it to Denise: that's a big ten four from your back door! Just put the hammer down. [Jackson Browne's "Shaky Town" plays] I blame all of this truck driving thing squarely on *you* Jackson Browne...*and* Denise. We've been married 38 years now, bless her heart. ["Shakey Town" ends]

So my dad had been a CEO. I had one brother who was valedictorian of his law school. Another brother spoke twelve languages by the time he graduated college. Me, I dropped out of college and wound up in truck driving school. When I had completed the course, I called my dad. It was the first time we'd talked in a really long time. I told him I had graduated from 'Such and Such Diesel Academy' and there was this long pause. He said: "Well, you can either make it a job or a profession." And it was good advice. [Low chatter and ambient sounds from airport, automated voice over speakers says, "For the health and comfort of the traveling public, all terminals are smoke-free"...]

All that was a long time ago. Now I'm heading back to the shadow of yet another meat packing plant, as ol' Jackson Brown himself wrote, "...going back to where my beginnings have gone." But this time, [Lacy says in background, "Did you just see me?" I'm not going alone. [Faint, gentle tones begin]

**Lacy Roberts:** [00:06:43] I'm raising my hand. Look to your right.

**Paul:** [As narrator] In Omaha, Nebraska, I meet our producer [Lacy laughs in background] Lacy Jane Roberts, in person for the first time.

**Lacy:** [To Paul] I was at the other Omaha Steaks. [Laughs]

**Paul:** [To Lacy] Oh, great to meet ya.

**Lacy:** Great to meet you too. Feels like you've already met.

**Paul:** Yes, it does feel that way. [Lacy laughs]

**Paul:** [As narrator] And we set out together across what truckers call, the “meat patch,” a patchwork of massive feedlots and packing houses which extends from Iowa to Colorado, and from the Dakotas to Texas. We’re hoping someone out here can help us understand the mysterious allure of driving a truck. [Ambient sounds from inside running car] [Lacy in background says, “Yeah, we can start there”] It’s appropriate that Lacy and I are taking this trip together. You see, Lacy’s not only a producer; she’s also the Montana-born daughter and granddaughter of cattle haulers.

**Paul:** [To Lacy] Any time you want to gain credibility within the trucking subculture. [Lacy affirms] I’m from Montana. My dad was a bull hauler. [Lacy repeats, “My dad was a bull hauler. Okay”] And they will salute you. [Lacy laughs]

**Lacy:** My dad and my grandpa were both. Yeah.

**Paul:** [As narrator] Somehow I don’t think she realizes just how cool that is.

**Lacy:** It’s very funny...

**Paul:** [To Lacy] Because they’re the bad-asses of trucking. Just stop and consider what you have to do to be a cattle hauler. You gotta get in a pen with an animal that can weigh up to twenty-five hundred pounds and has the power to trample you to death. And you’ve got to convince that animal to go up a chute, and go in a trailer. [Lacy affirms] Anybody embodies the myth, of what a cowboy, trucker is, it’s a bull hauler.

**Lacy:** That’s still pretty weird to think of my dad as bad ass.

**Paul:** Really?

**Lacy:** [Laughs] Yeah, it’s like someone telling you that the man that you’ve known all your life is something different than you thought he was.

**Paul:** [As narrator] And I have to say, talking to Lacy reminds me a bit of my own daughter.

**Paul:** [To Lacy] You know, I bought a Western Star brand new July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1997. It had two beds, a double bunk sleeper and it was a gorgeous truck, and I bought that truck for one reason. I wanted my kids to see what I did for a living. Because I knew the way I was running, the way I was coming home and all they would really see were the scraps that were left.

**Lacy:** Uh huh.

**Paul:** And all of them— [Crosstalk]

**Lacy:** [Crosstalk] —Do you remember which way?

**Paul:** I'll go left, I'm sorry. [Turn signal clicker sounds] All of them reached the same conclusion. I think I'm going to get a college degree [Laughs] [Lacy affirms] and not do this, [Lacy affirms] which is— I'm glad they reached that conclusion. I don't know. I would have mixed feelings if one of them followed me into trucking. I really would.

