

Eddie, The Collegiate Senior

Jimmy O'Brien's Flat Tire

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Again interrupting Eddie's and Bobby B's. workday at the service station is Jimmy O'Brien, who returns to the service station driving his chronically broken down AMC Gremlin. Seeing O'Brien driving up to a service bay, Eddie and Bobby B. figure that O'Brien has more than a fill up on his mind today.

Eddie tells Bobby B., "let's see who gets to help him this time. Rock-paper-scissors. On three. One. Two. Three." Eddie and Bobby B. have continued the tradition that Eddie and Angelo began years ago to decide who gets the pleasure of dealing with a customer who is a pain in the ass. Today, Eddie puts out a rock, and Bobby B. puts out scissors. Eddie smiles, and tells Bobby B., "good luck, bro. He's all yours." But, Bobby B. doesn't seem to care in the least. He has come to enjoy messing with Jimmy O'Brien as much as Eddie has.

Walking out to greet the customer, Bobby B. asks O'Brien, "what's your problem?" O'Brien replies, "I got a flat tire. Can you fix it for me?" Bobby B. examines all four tires, and tells O'Brien, "your left front tire is going flat. But, the good news is that it's only flat on the bottom." Showing a bit of anger, O'Brien tells Bobby B., "I know that! What are you talking about?" Bobby B. advises O'Brien, "just drive it a few feet, and the flat part will be at the top." Figuring that Bobby B. is messing with him, O'Brien exclaims, "what's the matter with you?" Bobby B. calmly replies, "well, you can always have Eddie take a look at it." Realizing that Bobby B. is messing with him, O'Brien

replies, “yeah. Get Eddie.” Bobby B. tells O’Brien, “let me get him for you.”

Bobby B. walks back into the service area, walks up to Eddie and tells him, “O’Brien has a flat tire.” Eddie tells Bobby B., “send him to the tire shop. We don’t have the time to deal with him today.” Bobby B. whispers to Eddie, “I told him that it’s only flat on the bottom.” Realizing there is free entertainment waiting outside, Eddie laughs, and tells Bobby B., “let’s go see what his problem is.”

Walking up to O’Brien, Eddie asks, “what’s your problem today?” O’Brien replies, “my tire is going flat.” Seeing the problem, just to annoy O’Brien, Eddie asks, “which one?” Pointing to the left front tire, O’Brien replies, “that one.” Eddie asks O’Brien, “did you put any air in it?” O’Brien replies, “yeah. It keeps leaking out.” Eddie replies, “that would usually be the first sign that something’s wrong.” Bobby B. points out to Eddie, “the other three are okay. Three out of four ain’t bad.” Eddie replies, “yeah. Especially since the left front tire is only flat on the bottom.”

As Eddie is filling O’Brien’s tire with air, Eddie whispers to Bobby B., “he’s got a nail in the shoulder. The tire can’t be repaired. It has to be replaced.” Bobby B. asks, whispering, “the shoulder? What’s that?” Eddie replies, “the shoulder is where the tread meets the sidewall. That part of the tire flexes like crazy, so it can’t be repaired.” Learning something new, Bobby B. whispers back, “got it.” A bit on the paranoid side, O’Brien thinks Eddie and Bobby B. are talking about him.

Once Eddie has finished filling O’Brien’s tire with air, Bobby B. announces to O’Brien, “there ya go! It’s as good as new. You’ll probably get about ten miles before it goes flat again. If you’re really lucky, it will go flat on the top next time.” Eddie turns around to conceal his laughter, knowing that he has trained Bobby B. well.

Seeing that he isn’t going to get anywhere and suspecting that he is being made fun of by Eddie and Bobby B., O’Brien angrily tells Eddie, “I’m just going to go

to the guy across town!" Eddie replies, "go ahead. I hope you make it." Your tire needs to be replaced. You may want to try the tire shop down the street." O'Brien exclaims, "I'm going to do that!" Eddie tells O'Brien, "good luck, junior." O'Brien drives away, but in the direction of the mall where the department store mechanics will be glad to take his money.

Later that day, Mr. O'Brien walks into the service station, yelling out, "can I get some service here?" Eddie walks into the office, and asks, "can you be helped?" Mr. O'Brien replies, slyly asking, "why wouldn't you fix Jimmy's tire for him?" Expecting a sarcastic response from Mr. O'Brien, Eddie replies, "because it can't be fixed." Mr. O'Brien replies, "sure it can! What do you think I am, stupid or something?" Eddie does not answer, but rather smiles, irritating Mr. O'Brien even more.

Mr. O'Brien again asks, "so, why didn't you fix Jimmy's tire?" Eddie explains, "I told you. The tire can't be fixed. It has a nail in the shoulder." Mr. O'Brien exclaims, "they fixed it over at the department store! Why couldn't you fix it?" Eddie replies, "because we don't do shoddy work here. If they repaired his tire at the department store, the repair will last about a week, if he's lucky." Mr. O'Brien sternly informs Eddie, "well, Jimmy's tire is just fine now!" Eddie smiles, and replies, "just wait a week. Then, come back and tell me what you think."

Mr. O'Brien storms out, leaving with doubt whether Jimmy's tire was fixed correctly at the department store. Eddie, however, knows O'Brien will be driving his AMC Gremlin into another shop in about a week when the repair fails.

Two weeks later, right before Eddie closes for the day, Jimmy O'Brien drives into Eddie's service station, wanting his tank filled. O'Brien gets pleasure from seeing Eddie or Bobby B. fill his gas tank and cleaning his windshield. Seeing O'Brien behind the wheel, Eddie takes a break and goes out to the pumps, hoping for some free entertainment.

Walking up to O'Brien, who is sitting in his car, Eddie asks, "fill it up?" O'Brien replies, "yeah. And, can you check the oil while you're at it?" Eddie replies, "sure. No problem." While O'Brien's tank is being filled, Eddie opens O'Brien's hood and checks the oil. Eddie also incidently notices that O'Brien's front left tire has been replaced and that the rim is all scuffed up.

Seeing damage to the front end of O'Brien's vehicle, Eddie asks O'Brien, "what happened to your car? Did you hit something?" O'Brien replies, "my tire blew out, and I ran off the road." Acting surprised, Eddie asks, "oh, really? When did that happen?" O'Brien replies, "about a week ago." Eddie asks, "did you end up getting your flat tire fixed?" O'Brien replies, "they fixed it over at the department store, but it didn't last. So, I went to the tire shop and they told me the tire has to be replaced." Eddie replies, "really? I can't imagine why."

O'Brien pays Eddie for the gas and two quarts of oil. As O'Brien drives off, Eddie wonders why O'Brien didn't get the other three tires replaced, as their useful life is just about over.