

Trader Ray Gallagher Transporter

1971 Chevrolet Cheyenne C30

History

The Lincoln Park Team

Ray Gallagher was a successful drag racer in the 1960's and 1970's. In that era, it was typical for both the dragster and the drag racer to have nicknames. Ray Gallagher's dragsters were no exception. Ray campaigned dragsters named: Tom Cat, Super Bear, Super Camaro, and Pandemonium. Ray Gallagher's stage name was "Trader Ray" Gallagher.

Ray Gallagher lived in Lincoln Park, MI. Lincoln Park is in Wayne County, just south of Ford headquarters in Dearborn. As you might suspect, this area was a hot bed of automotive activity in the 1960's.

Perry S. Wyatt Sr. owned and operated Lincoln Park Transmission Service, in Lincoln Park. In the 1960's, Wyatt built and drag raced a 1955 Chevrolet. So, Perry Wyatt was uniquely qualified to build transmissions for drag racers. In 1967, Ray Gallagher contracted with Perry Wyatt to build and service the transmissions and differentials on Gallagher's dragsters.

Lincoln Park Transmission
985 Southfield Road
Lincoln Park, MI 48146
313-386-7460
<http://www.lincolnparktransmission.com/index.html>

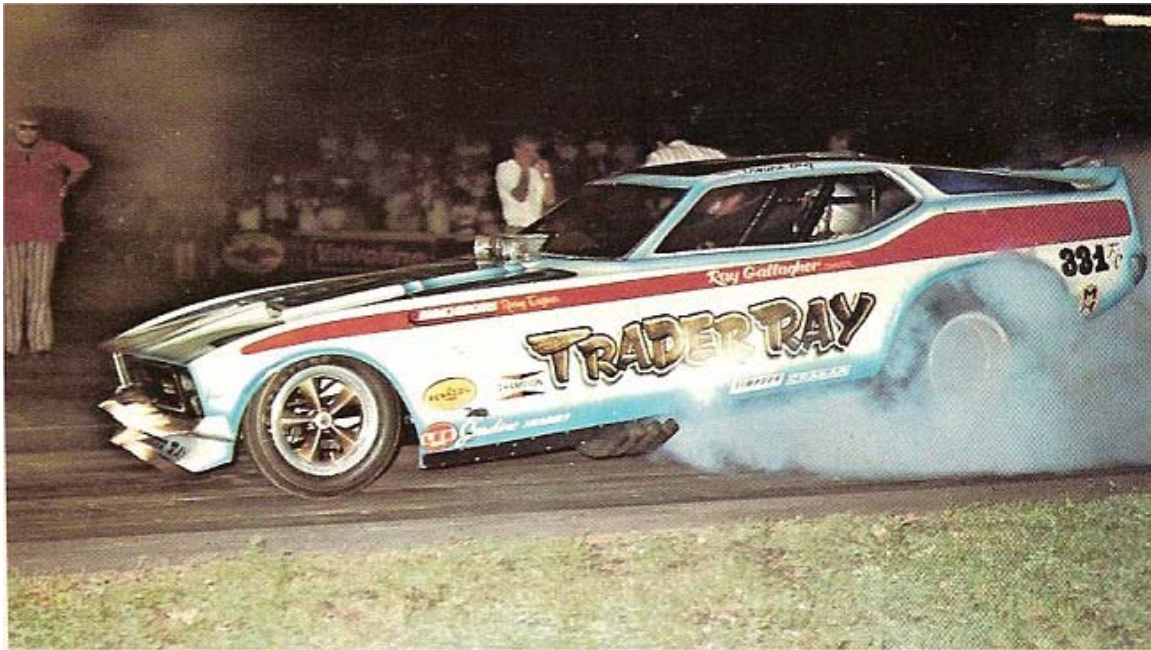
By 1969, the relationship between Gallagher and Wyatt had evolved into a partnership. They co-owned a funny car called the "Super Camaro". Tom Smith, another local racer, built the chassis. Smith owned Wolverine Chassis Specialties, which, of course, was named after the University of Michigan Wolverines.