**Paul** [As narrator] We're here to meet someone who *is* just getting into trucking, and find out why. Just as soon as we can get some good ol' fashioned mid-western comfort food in our bellies.

**Lacy:** [To Paul] Okay, so where you want me to park here?

**Paul:** Loop around the back of the building. I want to come in from the truck side so I don't think we're a couple four wheelers.

**Lacy:** What's a four-wheeler?

**Paul:** [To Lacy] [Laughs] A four-wheeler. It's a reference to a car but it becomes it becomes like a pejorative. Ugh *four-wheeler*.

**Lacy:** [Laughs] Well, we just happen to be four-wheelers today, but we got our trucker hats...

**Paul:** Yeah. So the only way out of that is to just tell people I'm in my personal vehicle. [Lacy laughs] [Both get out of car and close doors] [Upbeat, plucky guitar music begins]

**Paul:** [As narrator] We head in the trucker's entrance and find a booth. But somewhere in the middle of my chicken-fried steak...

**Lacy:** ...We met a guy at the Shoemaker's Truck Stop in Lincoln, and he recognized Paul from across the restaurant. [Paul laughs in background] And he walked up and said: "Are you Paul?"

**Paul:** [As narrator] A man in his thirties walks up to our table— a cattle hauler named Jared Sidlo.

**Lacy:** He goes: "Damn you got some good tunes!" Or something like that.

**Paul:** [As narrator] This has literally only happened to me like, one other time, since I started making these little folk albums five years ago.

**Lacy:** And now he's going to be our friend and we're gonna interview him tomorrow.

**Paul:** [As narrator] Jared tells us to come by his shop the next day. It's one of these chance meetings, that becomes its own story. [Plucky guitar music transitions into steady downbeat]

[Outdoor ambient sounds] But first, we have an appointment to make. [To Lacy] Grand Island Express, Grand Island, Nebraska.

Grand Island Express is a medium sized trucking company, with a fleet of about one hundred fifty trucks, and about twice that number of reefer trailers.

**Lacy:** Looks like a meat packing house across the street. [Sound of vehicles driving by]

**Paul:** [To Lacy] Right across the street from a large, meat packing concern.

**Paul:** [As narrator] So no surprise, they haul a lot o' meat. [Down beat fades out] [Ambient outdoor sounds] We're here to talk to a newbie. [People greet in background] Someone you just wouldn't expect in a tractor-trailer out here in the middle of the meat patch.

**Paul:** Hey, Kenyette

**Kenyette Godhigh-Bell:** Hey! How are you?

**Lacy:** Hey, Kenyette

**Paul:** I'm Paul.

**Kenyette:** Good to meet you.

**Paul:** Nice to meet you. [Laughs]

**Kenyette:** Thanks for coming.

**Lacy:** Thank you. So nice to meet you as well.

**Paul:** [As narrator] Kenyette Godhigh-Bell is a true cultural immigrant. She's a former social worker and real estate agent, who just started driving last year. [Indistinct chattering inside Kenyette's home] She's driving a brand spankin new Freightliner, in cobalt blue.

**Kenyette:** Yep this is my new truck, with Grand Island Express and I'm gonna put "Lady K" on the door. They've already stenciled it out for me. [Humming truck motor in the background]

**Paul:** [As narrator] It's Sleek, aerodynamic, with all the bells and whistles.

**Kenyette:** So do you know how to get in?

**Lacy:** I do.

**Kenyette:** Of course you do.

**Lacy:** The time that I spent the most time in trucks was when I was like before I was in school so I have a lot of memories of being in trucks. [Kenyette affirms] In my head it's a lot bigger but...

