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## PROOF OF PUBLICATION

CHRISTINE HOLDRAKER being duly sworn, representing the  
TIMES OF WAYNE COUNTY, INC., a weekly newspaper  
published in the Town of Macedon, State and County aforesaid:  
does duly state that the notice hereto annexed was published in said  
newspaper 4 consecutive issues dated 4/6, 4/13, 4/20, 4/27/2025.

Date of the last publication in which the notice appeared is  
04/27/2025 and there being in 4 publications

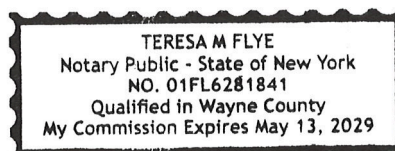
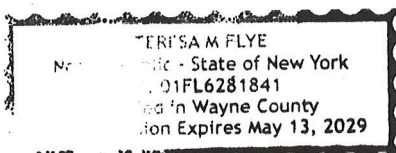
A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Christine Holdraker", written over a horizontal line.

CHRISTINE HOLDRAKER,  
Representing the TIMES OF WAYNE COUNTY

Sworn to before me this 28, day of April, 2025

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Teresa M. Flye", written over a horizontal line.

Notary Signature





MLB

# Demand for viral ‘torpedo’ baseball bats has sent Pennsylvania factory into overdrive

By Dan Gelston  
AP Sports Writer

KING OF PRUSSIA, Pa. -- A 70-year-old man who plays in an area senior hardball league popped into Vic-tus Sports this week because he needed bats for the new season. Plus he just had to take some cuts with baseball’s latest fad and see for himself if there really was some wizardry in the wallop off a torpedo bat.

Ed Costantini, of Newtown Square, picked up the custom-designed VOL-PE11-TPD Pro Reserve Maple, and took his hacks just like MLB stars and Victus customers Anthony Volpe or Bryson Stott would inside the compa-ny’s batting cage and tracked the ball’s path on the virtual Citizens Bank Park on the computer screens.

Most big leaguers use that often in-distinguishable “feel” as a qualifier as to how they select a bat.

Costantini had a similar process and thought the hype surrounding the torpe-do since it exploded into the baseball consciousness over the weekend was a “hoax.” But after dozens of swings in the cage, where he said the balance was better, the ball sounded more crisp off the bat, the left-handed hitter ordered on the spot four custom-crafted torpedo bats at \$150 a pop.

“The litmus test that I used was, I could see where the marks of the ball were,” Costantini said. “The swings were hitting the thickness of the torpe-do as opposed to the end of the bat.”

More than just All-Stars want a crack at the torpedo — a striking design in which wood is moved lower down the barrel after the label and shapes the end a little like a bowling pin — and Costantini’s purchase highlighted the surge of interest in baseball’s shiny new toy outside the majors.

Think of home runs in baseball, and the fan’s mind races to the mammoth distances a ball can fly when slugged right on the nose, or a history-making chase that captivates a nation.

Of lesser interest, the ol’ reliable wood bat itself.

That was, of course, until Paul Gold-schmidt and Cody Bellinger hit back-to-back homers for the New York Yan-kees last Saturday to open a nine-homer barrage. Victus Sports, known as much for their vibrant bats painted as pen-cils or the Phillie Phanatic dressed as a King’s Guard, had three employees at the game and they started a text thread where they hinted to those back home that, perhaps more than home runs were taking off.

Business was about to boom, too.

Yankees crowed about the torpedo-shape concept that had baseball buzz-ing -- and pitchers grumbling. The scut-tlebutt and headlines stoked their super curious peers, most with an eye out for any legal, offensive edge, into ask-ing Victus and other bat manufacturers about the possibility of taking a swing with the most famous style of bat since Roy Hobbs grabbed a “Wonderboy.”

Victus spent most of the last 14 years trying to help shape the future of base-ball. The company’s founders just nev-er imagined that shape would resemble a bowling pin.

