

Cars on Call - Episode 7

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cars on call is a different car podcast, two car guy physicians, one of whom has been reviewing new cars for almost 30 years. That's me, Steve Schutz, and the other of whom is a trauma surgeon. That's my co host, Vaughn Moran. Discuss car topics of the day from perspective you won't find anywhere else.

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Welcome to cars on call. I'm Steve Schutz. And I along with my co host find Rand. We'll be talking to cars and we've got some good stuff today. We're excited to really ready to get into it. But Stefan before we do, I continue to get good feedback, the anatomy of a car crash came up, someone emailed me and said, that was really good. So your your car crash stuff, and the trauma stuff is getting very good feedback. It's it's cool to see.

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Excellent. And then hey, no more exciting news. We have a website, cars on call podcast.com is still a work in progress. But we'll have our podcast available there. I'll also end up putting links and refer to things in our podcast like certain vehicles or some YouTube videos, I'll put links to all that. So it's still a work in progress. Bear with us. But there also is a page at the back that you can click and leave comments and they'll come to us as well. So that's super exciting. As we venture into this multimedia experience,

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the multimedia extravaganza.

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Yeah, not not too bad for a couple sexagenarians. Well, I guess you're not 60 yet, so. But for a couple old guys. We're kind of killing it here at the media. You know, we're figuring it out.

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Pretty damn close to 60. So far, closer about hell of all the closure of the 60s and 55. Having turned 59 Just like a month and a half ago. Yeah. All right. So you said you got these you saw some interesting cars. I want to hear about this. I

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want to say house cars cars are spawning.

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Spawning, I have one but you start because I want to hear yours.

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Okay, so I saw a Mitsubishi 3000 GT. And it was a total complete beater. It wasn't the VR four. So the Mitsubishi 3000 GT was late 80s, early 90s kind of Grand Tour and why the name GT to kind of compete with the Supra, and 300 ZX and I just thought even back then they were just they were just not good looking cars. I didn't like him then and it really has not aged well in terms of design. They had some pretty cool technology in the VR form had all wheel drive all wheel steering and had active aero, a lot of cool features, but it does. Yeah, I think it's up there with the Subaru. You know, their attempt that of a cool GT car just didn't work for me. But it

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was about this. I was literally about to say that it reminds me of the it reminded me the time of the super SPX. It was just this weird attempt to try to be legitimate by a company that didn't have I think either the money or the reputation, or the wherewithal to kind of do it just like Subaru flopped with their with their SPX the 3000 GT was not a success for me to be sheep. They did better with that than the SPX. But it was just kind of this I think a super wannabe as the best way to say it. I thought it looks strange at the time, and needs to be she again with the reputation not being all that strong. I can't imagine reliability was was good. I could survive. I can not remember the last time I saw one. It's been Yeah,

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I was amazed. You know, I spent a lot of time this weekend on the road. I went from where I live to Birmingham, then down to visit a friend. Today I spent about five hours on the road. So I was searching for vehicles and I saw something else cool. I saw on El Camino, which generation this was the, you know, the late 70s El Camino right at the end when their rancho came out, you know, we talked about last time when you know, two car makers got together and tried to make a car, you know, the the Sadhguru Well, the El Camino was trying to marry you know, a passenger car and a truck. And it was a horrible passenger car and a horrible truck. And just didn't work well. And so that was pretty cool. This one was well done. Nice. It looks cool. But I haven't seen one of those in forever.

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No, I mean, it is it is kind of funny. You made this point where we're talking about the Ford Maverick and that is that it actually does what people need in you know, do you want to tow a boat with an El Camino? No, but do you want to pick up mulch at Home Depot? Yeah, sure. Why not? I mean, there's you know, you can you were talking about getting plans for your wife with your truck. You can easily get a whole bunch of flowers and plants and stuff with the alchemy. That's really all you need. But yeah, otherwise, but it seems to the I guess I've had a better seat. Maybe it's three but He's just kind of just weird and just, I never did get it.

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Alright, so here you mentioned it only seated to so here's a question for you. Do you remember what mini truck in the late 80s, early 90s mini truck that sat for people? You remember which one?

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Yes, I did the Subaru brat.

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I can't believe you remember that? Yeah, I remember it.

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It had two seats with like, the handles like these vertical jump seats. Yeah, yeah. So you may think backward, right? A trauma surgeons delight, right, Stefan?

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Absolutely. Do you know what Brad stood for?

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I used to know.

05:45

Right, I forgot reminding by Dr. Recreational altering transporter. That's what Brad's did

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for me. I didn't know that.

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Do you know why they put those jump seats in the back of

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it? To get around the chicken tax, I think

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yeah, exactly. Then you just know, to me too smart. I mean, I keep trying to pull these questions out that was stumped most. You're exactly right. They were avoiding the 25% light truck tariff. Alright, so let me see if you've answered everything. I bet I'd be amazed if you know this. What famous person owned one is actually in their museum currently. You got me there I present I give you a clue as a president a president yes.

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Famous first ever order Brad. There's such a was such a stupid little

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on his ranch on his ranch. And he was a movie star.

