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YOUR LOSS?

An affordable and effective solution to vehicle theft

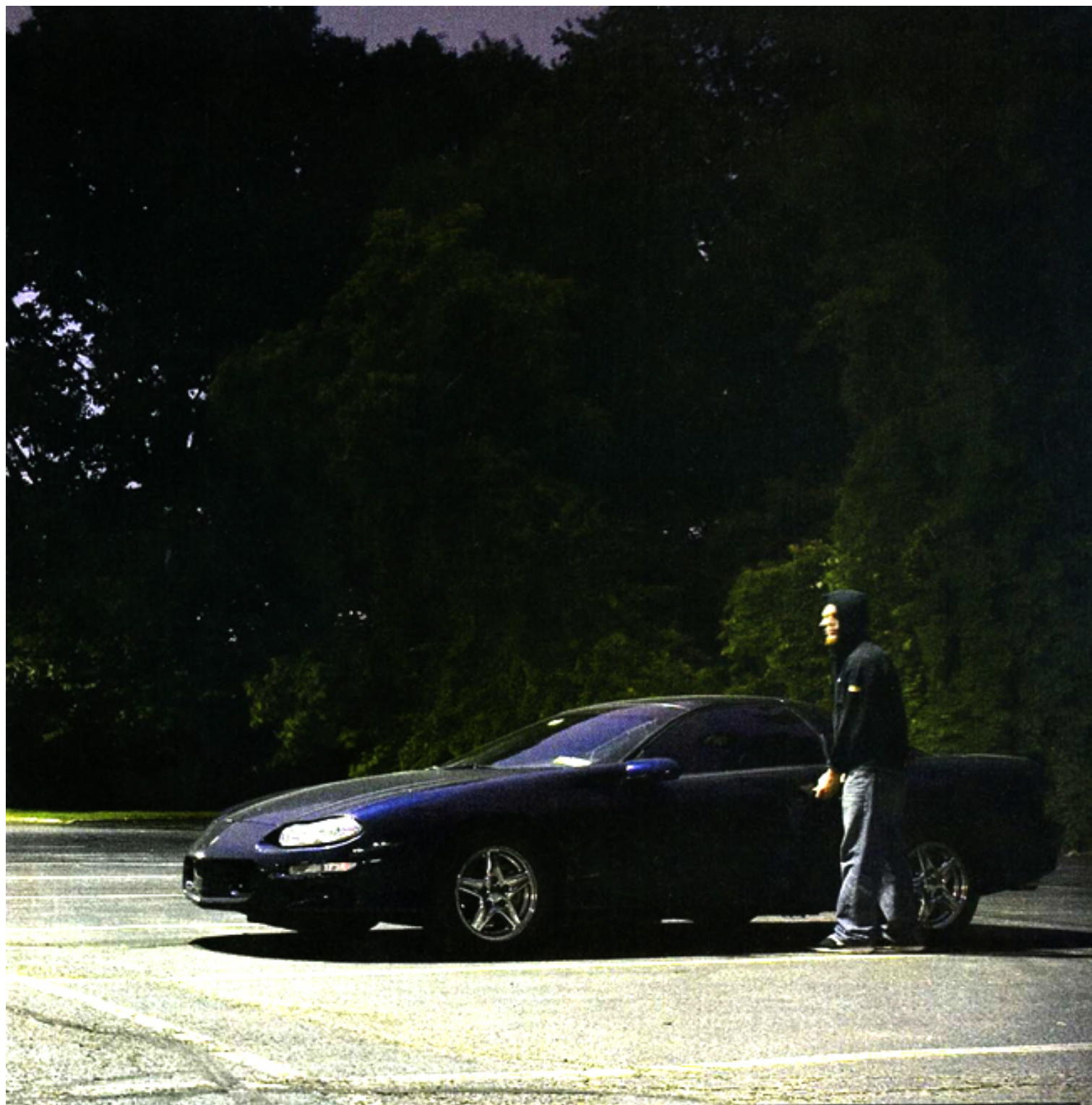
BY RICK JENSEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE AUTHOR

Car theft is a fact of life in America—over 1.2 million were stolen in 2004, according to the FBI. While some are lucky enough to live in rural areas where auto theft isn't a threat, most of us live in suburban and urban areas where it is a real and growing problem. While the FBI found that there was a nearly 2 percent drop in auto theft in 2004 compared to 2003, there are many areas around the U.S. that have seen drastic car theft increases in recent years. The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program mapped the changes in America's auto theft from 2002 to 2003. While many markets, including the New York metro area, Houston, and Chicago, showed large declines in theft that year, many states known for EFI GMs—including California, Texas, Michigan, Florida, North Carolina, and Illinois—showed 7 to 52

percent increases in auto theft in many of their cities! Faced with that fact, those of us who put a great deal of time and money into our vehicles simply can't afford to not protect them.