“It was the most talked about thing about bats that we ever experienced,” Victus co-founder Jared Smith said.

Victus isn’t the only company pro-duc-ing the bulgy bats, but they were among the first to list them for sale on-line after the Yankees’ made them the talk of the sports world. The torpedo bat took the league by storm in only 24 hours, and days later, the calls and or-ders, and test drives -- from big leagu-ers to rec leaguers -- are humming in-side the company’s base, in a northwest suburb of Philadelphia.

“The amount of steam that it’s caught, this quickly, that’s certainly surprising,” Smith said. “If the Yan-kees hitting nine home runs in a game doesn’t happen, this doesn’t happen.”

Victus was stamped this season as the official bat of Major League Base-ball and business was already good: Phillies slugger Bryce Harper is among the stars who stick their bats on high-light reels.

But that torpedo-looking hunk of lumber? It generated about as much in-terest last season in baseball as a .200 hitter. Victus made its first torpedoes around 2024 spring training when the Yankees reached out about crafting samples for their players. Victus, as di-aled-in as anyone in the bat game, only made about a dozen last season, and

about a dozen more birch or maple bats this spring.

This week alone, try hundreds of tor-pedoes.

“Every two minutes, another one comes out of the machine,” Smith said.

Who knew there would be a baseball bat craze?

On a good day, Victus makes 600-700 bats, but the influx of pro orders -- the company estimates at least half of every starting lineup uses Victus or Marucci bats -- has sent production into overdrive. The creation of a typical bat is usually a two-day process, but one can be turned around without a finish in about 20 minutes. Victus crafted rush-order bats Monday morning for a few interested Phillies and dashed to Citi-zens Bank Park for delivery moments before first pitch. All-Star third base-man Alec Bohm singled with one.

Stott tested bats at the Marucci hit lab down in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, churning through styles until the com-pany found the right fit.

“They connect all these wires to you, and you swing 1,000 bats,” Stott said. “And they kind of tell you where you’re hitting the ball mostly.”

Here’s the surprising part of the torpe-do bat: For all its early hype, the bat is no rookie in the game.

The lethal lumber has been used by some sluggers in baseball for at least a year or two only, well, no one really no-ticed. Giancarlo Stanton and Francisco Lindor used torpedoes last season. Oth-er players experimented with it and no one — not the bulk of other players or journalists or fans — ever really picked up on the newfangled advance in hitting innovation.

Smith said only “a few baseball junkies” inquired about the bats.

“I think it’s just one of those things that until you’re looking for it, you might not see it,” Smith said. “Now when you look at pictures, you’re like, oh yeah, it’s a torpedo.”

Aaron Leanhardt, a former Yankees front-office staffer who now works for the Miami Marlins, was credited as the one who developed the torpedo barrel to bring more mass to a bat’s sweet spot.

A member of Victus’ parent compa-ny, Marucci Sports, worked with Lean-hardt in a Louisiana branch of their hit lab last year to get the bat off the ground and into the hands of big leaguers.

“I think getting past the shape be-ing different was the hardest barrier,” Smith said. “Then the team goes out and hits those home runs like they did and everyone is willing to try it.”

Before last weekend, Victus had no plans to mass produce the bat, making it only available to professionals.

Now, Smith said, “I think it’s our job to kind of educate the public in what’s out there.”

The odd shape off the bat — like making a sausage, the meat is simply pushed down the casing — has little to no effect at Victus on the dynamics of making a baseball bat. The cost is the same as a standard bat, too, with a stick-er price starting at around \$200. Only the slogan is punched up: Get your hands on the most-talked about bat in the game.

Victus was created by Smith and Ryan Engroff in a Blackwood, New Jersey, garage in 2012 and exploded in popularity over the last decade thanks in the large part to its bat art. Bruce Ta-tum, an in-house artist known as “The Bat King,” calls his memorable designs such as the No. 2 pencil and crayon bats notably used in the Little League Clas-sic “swingable art.” The Victus walls look straight out of an art gallery, only instead of classic paintings, rows and rows of colorful bats emblazoned with everything from Harper’s face to Grit-ty’s eyes are on display.

