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car over 100 miles, just to confirm that it was truly fixed. Could the other shop really have missed something this simple, and common as the main relay? I had to believe that they had--I mean I drove it over 100 miles!

A week or so later, the customer called back. It had stalled again, several times, but had always restarted. Oh, great. "Bring it in", I said. When the car arrived I could find nothing wrong with it. I really tested it this time, checking everything in sight. I test drove the car for over a week. I drove the car to and from work, on errands, and to lunches. The engine never missed a beat. In fact, the car ran so well, I was starting to get attached to it.

After not being able to duplicate the stalling complaint, I called the customer back, in attempt to get more information. Perhaps, I wasn't properly duplicating the conditions under which it stalled. After an in depth discussion, yielding no new information, just a frustrated customer (and technician), it finally came out. He said, "getting stuck isn't so bad, but my wife gets angry having to stay with the boat trailer while I go for help."

The light bulb illuminates. "What trailer", I thought. As it turns out, the engine only stalls when he is towing his boat. (I didn't even know he had boat, or a trailer, or even a trailer hitch.) I went to his house to examine the trailer, and lighting hook-up. Someone had wired the trailer lights to the same circuit as the DME power supply. When he would trailer the boat, the extra current required to illuminate his trailer lights would over-heat the main relay, causing it to shut-off until it cooled sufficiently. Problem fixed.

This story may sound like a unique case, but unfortunately, I (and probably your mechanic too) deal with diagnostic situations like this one almost daily. Your help would be greatly appreciated. So next time you have a problem with your car, attempt to describe it in as much detail as possible. Please tell your mechanic the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. A little extra detail can save everyone a great deal of time and money.



SCENES FROM A RECENT RACING EVENT:

