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## **Shortgrass Country**

**by Monte Noelke**

Last month for the first time in many years, I stayed in downtown hotel in Dallas instead of staying in the outskirts. You may remember the old Hilton that was close to the Majestic Theater. Later it was called the White Plaza. Today, the hotel has been refurbished from the floor up into gracious surroundings.

But outside the hotel is the city's skid row. Details of the situation aren't necessary here, except that once I became aware of the street people loitering on the sidewalks, I began observing certain limits on going for walks and making shopping excursions farther downtown.

Crime reports in the daily paper also kept me aware of city life. Plenty of action was going on around town. What hit me the hardest was the increase in car thefts. I didn't want to have to ride a bus home. However, when the paper listed the most popular brands and models to steal, my pickup didn't even rate a call.

The article didn't say so, but I suspect all that hullabaloo about recalls, and such busybodies as consumer guides, are influencing the car racketeers' selections. One thing that can definitely be said in their behalf is they

are pro-Americans. Cars built in our country were far more popular with the thieves than foreign made automobiles.

Side effects are developing from the increase in thefts. Owners of one particular make are threatening to sue the manufacture for making an ignition to easy to hot wire. I scanned the papers expecting to see a rebuttal by the local automobile thieve denying that charge.

A safe guess is that the crooks are going to take the side of the manufacturer. They would certainly qualify as expert witnesses.

It didn't come to mind until I was leaving town, but I must have been in the same class as my pickup, because not one of those panhandlers so much as asked me for a dime.