“Normally people are here to talk about the Bat King,” Smith said, laugh-ing.

He was busy, sketching ideas for next year’s bats for the baseball All-Star game in Philadelphia.

“Bruce’s cheesesteak bat, I’m just telling you, is going to be the talk of the town,” Smith said. “I guarantee it.”

Victus has over 300 employees and 60 alone inside their King of Prussia headquarters. The company has out-grown its base and is busting at the seams, and when a bat suddenly goes viral, “all our seams are exposed.”

The folks at Victus — who previou-sly have experimented with axe handle and puck knobs — have no fear the bat will become the baseball equal to the



Torpedo baseball bats are displayed Wednesday at Victus Sports in King of Prussia, Pa. (Associated Press)

NFL’s tush push, a fresh wrinkle that some might try to legislate out of the game.

MLB has relatively uncomplicated bat rules, stating under 3.02: “The bat shall be a smooth, round stick not more than 2.61 inches in diameter at the thickest part and not more than 42 inches in length. The bat shall be one piece of solid wood.” It goes on to state there may be a cupped indentation up to 1 1/4 inches in depth, 2 inches wide and with at least a 1-inch diameter, and experimental models must be approved by MLB.

The torpedo is 100% legal.

Year after year, Victus’ bat business has picked up. Jonny Gomes used a Victus bat when he went deep in the 2013 World Series and Harper stamped the company as a major player when he played for Washington and swung a “We The People” bat and tossed it in the air to win the 2018 Home Run Derby.

“Our product kept getting better and it got to the point where he probably felt like we had the best bat, and we felt like we had the best bat,” Smith said.

There’s not enough data yet to truly know how much oomph — or hits and

homers — a torpedo bat may help some hitters. Cincinnati’s Elly De La Cruz picked one up for the first time Monday and had a single, double and two home runs for a career-high seven RBIs.

Not all hitters are believers — or at least feel like they need to tinker with their lumber.

Yankees slugger Aaron Judge, who hit an AL-record 62 homers in 2022 and 58 last year en route to his second AL MVP award, declined to try the new bat, asking, “Why try to change some-thing?” Phillies All-Star shortstop Trea Turner said the hoopla was “blown out of proportion.”

“You’ve still got to hit the ball,” Turner said.

Turner, though, said he was open to trying the torpedo.

Arizona pitcher Zac Gallen grew up a Mark McGwire fan and compared the fad to the bloated barrel used by the re-tired St. Louis Cardinals’ slugger’s old Nerf bat.

“The concept seems so simple. For it to take this long is wild,” Gallen said.

No matter. The bat is here today and not going anywhere — except perhaps flying off the shelves.

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**Regarding energy supply:** If you purchase energy supply from NYSEG, your price will continue to be based on market prices, we pass through that cost to you without profit; if you purchase your energy supply from a supplier other than NYSEG (also known as an energy services company or ESCO), your energy supply price depends on your agreement with your ESCO.



# State & Region

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## After decades of sex abuse complaints, a New York pediatrician is ordered to pay \$1.6B to over 100 women

By Philip Marcelo  
Associated Press

MERRICK, N.Y. (AP) — Starting in the 1980s, New York law enforcement and health officials fielded sexual abuse complaints from the young patients of a respected pediatrician who ran his practice out of a basement office in his home on Long Island.

But Stuart Copperman was never charged with any crime, and it was only as he approached retirement in 2000, at the age of 65, that he was stripped of his medical license over the complaints.

Now, 25 years later, more than 100 of his former patients have some vindication in their yearslong fight: a court has ordered him to pay a total of \$1.6 billion.

