

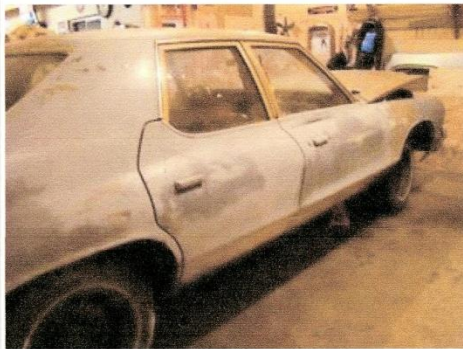
# 1975 Dodge Monaco – Bluesmobile Tribute Car

When you reach a certain point in life you realize that if you have something you want to do you'd better put an action plan together to make it happen. In this case I have wanted a Bluesmobile for years . I referenced the Bluesmobiles.proboards.com regularly. I thought I should contribute my Bluesmobile transformation experience to the board in the event it is helpful to somebody. I'm no expert, just an old guy living in the past.



## 1974 Dodge Monaco

Ad ID [1092026607](#)



Make	Dodge
Model	Other
For Sale By	Owner
Body Type	Sedan
Transmission	Automatic
Year	1974
Kilometers	89000

Yes ,maybe the last of its kind to purchase in Canada  
!1974 Dodge Monaco 360 motor ,auto trans,police  
cert/speedo ,painted rims, new tires ,90% body work done  
 ,bumpers,glass good " could be a great bluesmobile" no  
trades ! Soon to be listed on Ebay !!



Nobody is interested in the things you didn't do. I started to make things happen back in August 2015 when I was sitting around mindlessly surfing the net for a 1974 Monaco in Canada. I came across this one.



Just like Jake I saw the light and started to put a plan together.



I had to convince my wife about this life changing experience. Unlike Jake, no pleading necessary and I had her ~~support~~ OK to proceed. I talked to the seller and the year was actually a 1975. A bit of a lunch bag let down but I continued on with my plan.



I sealed the deal by the 21<sup>st</sup> of August, 2015 and then had to transport it 2000+ miles from Alberta to Ontario Canada. I found out that somebody I knew was regularly going to Alberta with his auto transport. I might have to wait a while for an empty spot... but suddenly it appeared out of the darkness and was here on Sept 2<sup>nd</sup> , 2015.





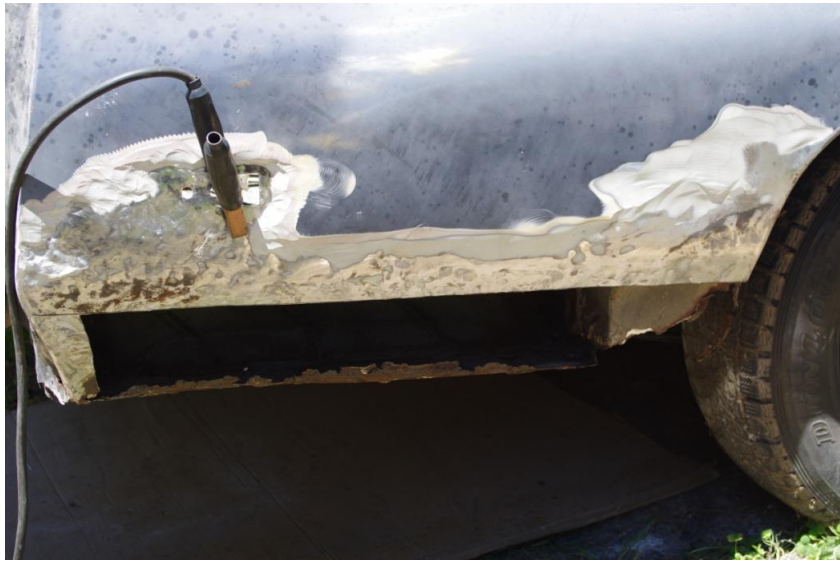
It was indeed a car of many colours. The previous owner was making it in to a CHIP replica but was selling as he was moving.

It came with a big "0" 140 speedo that was oranged out, the 6.5 inch JJ rims, dog dish hub caps, new to the car dash pad painted tan, radio delete plate , a newer S6 Unity spot light in the trunk and a whip aerial mount on the left side rear.

The engine was E37 – 360 Two Barrel

Price class "L" for low. No air conditioning, but had power steering / brakes

It was built in Belvidere Illinois. I put a tarp over it for the winter.



The next spring I took the tarp off and unfortunately the car was still there. I started into the body work. This was an outside job dependant on the weather. The right rear quarter was the worst for rust and I replaced from about an inch below the lower belt line down. The car appeared to be a victim of a pit maneuver with an old dent repair in the middle of the right rear panel. I pounded out more of the dent and as per Bad Chad (a Canadian car builder as seen on Discovery Channel) I flooded in the bondo.





The left rear was in a lot better shape than the right and just needed a small patch.





On both sides the inner fender wells needed some work but nothing serious.

I wire brushed out the wheel wells and put a coat of a direct-to-metal product called "ZeroRust 2BL". It was thinned with 10-20% acetone and painted with a regular siphon feed gun. Bonded well with the undercoat already on the car.







The inner trunk pan needed a couple of inches of new metal and then I put this right angle piece in for the cards that slide in to protect the quarter panel. The piece was already painted black as I cut it out of a repop rocker panel for a Buick Park Avenue that was laying around.



After removing the right fender I saw that it had been made up of two fenders many years back . Spliced together in the middle of the wheel well. In my reality I'm guessing that the fender repair was probably part of the same accident that hit the rear. They couldn't find a complete fender so they took the front half from the original car and grafted on a rusty back half that they repaired. The left fender was really good in this area so that 's why I think the bottom came from a rusty donor. I redid the rust repair. It was missing the cover for the lower attaching bolts so I bent one up by mirror copying the one from the left side.







I worked on the Monaco till the summer of 2016. Then full stop. I then worked through to the winter of 2018 on two house renovations for my sons.

I had my '33 Pontiac in the back of the shop that I was going to need to move out for the Bluesmobile. It had lost the babbitt out of one of the rods. I had the rod redone and installed in the fall of 2016.

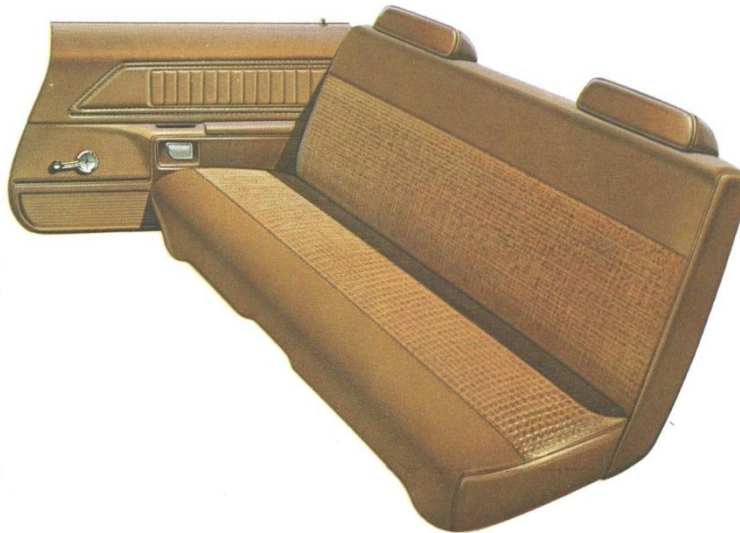
Now it could run on all 8 cylinders and get out of the way of that 220.5 inch long Bluesmobile wannabe of a Monaco. No comments on the messy shop please!







Stating the obvious, the seats needed some attention. I had the upholstery shop cut out the centre pieces to look more like the '74 seats as pictured in the sales folder.





## **Spoiler Alert!**

Here's how the seats turned out. I went with the all vinyl option. I had limited selection that had some sort of a grain in it. I ended up picking out a marine vinyl.



I was really pleased with how good the floor pan was. No repairs required!







In the summer of 2018 I got back to it. To make it easier to paint I decided to take the doors , hood and trunk off. It started to look like something I'd seen before.....

Oh yeah, that's what I was reminded of.....



