

I didn't really want to be running the tractor that day. I wanted to be on the harvester, riding with my Dad. I did what I was told, well enough, at least, that I had to pull the tractor up next to the pickup and refuel out of the seventy-gallon tank in the back.

Our equipment was old, but it was in good shape. The tractor and pickup were both about twenty years old, having been made in the mid sixties. They actually worked well together – using the hand-operated transfer pump to fill the tractor wasn't a big deal.

It shouldn't have happened, but I got careless when I tried to back away from the pickup that afternoon. The Caterpillar tractor's transmission selector was, honestly, a bit confusing. If the selector bar was forward, the tractor was in reverse, and pulling the selector backward put the tractor in drive.

I remember a lot of things from that day – pulling the transmission lever backwards, opening up the throttle and pulling the clutch. The pickup lurched backward when the tractor hit it, but not when my Dad threw a dirt clod at it in frustration.

My Dad is long gone, but the old pickup is still here, in the garage, with a dent in it from that day.