The Rev. Debbi Rhodes, who was awarded \$25 million, says the completion of the litigation in late March in state Supreme Court brought a mix of relief and frustration.

“I’m not sure if he’s facing justice. He kind of got away with it for all these years,” the 63-year-old Episcopal priest in Las Vegas said by phone. “But to have a court say, definitively, ‘I believe

you.’ To hear that -- that’s heavy medicine right there.”

A Manhattan lawyer who has represented Copperman over the years didn’t respond to multiple messages seeking comment in recent days.

Copperman has steadfastly denied the allegations, suggesting he was sim-

“For me, it’s about saying to other women who are facing this that someone will listen to you. I wasn’t believed for a very long time. Don’t stay silent. Speak your truth.”

**Rev. Debbi Rhodes**  
Former Patient

ply being “thorough” in his examinations, which his former patients say were typically conducted after he had ushered their parents out of the room.

**A lengthy history of complaints**

Some of the women filed complaints with local police and medical boards over the years, but no criminal charges or disciplinary actions were ever imposed, according to Rhodes’ lawsuit and others. Then a state medical board revoked his license after hearing from six accusers.

Statute of limitations laws, however, prevented Copperman’s accusers from filing lawsuits until passage of New

York’s Child Victims Act, a 2019 law that temporarily allowed people to file suits over sexual abuse they suffered long ago as children.

The Catholic Church and other major institutions have reached huge settlements to resolve sexual misconduct claims, but lawyers for the women say their litigation has resulted in one of the largest cumulative awards against a single individual in the U.S.

“For decades, these women were silenced and dismissed,” said Kristen Gibbons Feden, a Philadelphia lawyer representing the women. “Now, they cannot be ignored.”

**Copperman never responded**

The Long Island court ruled for the women because Copperman never responded to the litigation. But some of the special referees, in assessing damages, said they believed the women.

“The psychological scars from the abuse suffered by Plaintiff are profound and permanent,” wrote William Bodkin in awarding \$27 million to a woman identified as “Jane Doe T.A.” in April 2024.

“Here, there can only be outrage at Copperman’s reprehensible conduct,” he wrote in Rhodes’ \$25 million judgment in December 2024.

The last of the 104 awards were handed down March 28, with amounts ranging from \$500,000 to \$32 million, according to Michael Della, a Long Island-based attorney also representing the women.

**‘Nobody can grow if they are living in shame’**

Like many of the accusers, Rhodes says Copperman sexually abused her during routine visits at his home office in Merrick, some 35 miles (56 kilometers) east of Manhattan. She says the abuse started in 1968 when she was 7 years old, and led to an eating disorder and alcohol and drug problems at an early age.

Rhodes says she speaks openly and often about her childhood trauma as part of her ministry, which includes working with prison inmates. She still wrestles with anxiety, depression and other mental health impacts.

“Nobody can grow if they are living in shame. Nobody can really change,” said Rhodes, who has two now-grown children and whose husband is also an Episcopal priest. “I’m not even sure you can love if you’re living in shame.”

The Associated Press typically does not name people who say they have been sexually assaulted unless they come forward publicly, as Rhodes has.

Another woman who was awarded \$27 million but declined to be named said revisiting childhood trauma during her deposition was painful but, in a way, healing.

“It feels good to know that someone heard us,” the woman, identified in the litigation as “Jane Doe A.W.,” said in a phone interview. “People now understand the magnitude of what he did.”

Lawyers for the women say they have retained a collections specialist to begin pursuing compensation from Copperman.

But Rhodes and other plaintiffs say they’ve accepted the possibility they may never see much, if any. Copperman is now 89 years old and lives in South Florida.

“I’m not sure what justice looks like even if I got a million dollars tomorrow,” Rhodes said. “For me, it’s about saying to other women who are facing this that someone will listen to you. I wasn’t believed for a very long time. Don’t stay silent. Speak your truth.”

