

FEB - 7 2013

NVS-200
CL-10498661-9508

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EXECUTIVE SECRET

Santa Monica CA

2013 FEB - 6

RECEIVED - NHTSA

2013 January 30

Catastrophic Electric Power Steering Pump Failure
2005 Mini Cooper S Coupe WMWRE33435T

Last week on Tuesday morning, 2013 January 22, I drove my Mini to a local repair depot for a routine coolant exchange and general inspection. In heavy, rapidly moving, commute traffic the steering power assist failed abruptly creating a moment of panic as I fought to regain control of the situation. It was definitely a huge personal safety issue for a few seconds as I confronted the unrespondant steering input and assessed the problem. (I do possess many decades of experience in repairing automobiles plus I have BS, MS, PhD degrees in physics and engineering from MIT and Caltech!)

My personal mechanic verified what I surmised. The elecric power steering motor quit, quite likely due to the failure of the auxiliary cooling fan. I was shocked again when he told me that the cost of the parts alone was in excess of \$1100, as purchased from an authorized Mini dealer. (In addition to the safety hazard, these prices are **outrageous** for a \$22,000 car!)

Now this vehicle is clearly beyond its initial 3 yr/36,000 mi warranty. But, what occurred is obviously a *major* engineering error that puts any Mini owner's life in jeopardy. There is *not* even a dashboard warning light to indicate something awry, as there is for brakes, seat belts, doors, oil pressure,

I have, as an automotive enthusiast, sought to maintain this car in near "concourse" condition, religiously observing every service recommendation you suggest ... and I have the records to prove that! For a Mini with 19,500 miles on the odometer, under these circumstances, I believe that you, Mini/BMW, should reimburse me the circa \$1600 I incurred for this repair. A copy of the relevant receipt is enclosed.

A copy of this memo has been sent to NHTSA, the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration in Washington DC for their evaluation.

Other than this momentarily terrifying and highly expensive incident, I have enjoyed over eight years of Mini motoring that meets or exceeds that promised by the Mini group of USA.

As a corollary, every year hundreds of colleagues who respect my automotive expertise seek advice on an auto to buy. For the last eight years, I have, without hesitation, extolled the virtues of the Mini brand. From this time forward, what I will say depends entirely on the manner in which you resolve my complaint.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

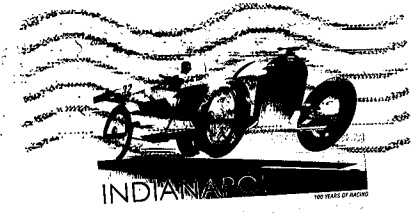
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NHTSA HEADQUARTERS
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BMW Mini Cooper Safety Danger

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