"I ended up in this business because I had my car stolen," David Wilmouth, our Ravelco installer, tells us. "I was driving an '86 Honda Accord, and when it happened, I wanted to make sure that it never happened again. So I did a lot of research into theft deterrents, and I ended up contacting Ravelco."

At the time, Houston-based Ravelco didn't have an installer in the New England area—but as it so happened, the father of Ravelco creator Vincent Raviele lived in the area and agreed to do the install on David's 1986 Blazer. David, a grad student with a good handle on electronics, was intrigued by the system's installation, and soon this



satisfied customer was the president of Northeast Ravelco, selling and installing the theft-deterrent system that impressed him so much.

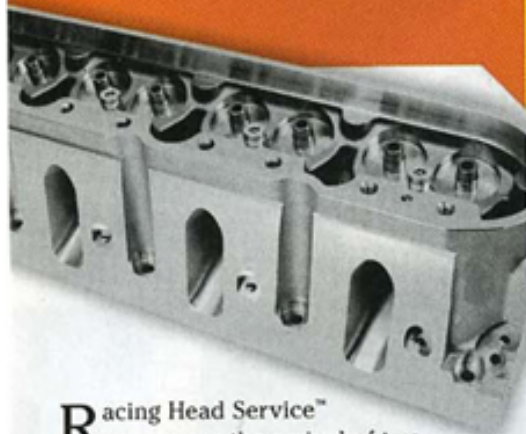
"The thing that impressed me the most was its track record. And I wanted something that would work and not be just another noisy alarm system. Plus, every install is different from vehicle to vehicle. And actually trying to defeat it takes a huge amount of time. Let's liken it to changing a timing belt: even if you know how to change a timing belt, there's no quick way to do it. That same theory applies to the Ravelco: even if a thief found out how the system was installed, it would take too much time to bypass it."

David was on hand to install a Ravelco system into my 2001 Z28 Camaro. I live in Queens, and high-end cars and SUVs disappear from my street all the time. While anyone who has a vehicle stolen is going to be pretty pissed, you all know as well as I that it's 10 times worse for an enthusiast. We take this pretty personally, and I've had two failed

theft attempts on my cars in the past. While I would very much like to invoke my Second Amendment rights in regard to theft protection, NYC is a bit harsh on residents who ventilate people—even criminals. So, just like David, I did lots of research to find a practical, affordable, and most of all, effective theft deterrent—and I ended up looking at Ravelco. This system, including installation, starts at \$350 and usually will cost around \$400.

We'll keep the actual installation process private, for obvious reasons. I was present during the installation and can unequivocally state that this system is for real. On top of the Ravelco's design and the standard in-depth installation that uses yards of identical black wiring, I witnessed David doing several other Ravelco tricks in the engine bay, all of which were designed to thoroughly confuse a would-be thief. The Ravelco is a real paradox: a simple design that makes theft very tough for the bad guys.

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PROTECT YOUR RIDE!

Heed these tips to make your high-performance GM a hard target for thieves:

- Locked garage parking is best: if you have it, always use it. Otherwise, park in a well-lit area that's visible to you, if possible
- Don't leave your car running unattended, or leave the ignition key in the car. Car thieves are opportunists
- Don't park in a semi-secure lot with little foot traffic. Thieves love the privacy. Store valuables out of view when you leave the vehicle
- Don't leave your personal IDs or registration/ insurance cards in the vehicle. Roll windows up, put top up, and install roof/T-tops
- If driveway parking, block your valuable vehicle in with another vehicle
- If street parking, turn wheels toward the curb and leave little space between cars
- Layer your protection—a combination of theft-deterrents, alarm systems, and recovery systems will do more than just one device
- If you don't have protection yet, disconnect the battery and/or computer
- VIN etching isn't necessarily best—thieves can get keys cut with your VIN

CONCLUSION

After using the Ravelco Anti-theft Device for three months, I've seen no adverse side effects to the installation. The idea of splicing into your wiring harness can make many people worry about electrical gremlins popping up, but I've seen none. I was also wary of the mounting location of the base unit, as it was at an angle and I wondered if the gray cap would pop off—especially on the bumpy roads that I travel. My installer said it wouldn't, and it hasn't, thanks to a snug fit onto the base unit. Once you get into your vehicle, you simply plug it into the base unit, turn the key, and away you go. Depending on which circuits the installer has tapped, some

installs may result in the engine running for a few seconds after the plug is pulled—a feature that may come in handy if faced with a carjack situation.

