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Daimler Chrysler Corp.
Customer Service Center/Customer Complaints
P.O. Box 21-8004
Auburn Hills, Michigan 48301-8001

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Dear Chrysler Customer Service Representative,

In January of 1996, my wife and I were impressed with your minivan design and features when we were looking to buy a family car. Our third child was to be born in June and our Lexus ES250 was going to be undersized to carry a family of five to our daily routines and travels. We have always enjoyed the dependability of the Toyota line of cars and had owned 3 other Toyota vehicles for about 10 years each. Toyota's van as well as other competitor minivans at the time were undersized and did not have the many features we found with your Grand Caravan. Many of the automobile magazines hailed the Chrysler minivans as top in their class. Despite our apprehension about unreliable American made cars, we proudly bought our minivan and recommended them to others that we know. Little did we know we were embarking on a hellish road of repeated car problems related to poor product parts design and at times to poor customer service by dealership technicians.

My wife and I are very busy health professionals. My wife is a psychologist and housewife. I own and operate my own dental office. With three young children and busy schedules, the least we wanted to do was to buy a used car and the problems that they have. After a lot of research, we settled on the Dodge Grand Caravan I.E FWD with 3.8 liter engine, heavy duty brakes, touring package, child built in car seats in the middle row bench seat as well as many other features. It was over \$28,000 and was the most we had ever paid for a car. I have to say the drive is comfortable and the features of the van very helpful when traveling with a family.

My wife and I are extremely disappointed in your van due to the repeated problems we have had from the brake system and electrical system problems, to the gas tank that would not hold 20 gallons and the door locks that would open and close while driving. We consider the van a Lemon. If we had not purchased an extended warranty with a non-Chrysler company, the repair costs to my family would have been in the thousands of dollars. My wife drove the car most of the time during the week. I drove the van on the weekends. We drive an average of 9,000 miles per year in this van. The problems with the van has reached such a climax, it has caused a rift between my wife and I over the fact that I insisted on keeping the van any longer. I keep our low mileage cars in good condition and have regular maintenance on all our vehicles every 5,000 miles. Due to our low miles per year and good maintenance record, we keep our vehicles for about 10 years before we replace them. We have two other cars as well, both Toyotas. My 1987 Landcruiser has had only one non-maintenance related problem that occurred twice, a radiator leak, that was cured when the radiator was replaced in 1990. Our 1990 Lexus gave us no problems in the 10 years we owned it. We now own a second new Landcruiser we bought in January of 2000. We expected to keep our minivan for 10 years. My dental hygienist also had a 1996 Chrysler minivan but was so aggravated with the repeated problems; she sold her van after 3 years and bought a Toyota Sienna.

I have documented most of our vehicle problems in the following 8 pages. This list has lapses of time that are as much as several months before it was taken in to service. This is sometimes due to the fact that the problem would start out intermittent. We would have to wait until it was consistent enough to occur when we would take it in for evaluation and service. My wife and I have lived with many car alarm outbursts, door lock openings, interior lights flashing on and off, and squealing brakes until it was obvious to the technician that the problem did exist. I have spoken several times to Linda Marraquin in their customer service department at the Whittier Chrysler-Jeep dealership. In mid July, I requested a meeting with the Zone representative. She said he wasn't available until later in August. I told her it has taken me countless hours to get all the documentation together in an easily readable form. I informed her we have complained several times over the years to the Customer Service Center in Michigan with occasional help to reduce the cost of a repair. She has been kind and has offered to meet with her to consider trading in the van for a new Chrysler product or possibly an Isuzu. I indicated we have every intention of getting rid of the van but I am angry with the Chrysler Corporation for putting out a poorly made product. I feel cheated out of the 10 years I expected to keep our van and slighted by the over 70 hours of time I have in dealing with various Chrysler service people to get the van repaired and back on the road for my family. My wife's anger and frustration over being in a car she felt she couldn't rely on is beyond words. For many trips, I have asked my wife to take the Landcruiser so that she can feel safer in her travels.

I also feel your company has been dishonest in covering up your problems with this minivan. Most of the problems with our van could lead to safety problems and avoidable injury or death. The collapsing gas tank problem was a well known problem that you did not make well known to your customers unless they noticed it. The same is true for many other problems such as the failing clockspring devices in the steering columns. Your Mopar batteries are poorly made and your brake pads are a failure. You have cheated many customers of their very valuable family time by causing them to spend time on the phone, waiting at the service departments of your dealerships to repair the problems, and spend time compiling the complaints and letters to let you know you have let your customers down. With the twelve hours a day I devote during the week to patient care and business management, my family time is extremely valuable. You have robbed me of over 70 hours of my family time to deal with your products poor parts design. You have given me headaches and frustration as well as a source of irritation in my wife's relationship with me. What is worse, when I have brought the vehicle in for repair, the same problem has taken multiple visits sometimes as many as 6 times to solve and repair. The techs can only call your Star department and ask, what do you want us to do? Shame on you Chrysler for the pain and problems you have caused my family and the many families and individuals who have bought your vehicles in good faith.

As I told Linda Marraquin at the Whittier Chrysler-Jeep dealership, for all the grief and anguish, loss of product longevity and use, and loss of personal time, I want Chrysler to buy back our minivan from us for \$20,000. It would be unethical for me to sell this vehicle to anyone else. I am sending a copy of this letter to Linda Marraquin at Whittier Chrysler-Jeep (she noted she would pass a copy along to the zone rep.), a number of governmental agencies including the United States National Highway Safety Administration, Dept. of Transportation, the California Department of Consumer Affairs, and the consumer group founded by Ralph Nader. I would hope you respond quickly to my letter and do not force me to make this an issue involving litigation. I feel I am being very fair with my request and I look forward to bringing this issue to a close.

Sincerely,

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PROTECT UNWARRANTED INVASION OF
PERSONAL PRIVACY PURSUANT TO
EXEMPTION 6 OF THE FREEDOM OF
INFORMATION ACT, 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(6)**

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