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Ronald Reagan Ronald Reagan had up

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that's actually restored it and they put it in his Presidential Museum. Yeah. And that

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I'm sure it's good on a ranch and it does it actually make sense. It's got four wheel drive. It's, it's very, very well built. I remember that. But now I do not know that either. So that's funny. Yeah. But I do remember well, because there were these vertical handles you held on it was almost like you're playing a video game or something. And you held on to those in lieu of seatbelts. You hold on to that. Crazy. Yeah. So if you're bouncing around, no way you'll fall out of the truck with those rights.

07:21

Oh, absolutely not. No. You know, since we're car spotting, you know, you remember when you're a kid, and even later you get a song stuck in your head. on repeat? Well, you did that to me with your car rent last week, spending five hours on the road over the weekend. all I saw were F and runners for runners everywhere. It was like a song on repeat in my head. I could not believe the number that is driving me insane because I was trying to look for other cars. But all I could see were for runners. I just liked that song was stuck in my head. So I was very effing runner, the FN runner.

07:56

There is a love for others people people love and people by and of course, it helps that they go forever. So I got today the new Ford Maverick truck is my press car and, and it was just dropped off. And I was talking to the driver and he was saying that his brother had the original Ford Maverick, which we both remember from the 70s. And he said when's the last time you saw one of those I said I don't remember but it's been many years. They you know, a brat or an old Camry or something like that. And you see them because they last but not a Maverick and not a Pinto.

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Now or a Chevy Vega I had a Chevy Vega gifted to me by Dr. Chrome as my first card 16 Two Door stationwagon pice yellow and then had the fake wood on the side. And that's the only thing that held it together was because it was so rusted out the fake wood. The fake wood held it together. Yeah, no wood sticker is the woody on the side. Door stationwagon the damn thing was. It was great.

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It's fun. This is the reality. In the 80s If you had a Vega, you're like, Oh crap, it's embarrassing in the 90s It's embarrassing. Now it's hilarious and kind of cool.

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Well, you know, you know I wasn't I didn't grow up on Long Island. I was in middle class American. I was happy to have wheels you know, I just to have a car and both kind of fight about that car. We got to college with him. I gave it to my brother. So I got my dad's old Jeep. But we would drag race the BMW up now for turning row but with the Vega. We weren't afraid to Florida and pop the clutch. You know, and just just quick shift that was it and then they catch up to us. But the guys in the BMW they wouldn't trash their brand new BMW 320 like we would trash that bag. But it was it was a lot of fun. I cannot imagine. Imagine. By the way when's the last time you saw Vega right? I mean, yeah, there rust bucket and all those all those GM Ford products in that era would just they just come pletely fell apart

10:01

yeah it was it was completely embarrassing as the word but again if I if I were to drive across there CSC have a game right now I would smile I'd say oh my god there's there's a Vega. Absolutely, yeah. So this is something I want to get off my chest and to say because this is it's also a car I spotted but it's something that I've been thinking and then as soon as I saw this this is just last week I saw it I'm like,

Alright, I got to talk about this show because it's kind of bothered me. So I saw the brand new Jeep Wagoneer and good looking truck. I have not driven one yet. My help too soon. But apparently the interior is beautiful. I did peek in it looks nice. So it's this brand new Jeep Wagoneer and there's two things that really thinking about it. Number one is why did it take so long and they have this very good Ram pickup. The Jeep is obviously owned by sta Lantis, which used to be Fiat Chrysler, which used to be Chrysler, which used to be Daimler Chrysler, and which used to be Chrysler so that anyway, whatever the whole time as they've gone through different owners, they've had this ramp pick up. And Ford has made a lot of money with a navigator expedition on the F 150 platform. And GM has made even more money with their suburban Escalade, and Tahoe and Yukon, all those on the Silverado slash Sierra platform. You know, you take a half ton pickup and you make it into dusty v. And it just boggles my mind that still Lantis or Chrysler is leaving all this money on the table. They could have easily made a Jeep Wagoneer years ago, and finally it's here. So I'm like, okay, they finally did it a tear. That's great. And the second thing that bothers me that, I mean, it doesn't really bother me. They didn't do it, but it just seems like a missed opportunity. But this kind of bothers me is to find because I think it's strange and inexplicable. I saw an ad I saw a couple ads during the the NCAA tournament there, they're advertising the wagoneer and the grand wagoneer. And you It's like they're embarrassed, it's a jeep. The ad does not say the word jeep. There's nothing on there that indicates it's a jeep and when you look at the wagoneer it barely says it's a Jeep looking for a Jeep insignia is difficult. So they're selling it like it's this new company called wagoneer company and they're making the wagoneer grant wait a year. And so almost like they're embarrassed, they're it's a jeep, they should be proud that it's a jeep.