Perry Wyatt Sr. built the drive train. Ray Gallagher drove the *Super Camaro*. They raced the *Super Camaro* throughout the 1970 season. The funny car was transported on a black Ford ramp truck. Perry

Wyatt Jr., the nine-year-old son of Perry Wyatt Sr., helped his father at the shop and was a member of the crew at the race track.

At the end of the 1970 season, the team from Lincoln Park determined that the *Super Camaro* was no longer competitive. Wyatt and Gallagher dissolved their partnership.

For 1971, Ray Gallagher built a new funny car. Gallagher named this car after himself: the "Trader Ray". The *Trader Ray* had a fiberglass Mustang body and a Chrysler Hemi engine. Ray Gallagher hired Dwane Ong to drive the *Trader Ray*. Dwane Ong also lived in Lincoln Park, MI. Ong had been racing his own dragster, named the *Pawnbroker*.



Dwane Ong doing a "burnout" to warm up the rear tires of the "Trader Ray" Mustang. The 331 is Ong's NHRA TF driver number.

Perry Wyatt Sr. continued to build and service the transmission and the differential. Likewise, the young Perry Wyatt Jr. continued to help his father in the transmission shop. Perry also continued to crew for Ray Gallagher at the drag strip. Perry Wyatt Jr. recalls that for the 1971 season, Ray Gallagher purchased a new ramp truck to haul the *Trader Ray*.

"Ray spared no expense; the *Trader Ray* would have the best of everything! (Gallagher purchased) a brand new Chevy one ton dually, stretched and a ramp added by Louie Oleynik, with a twin-size sleeper, all state-of-the-art at the time."

Perry Wyatt, Jr., "History: The *Super Camaro* Funny Car"
<http://www.draglist.com/stories/SOD-Jul-2002/SOD-071202.htm>



The body of the "Trader Ray" Mustang on the asphalt of the paddock. The transporter is in the upper left of the photo.

Gallagher's truck started life as a Chevrolet Cheyenne C30. It came with a 350 cubic inch small block Chevrolet engine. A 396 cubic inch big block engine was available as an option, but was not selected for this truck. The truck was rated as a "one ton". The dual rear wheel "dually" option was selected. Front disc brakes were standard. It was painted white by the factory.

The VIN is CE331F636733. Decoding the VIN, we get the following information about the truck.

C	Chassis	4 x 2
E	Engine	V8 gasoline
3	GVW Range	1 ton
3	Model	Pick Up
1	Year	1971
F	Assembly Plant	Flint, MI
636733	Serial Number	First truck was 100001.

So, this truck was the 536733st

Perry Wyatt Jr. recalls one of his roles, in the 1971 campaign, was publicizing the team.

"I would get to ride in the ramp truck. Plus, Ray had handouts for this car, and I would pass them out."

