

# At a Glanz...

## Driving Across America

### Part 4 and 5



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As I drove through I-15 in Utah, I was pumped, ready to hit Vegas.

**Even though I was basically driving for 24 out of the last 27 hours, I wasn't all that tired, as I drove on one of the many mountains in Utah.**

But once 12 p.m. hit, something happened. I hit a wall. I was very tired and decided to stop and grab lunch. Lunch didn't help and it became abundantly clear I needed to sleep. I couldn't take another nap in my car because like I said in previous columns, I couldn't even move my seat back an inch since all my earthly possessions were in my car.

So I begrudgingly looked for a hotel. But I couldn't find one. I was frustrated, cranky and above everything else exhausted. But after searching for a hotel for half an hour, I decided to hit the road and try to make it to Vegas. I drove for another hour but couldn't stay awake. So I decided to try and find a hotel again.

Now people in Utah like to be called Utahns. Perhaps it stands for Us Tourists Arrive, Hotels Not Seen. Seriously, Waldo should hide in a hotel in Utah because dude would never be found.

I called my roommate-to-be Anthony Fiorino screaming like a madman, complaining about the lack of hotels in Utah. Anthony tried pumping me up by playing the Rocky theme song, but it fell on deaf ears. I eventually pulled over and had the most uncomfortable nap in my life as I tried to sleep for an hour sitting up.

I awoke, non-refreshed and grumpier than ever. This was not the victory lap I had

hoped for. I had basically been driving from Des Moines, Iowa for almost 36 hours with very, very little sleep. And it was getting worse. It started to rain with streaks of lightning. I hate lightning!!! I pulled into a gas station and asked the girl behind the counter if the oncoming mountains were steep. She assured me they were not.

So if you ever see this gas station counter girl, I have a warning for you. She lies! She lies!!! Now, let me set the scene for you. It's pouring rain. Pouring. I'm on a mountain. The lightning is basically over/under/next to me. I'm exhausted. And despite what the Evil Gas Station Counter Girl says, it's the steepest mountain known to man. Don't bother Googling, it's true.

But there was hope. A sign signified the leaving of Utah and the entering of Arizona. I was praying the steepness of this mountain would end with Utah, but then the next sign proved there is a God, and he doesn't like me. "Next 11 miles are going to be steep." Again, dont Google, that's what the sign said.

I, my friends, was screwed! This wasn't going to be your typical 11-mile drive. No, this was more like a heavyweight fight. In one corner, The Mountain, God, Mother Nature, and an 18-Wheeler. In the other corner....me. Ding Ding!!! (End of Part 4)

This was a two-lane mountain. I was in the right lane, driving literally 30 miles per hour in the pouring rain. Cars were driving 80 mph past me. To make matters worse, the darkness of night was beginning to settle in. Every second of these 11 miles were super tense. The lightning, rain, and speed of all these cars passing me were freaking me out! I was going slower and slower and was now driving around 20 mph at this point. Finally, an 18-Wheeler sped past me and washed my whole windshield with water. I couldn't see a thing.

I all of a sudden started hyperventilating because I was on this incredibly steep road and couldn't see. I had never hyperventilated before so I didn't know what was happening.

Luckily, I was able to see out of the corner of my eye a place to pull over. I made a sharp turn and parked. I was still hyperventilating but I was at least parked. I just stayed there for five minutes and tried calming myself down. I finally decided Vegas is overrated, and I was going to live here the rest of my life, on this mountain.

Truthfully, I didn't know what to do. I knew I couldn't drive anymore. I was done. I would have died. The Mountain had won. I tried to call a couple of friends but I had no reception on The Mountain. The Mountain was smart. So I called 911 and was surprised when Verizon was able to put the call through.

An officer answered the phone and I told him I was done. I told him I couldn't make it out of this mountain. He asked me if there was a little green marker on the side of the road. There was, it read 46. He said if I drive 20 mph I will be in Nevada on a flat road in two minutes. I said, "Are you suuuuuure?????"

He said he knew exactly where I was and he was positive. He told me to relax, wait till there were no cars behind me and go.

I took a deep breath, went back on the road and was literally out of the Mountain in 10 seconds. 10 seconds!!! As my great friend, Chumbawamba said, "I get knocked down, but I get up again, you're never going to keep me down." Sorry The Mountain, God, Mother Nature and 18-Wheeler...I beat you! It wasn't easy, you were winning for awhile, but in the end, Richie G. from Lynbrook pulled through.

The last hour wasn't exactly the easiest drive of my life either, but I finally arrived in Vegas. I got out of my car, kicked the tire, kissed the ground, and hugged my roommate. It was an amazing adventure and I would love to do it again, though I never will.

Up next, another great adventure, my time in Vegas, and how I became the Jew that Ruined Easter!