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Yeah, I mean, the Jeep, the original Jeep Grand wagoneer Woody, that is a complete Colt vehicle. You know, they're all over the east coast in the Hamptons, but they were the vehicle to have they were the original, not totally original, but of the true luxury SUV. They kind of nailed that market a long time ago, and then they let it go away. And I absolutely love the original Jeep Grand wagoneer and I saw the new one here in my little hometown where I live now at the post office. And I was like what is that I looked at as I just didn't it didn't do it for me. I did not look at the interior. She was getting out of the car. She had a kid in the front. I didn't want it to be a peeping Tom. But I looked at it and I've kind of walked around the rear end of the car just the proportions are off for me sometimes it's too tall maybe and narrow I don't know just I was like I was terribly disappointed and when I saw it

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Yeah, it's you know designs like this which are brand new, I always kind of give it some time to sink in because my first reaction is not always accurate or whatever but it is big. And I think they they tried to make some design elements look like it's kind of make it slimming like you do sometimes with a dress or something. So I don't know the design on that crazy bet. But you know, ironically, they really you know with the with the grille did make it look like a jeep. I mean they it looks like it's in the family that Jeep which of course it is, which is why it's so strange that they don't put the name on. I think the name is on the exterior in one area one place, I have to have to double check that but it's certainly not prominent, and again, during the ad they don't even mention it. So it's just kind of a weird, a weird thing. I'm sure it'll succeed because people like these big trucks, you know, do they like they're Escalades, and they like their toes. So I'm sure it'll succeed but it's just a little weird. And you're right about that the old grin that wasn't great. The Old Wagoneer wasn't grant Wagner firing but you're right about that. You know, you go to Nantucket or the Hamptons or something like that. You see him you see him a lot

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guys are great vehicles you know, and Hyundai was a little bit and Kia were late. You know what they're telling you right? All three of those big Genesis, but they nailed that one. That thing sound like the absolute luiten out. That is just I've seen all three of them. And I think they're absolutely gorgeous for you know, for a big SUV that it is looks way better than the Infiniti QX. I do like the looks at the expedition. I'm just not a GM guy. So, you know, the Tahoes are just sort of bourbons or they just, they don't appeal to me that much because

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they really I agree. You know, every time I see a palisade every time I see it tell you, right? Oh, yeah. Wow, they've really got that right.

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An interior on the Genesis is unbelievable. My partner has one and I'll just oh, it's absolutely gorgeous interior on that vehicle.

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I have not driven a Genesis SUV recently. I drove a Genesis today. And the interior is great. The text great. It feels special, which is really what you have to do.

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Yeah, so speaking of special Who's Who do you think's no longer special in the car industry? The new car dealers?

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I don't know. Lexus? Oh, yeah. Yeah, that's that's our topic for today. Yeah. Yeah, I think I think you're right. And you know, the question, which we're going to talk about which I'm dying to get your input is, is, is Lexus irrelevant? What I'd say is, I'll give you my answer. Obviously, they're not. They're not irrelevant. But, boy, they're not what they used to be. And, and I was thinking about this, and I just was thinking about a few things in number one. When Lexus landed in 1989, can you think of a bigger sensation, automotive really in our lifetimes, and when Lexus launched

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I remember the day because we had this there's this big build up to Lexus, and Infiniti Infiniti had all these just bizarre commercials that were Zen and just this weird commercial, but the Lexus. They didn't show the car. Right? You know, but Lexus we all need Toyota and we knew Lexus and Toyota products for five months. But we had one of my residents. I was an intern at the time. And this dude was he was like Don Johnson from Miami Vice. He had his frosted his hair was tipped and color noise had the perfect hair. And he looked just like he could have been in the Miami Vice set. But he bought the brand new LS 400 The new LS and drove it to the hospital and pull it up in the ER Bay. I mean, every buddy came out to look at that car was a pearl white, that pearl, metallic. And it was like, I still can see that car today. It was like nothing. I mean, they really hit complete homerun in that marketplace, the price point, the quality of the luxury. They just nailed it. They out Mercedes, Mercedes and on the sedan.

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Yeah, and my I remember at the time thinking that, you know, as far as luxury vehicles went in the 1970s, it was Cadillac, and Lincoln dominated but they were floaty, and the quality was was not good. And the 80s the quality got even worse, and they just weren't good cars. And then in the 80s it was

Mercedes and BMW that kind of were ascendant, but they had limited numbers of vehicles. So the prices were high, the dealer experience was was not great. And maintenance costs were huge. They can everyone just everyone a Mercedes and BMW, I would say Mercedes more than BMW. They had a real attitude problem. And, you know, they were snooty. And I guess that's what happens when you're so expensive, but it was an opportunity for for Toyota. They came in with better they had better quality than Mercedes, BMW or Cadillac. And then they had nice dealers. You know, there was a dealer promise that they made and I'll bring it up for you because it's really interesting. Before they launched the dealers had to take this pledge and the pledge was Lexus will do it right from the start Lexus will have the finest dealer network in the industry. Lexus we'll treat each customer as we would a guest in our home. And they had that up on the wall. And they lived it you know, I when I just like it is to finally walked into a Lexus dealer at some point. And, and just to check it out, and we were treated very well. It was it was really good experience. Just to give you an idea of the numbers. I looked this up Automotive News. And in 1986, Mercedes sales in the US were 99,314. And Lexus, of course was zero. Lexus didn't launch until the 9090 model year and then in 1992, Mercedes sales had dropped from 99,000 A little bit over 99,000 to 60 3000s. They lost about 36,000 sales and Lexus which was zero was it 92 and some change. So you know, basically Wow. That's amazing. So they were eating their lunch and they were selling their cars. And oh, by the way, you know, you just mentioned prices and how expensive they were. I looked this up to 1990. The s 560. S Class sedan MSRP. Started at \$82,000 82,080 \$2,000. In 1990. Wow. Is 400. Just, it was under 40,000. It was like \$35,000. Wow.