**Kenyette:** I didn't grow up around trucks. I had an uncle whose name was Pete and I remember he rode into Indianapolis in a Peterbilt and I was like, "how did you get a truck with your name on it!?" [Paul laughs] And so, but I didn't grow up around trucks. [Twangy guitar melody begins]

**Paul:** [As narrator] I know how I wound up out here, but what would make a decent, normal person like Kenyette, ever want to do this? Well, she tells us her story.

**Kenyette:** Well, I wanted to be a cashier because I like buttons. [Kenyette and Paul laugh] And I told my momma, "I wanna be a cashier." And she said, "child, by the time you grow up they won't need you. It'll be all computers. This is the '70s." So then I also wanted to be rich and so I thought the way to do that was corporate America. And so I went to business school. So truck driving was nowhere on the radar. [Guitar music fades out] Options are always important for me and I grew up having options. My mother would say "Okay so do you want to wash the dishes, or do you want to clean the bathroom?" Who does that? But she gave us options. So I'm sitting on these jobs and I'm sitting there thinking there's gotta be more to life than this.

**Paul:** [As narrator] Kenyette took a class in graphic design, then one in computer networking. She got a masters in marriage and family therapy, and then a real estate license. Still, trucking was the farthest thing from her mind.

**Kenyette:** And so I was at a family reunion in 2016 and my husband's cousin he was driving and he was saying, "you know what, there's a lot of ladies out here I'm seeing and they're really getting it done." And so I was intrigued because it was a fleeting thought. At some point you'd see it's like that looks like something that I might be able to do. It's outside of the box, it's not following the crowd. But then it just seemed to be so much overwhelming without knowing a thing about it. It's like, ah, it's probably a man's world. And so I tabled that in the back of my mind. And then once I met a lady later that year, 2016, and we were talking about real estate and then I asked her what she did and she said, "why, I'm a truck driver." What? Well she looked like me. She was a black lady. She's about my age and so she shows a picture of the truck and she's like, "It's not the impossible dream. Yeah you got to learn how to back up and you got to go to school" but she's like, "the school's three weeks, they'll work with you. It's fine." So that stayed in my mind 'til about December 2016 and I called her up and I said, "Now come again about this truck driving. What did you say?" [Bluesy, guitar music begins] Getting through school was the hardest part of this whole process. It wasn't being harassed by other truckers or you know adjusting to the lifestyle. The hardest hurdle was getting out of school. Because I truly don't think that they thought that I would make it because I don't look like what you think a trucker would look like. [Guitar music continues with a brighter, grander sound] I struggled with just the timing of the double clutching. [Sound of changing gears] I knew how to drive a stick shift. Most of my cars had been. But the double clutching is about timing and they don't let you

float gears in school; you have to do it by the book. *[Sound of grating gears]* And so, the timing was off on certain gears, and they thought, well, you're just you're just not up to par. You're not getting it. And I had to advocate and say you don't know me. This is one chapter of my life that you're coming in on but I've been with me my whole life and I know that this is not insurmountable. So if you give me a little more time, I'm going to get this. And so they end up giving me more time. And then I came in and I finished.

**Kyle Wiesen:** [00:17:03] I am totally making it my mission to build the number of female drivers that are in the industry.

**Paul:** [As narrator] So, one of the other people we talk to at Grand Island is Kyle Wiesen.

**Kyle:** I am the driver recruiter at Grand Island Express.

**Paul:** [As narrator] And when we meet in the lobby, Kyle is wearing this shirt that says: "The Future is Female." [Music fades out] [Indistinct greetings between Kyle and others. Someone says, "I like your shirt"] In Grand Island, Nebraska, that's a statement.

**Kyle W:** I have to admit though, like, I just moved to the area from Omaha a couple of months ago and I was like, you know what, there's no better time for me to really bust out to them. And so many people today were like, "oh my god, I love your shirt."

**Paul:** [As narrator] Now when I started driving in the 70s, female truckers were a rare sight. That's changed, somewhat.

