



“I was standing there with my dad when he turned the engine over. The next thing I knew I was cleaning out my black 1998 6-cylinder Camaro. I didn’t stand a chance.”

SETH JONES, *Editor-in-Chief*

Ode to the Z

I should be buying a sports car about now, not selling one. Is this a reverse midlife crisis? ¶ For the last 20 years I’ve been driving a Camaro. My current Camaro is a 2002 Z28, (5.7 liter V8 with 310 hp at 5200 RPM) red with a black top. It’s the third Camaro I’ve owned since 1994. ¶ And soon, it will surely be the last one I ever owned.

I’ve got two young kids — one 7, the other 2. I can handle the hypocrisy of toting one small child in the back of a sports car, but two? How sad is a red Camaro with two child car seats in the back?

And yet the end of my Camaro days came unexpectedly. I was at my mom’s house a few weeks ago. In her driveway is my dad’s old truck. Dad died four years ago. Dad had a nice 1999 Dodge Ram V8 truck. It was sitting there in the driveway, just aging, dead battery, cobwebs in the door jambs. This was the truck that Dad and I always took fishing, you know?

“Mom, what are you going to do with Dad’s truck?” I asked her. “Nothing,” she said. “But I can’t get rid of it.”

So I opened my dumb mouth. “Why don’t you let me drive it for a few years?”

“I think your dad would love that,” she told me.

Great idea at first. It’s a nice truck. Just needed a little work (by “a little,” I mean “\$1,000.”)

But the problem? I already had two vehicles. The aforementioned Camaro, as well as my first car, a 1964 Chevy Impala (2-door, 327, baby blue with a white top and glass-packs.) There’s no way the missus would let me get away with keeping three cars.

So, goodbye, Camaro. You’ve been a fun ride. But practicality wins today. I can’t get both kids inside you, my wife can’t drive you and you’re worthless in the snow.

Sigh...

It’s highly unlikely I’ll ever own a car that fast again. The Z jumped off the line, screamed through turns and laughed at steep inclines. I recently enjoyed the highlight

of my Camaro years with this Z28 when I took it on a three-lap joyride around the turns of the Kansas Speedway. My adrenaline was pumping for that, let me tell you! I only got it up to 90 on the turns (they had a pace car and motorcycle cops monitoring drivers during the event) but it was still so cool.

I remember when I bought that red Z in 2002. I was in Mulvane, Kan., helping my dad build a new back deck at their house. Dad had the oldies channel on all day while we worked. Every commercial break, the same commercial came on — Rock Chevrolet in Mulvane begging people

to come take their last 2002 Z28s off their hands. They were offering 60 month zero-percent financing, which caught my ear.

As soon as we were done with the deck, my old man asked me what I wanted to do. “I want to go test drive one of those Zs,” I said. It couldn’t have been any easier; the dealership was less than two miles from their doorstep.

The one I went for was the one in the showroom. They pulled back the sliding windows to get my future Camaro out for a test drive. They let one of the sales guys pull it out. I was standing there with my dad when he turned the engine over. “Vroom!” The showroom echoed with the power of those 8 cylinders. They had me at “vroom!” The next thing I knew I was cleaning out my black 1998 6-cylinder Camaro. I didn’t stand a chance.

I held on for almost 20 years. That’s a good run. Now I’ll be like most of my readers: a truck man. I look forward to the advantages of having a truck at my convenience.

I’ll miss this Camaro. But for now, it’s time to get out of the fast lane.

Got a cool ride? Email Seth a photo at: sjones@northcoastmedia.net.