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Yeah, that's unbelievable.

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That's incredible.

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Yeah. And I think that, you know, Mercedes lost 30% of their market share, and Lexus in one year, outsold them by 30%. That's a 60%. Swing and market. Jacksonville is amazing. So it was a homerun. I mean, they built it up with the advertising. And they nailed it with the product. I mean, that was a monumental day, and you could actually go, you could walk into the Lexus dealership, and they've invited you to look at their cars, you know, you go to the Mercedes dealer or the Porsche dealer to want to see these cars. I love cars. And now it's like a redheaded stepchild walking in there, but not the Lexus dealer. We should probably tell the story.

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You and I together in Dayton, Ohio, when we were in the Air Force went into a Mercedes dealer in Dayton. I won't give the name but we walked in. And I remember, polo shirt, khakis, we both looked respectable. And we walked in because you wanted to test drive the E class, the famous w 124. BRUNO Sacco E class, which was beautiful. And the sales, the sales guy just treat us like crap and refused, absolutely refused to let us drive the car. I just I felt terrible like that. And I felt like I was completely unworthy to even be on the premises. And there was no reason for him to do that.

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No, I mean, and we know that we were in the military time, we had short hair, clean cut, and we dressed up for the event. And we still got treated like crap. But you know, we can walk, you could walk in an Infiniti dealer, or the Lexus dealer and your cane, cotton man, you know, you were they treated

you well. And that's why their sales are up in the showroom, not only the showroom experience a Lexus, but we'll talk a little later on your own, and a couple of them. And we'll two of them. When you walked into maintenance, the service, you were treated, once again, they had these little, you know, little spresso thing, and they just treated you wonderfully, you're always like they said, treat you like you're in your own home. And it was they completely nailed the entire experience, from buying a car to having it maintained. And they nailed it. I think they've I don't know what their sales are like now. But I have to imagine that they've had a major slide and market share.

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I got a bunch of say about how they've evolved. But before I get to that, because because you're absolutely right to find that it's not it's not what it used to be their slogan when they first came out, I loved and they changed it. They changed it a couple times since then. Do you remember their their slogan when they first came out?

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Well, when I bought mine, it was a relentless pursuit of perfection. Yeah, that was the

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original, okay. And I always thought that was great, because it gives this idea that they're going to continue to improve and continue to get better, and continue to take care of the customer in a way that that Mercedes or whoever won't, because they're relentless about it now, and then they just want some passionate pursuit of perfection. And now I don't even know what it is now, which probably says something there. I don't I'll never forget relentless pursuit of perfection. And now I don't even know if they have a slogan if they do what it is, but it's just like, I don't know, I would say this competition changes everything. And what happened was Mercedes, BMW and then more recently, Audi have come in and they have benchmarked Lexus. So they have much better reliability. And then in addition to that, they have lowered their prices. So they have done a good job of kind of, you know, getting more of a level playing field in responding to the Lexus challenge and make no mistake about it Lexus, you know, challenge them in a gigantic way. Really kick their asses, and Mercedes and BMW and more recently, Audi had to respond. The same with Cadillac and Lincoln, who were obviously less relevant today. But I just I feel like yeah, the dealers, it's not as special to go to Lexus dealer anymore. And let's face it, you know, a Mercedes dealer, Audi dealer, BMW dealer. They're nicer to people like us. I think they're nicer to everybody. So that whole snootiness from the 80s and early 90s is has really gone away so it's you know, it's much more of an equivalent thing

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before they're not so nice when you're buying a Bullitt Mustang from now on previous episode, yeah, maybe by the bottom new Mercedes but buying a Ford you know, but

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yeah, by the way before we move on and talk more about you know, recent Lexus, everybody talks about the LS 400. But do you remember the other model that they sold? They actually launched with two models. Oh, man. Okay, while you're thinking they had no the ES.

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Yeah, no, they thought the Camry Camry. And it really did look like a gussied up camera at the time.

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It was kind of I cannot believe people didn't make fun of him more for that car. It was it was just a camera with a different font and in different rear end, and a little bit more leather and had the steering wheel from the LS 400. But it was just a camera. And I'm like this kind of embarrassing. So yeah, I think they're, they should be happy. Everyone focused so much on the LS 400, which was spectacular. It really was an S class. It was matched up the S class with a V eight, and a look that look luxurious and nice. And then you mentioned the EDS. I'll never forget that champagne glass ad. They lined up these champagne glasses, and they made like a tower of champagne glasses. And then they started the engine. So the champagne and the champagne glasses. They started the engine and they read it. And it was so smooth that the champagne glasses didn't fall over. It was very striking.

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Yeah, they were super comfortable in I mean, they nailed that, you know, the fresh design. And they just completely nailed every aspect of it. Yeah.