**Kyle:** You know, this is still a very male dominated industry. Only eight percent of drivers are women, and just from my background I actually was a recruiter at an all women's college prior to this. So for me, you know, I said, well this is a huge area that we're not really tapping into. Or we could basically, you know, own this, because as a company, we actually have ten percent of our drivers that are female.

**Paul:** [As narrator] I should say, this push for female drivers is not just about a feel-good diversity thing. You may have noticed out on the road, that a lot of trucks have "we're hiring" signs on them. That's because there's a lot of turnover in this industry, and trucking companies are always trying to find new people.

**Kyle:** I mean the studies are out there that women are coming into the workforce and they're looking for jobs that aren't traditional. And I don't think the women in the industry are gonna bounce through jobs the same as some of the men do. They want to find a place they can come on and they can stay and they can actually, you know, call that their home.

**Kenyette:** So the fact that there's over two-hundred thousand ladies out here, and you see more and more, is very encouraging...



**Paul** [As narrator]: Here's our friend Kenyette again.

**Kenyette:** ...especially when you see someone, let's say like myself who just looks like a regular person. And so I could still have my boots with little heels and these cute little jeans and have some earrings on and some jewelry. I could bring my identity to trucking. And not let trucking shape my identity. And I think it's important to keep moving forward and not be afraid to dream big. [Indistinct ambient indoor sounds]

**Paul:** [As narrator] For Kenyette, part of that dream is ownership—owning her own truck, and being her own boss.

**Instructor:** Alright. So welcome everybody to the Road to Independence class...

**Paul:** And it just happens, that the day we visit, she's starting a class on how to become, what we call an "owner-operator." [Instructor takes roll call while Paul narrates] You can make more money as an owner-operator, but there's also more costs, more responsibility, and a lot more risk.

**Kenyette:** So does that dollar six fluctuate? [Indistinct class discussion]

**Paul:** So in the class, they go over, in detail, what you expect to pay...

**Kenyette:** [In class] You mean just taking the cost of tires and averaging it out monthly? [Instructor affirms and indistinguishable discussion continues]

**Paul:** New tires for a tractor trailer alone could run up towards seven thousand dollars.

**Instructor:** Let's say conservatively, a couple hundred thousand dollars...

**Paul:** [Instructor continues speaking, now in background] Then there's fuel, maintenance, health insurance, truck insurance. All of that adds up, of course. So the class turns to how much money they should set aside for every mile they drive.

**Kenyette:** I've heard you at a minimum of ten cents a mile...

**Paul:** [Class conversation continues as Paul narrates] And for some reason they turn to me for advice—

**Kenyette:** What do you think, Paul?

**Paul:** [As narrator] You *do not* want to do that.

**Paul:** [To class] Well, I'm just an observer here. I am not an expert, okay?

**Student:** [00:20:53] Well, you've been driving since I was five—

**Kenyette:** —1979, when I was seven... [Student laughs]

**Paul:** Don't let these gray hairs make you think I'm wise, okay? [Students laugh]

**Paul:** [As narrator] The class wraps up for lunch, and for Kenyette, the sky is still the limit in trucking. [Students chattering the in the background]

**Kenyette:** I need to make a lot more money. And so it's not like oh I'm just gonna drive, oh my goodness, and by the way you happen to pay me too for driving this truck? No! I'm 50. You gotta make time, you know, work for me because it's later than it's ever been and the sun is going down. [Paul laughs] My former pastor said.

**Paul:** What makes others cave seems to only energize her.

**Kenyette:** [Voices chattering and laughing in the background] So I realize in this industry if you want to make more money and have some more freedom then you need to have your own truck. And this is a wonderful timing for you because this is the actual anniversary: May 17, 2018, where I actually got in the truck to drive for the first time ever.

