

Bruce Springsteen, Johnny 99

Well they closed down the auto plant in Mahwah late that month
Ralph went out lookin' for a job but he couldn't find none
He came home too drunk from mixin' Tanqueray and wine
He got a gun shot a night clerk now they call him Johnny 99
Down in the part of town where when you hit a red light you don't stop
Johnny's wavin' his gun around and threatenin' to blow his top
When an off-duty cop snuck up on him from behind
Out in front of the Club Tip Top they slapped the cuffs on Johnny 99

Well the city supplied a public defender but the judge was Mean John Brown
He came into the courtroom and stared young Johnny down
Well the evidence is clear gonna let the sentence son fit the crime
Prison for 98 and a year and we'll call it even Johnny 99

A fist fight broke out in the courtroom they had to drag Johnny's girl away
His mama stood up and shouted "Judge don't take my boy this way";
Well son you got a statement you'd like to make
Before the bailiff comes to forever take you away

Now judge I had debts no honest man could pay
The bank was holdin' my mortgage and they were gonna take my house away
Now I ain't sayin' that makes me an innocent man
But it was more `n all this that put that gun in my hand

Well your honor I do believe I'd be better off dead
So if you can take a man's life for the thoughts that's in his head
Then sit back in that chair and think it over judge one more time
And let `em shave off my hair and put me on that killin' line