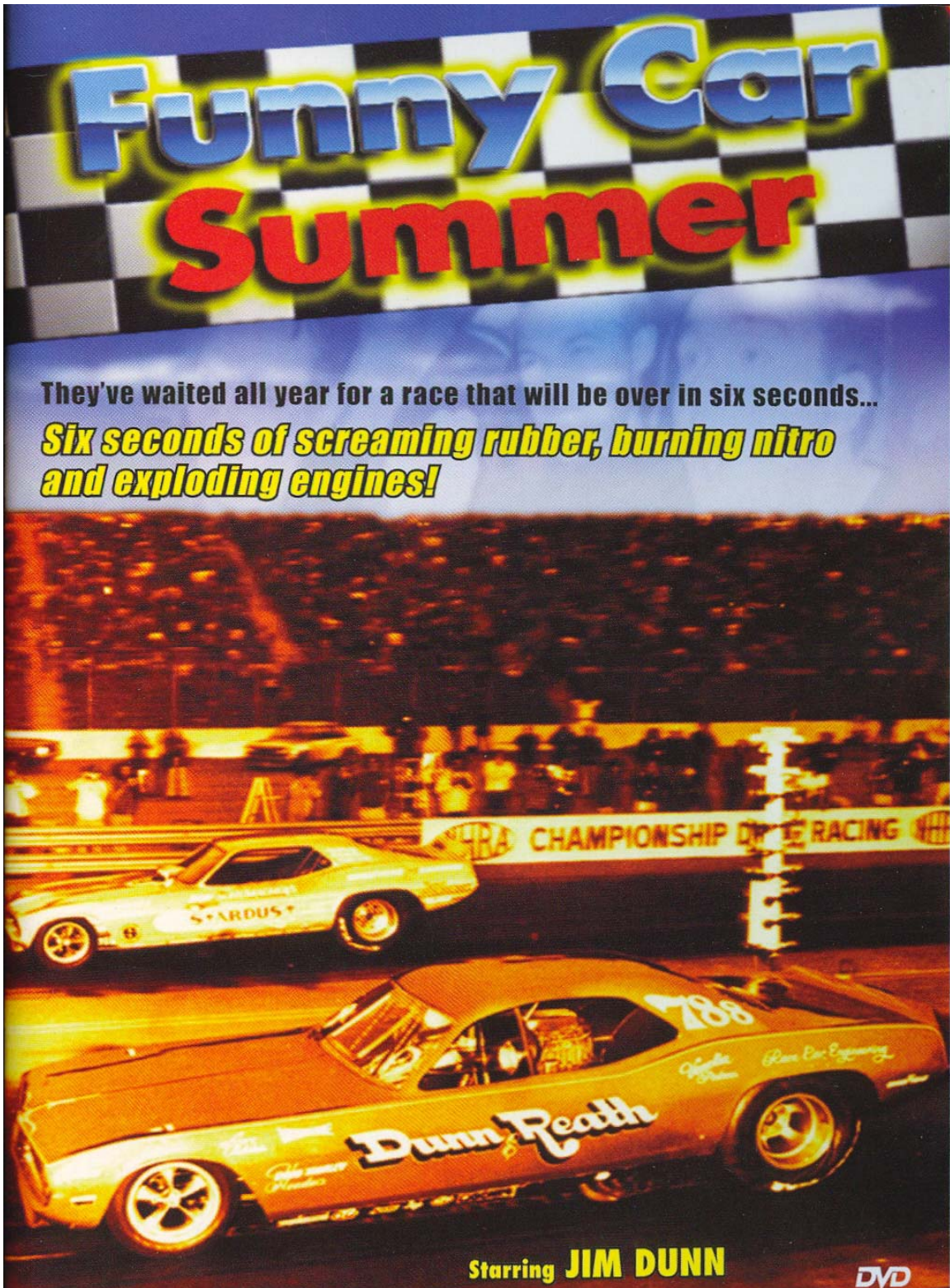
Perry Wyatt, Jr., "History: The *Super Camaro* Funny Car"
<http://www.draglist.com/stories/SOD-Jul-2002/SOD-071202.htm>

The Lincoln Park team raced the car at Detroit Dragway. The *Trader Ray* Mustang was successful right away. This success led to opportunities to campaign the dragster nationally. The new transporter would turn out to be a worthwhile investment.



The *Trader Ray* Mustang funny car with the transporter in the background.
New York Nationals, 1971
Photo: Perry Wyatt, Jr.

The hauler appeared in the movie, *Funny Car Summer*. A scene in the movie shows a parade of dragsters at the Tulsa Drag Strip. The parade is composed of dragsters being pulled down the drag strip (at parade speed) by their respective tow vehicles. The hauler is pulling the *Trader Ray* Mustang.



Cover photo for the movie *Funny Car Summer*.

The team from Lincoln Park did not have experience campaigning a car nationally. They found out that traveling across the country exposed the transporter and the funny car to the elements. So, in 1972, they had Speed Products Engineering (SPE), of southern California, fabricate a stainless steel cover for the ramp. SPE also affixed a serial number plate to the hauler. The serial number is 418. The ramp cover includes plexiglass windows. While hauling across the country, motorists could see *Trader Ray* emblazoned on the side of the funny car.



Speed Products Engineering
14733 Garfield Avenue
Paramount, CA 90723
562-630-2149

In 1972, the Lincoln Park team traveled west to Orange County International Raceway (OCIR).



The *Trader Ray* funny car with the transporter in the background. Note the new stainless steel cover for the ramp. Dwane Ong, the driver, signed the photo. Orange County International Raceway, 1972.
Photo: Perry Wyatt, Jr.