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So, you know, Alexis kind of chugged along. I do think that as their volumes increased, it became less and less special to go to a dealership, I think this whole thing about treating you like a guest in your home that that went away a long time ago. I have not had that feeling. Since the 90s, I've had own three Lexuses. I own an LX 570. Now, which I bought about 10 years ago, and it was another LX for 6470 that I had a few years before that. And I would say that the dealer experience has been nice, but certainly not exceptional and no better than BMW I have. I do have BMW, it's, it's, it's maybe worth worth noting that since Stefan, since you and I had that unpleasant dealership experience, we have owned all kinds of luxury cars, and neither one of us has bought a Mercedes. I think that's not coincidental. But anyway, Lexus kind of has, I would say, tried to change their personality over the years. And they've gotten away from just being a quiet, luxury car that competes with Mercedes, and they did something about 10 years ago, which I thought was almost uncomfortable. They're like, Okay, we're going to try to compete with BMW, and Audi, and they had the, the ISF, which was VA powered. Their small car, the ice is the a powered, actually pretty good car. One of my favorite cars of all time that I've ever driven is the GS F, I would absolutely take a GSF over an EN five or an AMG EClass. I felt that at the time. And right now if I were to buy a used one, I would buy a GSF over a similar vintage Mercedes, E Class AMG or M five. It's the GSF was spectacular. And then of course, the LFA so they went into this, like this thing where they're like, Alright, we're gonna go ahead and try to be performance and that didn't seem

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to work. Now, I mean, they, their origin was really based off my mind, you know, just luxury perfected handles, well, everything felt right ergonomics everything nothing unusual. You know, you could go from your your regular car sitting in a Lexus everything's where you knew how it was where it was supposed to be where it worked. But the level quality level was just exponentially raised above everything else. And it was a complete package and yeah, for me, Alexa sports card. And you know, I mean, you know, they I'm sure they they thought along the M series and the AMG series and they thought about the separate branding. But I think that just violates the root of what Lexus is for people like you and I think is great. They get up you know, the the F series but you're right is like that's not their core brand. That's not what I would say customer that's looking for a Lexus this that they're trying to steal from Mercedes. Somebody's been buying an AMG or or an M series and that's, that's a tough, that's a tough, tough one to do.

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Yeah. It you know, the heart wasn't in it. I think that's what it comes down to. Obviously, they had some engineers there were doozy ASIC and they, they they really didn't make good cars. I mean, the GSF one of my all time favorite drivers, the ISF very, very good, but there wasn't, it was just kind of off brand didn't fit their personality. I'll say very quickly that they made I think 500 LFHS worldwide. And I am very fortunate to have been one of the people that drove on I drove on at Sonoma Raceway without question the best car I've ever driven, and I've driven some great ones, an absolutely wonderful V 10 supercar that it was a joy to drive. It was drunk. It was a joy to listen to the engine.

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Sounds like f1. It sounds like an f1 car. It's got that wonderful v 10. Whale. That's just spectacular. Yeah.

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So I think there was no reason to, for them to kind of go on that cul de sac. And I think, I guess my point is that people in the early 90s, you know, you go to a cocktail party, people want to talk about Lexus, Lexus was really front and center. In everyone's mind, everyone was excited by the brand. And everyone thought they were great. Now you go to a cocktail party, nobody talks about Lexus. And I think if they just really were to continue to focus on quiet refinement, I think that have some things to find, you know, this too. If you're working all day, and you have a stressful job, which which we both do, and you're driving home, it's actually very nice to be in a quiet Lexus, you know, you make a couple phone calls, listens to music, and you just relax after a stressful day. I love that. And I don't need to, you know, I have an M three, which I love. But I'd rather drive a quiet Lexus after a long day at work, and relax, then then be in my M three, which demands my attention.

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Yeah, I mean, you want to be coddled, but I think you know, I think also that, you know, we talk a lot about Tesla, but I think Lexus has missed the mark that they did not come out with a Ford or luxury Evie. And we got the lucid coming out. We've got Tesla, there's you know, Mercedes has their new one. There clearly is a market for the luxury Evie. And Tesla has shown that and once again, and Lexus is very late to this party. I know they've got some things coming down the pipeline, but hey, you know, a big company like that should be at the forefront rather than be playing catch up.

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Yes, they should. I think that they've lost some specialists which they can get back up they do that. You know, I always think in terms of like, Who exactly are we talking about, that are driving these cars and you know, think of of a 40 year old lawyer who just made partner of a 45 year old accountant. Tough day at the office. They just want to have a nice drive home and be relaxed and taken care of. Imagine a really comfortable Lexus, Evie that really coddles you and makes that drive home when you're tired. extra special. I mean, what's special about Lexus now, you asked about their sales numbers. And I did look it up, they sold 304,000. So in the US last year, so they're selling a lot of vehicles, but most of those are the RT X crossover. Yeah, nothing special about that. And they also sell a lot of the NX. And the big sale was our number one our x but also they sell a lot of annexes, which is a little smaller. And then the ES the RX, of course is in the Highlander platform, and the NX is on the rav4 platform. And then the ES and those are just very ordinary cars. So what you have, when you have this lack of specialness is you get older customers, and I don't know what the average age of a Lexus buyer is, but

I would bet that it's in the 60s, whereas with Audi, I know it's right around 50. I think it's like 48, the Lexus buyer is aging. And he just you don't see him around as much as he used to. Even though they sell lots of cars. It's not something that you see in coal parts of town.

