

At last, a woman's armor against unscrupulous automotive scams.

A Woman's Guide To Avoiding Automotive Scams

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Chapter Three: What You Can Look Forward to When Buying a Car



Let's face it, most car salesmen benefit from their sales in one way or another. They usually get commission, so their decisions on what vehicle is best for you are, nine times out of ten, biased. Maybe they've even got a wagered bet going to see which salesperson can unload a pile of junk first. You never know. If the salesperson is the owner of the car lot, in most cases, he is going to try and sell you the one he'll make the most money off of, or the one that's going to be the most difficult to sell, not necessarily the best one or the best deal.

If it's independent owners you're dealing with, they just want to unload the vehicle at the best price they can get and chances are, you can't trust them to tell you what, if anything, is wrong with the vehicle and many times, they've temporarily rigged it to make problems less noticeable.

Back to the car lots . . . when you deal with a car lot, some vehicles will have factory warranties and some won't, usually depending on how old the vehicle is. Understandable. What isn't understandable is when a salesperson sells you on the fact that the car is under warranty, but fails to give you the paperwork.

For instance . . .

Charlene was in the market for a new vehicle, so she went to what she thought was a reputable dealership to buy her car. She believed Myth #1 – Dealerships are less likely to rip you off.

She had her heart set on a new SUV (sports utility vehicle) that would be just perfect for her and her kids to go on their regular outings which included hiking in rough terrains. With two teenaged boys, she was always taking them hiking, fishing or hunting. They loved the great outdoors.

She left the dealership with a used Buick Skylark, totally unfit for the adventures she had in mind. I'm sure you're asking yourself..."How did THAT happen?"

Well, in addition to Myth #1, Katie fell for Myth #6 "Men know everything about automobiles" and Myth #7 "Experts can be trusted."

The salesman played on her fear and concern for her children's safety. He convinced her that the SUV she wanted would turn over easily and threw in a bunch of jargon she didn't understand that made her think that, without a doubt, he knew exactly what he was talking about.

Her second desire was to have a vehicle that was under warranty so she wouldn't have to worry about repair expenses for a while. He sold her on the used Skylark by appealing to her feminine side and showing her all the luxury components of the car. It was a nice car, even if it wasn't what she wanted, but she was leery about buying a used car.

The slick salesman had a solution to that too. He convinced her that the car was still under warranty as it had less than 50,000 miles on it. It would be good for the long-run and with a parts and service warranty, there were no worries.

Hook, line and sinker, Charlene bought the car.

When she got home with it, the boys were quite disappointed. She assured them it would be okay and they could still go on their outings. She pointed out all the luxury accessories that she fell head over heels for, but they were not impressed. “Oh well,” she said, “It’s too late to take it back.”

About a month later, much to Charlene’s dismay, she got stranded on the highway. She didn’t have a cell phone with her, so she had to walk to the nearest building to use the phone. That experience itself was quite humiliating with passersby honking and whistling at her.

She finally reached a phone and called to have her car towed to the dealership. She wasn’t nearly as worried about the diagnosis as she had been in the past because she had a warranty, or so she thought.

After a little while, the mechanic came out and gave her the rundown of what was wrong with her car. There was a problem with the fuel system and she needed a new fuel pump and fuel filter. Expecting that would be covered under the warranty, she directed the mechanic to go ahead with the work.

When she had her friend drop her off to pick up her vehicle from the shop at the dealership, she got hit with a bill she was not expecting. She told the service clerk that she had bought the car less than a month ago and the car was under warranty. The service clerk ran a computer query and told Charlene there was no record that the vehicle was under warranty and asked for her warranty papers. She had none.

She couldn’t pay for the repairs, so the service clerk explained that when an automotive shop works on your vehicle, they have a mechanic’s lien on it. They would keep the car and if she could come up with the money in a reasonable

amount of time she could have the car back. If not, they would sell it to cover the cost of repairs.

Charlene was steaming! She looked up the salesperson that sold her the car and confronted him. He told her she was confused. He said that she looked at some cars that had warranties, but the one she had purchased was not one of them. She knew better, but had no way of proving it.

Plain and simple . . . Charlene was a victim. She was a victim of naivety, a victim of persuasion, and a victim of a heartless automobile salesman who was concerned with nothing more than making the sale.

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