It would have been easier to recreate the fall apart car, but it would be hard to get it licensed so I carried on with the original plan.



The strip down continues, still sporting the '75 bumper. Shop looks better!



The Dodge letters on the front header had been removed before I got the car. I filled the holes with the MIG, same for all the holes down the side of the car where the trim was.





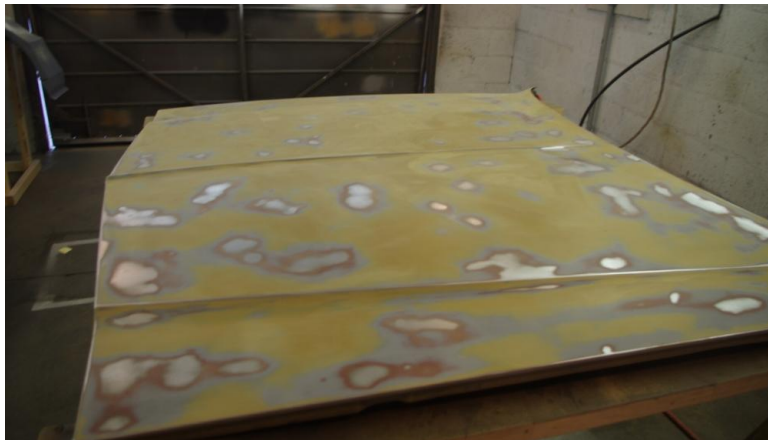
The black and white paint on the main body was now complete. Next I took the hood and front fenders off to get them ready for paint. My interpretation on the jams was that the car was painted black and masked to apply the white. The fall apart car contradicts this but as we know the obstacle to completion is perfection!



With the paint done it was making a better version of the fall apart car. The '81 Monte in the background is the last car I did a complete paint job on back in the early '90's and has since been sold off to the highest bidder. I used the same siphon feed Devilbiss JGA 502 gun to spray the Monaco and that explains why I used almost a gallon of the black.



The doors were in good shape, this was the biggest patch required.



Both the hood and roof had some surface rust popping through, I spot blasted / ground them and feathered out the spots.





Getting set up to shoot the black. I bolted the hood hinges to saw horses and propped it up so I could paint both sides in the same shoot.



Everything painted and ready to go back on the car.



By the end of August 2018 it was looking more like a car. I used Sherwin-Williams Automotive Industrial Coatings acrylic enamel single step paint. The 1975 Body Service manual says the paint used was acrylic enamel so I guess I am period correct. I used the hot weather reducer and a splash of hardener. It still took a week to dry hard. The cold weather was coming so the graphics waited till next year.





After painting the car I started work on the push bar. I used the liquidrealities plans. Thanks to them for sharing! I'm glad I got them when I did as I think they are down now. My local steel shop could not put the 1 inch cross bar in their roller for the bend. I made up a jig and put a lot of heat into the bar to get it bent. When complete this is one hefty piece. I elected not to weld it on the frame, I just went with the bumper mount.



I put together a little scaffold to help get the push bar mounted. The '74 grille and bumper are now installed, but not without a story..... I bought the grille from those good ol' boys in Georgia at AMS Obsolete. They were good to deal with. They have a bunch of '74 grilles and I think he said they had picked them up at an auction. I asked them if they had a '74 bumper and they did, except it had been close to a fire in a building. The plastic wrap around it had been melted on to the bumper. I went ahead with the deal and they would bring the parts to the 2018 fall Hersey meet. I got the bumper but they left the grille back in Georgia. They shipped it to me shortly after I got back home.....

This is where it turns bad. I am a General Motors guy and use to lots of interchangeability between years. I had assumed that the '74 bumper would fit the '75 inner bumper. For those of you in the know you would know that it doesn't. I was plotting my next move as to modifying the '75 inner or creating one from scratch. Then a miracle happened when I found a '74 inner and outer bumper with turn signals advertised on Kijiji and about an hour away. It was missing the left turn signal lens, so I know it was specifically made for a Bluesmobile! I had already bought the lower centre grill so all was good to complete the 1974 face lift.



