

Things that could only happen to Peck.

Last Crash

In my marketing position at Lanier and Associates I was often in an airport waiting for a plane. Once I was killing time at the bookstore, reading a Dirt Bike Magazine article about a Can-Am 800 four-wheeler, top speed 70 mph. I raced dirt bikes in my younger days, and I knew that I would love to ride this Can-Am!

The next weekend I was at Sorrell's 680-acre country estate, where we spent a lot of time hunting and fishing. We were walking out to the barn and Sorrell was telling me that his son's friend left a very fast four-wheeler in the barn for anyone to ride. Sorrell said, "I have the keys, but nobody is going to ride this dangerous thing!" When we got to the barn there it was, a Can-Am 800!

I was surprised when Sorrell said, "Do you want to take a ride?" I said, "I'll take a little spin." I went really slow until I got out of sight, then I gassed it, in biker terms, WFO (wide f**king open). The Can-Am was everything I expected and more. It was very fast, and I blasted around the trails for 5-years until I came out to Sorrell's one day and the Can-Am was gone. I learned later that the owner traded it for a jet ski. "No problem," I thought, because I had bought another one just like it that I found on the internet.

Several years later, after I was diagnosed with ALS, I was progressively losing my strength, but I was committed to not stop doing anything I loved until I absolutely had to. Yet, there were issues: I was still blasting around the trails in the country, but it took two people to get me off the wheelchair and mounted on the Can-Am.

One day while riding the Can-Am to my deer hunting spot, two friends were following in a four-wheeler so they could help me get into my deer stand. I decided to show off my riding skills by sliding around a turn into a trail that had a pine forest on both sides. The ground was covered with pine needles, so it was like riding on marbles. This made me slide more than planned, so I was sideways on the trail and was going to hit the pine forest hard! "This is not good," I said to myself, "it's gonna hurt."

There is a dirtbike riders' motto, "When in doubt Gas It!" I tried to power out of the slide and I just hit the trees going faster. I did a complete flip over the handlebars and landed on my back in the only open space in the pine forest. I still had my rifle over my shoulder, but luckily it landed by my side. All I could think of during my flip in the air was, "I'm going to break my neck again!"

I laid on the pine needles trying to determine if I was hurt anywhere. The two guys that were behind me, Matt and Dave, came running over in a panic. I heard Dave yell, "Call 911, call an ambulance! I haven't had a cigarette in five years, and I need one right now!"

They stood me up and I only had a bump on my head that was swelling some. I must have hit a tree. The Can-Am hit the trees so hard that the axle and frame were broken. The repair was \$2200, a cheap penalty considering how lucky I was not to break my body.

When I got home, I didn't tell LeeAnn what happened because she would worry when I went to the country. I did tell her about it three months later after I sold the Can-Am. I was sad that my disease prevented me from future hot-dogging on the Can-Am but reflected that it is just another part of ALS aka, 'A Lota Shit.'

Some of my favorite memories are going as fast as possible in the woods. Now my wheelchair is my fast ride, top speed 5 mph.

