

**SLIGHTLY AWKWARD
ADVENTURES**

Duct Tape Plymouth

By Larry Tanner

My parents named me Larry after a character named Larry Dallas played by Richard Kline on the television show Threes a Company from long before I was born. With the last name Tanner, I quickly became LT. Here are some of my stories warts and all.

Duct Tape Plymouth

No signal. This is the 21st century how can we be in America and not have a cell signal. My friends Greg, Luke and I went on a trip to buy some pot. Yes, I know that's illegal. None of us have smoked it before, and you should try things before you grow old and die inside. I think that's around 30? Luke said he knew a guy that grows his own and sells it on the down low. I want to tell him he is using "down low" wrong but it's too funny to see people's reactions when he says it. We must find our fun where we can. The trouble is that this guy lives about fifty miles out of town. That is where Greg comes into the picture.

Greg has a car. Well, a sort of car. He and his father rebuilt an old Plymouth minivan for Greg. Neither of them are mechanics. The body is a mix of body filler and duct tape. A mechanic checked under the hood and offered them \$50 to tow it away. He said he couldn't see how this thing runs. It was the ideal display of what not to do. Yet somehow it not only runs but it has never had an issue. At that point, I should have said, "*yes because you never drive it more than 5 miles at a time.*" But we were up to no good, and when you're up to no good, you don't think of stupid things like consequences.

We decided to make the trek after school. It should have been a simple hour trip, but nothing can ever be simple. Greg's car gets about ten miles to the gallon with a five-gallon gas tank. We had to plan the trip by searching for every gas station along the way. Somehow, we worked it out, although we may be coasting on fumes for part of that trip. Soon the school day was over, and we were off. At the first station, the guy behind the bullet-resistant glass asked, "*what the hell kind of car is that?*" Greg said, "*it's a little bit of everything.*" We had to open the back hatch to pump the fuel. It explains why the car always smells like gas.

We hit the hills, and the car started to make a new sound. A bad sound. Then the smell of burning rubber. Greg said, “*you get used to it.*” The next stop was a full-service center, but the attendant wouldn’t touch the car. He said, “*I don’t want to break it. Is that duct tape?*” Greg said, “*yes, it’s a structural piece of duct tape.*” We were relying on a car held together by duct tape. At least we aren’t going very fast. 50mph is its highest speed, and that’s only going downhill. The next shop was closed. It looked like it closed about a thousand years ago. Thanks, internet. We somehow made it to the next shop. The tank topped off exactly at 5 gallons. We have only gone about thirty miles. Greg got an idea. He went inside the station and came back with a ten-gallon gas can. This is where I should have asked, “*are you out of your mind?*” but I didn’t say a word.

About five minutes from the last station we stopped and opened all the windows. With this car, you must stop and open the windows from the outside. It’s not like anyone is going to steal this piece of shit. Soon the hills grew steeper, and the car grew hotter. Greg said, “*we have to run the heater, or the car will overheat.*” It was about 80 degrees outside and about 150 degrees inside the car. The heat coming off the hood of the car was almost blinding. Then we saw smoke. A little smoke became a torrent. Greg stopped the car, and we all got out. He went to the back and retrieved a fire extinguisher. Then he tried to pop the hood, but he hit the emergency brake instead, and the car started to roll down a steep hill.

The car hit the curb going at a good speed. One it could never achieve on its own. Somehow it achieved some lift and made it over the guardrail and off the cliff into a ravine. Before anyone could get to the side of the road, there was a massive explosion. Like someone left a ten-gallon gas can in a burning car. Greg looked down at the smoldering ruin of a car he rebuilt with his own hands and said, “*my phone was in there.*” Luke checked his pockets and said, “*oh shit, so was mine.*” They both looked at me. I showed them my shame phone. My parents took my iPhone away after a little problem I was in. I was in a car with my girlfriend when the car went into gear, and we ended up in a gorge in a national forest. The shame phone is a basic model with no touchscreen and no apps. It makes calls, and that’s it.

After a few tries, we had to come to terms with the idea we would have to walk until we found a signal and maybe even further. Luke thought we should wait to see if the fire goes out. I said, *“do you really want to be out here when it gets dark?”* We started to walk, and we made it about three miles when a truck pulled up. Behind the wheel was a woman in her thirties. In the truck bed was another girl maybe our age. She asked if we had some car trouble. Greg said, *“a little car went off a cliff kind of trouble.”*

We got in the back, and Luke got in the front with the woman. The girl looked older as the truck started to move. We sat with our backs to the back of the cab so the wind would be manageable. The driver was speeding. The girl in the back spat out her gum and moved closer to Greg. She asked, *“are you a virgin?”* He nodded his head. She took her left hand and grabbed him by the crotch. She then looked at me and said, *“don’t worry you’re next.”* From behind us, we saw the unmistakable red and blue lights of the police. We were either saved or going to jail. The woman pulled over, and a cop got out of the car. He looked in the bed of the truck then went to the driver side window. In the cab, the woman was pulling her shirt down. He said, *“going a little fast aren’t you.”* It sounded like a question, but it wasn’t. The cop didn’t know the half of it.

He let them go with a ticket, and he arrested us for abandoning the car in the ravine. He whispered to us, *“I am really doing this to get you away from them.”* We finally could call home, and my little cheap phone was a lifesaver. No one knew their home or parents cell phone numbers, but I had them all saved in my shame phone. The guy at the front desk said, *“we won’t be pressing any charges as long as you can prove it was an accident.”* Using a link to the cloud, we showed him pictures of the car. He said, *“maybe it was for the best. Some things shouldn’t be on the road.”* He then asked what we were doing out there. Greg said he wanted to take a drive and see how far the car could go. The officer said, *“it’s a good thing you didn’t make it very far. The County Marshals are running a sting as a fake pot farm luring people in then arresting them.”*