### Supreme Court declines to hear challenge to NY’s ban on guns in ‘sensitive’ locations

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday declined to take up a challenge to gun laws in New York that ban firearms from certain “sensitive” locations and require that handgun owners be of “good moral character.”

The high court did not give an explanation on why it chose not to hear the case.

The decision leaves in place an appeals court ruling that upheld provisions of the law while also striking down some elements.

In that earlier ruling, the appeals court allowed New York to continue enforcing parts of the law that ban firearms from certain so-called sensitive locations such as public transportation, hospitals and schools, and require that handgun owners prove “good moral character.”

But the court also blocked a requirement that handgun license applicants reveal their social media accounts and said the state can’t enforce part of the law that made it a crime to carry a concealed gun onto private property without the express consent of the owner.

Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul applauded the high court’s decision not to hear a challenge to the law on Monday, saying that “New York’s strong gun safety laws save lives.”

The Supreme Court in 2022 struck down New York’s old gun rules, which restricted guns being carried outside the home to people who could show they had a special need for protection.

New York lawmakers responded by crafting new rules that opened the door to more people getting handgun licenses while also setting up new restrictions on where guns could be carried.

Erich Pratt, senior vice president of the Gun Owners of America, a lobbying organization involved in the litigation, said “While we are disappointed by the Supreme Court’s decision not to take this case, we will never stop fighting to defend the rights of gun owners across the country.”

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Incarcerations/Sentencing

On Friday (4/11) **Megan E. Jacobs**, age 43, of 46 G l a s g o w Street in Clyde was sentenced to six months in the Wayne County Jail after a conviction for Criminal Mischief in the Second Degree from a 5/5/24 arrest.

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On Tuesday (4/15) **Braxton J. Purdy**, age 18, of 6771 Miller Road in Newark was arrested for Violation of Probation out of Wayne County Court for a 8/24/23 arrest for Criminal Possess Weapon 2nd: Loaded Firearm.

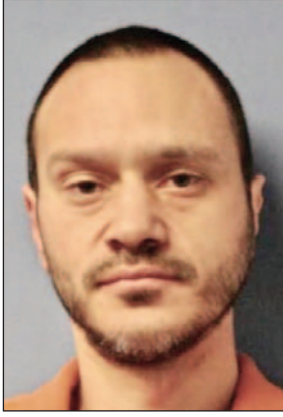
He was remanded to jail pending his appearance in Wayne County Court.



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Indictments

**Patrick J Frank**  
DOB: 10/22/1985  
Incident Date: 12/23/2024  
Arrest Date: 12/23/2024  
Arresting Agency: NYSP  
Charges: DWI: Previous Conviction of Designated Offense Within 10 Years; Operate MV .08 of 1% or More Alcohol – Prior Conv Desig Off w/in 10 Yrs; Operator Leaves Scene of Property Damage Accident; Operate Moving Motor Vehicle While Using Portable Electronic Device; Moved From Lane Unsafely  
Indictment: DWI: Previous Conviction of Designated Offense Within 10 Years; Operate MV .08 of 1% or More Alcohol – Prior Conv Desig Off w/in 10 Yrs



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Regional Police News

Johnkiomi Ruiz sentenced to 30 Years for Assault in the 1st and 2 counts of Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the 2nd

Rochester, NY- Monday, April 14, New York State Supreme Court Justice Miller sentenced 33-year-old **Johnkiomi Ruiz** to 30 years in the New York State Department of Corrections plus 5 years of post-release supervision. He was previously convicted by a jury of Assault in the 1st Degree and two counts of Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the 2nd Degree for shooting a man on June 20, 2023.

On June 20, 2023, Rochester Police Officers responded to a report of a person shot on Lake Avenue near Ravine Avenue in the City of Rochester. Upon arrival, a 24-year-old man was found with a gunshot wound in the back. He was immediately transported to Strong Memorial Hospital, where he needed life-saving surgery.

