

Pickup Only Seven Years Old, Yet Dealer Says It's Not Guaranteed

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MERTZON — There are times when a man would feel safer ranching on the mushy portion of the moon than in this land the Indians called “the Home of the Shifty Spirits.” Often we feel so certain that a law abiding rural citizen can't avoid having the old hocus pocus put to him, many of us dread going to town.

For instance, take the case of the 1955 pickup which I have been breaking in for the past few years. In 1959, when I traded for this now-cursed old rattler, the seller over in San Angelo represented it as the hand-honed marvel of the machine age. According to him, my end of the transaction was going down in the annals of the used car industry as the biggest bargain of the century.

Furthermore, he claimed that anyone with \$1.98 and an understanding of the principle of the tricycle could make the pickup purr like a mother mink. (Tigers were yet to become the basis of automotive jargon.)

Today this isn't the case at all. The salesman's statements that this unit could cross the Sahara desert without so much as a bubbling radiator have proven false as the face of a smooth mouthed dance hall girl. Doctors of Motors have installed washers on it that cost more than \$2. And the reverse therapy of healing droopy carburetor floats by hooking on rebuilt fuel pumps has put such a strain on the ignition system that there isn't enough fire left to start a model airplane engine.

As a clincher, the innards and undersides have been attacked by adjustable wrenches until a direct descendent of Houdini couldn't break into the oil pan, much less unscrew the bolts.

However, the principal source of my loss of faith stems from the unswerving attitude of the former owner — the car dealer. He refuses to even consider my pleas that the ancient but toothless law concerning refunding the purchaser's money be brought into the case. After seven short years, he refuses to listen to my indisputable evidence that this phlegmatic truck is turning out to be a lemon of the highest order.

His only response is to repeat, over and over again, some groundless gibberish about need for a law prohibiting people from being lose on the highways if they think a pickup should last 40 years; then he goes into something baseless about what a sad ay it was for the world when herders quit using burros.

Once or twice he has acted as if the only place where an automobile service guarantee applies is in some far distant state such as Oklahoma or New Mexico.

On one occasion I threatened to take my secondhand car business elsewhere. Instead of showing alarm at this though, he replied that I could move my account to the coast of Maine and it wouldn't hamper his volume one dollar. He did admit that he hoped his grandchildren got a chance at my pickup if it is ever traded in on a jet helicopter.

So as you can see, the country-bred Shortgrasser hasn't as much chance with the city folks as Grandma Moses has of highjacking a Las Vegas dice game. Those smooth-talking sharpies just lie around town waiting for one of us to come along. Many's the time we leave the city, facing the afternoon sun, wishing our city brothers would reform. It's awfully discouraging to live with the thought that they are constantly primed and ready to stage a daylight holdup, the audacity of which the James boys never dreamed.