

# The Alternative Line

by Joe Holzer for CNY-PCA Redline Report Copyright 2017 <http://www.holzerent.com>

## The Alternative Rambler

For any of those recalling my last diatribe, the '95 993 Cabrio Tip is still in storage because it's still winter here in CNY and most of our Porsches are still hibernating, and will be until at least the salt has been washed from the roads by April Showers. Hopefully, my Porsche is drying out, although interim tests have not been promising – I do not yet know if there really IS Tiptronic damage, or if it is merely a problem of a short somewhere in the Tip control box, which is unfortunately under the passenger seat and so was subjected to Noah's problem when the rains of October came through an unrealized separation between the fabric roof and the plastic rear window. For three days continuous. And had no place to go once it got there except the lowest point inside the interior it could get to. Guess where that might be. What a mess. And given the small gaps on circuit boards, I expect dendritic shorting of the Tip controller ;-(

But that was combined with the known transmission problems which occurred a year ago on my '97 Audi "S"8. That is not a misprint for those knowledgeable among you dear readers – Audi did not import to the USA the actual S8 until model year 2001, but the original owner of my '97 A8 paid an added \$12K atop the original \$69K to have Hoppen Motorsport source all the "Euro S8" suspension, induction, exhaust and brake parts and install them right after he received his original Pearl White with Deep Navy Blue leather and loaded with EVERY option '97 A8. He sold it to me in November 2001 when his actual 2001, ordered the WEEK before 9/11, arrived to him in Massachusetts, and he let me have it for what the dealer would allow him in trade when he had gotten NO other responses on Cars.com to his ad for a "97 Audi A8 – Modified" – small wonder with that ad for that class of car, suggestive of flames or wheelie bars. I LOVED that car, and it had plenty of laps at Watkins Glen itself, surprising lots of 944 and other instructors as a huge 4 door sedan bearing down on them with me waving for them to "git out mu way". One sweet ride, which was my "winter rat" since then, until the tranny problem. Except when it came to NYSI, but more on that a little later herein.

Sadly, economics being such a cruel bitch has forced me to be unable to justify the seeming minimum \$3K to swap out a used tranny, or \$7K to rebuild the original. But I have also not found a buyer for it either. Probably for the same reason ;-) But if you wish me to, I will regale you with the load of know-nothing trolls on Craigslist who hide behind anonymous keyboards and heap epithets like the clown who insisted it was "just an old A6" and did not even KNOW that the A8 is an aluminum space frame, the very thing which allows the aforementioned performance on track and street, and keeps the car physically in almost original appearance condition, because aluminum does not rust. And besides the fabulous BOSE stereo and practically hot and cold running women on the options list, like the ski sack which pops from the rear seat back to allow skis to be put in the trunk and keep them from dripping into the interior, and the solar sunroof which keeps air flowing in sun so the interior stays cool on the hottest days despite being an almost black leather, etc. Along with the AC system with which you could hang meat. But, as usual, I digress ;-

So anyway... During my move to Oswego County in late 2013 I had a '95 Range Rover "Country" LWB. A tank, with which to invade once I overcame the stupid Lucas Electrics "Prince of Darkness" design problems which caused it to fail to start at anything below 32 Deg F, and Britmobile assembly issues, like the kinked fuel tank vent line which caused splash-back every time the tank was filled. And those perceptive among you will observe my pattern of purchasing model year '95 vehicles, the last year before OBD-II so as to avoid the needless costs associated with believing that the computer in a vehicle equals its actual tailpipe emissions. Don't ;-) I could regale you with examples which could curl your toes, but I won't. This issue anyways ;-

However, in keeping with that pattern, when the "Strange Rover" decided to have a serious internal engine is sue WHILE I was in the middle of moving, I went looking for something similarly capable of pulling my car trailer, with which I was doing my move from my then house in Liverpool to where I would reside from my 34 ft Motorhome near Central Square on the non-working farm I setup as an RV Park as per last issue.

You are likely wondering what any of this has to do with "Rambler", or even "Porsche", and I will request your patient indulgence for a bit yet. At that time, November 2013, I found a '95 Chevy Tahoe, which will become Tahoe1 later, but I am ahead of myself. However, what became "Tahoe2" is an almost identical SECOND '95 Chevy Tahoe with the same color, options, details, etc, except 40K less on the clock, and was eventually purchased in March 2016 when the Audi trans had a fit on 81 returning from an open mic session, which led to its being removed from the road and necessitating another means to deal with Tug Hill Plateau winters, which were still in effect at the time. As things happened...

