

Johnny 99

Los Lobos

Well, they closed down the auto plant in Mahwah late last night
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 you hit a red light, you don't stop
Johnny is 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 poor Johnny down
"Well, the evidence is clear, gonna let the sentence fit the crime
Ninety-eight and a year, we'll call it even, Johnny 99"

Fistfight 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 and forever take you away?"

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

"Well, your honor, I do believe I'd be better off dead
And if you can take a man's life for the thoughts that's in his head
Then won't you sit back in that chair and think it over, judge,
one more time?
Let 'em shave off my hair and put me on the execution line"