The car came with a newer S6 unity spot but the shaft was too short. I ordered the 3615-GM-202 shaft and head post plus the 216 installation kit. The windshield trim reflected an earlier attempt to install the spot light. I just plugged that hole with a stainless push in cap. I used the supplied template to drill the large and two small holes in the windshield trim. I drilled into the A pillar to mark the spot for the shaft hole and drilled the two small holes for the bracket into the A pillar. I then removed the trim so I didn't oblong the hole as well as the inside garnish molding.



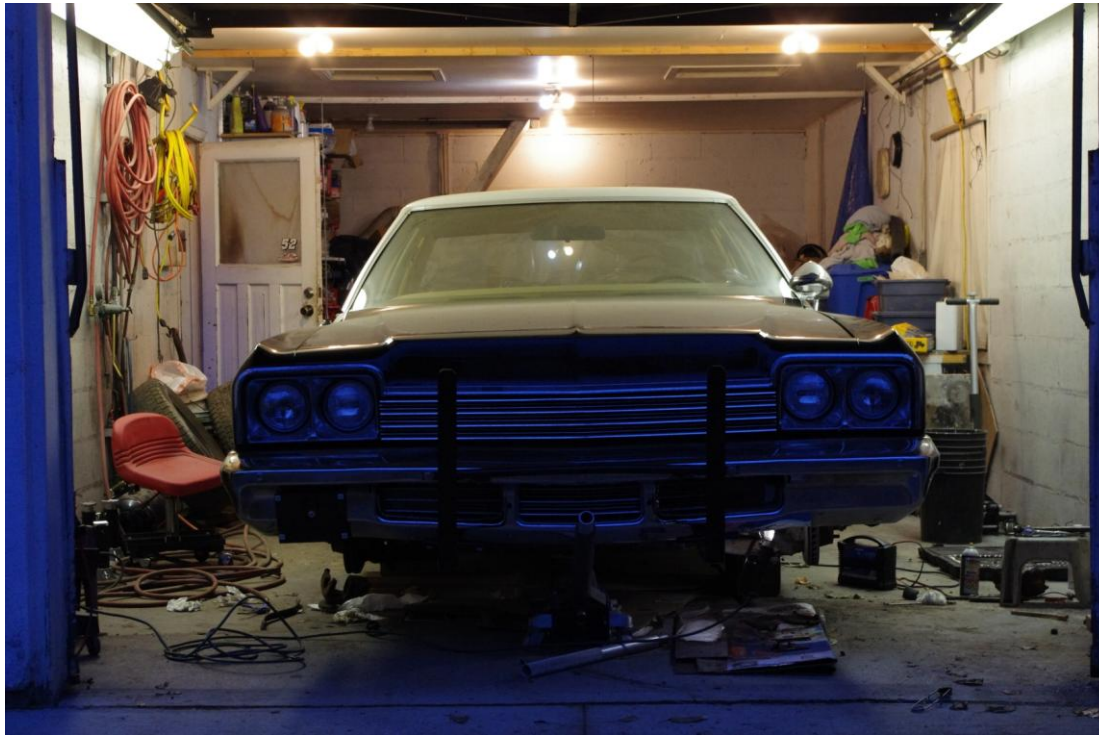


The “A” pillar was already notched and with a 12 inch long  $\frac{1}{2}$  drill , a level, and the supplied steel drill guide I slowly drilled through the two sides of the pillar. I do mean slow. If you’ve done this before you know how nail bittenly close you get to the glass. I then installed the inner garnish molding and drilled through it. I also drilled a small hole in the garnish and put in a small grommet to run the power behind the molding down to the fuse tap on the panel. I just used the outside bracket, I did not put one on the inside.



Just a comment on how complete the car was. Only a few things needed to be made.

I already mentioned that it was missing the right front fender cover for the lower attaching bolts. I had to make up a support brace for the Frankenstein fender based on the one from the left fender. I made up a rough facsimile of the triangle battery hold down loosely based on pictures of the '74 Monaco on [copcarsonline.com](http://copcarsonline.com). Great that they kept the pictures up after it was sold.