After a thorough investigation by the Non-Fatal Shooting Taskforce, which includes Rochester Police Investigators, Monroe County District Attorney Investigators, and Assistant District Attorneys, it was determined that Johnkiomi Ruiz targeted the victim and shot him in the back as the victim attempted to run away.

Ontario County woman faces extradition to Florida

On Saturday (4/12) at 11:04 hours, Ontario County Sheriff’s deputies arrested **Jennifer Ann Ketcham**, age 41, of 16 Maple Avenue in the Town of Bloomfield without incident on a full extradition warrant out of Florida.

The arrest occurred at Eastview Mall at 7979 State Route 96, located in the Town of Victor. It was determined Ms. Ketcham had an active warrant out of Monroe County in Florida for failing to appear on several felony level public order crimes.

Ms. Ketcham was transported to the Ontario County Jail where she was held to await extradition to the Monroe County Sheriff’s Office in Key West, Florida.



Monroe County District Attorney files petition against Irondequoit Town Supervisor Andrae Evans

Rochester, NY- On Wednesday (4/16) Monroe County District Attorney Sandra Doorley filed a petition against Irondequoit Town Supervisor Andrae Evans for a judgment under Public Officers Law §36. This petition was filed with the State of New York Appellate Division Fourth Department for a judgment removing Andrae Evans as the Supervisor of the Town of Irondequoit.

Following a referral from the Irondequoit Town Board and the Irondequoit Police Department, the Monroe County District Attorney’s Office reviewed the current findings and conducted an outside investigation to determine if any criminal charges or penalties are appropriate. Upon review, it was determined that the petition for a judgment under Public Officers Law §36 is the most appropriate action at this time. This statute provides that this petition may be filed by the District Attorney.

The Monroe County District Attorney’s Office anticipates a scheduling order from the Fourth Department in the coming weeks.

Geneva man drives down embankment, found to be under influence of drugs

On Wednesday, April 16th at approximately 9:41 p.m. Ontario County Sheriff’s Deputies were dispatched to the area of 3694 Kearney Road in the Town of Gorham for the report of a single vehicle personal injury crash.

Through a police investigation, it was determined that the operator **Robert T. Michaels**, age 46, of 3562 Savage Road in Geneva had failed to keep right and went off the West side of Kearney Road, down an embankment, and collided into a tree.

During deputies’ investigation, Michaels was found to have been operating his vehicle while impaired by drugs. Mr. Michaels was issued citations for DWAI-Drugs and Failure to Keep Right. Michaels was transported to the local hospital for a precautionary check over, he did not appear to sustain any injuries as a result of the motor vehicle crash. He will appear in Gorham Town Court at a later date to answer to these charges

Rochester woman pleads guilty to defrauding Social Security

ROCHESTER, N.Y.-U.S. Attorney Michael DiGiacomo announced that Wendy Stone, 63, of Rochester, NY, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Frank P. Geraci, Jr. to conversion/unlawful conveyance of government money, which carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

In December 2022, Victim 1 was a recipient of benefits under the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Program. On December 28, 2022, Victim 1 died at a residence in Rochester. Stone discovered Victim 1’s body days after Victim 1 died. She was also aware that Victim 1 collected SSI Program benefits. But rather than inform authorities of Victim 1’s death, Stone took Victim 1’s debit card and spent SSI Program money still being deposited into Victim 1’s account for her own benefit. In furtherance of this scheme, Stone used Victim 1’s social security number to activate a new debit card in the name of Victim 1. In order to conceal Victim 1’s death and continue receiving Victim 1’s SSI Program benefits, Stone moved Victim 1’s corpse into the basement of the residence Victim 1 died in. She wrapped Victim 1’s corpse in plastic, placed it in a recycling bin, and periodically poured bleach on it. Victim 1’s corpse remained in the basement from December 2022 to September 2023. Between January 2023 and September 2023, Stone improperly collected \$7,902.00 in SSI Program benefits intended for Victim 1. In addition, on February 6, 2023, Stone recertified SNAP benefits. In her recertification, Stone stated that Victim 1 still resided with her. As a result of this false information, Stone received an additional \$1,072.00 in SNAP benefits that she was not entitled to receive.