**Lacy:** Today?

**Kenyette:** Yes, a year ago. This is this same date that I went out with my trainer. [Keyboard music begins] So one year later, I'm having this conversation about how can I maybe get my own truck. [Keyboard music continues]

**Paul:** But with the freedom of ownership, often comes a price. After the break, we meet up with Jared, the bull hauler we met at the truckstop. Jared's path into trucking was completely different from Kenyette's. And now, eight years into his career as an owner-operator, he has a lot to say about it.

**Jared:** Sometimes when the grass looks greener on the other side of the fence, it's 'cause there's a septic tank leaking [Laughs] [Keyboard music continues with the addition of harmonica, gradually increasing in intensity, then fades to silence]

[Car door closing, ambience outdoor sounds]

**Paul:** That night we go to visit Jared Sidlo.

**Jared:** You want a beer?

**Paul:** Lacy, would you like a beer.

**Lacy:** I'd love a beer.

**Paul:** We meet in his shop, where he parks and works on his truck. [Ambient sound from Jared's shop, music playing from speakers]

**Paul:** [Voices chattering in the background] Jared is the polar opposite of Kenyette. For one thing, he was born into this—

**Jared:** Long as I remember, grandpa was home, and I just wanted to go sit in his truck. Didn't have to be doing anything, just wanted to be in a truck. Finally let me drive you home. Grandma get a bunch of milk cartons and when I could back through those, he let me learn the forward gears.

**Paul:** Jared was 13 the first time he drove his Grampa's rig.

**Jared:** Taking a trailer out to Denver...

**Paul:** His Grampa was napping in the back, and told Jared to wake him up before they got to the weigh station.

**Jared:** And was trying to wake him up before Fort Morgan, and throwing shoes at him try to wake him up. He wouldn't wake up and end up taking his truck across the scales at 13 years old. [Gentle music comes in]

**Lacy:** So you, you had a thing for trucks...

**Jared:** Forever...

**Paul:** [Harmonica joins in with a trill] Now, Jared wasn't always an owner-operator

**Jared:** I've been doing this on my own now for eight years. Before I worked for Conway freight and I hauled fuel for Bosselmans.

**Paul:** [To Jared] Oh really. So you had all the benefits you had a good salary dependable work... [Music continues, now with percussion]

**Jared:** 401K, all that jazz, but I was miserable.

**Paul:** You were miserable.

**Jared:** Yep.

**Paul:** [As narrator] He had a good ten years of living the trucking straight life, working for a by-the-book company, kind of like Grand Island Express. Back in those days he even wore a

uniform. [Harmonica comes back in with keys playing a melody] One day though, he just had enough of being a working stiff. He cashed it all in, left the straight life, and bought his own truck.

**Paul:** Check that out...

**Lacy:** That is a good-looking truck...

**Paul:** [As narrator] Today he hauls in this beautiful red Peterbilt with big white stripes across the cab..

**Jared:** [Jared describes truck ]...then the door jams are all polished out.

**Paul:** Now are you subject to e-logs?

**Jared:** Not no more, no. Not pulling livestock, no

**Paul:** I didn't think so...

**Paul:** [As narrator] Since he's hauling live cattle, Jared doesn't have to use an electronic logging device, like the rest of us.

**Jared:** Well you're babysitting 90 cattle. You gotta do what it takes to get 'em back and make sure they're alive when they get there, in good shape.

**Paul:** [As narrator] For a guy like Jared, whose freight lives and breathes, the herd has to come first— it comes before his own family and comfort.

**Paul:** So you were hauling other stuff?

**Jared:** Yeah, we were doing flatbedding, then e-logs came into effect and everyone was like, well, I don't want to do this no more.

**Paul:** [As narrator] The bull haulers are like symbols of independence in the trucking world— especially now that most other truckers are required to run e-logs.