The *Trader Ray* with the hauler in paddock. New York Nationals, 1973.
Photo: Perry Wyatt, Jr.

In 1973, the Lincoln Park team continued to campaign nationally. They returned to southern California. Perry Wyatt, Jr. recalls that the last time he saw the *Trader Ray* Mustang.

"The car was loaded in the ramp truck and whole rig was parked in a motel parking lot. Dwane Ong and Jerry Shields (a crew member) came out in the morning to find that the rig had been stolen. It was later recovered, but that was the end of the "Trader Ray"!"

Perry Wyatt, Jr., "History: The Super Camaro Funny Car"
<http://www.draglist.com/stories/SOD-Jul-2002/SOD-071202.htm>



Loading the *Trader Ray* into the hauler. 1973. Photo: Perry Wyatt, Sr.

TV Tommy Ivo

At the end of the 1973 season, the Lincoln Park team disbanded. The hauler was sold to Tommy Ivo. Ivo used the hauler to carry one of his funny cars. Ivo also had a nickname: "TV Tommy" Ivo. Ivo earned the moniker by appearing in close to 100 motion pictures and approximately 200 television episodes.

TV Tommy was an enthusiastic showman and a relentless self-promoter. He painted his dragsters and his haulers red. He also put windows on the side of his haulers so that motorists could see his dragsters. He even put lights in haulers to illuminate the race cars during night driving.

Ivo got the idea of a glass-sided trailer after he saw the double-decker buses in England. "I thought it was a neat idea, and so did the truckers who saw me on the Interstates. They would comment on their CBs saying, 'Did you see that Tommy Ivo car?'"

"I began putting windows in my trailers so the fans could see my cars. I was running two cars, so if one broke I would have a backup. I even got the bright idea to put lights and a generator in the trailer, so it would light up the cars at night and save me the time of lowering the tailgate so the spectators could see what was inside."

Tommy Ivo

<http://www.tommyivo.com/hotrod-2.htm>



TV Tommy Ivo's four engine dragster. In the background is one of IVO's trailers. This trailer is an example of IVO's use of windows to allow fans to see his dragsters while being transported.

"There were a several unique haulers about 30 to 40 years ago. "TV" Tommy Ivo had an enclosed ramp truck. The unique feature was that it had plexiglass side windows, which made the racer visible as he traveled down the highway."

"Evolution Of A Race Car Hauler", Norm Bogan

<http://www.scrafan.com/column/norm/norm07.html>

Ivo painted the hauler red (over the existing white) to match his other trucks, trailers, and race cars. In addition, he replaced the 350 cubic inch engine with a big block Chevy 454.

Back in that period, one of Ivo's fans saw the hauler in Virginia. After seeing photographs of the hauler on the web in 2003, this fan wrote to the current owner:

"I just happened to stumble across this item. I remember seeing Tommy Ivo carrying his top fuel car to Suffolk Raceway, in VA, in a truck that looked exactly like this."

Email from Calvin S (calvin767). December 19, 2003.

Ivo retired from racing in 1982.

Tennessee

A drag racer, in Tennessee, purchased the hauler.

On October 30, 1984, Henry "Buddy" Smith, also of Tennessee, purchased the hauler. On that day, the hauler had 71,849 miles on the odometer. Smith used the hauler to transport his 1955 Corvette to car shows. After selling the Corvette, in 1983, Smith put the hauler up for sale. Perry Wyatt Jr., then 42 years old, corresponded with Smith. Wyatt verified that the hauler is the one purchased and used by Ray Gallagher.

"... I personally am positive that this it is the ramp truck bought new by Ray Gallagher to haul the "Trader Ray" Mustang funny car, driven by Dwane Ong, and trust me, this is very near and dear to my heart."

Email from Perry Smith Jr. to Henry Smith. December 8, 2003.

On March 1, 2004, Henry Smith sold the hauler to the current owner. On that day, the hauler had 93,023 miles on the odometer.

Currently

The hauler remains as it was in the Tommy Ivo era. It retains the big block Chevrolet engine. The paint is red, with some of the original white showing through. The SPE stainless steel cover remains. The lights to illuminate the dragster while on the ramp still exist.