I won't be leaving this Z in the Brooklyn projects to test the Ravelco's effectiveness—because it has already been tested in 2001 in Mexico City by a company owned by the seven major insurance companies in Mexico. This company had professional thieves attempt to steal a 2002 Nissan Sentra with a variety of anti-theft devices, alarms, and tracking systems installed. Every other system was defeated in under three minutes. The thieves worked on the Ravelco for 35 minutes—and finally just gave up. For under \$500, that peace of mind is a steal.

A WORD ABOUT AUTO SECURITY

WITH RICHARD BISCEVIC, CALIFORNIA RAVELCO

Your readers have lots of choices about auto security. They should be aware of some of the shortfalls regarding security when making their choices.

At some level, we all know that no one pays attention to car alarms. How many times have you gone to the mall and heard an annoying car alarm and actually thought someone was breaking into a car? And how many times have you actually called the police when hearing a car alarm? "Never" is the most common answer to both questions. If that is the case, why spend money on something you know not to work?

Sirens and blinking lights do nothing to deter a thief. Someone bold enough to break a window or door lock in order to get in a car and take a leather jacket, an iPod, or even a \$5 bill, is not afraid of a siren or blinking light. They know no one will pay attention to it. They'll bust open the door lock, grab what they want and go. A siren will not protect the contents of your car. If they want the car, they have a number of avenues of accomplishing that task.

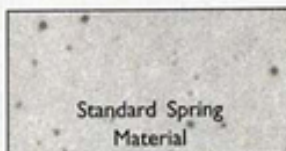
Unfortunately, alarms are very easy to defeat. What I'm going to tell you is stuff car thieves already know, but consumers may not.

All car alarms use the switch in the door jam (the one that turns the interior light on). When the thief opens the door and the alarm goes off, they can just

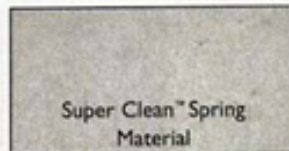
THE TRUTH ABOUT VALVE SPRINGS

THE DIFFERENCE IS BENEATH THE SURFACE.

Try to cut corners with a set of "low-buck" valve springs and chances are you'll get exactly what you pay for. You might even get some things you didn't pay for: tiny pockets of material impurities, called "inclusions," that are undetectable to the naked eye but which loom large under a high-powered microscope. These inclusions are directly responsible for 95% of all valve spring failures, failures that can lead to destructive piston-to-valve contact. When you stop to consider the cost of rebuilding a high-performance engine, it's clear that those low-buck valve springs might not be such a great buy after all.



Standard Spring Material



Super Clean™ Spring Material

*Under the microscope, impurities which lead to failure are clearly visible

What Is Super Clean™ Material?

COMP Cams® valve springs are produced from a patented steel material, which is only produced by a select group of licensed foundries throughout the world. Our metallurgists Eddy-Current test and microscopically inspect the raw spring material to continuously verify that it meets COMP Cams™ stringent standards for purity, tensile strength and chemical composition. Only after this rigorous, multi-phase evaluation does the material earn the right to wear the Super Clean™ label and be used in COMP Cams® valve springs.

Added Processes Make A Difference

But Super Clean™ steel is only part of the story. Every COMP Cams® valve spring is created using the latest CNC coiling machinery, then stress-relieved, ground, deburred, shot-peened and heat-set prior to shipment. Processes that, although time-consuming and costly, produce a better product; making COMP Cams® Super Clean™ valve springs your best investment!

*Check out www.compcams.com/beehive for high-speed valve spring video footage.

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break the door switch, close the door and leave. The owner comes out, sees nothing is wrong with the car, and resets the alarm. The thief comes back later, opens the car door, and because the switch is broken, no alarm. It is that simple!

If the car is equipped with a motion sensor, sometimes a thief will set the alarm off and then hide repeatedly. Each time the owner comes out and sees nothing is wrong with the car. The owner is eventually worn down, and thinking something is wrong with the alarm, turns it off. The thief is then free to hotwire the car and drive away.

