

Tuesday 19 June 2001

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Six days on the road

Gary Dimmock joins a Tennessee trucker on a gruelling 8,000-km cross-continent round trip and his fight against fatigue and the flu.

Gary Dimmock
The Ottawa Citizen

Just south of the border, on the Dixie Highway in Michigan, Mike Damewood is fighting to stay awake.

His mind is still fuzzy from all the whisky he drank on the weekend. A truckstop waitress brings him another pot of coffee. He regrets sleeping only three hours in the bunk of his Peterbilt, but he's running out of time.

This trucker runs hard

In the past eight years, he's run more than two million miles. He runs so hard sometimes he won't even stop to urinate. Instead, he'll drain his bladder in an empty water jug without missing a beat.

He runs the hardest in the summer. "In the summer," he says, "if my bowels aren't moving, I'm moving."

Monday 25 June 2001

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How Irving fuelled highway fatigue

Gary Dimmock and Zev Singer
The Ottawa Citizen

Irving Oil's truckers were tired.

Hundreds of times, the company broke laws designed to keep tired truckers off the roads. In some cases, the men at the wheel of its delivery trucks exceeded weekly driving-time limits by 20 hours, with some working 80 hours each week.

The company had enough money to hire and train more truckers, but didn't. Instead, its drivers worked under pressure from supervisors to make as many deliveries in the shortest time possible.



Rebecca Stevenson, The Ottawa Citizen / A jug containing urine lies discarded on an Irving gas station parking lot. Some truckers, in their push to make time, don't even bother to stop for washroom breaks.