

# The Devil You Know

Todd Snider

Helicopters over the house again  
We got the projects two or three blocks from here  
They pull the kids over for driving while African  
And the ones with the warrants always run in fear  
So, I sit here, waiting for the coast to clear  
Wishing once again I had a gun around here  
Turn on the news and what do I hear  
Some kid shot the bank up on Gallatin road  
Ran away from the cops while he was trying to reload  
He beat them up to Eastland street on feet  
Now, he's probably reloaded and running down my street  
Better turn the alarm on and lock myself in  
Helicopters over the house again  
Sometimes, you rise above it  
Sometimes, you sneak below  
Somewhere in between believing in Heaven  
And facing the Devil you know  
Poor kid probably never had a chance to give a f\*\*k  
Wouldn't know good luck from a debutant  
He's gotta find a way to be Steve McNair or young buck  
Or it's tough luck looking for a prison to haunt  
And you can f\*\*k getting any kind of job you want  
Unless you really want to work in a fast food restaurant  
And who wants to do that? Do you want to do that?  
I wouldn't trade that for my crooked hat  
Or my gang or my gun or my waist full of pagers  
For a job deep frying shit, for richer teen agers  
If that's where it's at and no one's gonna help  
How you gonna blame a man for helping himself?  
There's a war going on that the poor can't win  
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Black and white cops shining lights in the bushes  
Can't see how this kid is gonna get very far  
Unless he finds a way to make it back over to Barry street  
And he can't do that unless he steals a car  
Man, the way things are, they just don't seem right  
All the white people talking 'bout the hope and the light  
There ain't no hope in Sam Levy just guns and drugs  
We ain't building bridges, we're just training thugs  
Then I hear a terrifying kick at my back door  
And in comes this kid, I say, ?Hey I've seen this kid before?  
I see him all the time at that bar on woodland street  
Now, he's bleeding in my kitchen, tracking mud off his feet  
And he's looking at me like I'll either help him or die  
Until he sees in my eyes that I'm on his side  
I hand him my keys, I say, you better move fast  
There's a J in the ashtray and plenty of gas  
He throws me the cash and says I'll be back for this  
I say, yeah, well, don't be surprised if there's a little bit of it missing  
His gold teeth glistened with a big old grin  
He said we'll talk about that when I see you again  
He shook my hand, I shook his back  
I felt like I was about to have a heart attack

Until he finally drove away, I thought "Goddamn"  
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Facing the devil you know