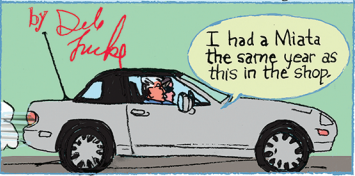


# An Interview on Wheels!

Lou Ferreira drives cars a lot. He drives them to find out what's wrong. He drives them to make sure they're truly fixed. He drives them to places like Newburgh Auto Glass and drops them off so they can get things like Windshields. Then he needs a ride home if. Which is how this cartoonist and the busy mechanic came to be talking over a steering wheel.



It needed a new engine. I couldn't find one. I called up and down the East Coast. Then, one day, I saw a tow truck go by with a Miata. The top was off... it was filled with leaves... water... it had been abandoned. I assumed it was going to the junk yard.



So I called and asked, "Did you just get a Miata in?" "How did you know?" they said. I bought it, took out the engine, fixed my car, and sold the body back to the junk yard.



Some interview different car. Now, this car had a problem. You try to put in gas -- the fuel cuts off after 10 cents. You squeeze the nozzle and it does another 10 cents and shuts off.



The owner calls me and says: It's making me crazy! I take it for a drive, put in gas, at 10 cents, it shuts off. So now we research.



We get AllData, which is a bulletin from dealers. Their advice tends to be excessive fixes that cost a lot of \$\$\$\$. On this car, AllData said to replace the fuel tank. I found an online forum that said dirt in the fuel canister is clogging it up. So we replaced just that part.



Kelly McCarvel  
Mechanic  
Ferreira's Auto

After confirming the tank will now take \$36.50 in gas, we continue the interview in yet another vehicle. This one has an extra engine in the back. It's headed to Reich's Machine Shop.

I go all the way to Walden because they're the best.



When cars overheat, the head can warp or crack. I pressure-test them--fill them with air to see if there's any leaks. Then I cut them down so they're square and clear.

I bring him a headache; he fixes it. I take all the credit.

Shawn Jackson,  
Auto Mechanic  
Reich's Machine Shop

Next stop, the ignition and alternator place. I only work with repair shop owners [like Lou] that know what they're doing. A mechanic could replace an alternator without asking why it has gone bad. If a bad battery caused it, it burns out the new alternator. Then, they try to return the part!

Oh, yeah. Anyone can put up an Auto Repair sign. There should be a test.

Lucho Lee  
Orange Auto  
Electric

Parts are getting more and more complicated. A Toyota came in that had a problem with the computer. So I buy a new computer. The dealer has to flash it to tell the computer to work with this car--you put in the VIN number. It's the same with a lot of parts. How can I buy a machine that will only work on a Toyota... a Honda... a Hyundai... a BMW? Each machine is \$6,000. IMPOSSIBLE! So I buy the part, install it, tow the car to the dealer, and have them flash it.



I'm guessing you have your own tow truck. Always.

I'm a dying breed. We work on 150 different models. Dealer mechanics are experts in certain cars. Problem is the dealer pays his mechanics on commission. When a car comes in here with a small problem we only charge that small amount because we're in it for the long haul.



The interview concludes when I drop Lou at Jerry's Auto Body to pick up a no-longer-dented car.