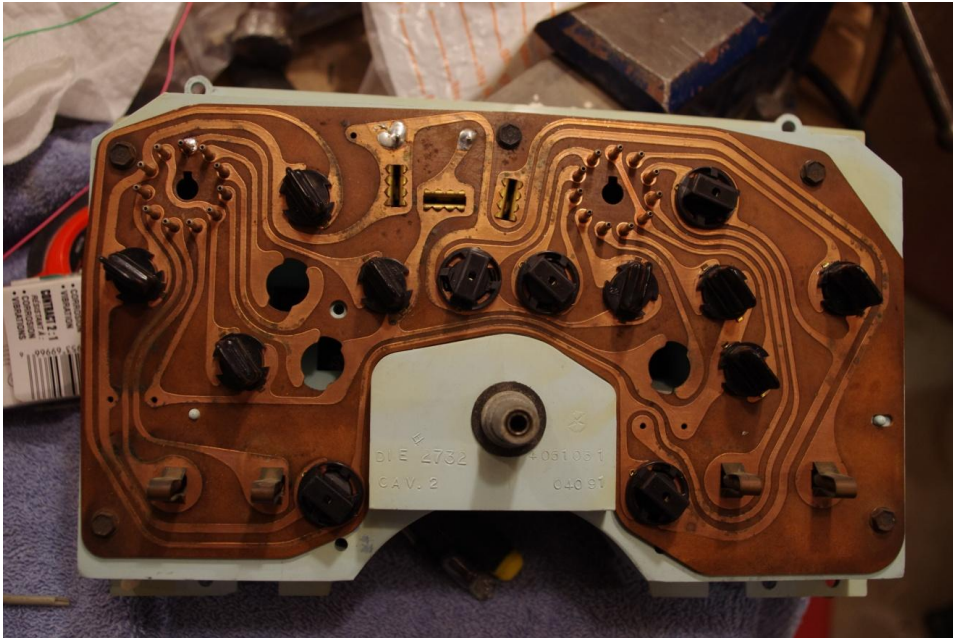
In the winter of 2018 I did a lot of brake work. New rear cylinders, flex and brake lines, and front calipers and flex lines. The rotors and drums were good. The rear drums even had the Chrysler Pentagon stamp . I had real problems with bleeding the calipers. I could get fluid but not a good stream. I got hung up that it was the proportioning valve. I pulled open the valve stem and clamped it , but no luck. I had my wife out pumping the brakes so many times that if we had carried on for much longer her right leg would have been strong enough for her to join the Indian leg wrestling circuit. I broke through my mental block and replaced the master cylinder, problem fixed.

I got all the brake supplies from Auto Parts Centre in Canada. Pretty much everything was in stock right at the store.





As mentioned I replaced all of the rear brake lines. I couldn't source the spring gravel guard locally so I got that off of eBay. With a little work I did get the main line from the proportioning valve back done in one piece. I didn't do the fuel and vapor lines in one piece. I couldn't fish them through the hole in the front clip so I had to splice them and ran new lines from there to the back.



The car came with a 140 mph speedometer with the faded orange numbers. It was sold to the previous owner as a '74 Monaco speedometer. But I knew that wasn't right as it had the big zeros. I really knew it wasn't right when I flipped the left turn signal on and the hi beam indicator lit up. Other weird things were going on with the idiot lights. A company in Canada was selling repop boards and they had a drawing on ebay of the board. It was different. I confirmed this again when I looked closely at the wiring diagrams.

I tried to get a repop from the ebay company but they were having delivery problems from China. I was getting ready to scratch up the board and resolder or change the pin wiring on the socket. Thanks to bobalindalu on eBay who came to the rescue with a NOS board for a 74-76 Monaco. It fixed the problem. I still don't know what car the other board was for.

