

## Not Perfect, Just Forgiven

Looking back, I'm sure glad I survived my ride with the killer pimp. You see, I was just a naïve little punk at the time, working my way through Jr. College, coughing up sixty bucks a month rent out of my Pell grant money to share a one room efficiency. I had nothing more than an old mattress and a few sets of clothes to my name. A local burglar checked us periodically to make sure of that. I had hopes of catching him one day, but until then, we made do. He always left our toothbrushes and the crusty old hot plate we heated our Ramon noodles on.

What really got me hot was when somebody went and stole my 1977 Datsun B-210 without bringing it back. I didn't tolerate horse thieving, so I saddled my mom's yellow Buick Century and rode out to bring my trusty steed back home. Unfortunately, the first guy I trusted turned out to be the killer pimp. He was loitering out front of the corner store when I rode up.

"Yeah, I know who got your car man," he spoke up, "But dem some mean dudes. You bed not go alone."

"Where they at," I fumed.

He glanced around. "I'll take you der man," he whispered, "but you gon' need some help."

"Well, I guess you're right," I agreed. It did seem reasonable to have a partner in case of a ruckus, and I figured him to be a good one, standing at least 6'7", not counting his 6" fro and 4" stacks.

He pointed me down some back streets till we came up on a nice looking young lady on the corner.

"Pull over," he said, "I'm gon ask him where yo car be's at."

"Him?" I questioned.

He strutted off like George Jefferson. Some money changed hands, and there was a small scuffle. My partner let loose with a few backhands, and soon came back unwading some bills. He slid them into his money clip.

"What?" he challenged, "She said yo car's two blocks down."

Well, it weren't true. We ended up in neighborhoods that afternoon I figured I'd never see this side of hell, and it was always the same old routine, "She said yo car's two blocks down."

Finally it dawned on me, "I'm being suckered for a ride." I gritted my teeth and confronted him, "You don't really know where my car is do you?"

At that point the killer pimp pulled a gun out of his sock. Needless to say, we went on and finished his rounds. He collected all his money, and when he'd proved his pimp hand was still strong, he turned to me, "Give me yo wallet."

"Some partner you turned out to be," I mumbled. It contained my life savings, but I handed it over and he hopped out with my last five dollars. I shrugged and headed off to pick up my date for the evening. I'm not sure I even mentioned the incident to her, other than advising her she'd be paying again. It's amazing what you'll begin to think is common place after you've lived a while out on one of those mean city streets named after some dead President.

But anyway- Twenty years have come and gone since that day. I now live in a nice neighborhood in a quiet little country town. I even have a fancy alarm system; though I'm not sure why. I'm hardly ever mixed up in gun play anymore, and I was just thinking how great things have become, especially since I've asked Jesus to come into my heart.

Many would probably say I've come a good ways since my days on the horse thieving posse. However, in reality, I think God might say, "Hey man, yo car ain't but two blocks down."

You see, my little journey towards righteousness wouldn't lift me to the first rung on the ladder to heaven. Come on- How could I expect to even come close to earning God's gift of eternal life, or attain to His standards of holiness? Shucks, on the righteousness gauge, the killer pimp and I probably aren't that far apart. Neither of us could muster enough holiness to fill the tank on my B-210!

Christians aren't perfect people. They are just forgiven people. Our only hope is in God's grace. It's ridiculous to think our good works could make us acceptable before a holy God. See **Ephesians 2:8-9**. It is only by our faith in the redemptive work of His son Jesus that we stand. (*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: Romans 5:1*) PERIOD!!!

Don't let that killer pimp sucker you for a ride. If you're being told being a good person is going to get you into heaven, I strongly suggest you try a new posse, and quick. You don't want to stand before a holy God based on your own righteousness. I don't care who you are. If you think it's hard out here for a pimp now, how do you think it's going to be on judgment day? God's grace and forgiveness is being offered to you right now, but it's only through Jesus. I suggest you throw your saddle over on that deal.

-Guy Sheffield 5-16-06