One Piece at a Time

**Johnny Cash**

***https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWHniL8MyMM***

**Teacher’s Notes**

**Focus:** Listening, vocabulary, writing

**Level:** Upper-Intermediate, Advanced

**Length:** 90 minutes (including writing follow-up)

**Stage 1: Warmer**

Tell students that they are going to listen to a song that tells a story about someone who stole something in a very unusual way.

Ask students to work in pairs to brainstorm 4-5 unusual ways to steal something.

Ask each pair to tell the class their most unusual idea. The whole class then votes on which idea is the strangest or funniest.

**Stage 2: Vocabulary**

Split the class into two groups. Group A is responsible for *car parts*, while Group B is responsible for *tools*.

Within each group, students work in pairs or threes. Give them 15 minutes to use dictionaries to brainstorm, research, and record at least 10 words in their category.

Rearrange groups so that students are working in A-B pairs. They then teach each other their words (suggest that they use drawings, or images on their phones)

Class feedback: ask for a few examples of words that were learnt.

Elicit or teach the following words if they have not already been mentioned:

*gears; gear box/transmission; boot/trunk; bonnet/hood; headlights; drill; nuts and bolts*

Draw attention to the differences between American and British English.

**Stage 3: Listening for Detail**

Give out the handout. Students listen to the song and fill in the gaps. They may want to listen twice. Check answers in pairs and as a class.

*Answers: 1) forty-nine; 2) wheels; 3) beauties; 4) plan; 5) lunchbox; 6) retired; 7) hundred; 8) cost; 9) style; 10) only; 11) help; 12) considered; 13) several; 14) engine; 15) little; 16) stuff; 17) all right; 18) definitely; 19) motor; 20) holes; 21) drilled; 22) song; 23) headlights; 24) switch; 25) funny; 26) noticed; 27) doubts; 28) honey; 29) headed; 30) laughing; 31) court; 32) sixty; 33) factory; 34) cheaper*

**Stage 4: Understanding the Meaning**

Put the following questions on the board and ask students to discuss them:

1. Where did the guy steal his car from?
2. How did he steal it?
3. What problems did he encounter?
4. How successful was it?
5. Did he get caught?

*Answers: 1. from the GM factory in Detroit. 2. He took it home piece by piece when he left work each day, either in his lunchbox or his friend’s mobile home. Then he put them together to make a whole car. 3. Many of the parts didn’t fit, especially because they were from cars of slightly different models from different years. 4. It worked well enough to drive through town, but everybody laughed at it, presumably because it looked so strange. 5. Yes – at the end of the song he mentions the staff at the courthouse typing up the case.*

**Stage 5: Writing**

Write a news article (or a script for a radio news item) about the day this car was driven through town.

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***Listen to the song and fill in the gaps.***

Well, I left Kentucky back in 1)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 And went to Detroit working on the assembly line.

 The first year, they had me putting 2) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on Cadillacs

Every day I'd watch them 3)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ roll by

 And sometimes I'd hang my head and cry

 'Cause I always wanted me one that was long and black.

One day I devised myself a 4) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 That should be the envy of most any man:

 I'd sneak it out of there in a 5)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in my hand.

 Now getting caught meant getting fired,

 But I figured I'd have it all by the time I 6)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

 I'd have me a car worth at least a 7)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ grand.

***Chorus:***

*I'd get it one piece at a time,*

 *And it wouldn't 8) \_\_\_\_\_\_ me a dime,*

 *You'll know it's me when I come through your town.*

 *I'm gonna ride around in 9)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ,*

 *I'm gonna drive everybody wild,*

 *'Cause I'll have the 10)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ one there is around.*

So the very next day when I punched in,

 With my big lunchbox and with 11) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from my friend,

 I left that day with a lunch box full of gears.

 I've never 12)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ myself a thief,

 But GM wouldn't miss just one little piece,

 Especially if I strung it out over 13)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ years.

The first day I got me a fuel pump,

 And the next day I got me an 14) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and a trunk,

 Then I got me a transmission and all the chrome.

 The 15)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ things I could get in my big lunchbox,

 Like nuts, and bolts, and all four shocks,

 But the big 16) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ we snuck out in my buddy’s mobile home.

Now, up to now my plan went 17) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 'Til we tried to put it all together one night

 And that's when we noticed that something was 18)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ wrong.

The transmission was a fifty-three

 And the 19)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ turned out to be a seventy-three

 And when we tried to put in the bolts all the 20)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ were gone.

So we 21)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ it out so that it would fit,

 And with a little bit of help from an adapter kit,

 We had that engine running just like a 22)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 Now the 23)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ , there was another sight:

 We had two on the left and one on the right,

 But when we pulled out the 24)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ all three of them come on.

The back end looked kind of 25) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ too,

 But we put it together, and when we got through

 Well, that's when we 26)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that we only had one tail-fin.

 About that time my wife walked out,

 And I could see in her eyes that she had her 27)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ,

 But she opened the door and said "28)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ , take me for a spin."

So we drove up town just to get the tax,

 And I 29)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ her right on down main drag,

 I could hear everybody 30)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for blocks around

 But up there at the 31)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ house they didn't laugh,

 'Cause to type it up it took the whole staff,

 And when they got through the title weighed 32)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ pounds.

***Chorus***

Oh, yeah, RED RYDER

This is the COTTON MOUTH

In the PSYCHO-BILLY CADILLAC. Come on!

Huh, this is the COTTON MOUTH

And negatory on the cost of this machine there, RED RYDER

You might say I went right up to the 33)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

And picked it up, it's 34)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that way.

Ah, what model is it?

Well, it's a '49, '50, '51, '52, '53, '54, '55, '56, '57, '58 '59 automobile

It's a '60, '61, '62, '63, '64, '65, '66, '67, '68, '69, '70 automobile.