

Bruce Springsteen

"Johnny 99"

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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 'm 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 poor 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 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 to forever take you away

Now judge I got debts no honest man could pay
The bank was holdin' my mortgage and they was takin'
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
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
And let 'em shave off my hair and put me on that
execution line

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