

Pantera International:

Our 2 ZF mechanics thought the Mason/Hairston article (April,1975) very funny but I didn't because a severe dis-service was done Pantera owners by implying that once ZF parts were in hand, a satisfactory repair could be made by local mechanics.

That this is not true, is attested by the disastrously expensive experience of the majority who have tried it. We know because we get a steady stream of needlessly damaged, disassembled transaxles for repair, from garages and others who should have known better. It should also be pointed out, that the reason that FoMoCo declined to furnish parts, tools, and training to Lincoln-Mercury service departments was the realization that the results would not be satisfactory. The ZF is the most complicated and critical transaxle in existence, and Pantera owners better recognize that before allowing their local mechanics to start prying it apart.

To put everyone on the right track, let's clarify a few things:

(a) Current list price on a new 5DS25/2 from Ford is \$1886.65. The same box retails in W.Germany for \$3145.00 (7400 DM). Is Ford ripping you off ?

(b) Pantera Performance Center does sell parts. We will get you twice, however, once when we sell them, and again when you ship the box to us because the local people " found just too much wrong inside it".

Also, contrary to the Mason/Hairston article, we do not charge "\$175 for the synchro ring". If all you want is a 2nd gear synchronizer ring, it costs \$35.75 (without a \$21 phone call to Germany) and it will go out UPS the next day. What did cost \$175 was an entire 2/3 gear synchronizer consisting of 9 parts, including both rings, hub, slider, springs,slugs, etc. However, this assembly is now \$210.30. We do not charge anything for shipping, that expense goes to whatever carrier you choose to use, and is dependent on how quickly you want it moved. Round trip by air, Calif/Florida could run as high as \$100, but you would have your ZF back in 4 to 5 days, repaired perfectly.

Her's what we do, and what we charge for fixing 2nd gear grinding problems.

- (a) Disassemble and clean entire gear housing group.
- (b) Inspect with critical and experienced eyes all the parts.
- (c) Phone customer with report prior to starting repair, and confirm work and cost.
- (d) Replace defective synchronizer with new factory parts. Install all necessary seals, gaskets, and other minor parts.
- (e) Re-crate and deliver to airport, REA, etc.
- (f) Guarantee our work for 90 days. Charge a flat \$350 for all of this.

Now, here are some other things you ought to know. Even today, with 2 years of experience on ZF and 12 years prior experience with Hewland,Porsche, and VW, some of the synchro repair jobs still take us over 8 hours of fitting and re-fitting. Yet we are using a set of special, \$1600, ZF tools to "quickly" disassemble and reassemble, plus a 30 ton press, plus the precise application of the heating torch or chilling, as required.

We're not saying your local good guy can't do it - but the chances of getting it done satisfactory is no better than 1 in 5 in our experience.

One last thing, driving about any length of time with a bum synchro destroys the ribbed and tapered surface on the gear itself. And it doesn't take too long to do it. Cost for a new 2nd gear set- \$296 ! and when a mechanic inexperienced at ZF's looks at it, it'll probably look "a little polished, but ok" if he notices it at all.

However, after you've paid for the job, plus paid for putting the box back in your car, guess what - it still grinds !

Sincerely,
H.I.Kleinpeter / Pantera Performance Center.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Mr. Kleinpeter's letter is in reference to TIS Group # 16, Article # 1. We wish to point out that nothing in the article was meant, in any way, to deprecate or question the ability of Pantera Performance Center to competently repair ZF transaxles. Quite to the contrary, we have not received any complaints, from anyone, about the quality of their work; and the firm may be the only one in the U.S. that is repairing ZFs on a regular, somewhat large scale basis. Likewise, we did not mean to imply that nearly any local mechanic could properly repair the units, nor did we intend to belittle the complexity of the gearbox itself. It's certainly a far cry from a Muncie four speed! Our intent was simply to relate a circumstance that we knew, first hand, had frustrated a number of owners; and to describe a way (seemingly the only way at the time the article was written) that those owners who desired to could purchase ZF parts.

At the present time Pantera Performance Center will sell ZF parts at prices comparable to the factory's; although with considerable concern and reservation about the chances of an owner getting a satisfactory repair from a local mechanic. Also, for clarification, the \$350 price, quoted in Mr. Kleinpeter's letter for second gear repairs, includes all of the parts in the 9 piece, \$210 assembly, if they are needed.

So now you can pay your money and take your choice. We recommend that you at least call Pantera Performance to talk about any ZF repairs that you need. Even if you decide not to have them do the work, they are still the best current source of parts. The telephone number is (305) 887-8903.