

Filling that Hole in Your Dash

My first car was a toxic green Datsun B-210 with some very interesting upgrades. For example, a discarded pickle slice had hardened to the front fender making for a stylish emblem. Also a trendy trailer hitch spot-welded to the bumper enabled you to take full advantage of its 120lb towing capacity. Broken hinges on the driver's door kept me hopping along, especially since the door always plunked out onto my ankle! If that didn't send me dancing a jig, the shower of sparks that shot across my socks when I swung it open would.

The removable stereo unit was a big hit with the local thugs too. Just clip a few wires and you're upgraded to a nice storage hole in your dash. Other innovative designs included the coat hanger operated windshield wipers. Those always went over real big on a date. Overall the B-210 was quite a steal, though not everyone agreed. One guy stole it and brought it back! Boy that made me mad. But those are all stories for another day. Today's B-210 tale begins with one drive in particular.

I was on the interstate and had the pedal to the metal, enjoying the occasional honks and interesting finger configurations people used to rush me along, when what through my cracked windshield should arise; a sudden stirring in the western skies. The concoction of clouds grew and grew, until they were swirling into a devilish brew; dangerously dark, and as quick to unsettle, as a mess of ripe prunes stewing in a black kettle. But let's not get poetic. In short, a menacing squall ran down the embankment and lifted my car until I almost had to add "Involuntary Lane Changes" to my repertoire of annoying driving habits.

Alertly I tossed my crossword puzzle aside and came up off my gangster lean. With a pair of channel locks I hastily rolled my window *down*. (Okay, that sounds odd, but getting wet was another unfortunate design flaw associated with the manual wipers solution.) Soon I found myself facing right into the eye of the beast. I should've just pulled over. However, it's never been my policy to back off, so I just kept pumping that coat hanger until out of nowhere- "BLAM". My heart almost jumped out of my chest and took off swimming across the floorboard! All I could see was a putrid green haze. "What in the world," I cried. Then I realized. My hood had blown back against the windshield.

I couldn't see a thing, so I alertly slammed on my brakes in the rush hour traffic and wiggled my way through the maze of blaring horns until I found the emergency lane. There I unhinging my door and squished out into the stinging rain to examine the situation. The hood was creased and wrapped back over the top of the car. Thankfully, the Datsun engineers had planned ahead for just such an event. The lightweight hood design made it possible for just about anyone to bend it right back into shape.

Never being one to back off, I experienced two more BLAMS before making it home. It's not like I didn't learn a lesson though. I wisely noticed there were little vents in the hood you can see through if you slide back down into your gangster lean during an episode.

I'm embarrassed to say I kept that old car several more years, never once thinking of tying the hood down. Of course I stayed jumpier than a Rat Terrier traipsing through a mine field every time I topped 50mph. Nevertheless, I just went right on pumping that coat hanger from one storm to the next.

I went through a lot of different cars after that, but deep down I was always feeling the depth of that hole in my dash. Secretly I began to wish I could just trade my whole life in for a newer model.

"Man," I thought, "If I could just explain to those Datsun engineers what I'm looking for."

Then one day I heard about Jesus. Word on the street was He was offering quite a deal. (*God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV*) It sounded fishy to me. "Let me get this straight," I asked, "I give my raggedy old putrid green life to Jesus, and He gives me a brand new one?" The preacher man smiled, reached in his gloved box, and showed it to me right there in his driver's manual, the Bible.

But anyway- needless to say, I came up off my gangster lean for good. I gave my heart to Jesus. With the new deal there'd be no more staring into the eyes of the beast. I had traded my B-210 in for a golden chariot with an eternal warranty! Why don't you go ahead and tie your salvation down? How many "BLAMS" do you reckon your heart can stand before you meet eternity head on?

-Guy Sheffield 4-6-07