Sentencing is scheduled for July 17, 2025, at 11:30 a.m., before Judge Geraci.

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# Car Collector Corner

By Greg Zyla  
Syndicated Auto Columnist

## One very special '55 Chevy and the infamous, short-lived Edsel

Q: Greg, you did a column a long time ago on the “Two Lane Blacktop” 1955 Chevy and that it was the same one featured in the hit film “American Graffiti.” Can you give us an updated information version? John May, Spokane, WA.

A: Glad to John, as I never tire of writing about this very interesting '55 Chevy and two movies I’ve always enjoyed watching.

"Two-Lane Blacktop," released in 1971 and directed by Monte Hellman, is today a solid cult classic. It stars singing favorite James Taylor and the Beach Boys’ Dennis Wilson as the primary duo, along with unknown and “first timer” actress Laurie Bird. Bird was Art Garfunkel’s girlfriend at the time of her passing at just 25-years-old. (sadly, overdose of Valium). The final actor of note in Two-Lane is film veteran Warren Oates, known for his numerous excellent supporting roles and gritty performances.

These four actors deal with Two-Lane Blacktop’s underlying theme that centers on the nothingness of the four-some on a racing quest with Oates and his 1970 GTO from out west to Washington DC for "pink slips."

“American Graffiti,” released in 1973, was the landmark Hollywood movie about life in the early Sixties that became an instant box office smash. Directed by George Lucas and featuring wonderful music from the era, the film featured many soon-to-be mega stars. Included were Richard Dreyfus, Harrison Ford, Suzanne Somers, Cindy Williams and Ron Howard, the latter already a childhood star from his "Opie Taylor" days on “The Andy Griffith Show.”

As for that good looking black '55 Chevy, a car builder by the name of Richard Ruth built three '55 Chevys for the movie "Two-Lane Blacktop." Ruth has a bit part in the movie as a gas station mechanic wearing a "Glendale Speedshop" shirt when Taylor and Wilson arrive for fuel at a gas station.

Of the three Chevys in “Two-Lane,” one was used as a camera car for interior shots, of which there are many, while the second and third '55 Chevys were utilized for racing, street, and highway scenes. The main “Two-Lane Blacktop” Chevy featured a 454 engine with aluminum heads, tunnel ram intake and dual Holley carburetors. The transmission was a rock crusher Muncie M-22 hooked to 4.88 gears. A straight axle and four-wheel disc brakes were also utilized. Lots of fiberglass was featured on the build, including sliding Plexiglas windows and of course, the entire flip front end. One car was built for an ending rollover scene, but never made the final cut.

Thanks to respected film producer Gary Kurtz, who was involved with both movies, the same “Two Lane Blacktop” '55 Chevy appeared in “American Graffiti.” Under Kurtz’s guidance, the primed '55 from “Two-Lane” became a shiny black '55 that Bob Falfa drove in “Graffiti” with Falfa’s actor Harrison Ford pulling the gears. They replaced the big hood scoop with a smaller one, added chrome wheels, put in different windows and then added a hinged trunk instead of the lift off. Kurtz is perhaps best known for producing Star Wars (1977) and The Empire Strikes Back (1980), which cemented his legacy in Hollywood.

There you have it John, the '55 Chevy is indeed the same vehicle with that powerful 454 under the hood. Thanks for your letter.

### Edsel’s flop linked to gimmicks, name and design

Q: Greg, I really liked your Ford Allegra and Chevy Cadet articles recently, and wonder how you feel about the Edsel? It was a new car but failed miserably. What’s your thoughts? I know it was “all new” according to Ford, but mechanically it was the same as a '58 Ford or Mercury.