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No, I mean, I drove I was in Birmingham all weekend and so I was wearing when talking about Lexus I had my eyes out and I was expecting to see a lot actually saw. I saw three our X's, there may have been more and I just didn't notice them. I saw one ES and I saw one at one annex. That's it. I didn't see any others. And you know, this is even Sunday, you know, you think some subs engineerings and octogenarian with their Lexuses would get them out of the garage Church on the way to Cracker Barrel but it didn't happen. You know? I mean, how I mean, I'm 60 so I can talk like that. I'm just one. I'm only 10 years away from being one of them. But I didn't see him out this weekend. A lot of miles on the road and I just I was searching for a Lexus you know back in the day. You saw him all the time but what did I see f and runners everywhere I saw that it just drove I can I can tell you just drove me It drove me insane but I'll be back on the road tomorrow going to work so I'm gonna keep my eyes open but down here most mostly pickup trucks. But yeah, I feel like

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the the young by the young people that drive Lexus is when I see somebody young and cool and hip drive and Alexis it's always in one of their ads. And then when I see him on the road, it's like they're, you know, they're older. These are older people driving the Lexus is and I think that they've kind of changed something. They're not irrelevant. Nope, no vehicle All manufacturers are irrelevant. If you're selling expensive cars, and you're selling 305,000 a year, that's that's, you know, you're obviously not irrelevant. But as far as being cool, and as far as having a bright future, Lexus is not there now. And will they get there again? I don't know. So in some to some extent, I mean, Stefan, I have to say they're a little bit irrelevant.

35:23

Yeah, they are, I think so they just, they're a little bit behind the eight ball they need to catch up. And, you know, I think one of the enlightening things for me was how they lost market share. As watching, I don't remember his Top Gear, Chris Harrison, somebody was talking, but they talked about the lesson. So they had sold like four in the UK that year. LLS is, I mean, the United Kingdom, the British have never understood Lexus. They just never hit over there. And

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no, actually Europe in general, you know, if you go to Germany or, or France, I'm sure when you've taken one of your trips to France is your family. How many Alexis disease you see, like 00? Yeah. So Europe, they're not. They're doing okay, in China, and China is the biggest market. You know, in the US, we sell 1516 17 million new cars, or new light vehicles every year, China's 25 million, so they're a lot bigger. And I think Lexus is doing okay, they're not as well as Porsche, Audi, Mercedes, BMW, those those brands do do a lot with the Germans were much more invested earlier than the than the Japanese. But Lexus? Is does okay. And China, they just don't do well in Europe. Anyway. Yeah. So I guess we can move on. But I guess our message the Lexus is do a better job, you know, maybe make the dealership experience more special, and have cars that seem more special? I think, you know, let's face it. The look. And kind of the feel of a Tesla Model y is something that Lexus needs to get. I think the the Tesla Model y is more like what Lexus used to be 30 years ago.

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Yeah, I agree. You know, and I had two geniuses. That'll help us segue into my safety topic. But I had the first generation GS, designed by Guillermo and it was absolutely gorgeous. You

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look at the the old Jaguar Kensington concept from I think it was the 80s Maybe it was it would have been early 90s That was shown. And then the first GS came out and we're looking at the first Jessen, kind of boy that looks a lot like the Kensington and then it was announced, like we go into the design. So yeah,

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I had the first generation absolutely loved it. It was it was a fabulous vehicle, inline six, which is probably my favorite engine. For a road car, just smooth. I mean, unbelievably smooth. In line six has no inherent frequency vibration at all. They don't need balance shafts. So they do great at low RPMs and fabulous engines. Well, we had three kids at the time. So we were doing that typical transition from kids to booster seats, no seats, no booster seat or car seat. And the GS had a lap belt in the rear middle. And so I was there's no way I was putting one of my we just couldn't get the kids in there with a laptop. So I bought a second generation GS, which was nice, but it it wasn't as nice as the first generation it didn't look as nice as stills a fabulous car. Had it for a long time. I really enjoyed it. So that's going to be the transition to talking about you know, kids and cars and what do you do with your kids and your cars, your grandkids and cars and or you're picking up a friend's kids? Where do you put the kids in the car and

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you know, you never think about it until you get married and start having kids. And then it never ends because you have great you know, you get grandkids is a little bit of a break. But you always have to have a vehicle. Once you're once you're married you the rest of your life, you need to have a vehicle where it's safe for kids. I'm dying to know this department. It's this is an area I'm very curious about.

39:05

So the way to remember one of my last talk, we talked about how cars are crash tested with that 50% hybrid male and the females don't do as well in car crashes because the vehicles are designed in the seat belt restraint systems are designed for the 50th percentile male. So you can imagine a kid there proportionately. They're not just little, little people, not little big people, their their heads are bigger. Their proportions are different than us. So they fit the seatbelt very different. So that's why it's so important that you have you start off with a car safety seat and that's what they're called as your big car seat that you see babies going in. And if you look at those seats, you can see where the it's almost like an f1 driver, they're bundled. They've got side head protection, so their head can't rotate and keeps her head locked in. And the nice thing about those car safeties is I have three point belts. So Look, they've got one belt, you know, come on each side down across the chest. And then there's usually a big plastic padded thing that clicks in between their legs. So they are really locked in like a racecar driver. You start them off facing, rear facing not front facing because you know, a little babies can't control their head. And if you haven't facing front, in a frontal collision, with the mass of their head, devastating injuries occur, so they had to be rear facing. So you want to transition your children based on the size of the seats you have from a safety seat with the integral belt to a booster seat. And the reason you want to put a kid in a booster seat is the booster seat will move that that child so they fit the restraint system that's in the vehicle for an adult. You know what you don't want to see as a little kid sitting in the back

seat and you look there and the three point belt, the shoulder belt is coming across his underneath his chin and neck right across his neck. And I had several kids that were sitting in those and they get a horrible neck injury typically breaks her neck. They get tracheal injuries,

