

The Gremlin

THE DEAL

After graduating from PJ Jacobs High School in 1971, I decided the quirky little Gremlin X was the car for me. Ron Hanson, my bandmate from “The Orbits”, cooked up a deal with Goben Cars in Madison on my behalf. It was a bright sunny Saturday morning in June when we drove to Mad-Town in Ron’s 1970 Cadillac Eldorado. I had been playing in the band for several years and managed to save some money, so I quickly plopped down \$2,300 cash to buy the car.

THE CAR

It was brand new, fire-engine red, mag tires, bucket seats, sun roof, racing stripes, rear deflector, 3-Speed, 4.2 Liter V6, AM radio; man...what a cool car! Trouble was, I was only 17 and couldn’t legally buy a car. So, we titled it in Ron’s name, completed the paperwork, and we were out the door in 30 minutes. That was a quick slick deal, and the best part of it was....my parents didn’t know a thing about it!



THE DRIVE

We were excited to make the 100 mile trip back to Stevens Point with my brand new car. Ron drove the Gremlin first while I drove his Eldorado. We stopped in Portage so I could drive the Gremlin back to Point, even though I had never driven a stick-shift before. After a rocky start and popping the clutch a few times, I slowly got the hang of it.





THE GOOF-UP

I was so naive that I thought my parents would be thrilled about my new car and that I paid for it myself. But when I drove in my driveway on Michigan Avenue, and they saw what I brought home, a whole lot of trouble began. Yikes, they sure were mad at me! Not

only for blowing so much money on a foolish car, but because I completely forgot about car insurance. My mom immediately called their agent, “The Berendt-Murrat Insurance Agency”, and Mr. Berendt said that the car was uninsurable because it was titled to Ron Hanson. Well, I don’t have to tell you how much fireworks occurred after that! Then she started on Ron. Even though my mom loved Ron like a son, she spent 20 minutes on the phone chewing him out for that harebrained idea!

THE RESCUE

The next day we went to the DMV to straighten this mess out. We met with the director, Mr. Kaczmarek, and Ron did a lot of fast talking to him. After several hours, and thanks to my mom, we were able to transfer the title to my dad’s name and get insurance. It was a humbling experience; one day I was an independent adult...the next day I was a bonehead kid!



THE COOL

Anyway, it all worked out. I had the very first Gremlin X in Point. Its flashy red color could be seen from blocks away, and everyone knew it was me when I cruised Main Street, which I did many times everyday. The cool little Gremlin is long gone, but the memories will last forever.

