

BOY, WAS I MAD!

by Trudy Kent

The latest car-theft surveys show, once again, that the most stolen American car is still the Ford Mustang. The average person-on-the-street may shake his or her head in disbelief and wonder . . . but any one of millions of Mustangers will surely understand this paradox.

Any of us finding ourselves in this vicious "stolen-car predicament" will also find ourselves attacked by a myriad of happenings, emotions and frustrating thoughts. Probably the first and most recurring feeling is that of terrible personal loss. The next predictable and most displayed emotion is an odd combination of sadness and anger and is usually a display of equal vigor for each of these components.

The frustrations include, indeed, a cornucopia of varying degrees and persuasions. The personal affront you find yourself engulfed with from the very start will soon turn to an almost absolute belief that you, and you *alone*, will be able to handle this very unsettling occurrence. Soon, however, you will find yourself reaching out for balance and help from others; and finally . . . clutching at veritable straws.

After contacting the local authorities and having completed the numerous forms and reports, you will soon discover that you have had the burden of proof-of-loss thrust solely on your shoulders. You may find yourself submerged in a muddle you never dreamed possible. A feeling of past naivety and a smattering of something vaguely resembling guilt will probably assail you. Diabolical . . . yes.

Fairly recently I was forced to join the ranks of this "stolen Mustang" group. My one-owner Pony, freshly back from a body, paint and upholstery shop, was spirited away in the middle of the night by what the constabulary entitled "person or persons unknown". Part of my heart and almost 14 years of my life went with it! Three things encompassed in this "transaction" will be 'scribed in my memory forever: 1. The absolute

outrage I felt after the 'Stang was abducted. 2. The hopeless and sad feelings experienced when I passed another Mustang of the same body style, year or color. 3. The strange "Vibs" I received from the insurance company when I filed my claim and was almost "harrassed" into proving each and every detail of the bonifide restoration that had so recently been completed.

After a semi-recovery from the traumatization of the theft I began to plot a personal strategy, centered about the word "logic". Many interesting developments in my way-of-life now have been for the good-of-the-future. I had various safety devices installed on my remaining cars and readjusted the timers on my exterior house lighting. I now make sure to turn my wheels as far as possible when I park and I became one of the best U turners you've ever seen when I decided to check out a passing Mustang that looked pretty similar to my lost beauty. I even considered carrying the distributor cap with me and until the last of the safeties were installed I dislocated one wire . . . leaving it "almost" in place — trying to fool the possible searching eye.

The best advice you can ever receive, of course, is very simple — so simple you might never think of it seriously. "Don't put yourself and/or your car in that position!" Trite, but true. Don't leave your keys if at all possible with any repairman you don't know well. Try to stay with your car. Take those insurance cards and any other address info out of the glove box — or wherever you keep them in the car. Use your business address whenever you can on work orders, forms, etc. Never park head-out if you can manage it. Purchase a steering wheel lock or the kind that hooks onto the brake pedal, at least. Sounds silly, but get into the habit of locking the doors. Install no-head door lock spindles. Park under a light. Turn the wheels to make it hard to tow the car.

Don't discount the fact that a serious thief will probably have a small collection of tools with him — slim-jims are readily available nowadays, too. Do the best you can. The harder you make it for the "intruder" the more likely it is that he will take off in search of an easier conquest. Maybe the thief will be as frustrated and MAD as I was when my Mustang was taken from me . . . Now that I think of it . . . BOY, WAS I EVER MAD!



POPULAR HOT RODDING CAR OF THE DECADE!

On March 6, 1972 *Popular Hot Rodding* magazine announced it had named the Ford Mustang "Car of the Decade." According to PHR "the Mustang was one of the finest cars (for its price) ever to roll off a Detroit assembly line. It certainly wasn't a race car, but it had an unmistakable racy flair . . .

"No other single car model ever captured the fancy of the American public as did the Mustang. . . Its impact on the car market and the specialty market was phenomenal.

"It was the Mustang that broke the ice (in the pony car field) and its tremendous and continued popularity is one of the reasons the editors . . . have chosen it "Car of the Decade."

"We've always been proud of Mustang's accomplishments," said Ford Division General Manager John Naughton, ". . . it's truly an honor to have it chosen above all others in a ten year period."