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do you say several mean? patients or

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patients? Yeah, that's right, I'd get several paid not mountain I'm sorry. Thank you, I'd serve up as a trauma surgeon and several pediatric injuries are just they just break your heart. But an improperly restrained child is gets severely injured in a motor vehicle collision. So you want to go the kids don't want to be in a booster seat. You know, Volvo was very good. And we had a Volvo wagon. They had an integral booster seat in the center seat, which brings the kid up automatically and our kids used to fight over that they loved that seat, they thought it was cool.

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And remember, that's the fun. And actually, we we bought a Volvo with that integrated seat after talking to you. And and we really loved that the kids loved it. I wonder if they still have that?

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Yeah, I don't know, it'd be something great to look up to see if they still have it. And

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I would assume they do such a good idea. Yeah,

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it was a great idea. You know, but the thing about car seats, that when you put them in there, don't be like Moses, you need to stop and read the directions, so you're not wandering for 40 years. So read the directions on your car seat. And they you know, cars now have latches in them, they've got the seat belt, the car seat restraint systems. So really make sure that that seat is properly attached, we had several patients where the car seats were not properly attached in the vehicle, and then the child in the car seat becomes a projectile in the vehicle. So make sure you read the directions, make sure they're well fastened. And a lot of hospitals actually have programs, a newborn and the mother leave the hospital, they actually make sure there is a car seat that is properly attached in the back. And they show the mother how to put the child into that seat. And that's very important. So we've kind of gone over the progression from a car safety seat to a booster seat to put him in a three point. Let's talk a little bit now about you know, swing, you're putting him in the car. You saying you got you say you're just putting one kid or two or three kids? Where do you put them in the back seat? Do you go inboard? In the center seat? Do you go to the outboard positions generally, what's the safest position? So you got to make a choice.

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I have always thought, again, based on conversations I've had with you over the years, although we've never actually specifically discussed this. But I've always thought you want to have as much space or enough room as much space as possible between the child and the door. So if you have right next to the door, it's going to increase the chance you're gonna get hit by a side collision, they're going to be

they're going to be injured. And if you can set a set of the absolute center. To me, that's the answer. But I don't know. That is an

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evolving, correct answer. And we'll get to the evolution. But yes, if you've got one child, you want to put them in the back in the middle seat, if it's a three point belt, that's the lap belt, don't put them there. You want to put him with a three point belt. Now if you've got a choice of how about left side or right side, so we call that the driver side or the passenger side, which would you put that so you can't put a you got a lap belt in the middle. So you have to go either side? Which side would you put them on?

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Well, I guess first you have to decide which is your favorite child. accordingly. It's I'd never thought about left versus right. That's a great question. I've never thought that

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so you want. So looking at statistics, they've done studies on driver side versus passenger side for rear side and passenger is pretty much just a statistical toss up. But the recommendation is that you want to put them on the passenger side. Two reasons. Number one is you can slide the front seat all the way forward. So the kid won't strike the back of the seat. Another reason is if you do have to pull out parallel park or park or pull on the side of the road, you are addressing the child on the passenger side of the vehicle not on the side of oncoming traffic. So that that's that makes sense. Yeah, that's smart. Yeah. You know, but like we talked about I mentioned one of our previous podcasts 69% of fatal crashes are actually going straight 20% in negotiating curve and 8% are turning left. So the really the risk from the side collision is not your greatest risk factor, but is clearly something that's very important. But the fact, overall, the risk of death is 21% lower by being in the backseat of a vehicle. So you know, if you've got your choice, you want to sit in the back, that's of all, I'll get to why that's changing a little bit. But if you put a child in the rear middle, they have a 43%, lower risk of injury. So is that's where your kid needs to be. And then, if you got three kids in the back, you got to pick where you put the most vulnerable child, which is going to be the infant in the middle. And then you'd put the largest kid, you know, probably, you know, you put them on the left side, and the kid on the smaller kid, and you're gonna put them on the right side, or they're probably had the lowest injury. You know, make sure move that seat forward. But let's say you've got 212 year olds in the backseat, and they want to sit next to each other. What do you tell them? The one wants to sit in the middle and one wants to sit on the side? What would you do? I would say no, no, you want to move apart? Yeah. Because then because

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their heads are gonna back together.

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So I had several cases where they were sitting next to each other in an impacts their head hit each other. And they had devastating head injuries and skull fracture. So because as an occupant in a vehicle, you become a moving object. And you will move until you strike something else. So yeah, but if you've got two kids by them, I put them on the outside, not not one of the metal, the data is changing on front versus rear seat. And what's happened is with the new Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and I HS testing, is the front seat has gotten way safer. So it's not that the back seat has gotten more dangerous. But now what's happening is seatbelts have evolved. So now we have pretensioners. So at a pretensioner does is when Mercedes started at this out with the safe system. When the vehicle

senses an impact, you actually have a little detonation or an electric motor in the seatbelt that tightens the seatbelt pulls you into the seat. So it's pre loading the seatbelt to allow you to have a greater time to decelerate rather than slamming forward in the seatbelt and then actually pushing through the seatbelt.