## Stencils for Bluesmobile

### Side of car

TO SERVE AND PROTECT      31.5" wide 2.25" high (2 required) Franklin Gothic demi  
font

555-4121      32" wide 5.5" high (2 required), Font similar to **1234567890** Miami Dade  
Font

P1      16" wide 16" high (2 required). The 1 in P1 should be in the shape of **1** P font is Helvict medium  
compact, 1 font is Highway Gothic Mode non-ak Rev a

### Trunk

POLICE      23.5" wide 4.5" high (1 required)

172      Same font size as POLICE (1 required). Use same font style as phone number 4.5" high    xxx wide

Star for door is 16" high (no feathers)

This is a copy of the note I sent to the sign shop. Just like everybody else I did the screen shot thing for sizing. I sat down with them in the shop to work out the details and they printed everything out on paper first to check it out on the car. Then they cut the stencils on low tack vinyl.



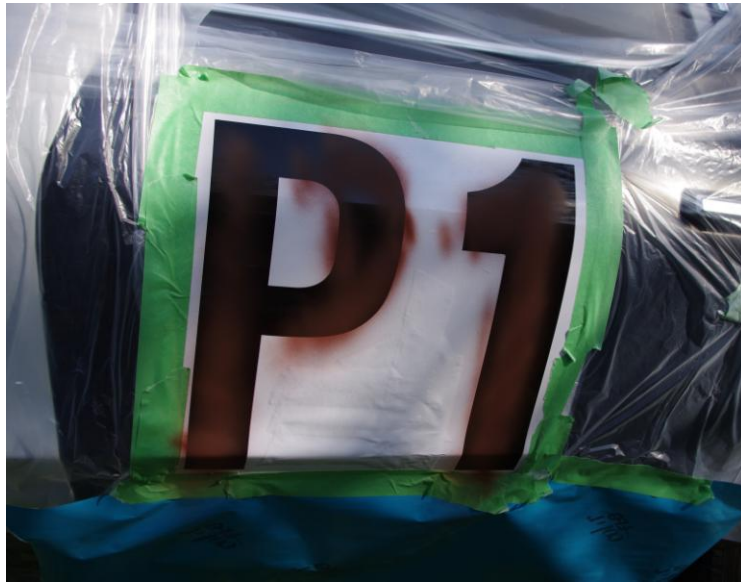


For the trunk lettering I put on some red primer than airbrushed on the white. I went with 172 for the number based on the screen shot from the Illinois Nazi scene.





When dry I took some varsol and wiped more of the white off so it no longer said POLICE, which made me legal.



P1 was done the same way as the trunk except more of a primer base and then fogged in the white







And again , dust in the white.



Wiped off a bit more of the white when dry.



I struggled with what the phone number was but went with 555-4121.  
Rubbed out the first 5 to create those two dots.  
I didn't drill the hole in the side for the "removed" antenna.



I had a graphic artist do the star. I didn't have him do the eagle in the middle as I thought it a waste of his time and my money as it wouldn't be seen. I also didn't go with the blacked out look as I wanted to see the star and Mt Prospect. So I airbrushed some white over it and let dry. I then took some varsol to remove some of the white.





So here she is in June of 2019 just before getting her licensed.  
I know she's shiny, but time and sun will work away on that acrylic enamel. At least the rims and tires are getting in to the role.  
No red primer on the left fender extension, I just wanted to enjoy the shine for awhile longer.





A picture of the dash with those famous faded orange numbers. The mirror is staying on the windshield for now till I find one that attaches to the roof/garnish





The car came with the trunk mat and jack with handle. I saw in the sales folder that a Police option was a single key for all locks. I pulled some pins out of the trunk tumbler to make that happen. I now have one police option on the car and it was a whole lot easier than some of the others on the list!