**Jared:** I guess if my name's on the truck, I'm not gonna run one. Yeah we've done some pretty wild stuff, hauling Holsteins out of Ohio to California. You're ready to get out of the truck when you get there. [Paul laughs]

**Paul:** [As narrator] Okay, I admit it. I kind of envy Jared: free of the e-log ankle bracelet, high stepping in a tricked-out Pete. But there's another side to this bull hauler's life -- that beautiful red Peterbilt doesn't just pay for itself.

**Jared:** Yep it's tough. You know my kids they both play baseball and a little girl. But I gotta go, I gotta go. That's the hardest part. I miss my kids. You're out on the road. You're doing whatever you can to do the job. And then you get home and you're just a waste of space almost and then everybody's pissed I'm snoring. [Laughs] It's hard all right. It's not all it's cracked up to be.

**Lacy:** So why do you keep doing it?

**Jared:** I don't know. Same reason people keep driving trucks. Gets in your blood. You hate it when you're doing it. You miss it when you don't. [Slow, contemplative acoustic guitar melody begins] I mean, who really wants to work this hard? it's crazy.

**Paul:** [As narrator] Somehow, talking to Jared reminds me a bit of myself— back when I bought that brand-new Western Star on July 4th 1997. I told myself it was my own independence day. When it was all said and done though, I didn't drive that truck, that truck drove me. \$1,741 dollars a month— that was my truck payment. But boy could that canary yellow beauty run. [*Distant sound of truck driving down highway*] Those were my hard-trucking years— paying the cost of being the boss, doing whatever it took to support my family. I want you to picture a shiny new truck that cost me \$87,000, and it's parked in front of an itty-bitty run-down \$33,000 farmhouse. [*Music and sound of truck driving fades out*] But you had to look fast; 'cause you only saw me there three or four days a month.

[Slow, contemplative acoustic guitar melody begins]

**Lacy:** Are you ever going to stop being a trucker?

**Jared:** Well, as of now, no. Keep pounding down the road.

**Lacy:** How many miles have you done?

**Jared:** Oh around 2 mil.

**Paul:** How old are you?

**Jared:** Thirty-seven.

**Paul:** That's a pretty good start.

**Jared:** Scares me a little bit honestly though. 'Cause it's not if it's when, that big one's going to come and hope to God it doesn't come.

**Paul:** [As narrator] He's talking about getting in a wreck— the “big one.”

**Jared:** I don't know. Every time you leave home, you just hope. [Paul affirms] Hug your loved ones. It's the real deal. There's no joke. This jobs a serious job, you know.

[Slow, contemplative acoustic guitar melody continues]

**Paul:** [As narrator] You know, maybe everyone has this ambivalence about their jobs. I mean I would think that a guy like Jared wouldn't have all these mixed feelings about being a cattle hauler. He's got one of the coolest trucks on the road, and yet he feels, maybe it's an addiction. Maybe it's just something you can't stop doing and you don't know why. [Acoustic guitar fades out and trilling harmonica comes in with strong down-beat percussion]

Like I said at the top, truckers come from all kinds of backgrounds and do this work for all kinds of reasons. For Jared, it meant meeting the expectations of a family tradition. For me, it was a disregard of all my family's expectations. For Kenyette, though, it was a carefully thought-out career transition, a second act if you will. I don't know what makes people wanna drive trucks, [Theme song begins] and I've driven one now since 1979. But there is something here about *freedom*, that I can't quite explain. [Theme continues]

So in our next episode, we're going into the history of this idea: why do some truckers drive for companies with 401ks, while some are out on their own? Why has popular culture always seemed to celebrate truckers as renegades and cowboys? We're talking with author Finn Murphy about how this notion of the "outlaw trucker" got started— what he calls the "Myth of the Last Cowboy."