James G., Vestel, N.Y.  
A: James, you are 100% correct about the Edsel, so first let’s separate the Chevy Cadet. Ford Allegro and even the Chevy Corvair from the Edsel in one big way: the Allegro, Cadet and Corvair were true innovations. The Corvair was the most innovative, featuring a rear mounted flat six-cylinder engine and transaxle and an all new, good looking, compact car design.

The Edsel, meanwhile, was what you say it was, nothing more than gadgets and gimmicks with new skin on what was still basically the day-to-day Ford-Mercury chassis. Therefore, the Corvair will always be regarded in this column as an innovative car, while the Edsel a non-innovative vehicle.

Edsel hoped to sell America and the consumer via slick advertising campaigns and the “new” Edsel gimmicks, like pushbutton transmission buttons in the center of the steering wheel and a rotary speedometer. The American consumer was not sold by the design and gadgets and saw right through the ad campaign what the Edsel really was. It was Ford’s Oldsmobile to be slotted between Mercury and Lincoln.

Still, there was so much hyped advertising about this car, and even an “Edsel TV Show,” you thought something “out of this world” was about to hit the dealer showrooms. When it appeared in late 1957 as a 1958 model, it was a bust from day one.

Another reason I feel Edsel failed was the name, Edsel. Now I know for sure that Edsel Ford, son of Henry Ford, was a great car person who I’ve written about before. However, the name just doesn’t have the “call power” like Lincoln-Mercury-Ford and its cars of the day, including Thunderbird, Continental, Fairlane, Marauder and so on. There were also many internal board room problems associated with the naming of the new car, and many at Ford did not want the Edsel name on it as he and his father never saw things eye-to-eye. The patriarch was slow to move on improving his cars while Edsel was a true auto progressive with great ideas for new cars. From a personal view and having studied Edsel’s life and written about him several times, the car they gave his name to in 1958 is indeed the actual reverse of what Edsel would have wanted if his name was on it.

Meanwhile at dealer showrooms, salespeople had to deal with a design that was “way out there,” thanks to an “in your face,” front end that would eventually be disliked by consumers. It featured a “scoop nose/grille, also nicknamed as a “hangman’s noose” and “snorkel” front end that didn’t seem to match with the rest of the car. I feel the rear end was nice with a styled trunk and rear taillight pattern. I owned a 1959 Edsel for about six years but got rid of it when I realized I had one car too many in my 20x40 pole barn garage.

As for marketing, Edsel was sold initially by a new “Edsel only” division, which didn’t last long thanks to problems with the union followed by dealer complaints, too. The Edsel eventually ended up at the Lincoln-Mercury dealers in a move to raise the Lincoln brand awareness to that of Cadillac and Imperial status. Edsel would then compete for the Oldsmobile-Pontiac-Dodge-Desoto sale, but probably impacted sibling Mercury more so than the competition it was aiming to take sales from.

As sales dropped, so did Edsel’s “design ingenuity,” which relegated it to front end facelifts and rear taillight tweaks on what was a noticeable Ford body as it came to its last year in 1960. When all was said and done, the one thing Edsel achieved from all of this was being labeled as the worst car introduction and sales flop in motoring history.

Now, with all this said, when I see an Edsel nowadays at a car show, I’m one of the first to go and see it. Thus, the years prove that even a horrible flop like the Edsel has its day in the sun, which happens to be right now at collector car shows starting up everywhere, USA.

Greg Zyla is a syndicated auto columnist who welcomes reader interaction at [extramile\\_2000@yahoo.com](mailto:extramile_2000@yahoo.com) or at [greg@gregzyla.com](mailto:greg@gregzyla.com).



Perhaps one of the most famous 1955 Chevrolets ever to appear in filmdom is the one and the same '55 Chevy that appeared in the cult classic “Two-Lane Blacktop” in 1971 and then in 1973, “American Graffiti.” Shown is the Graffiti film headliner. (Universal Studios)



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