

## Car buying fun (in real time)

So how many years will buying or leasing a car take off my life today? (This was updated live through the process)

**12:30pm-** Arrive at dealer. Went through formalities of finding the car we're interested in, discovered it's missing a key, all sorts of things that won't matter unless I actually leave with a car. Then about 10 minutes describing and filling out paperwork on potential trade in.

**1:03** hand over keys so they can inspect the 2001 Chrysler Town & Country Minivan (doesn't seem all that "mini" anymore!).

Thought I had current registration but turns out that was actually a receipt, which



caused the words I hate to hear most (at a car dealership) to come to the front- "We'll have to see if that's an issue for the finance guy." Hopefully not the first instance of good-cop bad-cop situation. Nice guy salesperson followed up by mean guy manager who says this or that can't be done, how could the salesperson think that, etc. Been down that road a few times before.

**1:35** Things are going too smoothly. I'm concerned. But still haven't discussed trade value. I "prairie dog" now and then but don't see anyone looking at the trade in.

**1:45** Salesperson (Troy) is wondering why nobody's looking at the car yet. Ah, it's gone. Someone either stole it or they're checking it out.

**1:55** Moment of truth coming soon- paperwork from trade-in inspection



Trade-in paperwork

**2:02** Virtually no credit on old car but good enough lease that it works out. The way they justify the lack of value (for the trade) is more than a bit insulting if you actually read it... \$425 for a "Service/Safety inspection" and \$750 for "body work" to pull a small dent out of the rear bumper? It's an 11 year old car, and low blue-book assumes a fair amount of wear & tear. On the other hand, it's not worth it for me to go to a lot of trouble trying to get rid of it for potentially not much more than that, and I don't care how worthy any "donation" organization might actually be, but 1 877-kars4kids has totally turned me off from such things.

What made sense was that, for \$324.88/month, I could be almost gas-free. There's still a possibility something could go south. Haven't signed and paid yet!

**2:21** More info given, car gone back for detailing.



**2:56** Paperwork signed; I've just leased a car for the first time in my life. Guess its nice to know that, at almost 57, there are still new things to experience in life. No funny business, or not much I should say. The price had go up \$500 from an earlier email but that was backed out. Lots of interesting stuff in the lease details but it makes sense when you work it all out. We'll see how the Volt works over the next three years. But first a bit of self-humiliation because I agreed to a video review of the experience. I figure I ought to learn as much about marketing from the pros as I can!

**3:09** Still waiting for the videographer. Hope I learn something from this! Otherwise I could have been done with this before 3. Still might be under 3 hours total. Could be worse!

**3:19** This is getting old real fast. Quite a buzz kill, having me wait for 20 minutes so I can say nice things about their dealership. As I told my staff at yesterday's pre-opening meeting, sometimes the only thing remembered is the first impression and the last.

**3:27** Short video interview over, now just waiting for the keys!

**3:35** Sitting in car with Troy (Salesman), having the various buttons and displays explained (a Volt has a lot of them!). OK, that's fine, but then begins the OnStar activation. Which should only take a short while, right?

**3:52** OnStar finally set up. You'd think (and the salesman thinks) this should be automatic, since all the info is fed to them electronically at the dealer, but that's not how things roll. Troy's a very nice guy, but I think both he and I have better things to do than sit in a car, essentially waiting for it to do something. The OnStar/Volt combination is impressive; the car is constantly feeding data through a cell network to OnStar, so if you're the sort that's concerned about cars having "black boxes" that know your every move, this car is not for you! It also allows for communications between an iPhone app and the car as well. Someday I'll figure it all out.

**4:00** (approximately) It's all over, I'm driving back, making wrong turns on super-crowded streets clogged with holiday shoppers and flooded by near-torrential rains. Not exactly what you'd like for your first drive in a new car! But mission accomplished.