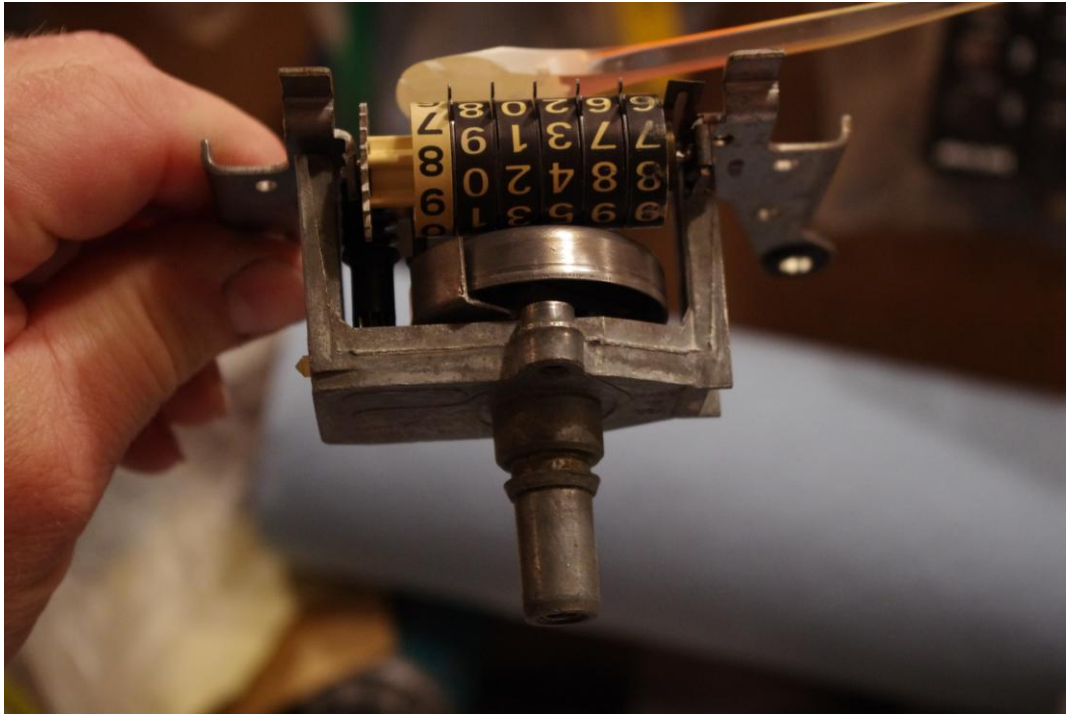
I put General Altimax 235/70 R15 tires on which translates to H70x15 which were an option for police sedans. I also installed a small amplifier and outdoor speakers mounted to the rad cradle for parades and to share the blues with my neighbours.



Here's the right side to prove that it got painted too. There are things left to do but I do not know if they will ever get done....things like

- Black rubber mat (from [autointeriors.com](http://autointeriors.com)?)
- Inside rear view mirror attached to garnish molding
- Craig 8 Track
- Coat hanger aerial
- Steering wheel pad painted black
- dual exhaust
- Push bar rubber
- Install 440... Will never happen!





When I started driving the speedometer needle would sometimes start bouncing . I took it in and out of the dash a bunch of times. I was hoping for it to be the cable, but it was not. I started to bench test it with a drill but couldn't solve the problem. It appears the bushings are worn and the spinning magnet occasionally drags on the needle bar. Hard to find mechanical speedo rebuilders!

There is a place in Michigan I might contact or just live with it. If I find a 120mph head I'll put that in as we are in kilometers in Canada and that will make the speedo read closer to KPH.





There was a final act of defiance from the Monaco for making her into a Bluesmobile. When I went to the Ministry of Transport for a plate they said the VIN decoded in their system to a 1976 despite the ownership and safety certificate showing 1975 . I told the clerk that the 6<sup>th</sup> position of the VIN identifies the year and it was a 5. I said I would bring in Chrysler documentation (shop manual) to prove it but no go. I have learned the hard way that the Ministry is always right and I don't think she really cared that I was on a Mission from God. I retreated. I ended up getting the local Dodge dealer to write a letter to confirm it was a 1975. That worked. Since then I've gotten my personalized plate and it is now on the car.



The great reveal during a Canada Day Parade on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019.





Now for something completely different, my next project. I have always wanted a '51 Merc since watching American Graffiti. I'd better stop here as this is starting to sound familiar. Just saying, I don't plan to paint it maroon. My brother is still mad at me for doing the Bluesmobile before the '51 Merc. But I'm happy and that's all that matters. The Merc was chopped when I bought it so the hard part is done.....It has a 454 in it so I park it close to the Bluesmobile in hopes that they will mate and spawn a 440.





And finally we need to pay homage to those proud officers of the village of Mount Prospect in Cook County Illinois, who just loved their MOPARs!

\* Picture from thedailyherald.com