

What Special Place is this?

It's hard to describe fully what it's like to move to Jonesborough from a place that one previously called "home". For a little over a year, we've done the best we could to find new pals, and it's become so easy to meet some truly remarkable folks. We're trying to be good stewards of the "ol girl" (our 1850 built home) and be present to absorb as many new experiences as possible. "Genuine" might be a good word to describe what we found here. Although our previous home in Colorado used to describe that adjective...we saw changes that were not appealing to us. Safety was one of our goals in moving.

After George Floyd, our Colorado town jumped on the entire "defund the police" bandwagon. Even though the police in our area had not recorded any credible claims of excessive force, the liberal government slashed funding. Good cops moved away, or just retired and got out. Of course, crime shot up, the homeless had new laws that allowed them to sleep unmolested inside a dress store...and a new "blue tarp city" hid some previously gorgeous purple hills overlooking downtown. New "Sanctuary City" status served as a beacon for illegal aliens. Thefts, and home invasions crept up. We moved to Jonesborough about that time.

Fast forward: There's news of "rehiring" in our old hometown police dept. What a joke. It's as though you snap your fingers...say "oops", and you can instantly replace seasoned law enforcement professionals with new faces. Quality policing is very personal, and polls from *PEW RESEARCH* and just common (now uncommon) sense indicates that a seasoned veteran officer familiar to the people where they might have grown up is going to be able to de-escalate faster and more effectively than a rookie cop from elsewhere. "Unforeseen consequences" are what I hear. Unforeseen only by those blinded by their dogma.

So, here we are. Our new home. Our safe place. Tuesday morning, I head down to the garage to grab some meat from the freezer. I round the corner, and gasp. The garage door is open, and my beloved classic El Camino is...*GONE*. My baby. It was purchased on a Sunday, almost 3 decades ago. I had seen it months previous but could not afford it. The owner called me on that Sunday, and said his wife told him "Either that car goes, or you go...TODAY". I internally questioned his judgement in that decision, but the insanely low (cash TODAY) offer he made caused me to call almost every firefighter I worked with...begging for a one-day loan. The car was mine by 6pm. I always loved El Camino's as a kid...my folks had a 1970 that was way too fun for a 16-year-old to drive! Now, as I stare at the space where "El C" used to be, a wave of awful emotions flow over me. Violation, loss, sadness, and anger all crest like a giant wave. Then the wave crashed upon me with the thought...***Did I make a mistake in moving my family here?*** As the officer says "Sir, are you ok?" ...I hear my wife Kim (retired NICU Nurse) say "call EMS please". The phrase "Good People" has been used by me to describe so many we have met here...and that visit here. In the ambulance I said a prayer. *"Please God, allow the Good People to Win"*.

Some stupid anxiety attack they say, and I'm homeward bound just in time to meet Lt. Chad Reece of the Jonesborough Police Department. Professional, quiet, reserved, and constantly observing his surroundings...and to whom he was addressing. Neighbors come over...shock, disbelief, and we sense anger and even maybe some embarrassment. Why? It's a criminal act, and of course only the goof that didn't take adequate anti-theft measures is to blame. Call the boss, I can't work today. Dozens of calls and texts. Stephen Callahan from Tennessee Hills Distillery suggests I put a picture of the car on Facebook. Good idea, only I never did enroll in any social media. "Well, send me a photo of the car and I'll put it on MY Facebook". 20 minutes later, the leads start coming in. There have been some "sightings". Positive social media.

"El C" is back home now, here in Jonesborough. As they say, "It's an active investigation". Here are a few thoughts I can share. Chief Matt Rice, Lt. Chad Reese (and many others) used their skills and contacts within the local agencies like the Unicoi County Sheriff and the Erwin Police Department to reach a wonderful conclusion. The drive they all displayed make me feel so humble, and grateful. What really "got to me" was the fact that a whole bunch of fellow "car freaks" around Erwin and Unicoi County read the Facebook posting...and pretty much took it upon themselves to find El C. *Ignoring the opportunity to claim any kind of monetary reward*, they camped out at intersections, used their fuel and time to scour neighborhoods...and called in tips by the dozens. As one of the car dudes told me on the phone..." Oh Heck no. This is NOT happening. Not in OUR town, and NOT to one of our own". Why on earth would these people be so motivated to help a perfect stranger? Then, it hit me. I started to openly weep; perhaps like I was John Boehner!

That prayer in the ambulance. "Please God, allow the Good People to Win".

Good People surround us. They say things like "our town", and "one of our own". We are so Blessed to call this place "Home", and what's special...I would have felt this way even if I had never seen the car again. That we've seen all of this at the time of the Birth of Jesus makes it even more special. And yes, El C is grateful. Only a car nut will know how much old iron speaks to us if we listen.

To all of you, the Good People...from our family we say "thanks" for being exactly who you are. What Special Place is this!

Merry Christmas!