

Cadillacs, Candy Bars and Boogers

by Steele Diamond

I won't ever forget the image of my father, behind the wheel of the Cadillac he so loved. Even as a ten year old, and more as an adult, I could never figure out why he loved that car as much as he did.

I must explain that he was really my step father, though he adopted me when he and my mom got married. So when we met "The Rabbit," he was a single, swinging bachelor type. (To this day, I don't know why everyone called him The Rabbit either). But the thing that impressed me about him was his 1963 Austin Healey 3000. He sold it within a year of marrying my mom, and replaced it with this brand new Cadillac Coupe DeVille. The Healey was much cooler.

The image always includes beer. I can't ever remember him driving anywhere without a beer in his hand. Back then, it wasn't against the law to have the open container and The Rabbit *always* had an open container. We went everywhere in that Cadillac. I used to ride in the backseat, which was about the same size as my bedroom. Right after we bought the thing, we took a road trip. We drove from Virginia Beach to Seattle, down to San Diego and across to Atlanta. We took a right at Atlanta and went to Orlando. Then back up to Virginia Beach.

One day I was riding with Dad and Mr Doug. We were taking Mr Doug to get his truck at a shop. Dad stopped at a convenience store to get another beer. He asked if I wanted anything and I asked for a candy bar. Mr Doug and The Rabbit headed into the store. They emerged a few minutes later, obviously engulfed in a funny conversation, each with a beer in hand and my dad had a brown

sack. They got in the car and he tossed me the bag which had in it my favorite candy bar. A Zero. Their humorous conversation ended when my dad said, "Yeah, as you get older, a few things happen. You quit eating candy bars and stop picking boogers."

Of all the wisdom The Rabbit thrust upon me, that is one of the things I remember. The funny thing is, I still love Zero bars.

