48 Past simple or past continuous?

At the end of the film the bridge **collapsed while** the truck **was crossing** it.

1 Use

PAST SIMPLE	PAST CONTINUOUS
to describe one or more finished actions in the past: *We arrived at the hotel at three o'clock and went to our room.* *I called you about four times yesterday afternoon.*	to describe an unfinished action at and around a time in the past: *When we arrived at the hotel, the maid was cleaning our room.* (The cleaning was not finished when we arrived.) *I couldn't answer the phone because I was speaking to some clients.*
when one action happened after another: *When Isabel came, we watched a DVD.* (= Isabel came and then we watched a DVD.) 6.00 — 8.00 Isabel came — we watched a DVD →	to describe something you were doing at the time when another thing happened: *When Isabel came, we were watching a DVD.* (= We were watching a DVD at the time Isabel came.) 6.00 — 8.00 ← we were watching a DVD — Isabel came

2 *when* and *while*

We can use either *when* or *while* before the past continuous:
The bridge collapsed ***when/while*** *the truck* ***was crossing*** *it.*
The post came ***when/while*** *I* ***was having*** *my breakfast.*

⚠ We don't use *while* before the past simple, but we can use *when*:
✗ ~~*While the post came I was having my breakfast.*~~
✓ ***When*** *the post* ***came****, I was having my breakfast.*