

Operation Snow Hammer

By Josh Evans

Have you ever had a real “I have no clue what I was thinking!” moment? The kind where after you’ve done it you’re probably saying, “Oh, crud. What did I just do?!” *Uh-huh*, me too.

I live in Oregon and when I was in kindergarten we had a major snowstorm. When I say *major* I’m talking snow above my knees. Everything was covered, including our mini SUV and Camry. We were completely snowed in. So naturally I put on my snow clothes and went out to play. At first I threw a couple of snowballs and made some tracks; you know, the usual. But then I started getting *bored* and *cold*. I wandered into the garage, and what do you know: there was my dad’s toolbox! Now, I know what you’re thinking, *here comes trouble*, but I was good at first. I went inside and asked my mom if I could use the hammer on the snow that blanketed the driveway.

Now, in my six-year-old hands, the blue-hilted foot-long Sears Craftsman felt like a medieval battle hammer, and I *liked* the feeling. I started going to town on the snow behind the Camry! Apparently, I looked pretty happy scooping up sizable blocks of snow with the back of the heavy-duty tool and sending them sailing because my mom, who had come out to check on me, went inside.

Josh Evans wrote “Operation Snow Hammer” when he was twelve years old. He is home-schooled and lives in Tigard, Oregon. He is interested in Greek mythology, learning Japanese, pencil drawing, playing violin, and practicing Karate.

That’s when I noticed a small hill of perfect-looking snow on the other side of the road. It tempted me; it even seemed to jeer at me. I walked over and took aim, heaving the hammer at it as hard as I could.

Whump!

The small mountain was reduced to a good-sized crater as an eruption of white, fluffy goodness soared several feet into the air. I couldn’t help myself: I laughed my head off! Then, looking around and noticing the snow *all* over the cars, I became filled with a sense of mission. *Huge* piles of snow that were untouched and untainted, just sitting there. That snow was mine. I mean, it just wasn’t fair how much there was; the snow was my enemy! I ran over and dislodged my “new friend” from the crater I’d just made, and planned my attack on the hood of our SUV. There was only one problem.

I’m pretty tall for my age, but being six years old and considering the size of the SUV, I was lacking a good six inches for what I needed to do. I backed up a couple of steps and leapt at it, except I miscalculated my jump and ended up smashing my face into the bumper. That’s when the bright idea hit me: I could pull myself up on the hood if I could only find something to hook the pick onto. So I tried jumping a couple of times, but even with the hammer I couldn’t grip anything! By now I was fed up, and in my anger I chucked the hammer up onto the SUV.

Clang!

The hammer struck the hood right under the windshield. But just as it was about to slide off, the claw caught on to something—and it held. I couldn’t believe my luck! If I jumped high enough I could just grab the end of the handle and pull myself up! Success! When I was finally on top of the hood, I stopped to catch my breath. I could see *everything!* Even the house at the end of the road! But I would have to enjoy the view later: I had work to do.

I turned the hammer around to use the side with the claw, and I started tearing away at the snow. The hammer made this loud *grinding* sound, and I felt vibrations zing up my arm. I was really being helpful! I thought there must be some super tough layer of ice underneath, so I kept hacking. And hacking. I was really ripping into the ice when I noticed these chipped-looking white spots appearing on the SUV. I tried to make sense of the spots and decided that they were some really hard ice that managed to cling on. So I hacked at them with even more ferocity. The spots didn’t seem to be coming off; in fact, they seemed to be growing bigger! The cold was getting

to me. Anyway, it was the only snow left on the hood so I decided I'd let it slide. I dragged my numb body to the windshield and just as I was about to start chipping away, my mom came out. I gave her a huge grin, expecting a "Wow, that was very thoughtful, Joshua! Great work!" But instead she rushed over to me, took one look at the hood, and screamed something unintelligible that sounded like: "AMUGHADAAAAAAAZ!!!"

She danced around like she needed to use the bathroom, wailing the whole time. She kept on for what seemed like *forever*. I didn't know what to make of it. Here I was, sacrificing my own time to be helpful, and not even getting a thank-you! That's when I noticed that my dad's hammer was still raised directly above the windshield, and part of her fit consisted of frequent hand motions toward it. I slowly lowered it.

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I slid off the hood to a not-so-graceful landing and asked hesitantly, "Did I do a good job?" This started a whole new frenzy, but I caught one word of it this time: money. She was going to pay me! I jumped for joy. I wondered how much. One hundred dollars? One thousand dollars? Then I caught another couple of words: a gazillion dollars. A gazillion dollars? How much is that? Well, it sure sounded like a lot. Maybe enough to get some cool Legos. I was rich! I couldn't wait to tell my best friend, Joe. Maybe I'd share a little. Then again, maybe not. I'd just tell him how I got it and see how generous *his* parents were. Maybe I could get even more by clearing the snow off his parents' cars, too! I just hoped my mom wouldn't notice the chips of ice still left on the SUV, or she might dock that from my reward.

Then my mom told me to go inside. Disappointment welled up inside me as I threw the hammer down and yelled, "NO!" Her eyes flared with fury and I worried about my gazillion dollars.

"Go inside *now*," she said in a quiet voice. All the jubilation drained out of me. Now it was clear: I had done something wrong. All because of the ice that I couldn't get off the hood? Harsh. I went inside.

It turned out that the "hard ice" on the SUV was in fact deep gashes in what my dad called an "expensive" paint job. Instead of earning a gazillion, I was docked a

gazillion. And all I had to my name was three dollars and twenty cents. I didn't know what to do, so I cried. That softened up my parents a bit and they came up with an idea. I would owe them only fifty dollars (that's *still* more than I've ever had at one time) and I would do fifty chores that were the equivalent of a dollar each.

So the moral of this story? Never give a twelve-inch hammer to a six-year-old. Do I get anything for advice like that? One thousand dollars? One hundred dollars? How about fifty? Do you need any snow removed?