If they don't want to come back later, they just drop underneath the dash, find the two wires going from the alarm through the hole in the fire wall and clip them. The siren is silenced. The more skilled thieves find the main box and clip the wires right there. (I've heard stories from customers of thieves breaking into the car to steal the alarm module advertised on their window!) And we haven't even talked about code grabbers that are readily available on the Internet!

One of the main problems with alarms is that all their wires are exposed and connected right underneath the dash. That is the first place thieves look to defeat any car security, and it is the first place alarm installers put the computers. And unfortunately, once a thief learns how to defeat one brand of car alarm, they can defeat almost all of them.

So given that car alarms do not deter thieves from stealing the contents of the car, are easy to defeat, and do not stop a thief from stealing the car, why get an alarm as the first layer of defense? People should first protect the most valuable asset: the car itself.

So how about tracking devices? GPS-based systems require the antenna be exposed to the sky, as they can not be mounted under metal. Without the antenna, the satellite can not see the car. This makes them vulnerable to having the GPS antenna broken off. For OEM installed systems, this is an obvious task as the antenna is mounted clearly on the leading or trailing edge of the roof. Other systems mount in 'hidden' locations, but they all must be exposed to the sky, and therefore their hiding places are limited. Without the antenna, a GPS-based tracking system is ineffective.

Radio-based systems used by police first require the police to have the time to locate your car. In heavily populated areas, this could take hours in the best case scenario. When a small crew can strip a car in less than eight minutes using just hand tools, why let them take the car in the first place? If the thief has parked the car in an underground garage, a thickly walled structure, or shipping container, odds are the radio waves will not be able to penetrate it. Just look at your cell phone. If you don't have a signal, odds are that a radio based system won't find a car where you are. The thief can also just drive your car out of range. Even the most popular tracking system only has statewide coverage (defined as over 80 percent of the population) in 8 of the 50 states!

The bottom line is that tracking systems are designed to get your car back AFTER it has been stolen. The Ravelco Anti-Theft Device prevents the car from being stolen in the first place. Would you rather get a car back after a thief has been able to cherry pick the parts off your car, or prevent them from taking it in the first place? Only a very small number of cars are stolen in the U.S. by being towed away. Most tow truck



operators don't want to risk losing their license. It's less obvious and faster to hot wire a car and drive it away.

That is where the Ravelco Anti-Theft Device excels. The Ravelco Anti-Theft Device has been around for nearly 30 years, has sold over 3,500,000 units world wide, and we've never had a reported theft by bypassing the Ravelco.

The Ravelco Anti-Theft Device is attached to a number of wires your engine requires to run. You then have the ability to disconnect those wires by pulling the plug out of the Ravelco. It's just like taking a piece of your engine with you. And because there is no computer to monitor the car, the Ravelco does not require electricity to operate; therefore there is no drain on the car's battery. The Ravelco can be mounted in or under the dash where it is easy for the driver to get to. It can even be mounted out of sight under the dash. Visible or concealed, it is just as effective.

With the Ravelco, there are no master plugs. And with over 100,000 combinations, there is no way for a thief to guess which combination of pins go to which circuit. The driver simply inserts the plug to start the car and drives away. When they're done, they turn the car off, and pull the plug out. Even with the ignition key, the car will not start if the Ravelco plug is not inserted.

We protect the Ravelco wires under the dash with steel conduit, and inside the engine compartment we disguise all the wires to look like the factory's original wires. We hide all the connections to the car's electrical system. Even if a would-be thief got access to the wires, they're all the same color, so it's a guessing game as to which wires go together. Thieves have a short time frame to work in. Every minute they spend trying to steal a car, they are more likely to be caught. They want to get in and out in less than five minutes. If they can't, they will give up and try the next car.

The Ravelco Anti-Theft Device is the best auto security because it does exactly what it is designed to do: the Ravelco prevents the car from being stolen. No bells or whistles, just 100 percent effective protection from hot wiring your vehicle.

Security systems I'd recommend if I didn't work with Ravelco:

- #1- The Ravelco. I'd have this on all my cars even if I didn't work for the company.
- #2- A cheap paging alarm. A siren isn't going to scare anyone. I'd call the police as I sure would hate to confront a thief. I don't like my odds in a gun fight or legal battle afterward.
- #3- I'd remove some engine component to disable it. This gets tiring pretty fast, and I'd get lazy after a while. Besides, clubs and brake locks are cumbersome and easily defeated. I work too hard to waste my money on them.
- #4- An after-the-fact tracking system.
- #5- VIN etching. In the very low-percent chance the parts ever turn up.