

The rube, snortin' it.

JOHNNI'S CAR was a poop-brown 1967 Plymouth Valiant, pure Michigan, made and rusted in Detroit. The Great Lakes were fresh, but when the snow fell, Michigan roads were salty as an ocean.

"What is this ride?" asked Codell. "Detroit Ferrari?" He laughed at his own joke.

Johnni returned the quip. "It's on us!" Johnni, his brother Jimmy and Codell were friends since they were kids, but they hadn't seen each other for a while. Johnni was a couple of years older than Jimmy and Codell.

They got in, Jimmy in back, Johnni in the driver's seat, and Codell on the front passenger side. There was a rusted out hole in the floor. "What the hell!" Codell laughed. "I can see the ground!"

"Put your feet on the side of it," said Johnni. "We get on the Lodge, crank the radio, and this hauls." He started the engine and revved it a few times.

"I like it," Codell said. "What you got to smoke?"

"Guess what, bro? We're not smoking!" Jimmy said.

"We got something better," said Johnni.

"Yeah?"

"Yeah. Nose candy."

"Coke? Cocaine?"

"Hell, yeah!"

"You into that?" asked Codell.

"It's good stuff, C. Know what I mean?"

"Never done it."

"Never done it? For real?"

"For real," Codell said. "Do tell."

Johnni unzipped a black pouch. He pulled out a small mirror, a tiny spoon, a razor blade, a short straw and a baggie of white powder. "You're gonna dig this, C. You're gonna feel so, so good."

Johnni put the mirror between them and spooned powder onto it. With the razor blade he formed three short, precise parallel lines of cocaine.

"What do I do?"

"Snort a line," said Jimmy. "You don't know?!"

"Like this." Johnni leaned down close to the mirror, pinched one nostril with a finger, placed one end of the straw at the base of a line of coke and the other end at his open nostril. He quickly inhaled through his nose. Half the line of cocaine disappeared up the straw.

"Easy," Johnni said, his voice an octave or two higher. He handed the straw to Codell. "From me to you," he said. "My gift, old friend. This shit is expensive."

Codell leaned his head over the mirror. He pinched one nostril. He positioned one end of the straw at his open nostril and the other end above one a line of cocaine.

"Snort it!" said Jimmy.

"Whew, I'm blowin' up," said Johnni. "I'm blowin' up!"

Codell snorted OUT of his nostril. All of the powder on the mirror exploded into the air and drifted down, like the snow it was, on the front seat and the floor.

"Oh man," Jimmy said.

"Oh, man," Johnni said.

"You told me to 'snort it,' bro."

"You just blew two and half lines, Codell. Two and a half lines."

"Sorry, Johnni. You said 'snort it'."

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