**Finn Murphy:** [00:30:52] I'm completely ambivalent about the myth. I mean I can excoriate it on the one hand but then I'm also bound up with it too

**Paul:** [As narrator]: But before we go, Lacy and I have to see off a friend.

[Ambient outdoor sounds, voices chattering]

**Lacy:** Do you mind just tell me one more time, where are you going today? [Truck door shuts]

**Kenyette:** [Truck motor running in background] I am going to deliver a load of meat to North Baltimore Ohio.

**Lacy:** How many miles away is that?

**Kenyette:** That's about eight hundred fifty miles. It technically delivers at 5:30 a.m. on Monday. But it's a drop-and-hook, so whenever I get there any time before then I can drop it off.

**Lacy:** Drive safe— I hope.

**Kenyette:** Yes, I will. The angels are with me. And I expect to get there safely. All right. All right well the final goodbye. [Starts singing] *I'm so glad we had this time together.* [Paul laughs] *I'm so glad we had this friendly smile...* [Laughs] I've always got a song...

**Paul:** I know this is redundant, but I'm going to hug you a third time.

**Kenyette:** Absolutely, yeah, absolutely.

**Paul:** Great to meet you.

**Kenyette:** What a blessing to meet both of you. You're such inspiration whether you believe it or not. Alright.

**Lacy:** You be safe out there.

**Paul:** Take care now.

**Kenyette:** See ya, bye. [Truck door shuts and truck drives off]

["Thirty Weight Coffee" by and performed by Paul Marhoefer begins]

**Paul:** [As narrator] Thanks to everyone who entrusted us with their stories. We'll catch you next time, over the road. ["Thirty Weight Coffee" continues, Paul's vocals enter]

Our Over the Road pit crew includes the nice young man who drags me kicking and screaming into excellence: Producer and Sound Designer Ian Coss. And Contributing Producer Lacy Roberts at Transmitter Media. Our editor from Overdrive Magazine is Todd Dills. Our Digital Producer is Erin Wade, our Project Manager is Audrey Mardavich, and our Executive Producer for Radiotopia is Julie Shapiro. I'm "Long Haul" Paul.

All the music on the show is by Ian Coss and myself, featuring performances by Travis "The Snakeman" Wammack, Terry "Two Socks" Richardson, The Late Great Roger Clark, Jan Gullet, Jim Whitehead, and Mr. Andrew Marshall. Additional engineering by Donnie Gullet down in Muscle Shoals, Alabama.

Special thanks this week to Real Women in Trucking, specifically Desiree Wood, who introduced us to Kenyette. Thanks also to the drivers you heard at the top of the show: Captain Tom Kyrk, Sandra Goche, Debbie Desiderato, Tommy and Linda Bryant, Carlos Rodriguez and my main man Harun— who was kind enough to let me interview him outside a warehouse in Detroit.

Over the Road is a collaboration between Overdrive Magazine and PRX's Radiotopia— a collection of the best independent podcasts around. I've turned a lot of overnight reefer loads listening to shows like The Allusionist and Criminal. Seriously, find out more about the whole network at [radiotopia.fm](http://radiotopia.fm).

Look for Overdrive Magazine at [overdriveonline.com](http://overdriveonline.com), where you can read Todd's Channel 19 blog, hear the Overdrive Radio podcast, and explore news, business and lifestyle reporting about trucking.

You can find Over the Road online at [overtheroad.fm](http://overtheroad.fm). Be sure to follow us on all those usual platforms too– Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @overtheroadpod. You can see some of my videos on YouTube by looking for “Long Haul Paul Music.”

Over the Road is made possible by the folks I've worked for, for a really long time, Moeller Trucking: now celebrating over 30 years of safe and reliable transportation for the food industry. For more information, check out [moellertrucking.com](http://moellertrucking.com).

Before we go– we wanna hear *your* questions about trucks, truckers, and trucking– whatever you've always wanted to ask. Leave us a message at 765-245-4844. And we'll see what we can do. That's 765-245-4844.

Thanks for listening, hanging in 'til the end of the run. We'll be back soon with more stories from Over the Road.

["Thirty Weight Coffee" continues and fades out at finish]

**[00:41:00] END OF EPISODE.**