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And the seatbelt. That's the is to help with the seatbelt stretching. So that actually decreases the amount of stretching that

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happens. Yeah, yes. And then the second thing they've now added or load limiters, so they're actually lit so the seatbelt is actually allowing you to ride down that belt rather than act on you know, you wouldn't want a seat belt made out of stainless steel and kitchen hat. So now you've got pretensioners and load limiters. Now about a third of manufacturer vehicles offer pretensioners and load limiters and the rear seat of the vehicle, which is very interesting. So the Camrys got it. The Ultima forester. Ford hasn't a lot of their vehicles including escape and explore. Of course Volvo and BMW and Audi Consumer Reports has an article and I'll try to I'll eventually we'll link that on our website that shows you the vehicles that have these but what the reason we talked about center versus passenger and driver side is we're not seeing these yet from a packaging standpoint yet in the center rear seat. So you got the option of sitting in the backseat of a car with a seat limiters and pretensioners in the bag, you're gonna want that seat belt. So you've preferably put your kid in the Outboard Seat and that vehicle in NHTSA actually recommends now that if you're 55 and older that you sit in the front of the vehicle not at the back seat. You see a lot of old people like to sit in the back with the empty front passenger seat. But because as we get older, our bones become a little bit they break easier or spine breaks easier or less compliant or a lot stiffer, you know that everyday you wake up that they recommend that actually you sit in the front. And somebody important to see a lot of people do they'll sit in the front and then they want to slide that seat all the way to the back to given stay away from the dash Well, you don't want to slide it back so far that you're not integrated with the seatbelt. And so you want to make sure that you're sitting at a point where the belt is properly tension against you. If you're so far back you've got a gap between the seatbelt that's bad. So you know IHS Insurance Institute for Highway Safety is planning on testing rear seat occupants starting about hopefully the maybe end of this year in the next year, which would be really exciting to see that now you'll be able to get data on what happens to people in the front and people in the rear. And, you know, hope I think is something that you do need to decide when you buy a vehicle is to look at the safety aspect of because you want to protect your loved ones. That kind of

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date. I'm glad they're doing that. You know it's funny, I don't this is not my area, but I would have assumed They would already be doing that testing. And I'm surprised that this is a new thing.

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Yeah, I mean, to me, it's how hard could it be to just I mean, they've been throwing dummies in the back and kind of crash and see, but now they're really, they're gonna start testing it routinely. Course nit says behind on this, he says they say they want to look into it, but they don't have any immediate plans in the future. But I just does. I think

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that it's important just because on the one hand, yeah, it's important for kids, which we talked about, but with more and more people doing ride hailing, and Uber and Lyft. Now, you know, you when you do that

you're in the backseat. So I think you have more backseat passengers than you did before. You're at Hoover.

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Exactly. And that's where a lot of this data has come from the spark that data was crash involving Uber and Lyft. were seated documents, because now we're seeing really more we're seated occupants in vehicles than we used to, because of ride sharing. That makes a lot of sense. So yeah, so put your kid may, you know, be be adamant about those kids. And I think you know, that the thing that we found that you see, oh, people say, Oh, my kid won't sit in the car seat, if you start them off early, and they just don't have a choice is not it's not, you know, kids don't have to have always have a choice in life. Now, they don't have a choice, if that's what you're sitting in, you know, and you start them off from the little infant car seat, you move them up and keep them in that all the way through the booster. And typically, it's when they get about four foot eight or so that they're big enough that they don't need that anymore, but you want to really make sure that they're they're fitting that belt properly.

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That makes sense. You know, it's funny to find you, you spend all this money on a car and you want to make it safe. And you, you look at the safety ratings, and you make your decision, you buy a Volvo or you buy something that is completely safe, and you do all that work, and you spend all that money to protect the people you love. And then you defeat the purpose by putting the car seat in wrong or, or letting your child not put the seatbelt on or not having a booster seat. That defeats the whole purpose of buying a car and keeping them safe in the first place. That's it just you gotta be consistent all the way through. Right, exactly.

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Here too. So I think it's interesting, the data is going to continue to change and evolve. But you know, the good thing is cars are getting profoundly safer than they ever have been. And it's a wonderful thing that you know, but the biggest thing that we could do to change our fatality rate on our on our roads is driver behavior. And that's that's that's another topic is driver behavior. That's the most dangerous aspect of the vehicle is the person behind the wheel. cars aren't dangerous trucks aren't dangerous, is the person behind the wheel is dangerous. And so we'll get into driver behavior and in another another podcast down the road.

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Beautiful. Yeah, want to hear about that. And one thing we've never talked about so far, that I want to hear about in a future episode is motorcycles. So yeah, yeah. Well, guess what? That's about those things. All right. Well, that's it for episode seven. And we very much appreciate your interest in attention and feedback. Keep listening until your friends. Thank you for participating with us.