

TWO BULLETS MISS OFFICER
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I purchased my first '57 Chevy from a friend that I worked with. It was a two-door post with a 283 cubic inch V8 engine that had just been overhauled. He had switched the automatic transmission for a three speed transmission and installed an aluminum flywheel with a heavy duty clutch. The car also had a floor shifter by Hurst. Next he changed the gears in the rearend for better take off.

The friend had purchased a '59 Chevy Biscayne with the 348 cubic inch V8 engine with tri-power and a three speed transmission and now wanted to race the car I had bought from him. We took them out to a place that had a quarter mile marked off.

On the count of three, I left him at the line and the race should have been over. However, when I hit second gear, I broke the Hurst shifter off at the floor. I watched the rear view mirror knowing that I would now have to finish the race in second gear and with the lower gears I would also have to watch the tachometer so as not to over rev the engine.

Holding back on the r.p.m.s the '59 Chevy was now gaining fast, as we approached the finish line I pulled over to the center line to block him off. My friend said that it was not a fair race and he wanted a "do over!" That's when I held up the shifting lever and told him that it wouldn't even have been close if I could have shifted into high gear.

I repaired the floor shifter, but every once in a while it would now hang up in second gear. Once, my first wife drove the '57 Chevy to work and the shifter locked up on her. She was at an intersection when this happened and traffic started to back up behind her. One of the cars was a State Police car.

The officer walked up to the '57 Chevy and asked my wife if there was a problem and she explained that the car would not shift! The officer asked if he could have a try at it. So my wife moved her purse over so she could slide over to the other side, but, did not notice the office was now in front of the car trying to open the hood to see what the problem was.

The '57 Chevys did not have the big hood ornament like the previous

Chevys had. Instead, they had two bullets, one on the left side of the hood and one on the right side.

My wife forgot the car was still running, so when she let the clutch out the police officer was now on the hood of the car, right between the two bullets. Luckily the officer wasn't hurt, but when I got home I was informed that I would be changing the floor shift back to the automatic transmission.

As it turned out, this was a lifesaver. When I removed the aluminum flywheel it was badly cracked. The next time I would have raced this car, the flywheel probably would have exploded.