Fast forward to the mess with my landlord and his childish behavior and unethical ingrate expectations – give him an inch and he expects to take a mile, and the quandary I found myself in last issue. As things happened, I have a friend who needed a vehicle just as I was trying to sell Tahoe1 after ingrate left it along the side of the road and expected he could use Tahoe2 as he had come to use Tahoe1 – as his own with no responsibilities whatsoever for any of the 2K+ miles per month he was putting on a vehicle I had agreed to “allow him to use no more than four days a week” – in writing, and so he behaves like a two year old having a tantrum and locking me from my almost 20K value belongings by locking them in his barn I am supposed to have unlimited access to, and stealing my electricity to heat his apartment which I was stupid enough to assist him placing in said barn when he saw how well I was living here on the property. And the Police will do NOTHING about it, and the dolt Judge who heard the small claims case in Fulton so obsessed about my filing two separate claims, one against each of what I understand are separate entities, he and his ex wife as co-owners of the deeded land, so dismissed my claims despite stated testimony by the ingrate that he owes me at least \$900 he “plans to pay me only when I leave the property”. So you can see that my hoping for ANYTHING representing judicial propriety is a total non-starter.

But by loaning Tahoe1 to my friend, who has a garage in Phoenix where I can store the 993, we have a synergistic solution to at least part of my problems – ie protecting the 993 from further damage. Tahoe2 has proven to be surprisingly capable – like any vehicle with 150K on the clock, some things need work – but it has AC and pretty much everything has been made to work sufficient for my needs. And with my new vocation (uncompensated, of course ;- ) of entertainer for charitable meals and the like in Southern Oswego County, is serving my purposes well. Which reminds me of the discussions previously about non-Porsches and their appropriateness for mention in the Redline. And I am here to express the opinion that I am no less of a Porsche man just because I do not currently have a Porsche with which to travel to those venues. And to be a Rambler about the ways in which we ALL came to be reading this and other items published herein (those who know me well understand that double-entendres are high art to me, and you have just been double entendred with THAT comment for real ;- ) And to assure those who care (those who don't can hardly complain unless THEIR articles somehow got displaced by this in Skip's largesse ;- ) will see that I have many scars, but my spirit is in the mending phase. Baby steps.

Oh; and on the subject of NYSI, and especially about OBD-II; I suggest you readers dig a bit deeper into what and why that all exists. If you have any automotive awareness, you doubtless have heard of the VW Diesel emissions “workaround”, which essentially looked at the fact that a running car was stationary, so adjusted fuel and operating parameters to enable the vehicle to easily pass specs for the TESTING to meet EPA requirements, the legal basis for inflicting OBD-II on all we owners of vehicles. Many of whom have had the “Murphy effect” of having our cars light the dreaded “Check Engine Light (CEL)” just before our NYSI was due, and wound up paying for our local service center personnel to vacation in Aruba or whatever. Then been infuriated to learn that the failure was NEVER to actually pass emissions, but instead to satisfy the computer at Albany which insists it must talk to your car before your car can pass NYSI. Unless it is a '95 or older. Anybody still not see the method to my madness?;-)

You did NOT read it here that Engineers are usually not limited in thought to the ways preconceived by politicians who promulgate rules. If any of you follow F1, you will know EXACTLY what I mean. Like the \$250 heated O2 sensor on the downside of my Audi right bank Catalytic Converter which was checked by the OBD-II and found to be open circuited, so set the CEL. Mind, not a single extra undesired fume left that side as a result, because THAT sensor merely checks the efficacy of the cat converter to properly treat the exhaust which is regulated by the UPSTREAM identical sensor, which heated properly so it read properly so it regulated properly so the engine was operating to spec. Only the “nanny” verifying the cat converter actually working was potentially misreading, a fact proved by noting that the heater in the sensor had the same impedance as the side marker light on an RV, which is why the passenger footwell in my Audi flashes but the car passed NYSI with flying colors for four years straight like that, and in fact on THE DAY the tranny gave up the ghost that night. And you don't want to get me started on the \$2600 cost to refurb the tranny on my earlier '96 Dodge Grand Caravan whose lockup torque converter valve solenoid open circuited, throwing the CEL. Until I noted that it had the same parameters as a ten cent resistor available at Radio Shack and easily spliced in parallel with that coil to prevent THAT from throwing the CEL, which might ONLY affect emissions if the vehicle ever actually GOT to the 70 mph needed for its underpowered 3.3l “gasp and wheeze” engine to actually ALLOW that lockup, which would otherwise NEVER HAPPEN if driven by someone who actually intended to GET ANYWHERE. Take my word for it; you are breathing better with the resistor, though I sold it long ago ;-)

And I am breathing better for knowing that I might have taken my knocks, but I am STILL an Engineer, so don't expect the expected; that's the LAST thing you'll see from ME ;-).

