

No Time Left for You...

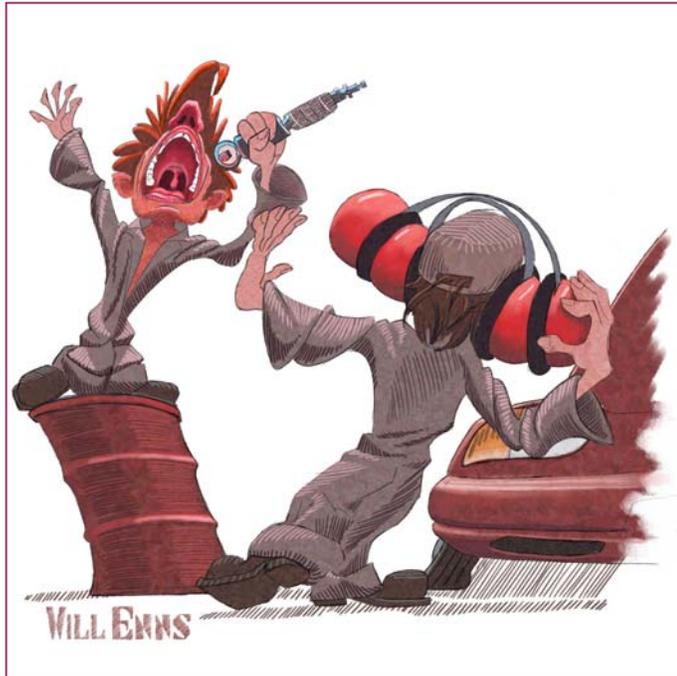
By Rick Cogbill
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A horrible noise suddenly careened through our shop, bashing into toolboxes and threatening to sterilize anything in its path that wasn't wearing ear protection.

I frantically looked around to see which of our customer's vehicles was about to throw a rod, when I spotted Beanie coming through the back door, bellowing out a tune at the top of his lungs. ***“NO TIME LEFT FOR YOU-OO-OO...”***

There was a mad dash for the box of ear plugs next to the time clock. “Beanie, what's wrong?” gasped Basil. “Should we call 911?!”

Our tone-deaf apprentice just grinned. “Nah, I'm just practicing a song; it's from a Canadian band popular in the '70s.”



Tooner grunted. “Let me guess; the Winnipeg Hog Callers.”

“Nope, but you're close; it's The Guess Who.”

“I did guess who,” growled Tooner, “and I ain't guessing again!”

“He means the old Burton Cummings' band, The Guess Who.” I looked at Beanie. “If you're thinking about those Canadian Idol tryouts again, then I've got a new name for your act: ‘The I Guess Not!’”

The Bean was undaunted. “I'll just keep practicing anyway; it can't hurt.”

“That's what he thinks!” grumbled Tooner, stuffing a second set of ear plugs into his ears as Beanie launched into the chorus.

“NO TIME; NO TIME...!”

We turned back to Tooner's current project, a 1995 Dodge Stratus with a 2.0L engine that wouldn't start. "What have you found so far?" I asked.

Tooner sighed. "Well, I got fuel, and cylinders two and three are sparking up a storm. But there's nothin' coming from the coil pack for cylinders one and four; it's as dead as a doornail. I swapped the coils, but still no joy."

I frowned. "How are the crank and cam sensors?"

"Fine; checked 'em with an oscilloscope," he replied. "Even tried a new pair, just in case, but I'm still only getting spark on two cylinders." When I left him, Tooner was tracing the wiring harness to make sure there were no breaks between the coil packs and the ECM. But it was beginning to look like the ECM could be faulty; there was power being supplied to the coil, but no pulsing ground signal.

It was time to bring Basil in on the score. I found him in a pickup truck, working under a dashboard, which was kind of tricky, considering that he had both doors closed and the windows rolled up tight. I opened the driver's door and peered in; he was folded up like a pretzel.

"Why the close quarters?" I asked.

"I'm trying to get as far away from Beanie's racket as I can," he wheezed. In the background, the words, I GOT, GOT, GOT, GOT, GOT NO TIME! were reverberating around the shop walls with gusto. Basil looked at me. "See what I mean? Now, what's your problem?"

I explained the job that Tooner was struggling with and suggested that Basil gather the crew together to discuss the matter over coffee. If nothing else, we'd have a reprieve from Beanie's vocal warfare.

Fresh donuts and coffee awaited the crew as they shuffled into the lunch room. Tooner was the last to arrive. "Beanie," he snarled, "if I hear you sing 'I ain't got no time' once more, I'm going to adjust your voice box with a pry bar!"

Basil, who'd been puzzling over our Dodge problem, suddenly stopped chewing. "Tooner, Beanie's right; I believe your Stratus has a timing problem."

Beanie's face broke into a grin. "You mean my singing has benefits?"

Tooner glared at him. "Easy there, Elvis; let's hear what Basil has to say first."

Basil dunked his donut again and chewed thoughtfully. Finally he took up his tale. "I seem to remember reading about a similar problem online some months ago concerning these Chrysler 2.0 litre engines. They're notorious for losing spark on two cylinders if they can't find the sync between the CKP and the CMP sensors."

Tooner grudgingly acknowledged that he might have a point. “What exactly should I be looking for?”

Basil recalled a few different possibilities that would affect cam timing: the timing belt could have jumped a tooth; the belt might be stripped; the camshaft pins for the cam gear could be sheared, causing the gear to move on the cam. After licking out the donut box, and exacting a vow of silence from the Beanster, Tooner went back to the offending vehicle to begin his search.

What he found was a seized up tensioner pulley for the timing belt, which had allowed the belt to loosen and jump three teeth on the cam gear. Once a new tensioner was installed and the timing reset, the Dodge fired right up and ran beautifully. In honor of Tooner’s success, Beanie blessed us all with a musical tribute. It was not so beautiful.

However, we have learned to pay closer attention to our apprentice. Even if he doesn’t have a clue what he’s saying (or singing), he does occasionally come up with the right answer.