



By King Wekenmann

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## Collision with the Chief's Vehicle



I have been on several police pursuits during my law enforcement career, but here is one of the more serious and yet funny stories to tell. It began during an evening shift which started at 3:00 pm. I was training a new rookie. We had a vehicle shortage that day with two marked squad cars in the mechanical shop and neither would be available for duty that night.

The Chief (Glynn Mayo) gave me his take-home car and handed me his keys while making the almighty errant statement: "Do NOT wreck my car!" I dropped the Chief at his house and came back to the station to pick up the rookie. I was driving through the various areas on the east side of Town showing him what parcels of land belonged to Tequesta's jurisdiction, what belonged to Jupiter and what areas were under Palm Beach County Sheriffs jurisdiction.

It was about 10:30 pm and we were patrolling northbound on the US#1 area across from the PDQ (currently Brown's Furniture Store) convenience store which had been the victim of past armed robberies. In the alley way, I observed a dark colored Camaro parked with its lights off, but exhaust could be seen coming out of the exhaust system in the rear clearly indicating that the car was running. It was unusual as it was parked in the dark shadowy side alley area, facing west toward Old Dixie Hwy which is accessible through the back alley behind the store. As I was pointing the suspicious vehicle out to the rookie, we then observed a thin build w/m, long hair, with a brown jacket on and carrying a package, exit the store. The w/m spotted the unmarked car, and ran to the unknown vehicle parked in the alleyway. We observed the suspect dive through an



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open window of the passenger side of the vehicle and the vehicle was then leaving at a high rate of acceleration. I did a quick U-turn at a break and then went after the suspect vehicle which was now fleeing North on Old Dixie Highway.

We turned on the blue lights and siren and began our pursuit northbound after the vehicle. As we were entering Tequesta's jurisdiction on Old Dixie Hwy at Bridge Rd, an elderly w/m with an elderly w/f passenger made a left hand turn in front of me, ending the pursuit. As the vehicles began to collide, I steered the cruiser into a sideways skid to avoid a T bone collision. I am certain that if we were to strike the vehicle in a T-bone fashion, the elderly w/f would have been seriously injured. After the collision, I looked for the suspect vehicle and observed him running the red light at Tequesta Drive and Old Dixie Highway.

Unfortunately, the Chiefs car was now out of commission due to the collision (Nuts! The Chiefs Car!). Tequesta Police Department came to work the accident and the elderly driver was charged with failure to yield the right of way to an approaching vehicle.

All injuries were very minor and everyone was treated and released. Protocol dictated that a supervisor be called to the scene of accident and the Chief responded as the on call supervisor for the night. When he got there you could tell that he was not happy about the condition that his vehicle was presently in, which previously was in great shape. The only thing I could think to say to him at this point was: "Here's your keys back Chief." For some reason that hit his funny bone and he had a good laugh over that. (Thank God this accident was not my fault!).

We checked with the PDQ convenience store and gratefully discovered that they were not robbed; that it was a possibility that it was some kids buying beer using a fake ID. (I would say that their demeanor was kind of drastic to be under age and just buy beer.)

A couple days later, dispatch called me in to headquarters as the chief needed a ride home. (Because his car was now in the shop) The chief came out of the office, put his finger up for me to wait a minute and disappeared back inside the office. About 5 minutes later, Chief Mayo came back out wearing a riot helmet, got in the car and said: "Okay, you can take me home now!" He had me laughing so hard, I could hardly see to drive him home. He had a great sense of humor!

Well the story is not over yet. The car was repaired and the chief was again driving himself back and forth. When the time came for new vehicles, the chief got a new one, and I got his old car which now came outfitted with blue lights and siren as my take home vehicle. I can still hear the Chief saying: "Hey King, here's your keys!"