

S3MAG

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TWIN-TURBO S775



HONEST ASSEMBLY
BMW E30 M3



MAKE SOMETHING THAT

MAKES SOMETHING



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TEXT: WOOLEY - PHOTOS: BRIAN MCGEE

I wish that, going into 2020, we had more people who set out to inspire... and less people who signed-up-to influence. To influence is a self-serving interest... building one's own ego first & foremost. To inspire is much more selfless, pure, & impactful.

Therefore, influencer is not a word I'll ever take seriously, and you shouldn't either, but I guess that's your choice. Just because it's somehow become a tolerated term DOES NOT make it fly. On the contrary, it shows a glaring problem with 21st-century digi-boy society. One that we're just sweeping under the rug here. And that is: We're not even self-conscious about our self-centeredness anymore. This social media era is diseased with ego & relentless self-promotion. And I promise if you're led by your ego, you'll end up unfulfilled, burnt-out, and resentful.



Look guys - we play with cars... it's pretty trivial/superficial stuff. We're not exactly changing the world here. BUT to contradict that... if we use our tools wisely, we can ABSOLUTELY connect with people, find the common ground, gain perspectives, and inspire one another. For those of us who really get it, we know there's so much more to car culture than what's on the surface. REAL car culture is a nucleus, and a lot of universally positive things circle that nucleus. Creativity, innovation, leadership, guidance, friendship... the list goes on & on. For us, car culture means camaraderie. It teaches discipline, and perseverance. It's the way we express ourselves, and add our splash of color to the world. It's our rebellion from normalcy & sensibility. And it's therapy.

With this E30 M3, Cory Rowan was able to translate his love for cars into something bigger than himself. At this point in my life, that's like... the ultimate win. He came up with the concept of Honest Assembly. And under that name, he put a team of college students under the leadership of auto-industry professionals & mentors. The lead sponsor/believer in the project was CRC Industries. And the goal, was SEMA's Battle of the Builders 2018. That's what they were working & competing for. Ravi from CSF Cooling (one of the mentors) volunteered to put the car in his booth at The Sema Show, front & center.

This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for these students. And to double-down, Cory's wife is a doctor, so being close to his heart, the entire project would operate under the umbrella of raising awareness & support for the Morgan Adams Foundation - a children's cancer charity.

The M3 had belonged to Cory for a while before this idea ever sparked. He'd been holding onto the car since it's a real E30 M3... and E30 M3 values are going up up & awaaaay. But it'd just been sitting in storage. It didn't run. It was in 'ok' shape, but kind of forgotten. But - it was a great platform for the task at hand.

The plan was to keep it fairly period-correct & pay homage to the essence of the early M3s. But as the Honest Assembly project started to get legs & Battle of the Builders became officially 'on'... everyone involved knew they were gonna have to pull a rabbit or 2 out of their hats to capture eyes at an event like SEMA.

Ravi from CSF also happens to be a BMW guy & a little bit of a BMW purist. Ravi & Cory both STILL felt it was crucial to NOT bastardize the factory M3 styling too much. Meaning - they didn't want to cut up the OEM M3 widebody, just to tack on some trendy fiberglass suuper widebody just because it's the SEMA thing to do. But SEMA is all about the aftermarket after all.



REAL CAR CULTURE
IS A NUCLEUS



AND A LOT OF UNIVERSALLY POSITIVE
THINGS CIRCLE THAT NUCLEUS.

MENTORS

- Dori Ahart - CRC Industries (Lead Believer And Sponsor)
- Geoff Barrett - BMW CCA (Supporting Mentor)
- Mike Benvo - BPM Sport (Tuning And Coding)
- Nate Bourgeois - Duroboros Fabrication (Exhaust)
- James Clay - BimmerWorld (Lead Tech Advisor & Parts Sourcing)
- Fox Chung - BMW CCA (Supporting Mentor)
- Dean Coccaro - Zendex Tool and GoJax (Made our 1.5-car garage into actual usable space.)
- Ravi Dolwani - CSF Radiators (SEMA Booth, Cooling, and PR)
- Dan Fitzgerald - Diffsonline (Custom Differential)
- Erin Flaherty - Flaherty's Fine Fabrication (Oil pan and general awesome mentor.)
- Wyatt Gilbert - Motion Control Suspension (Suspension Consulting)
- Jeff Jegelwicz - Cover Craft (Developed custom cover.)
- Ryan Lindsley - BimmerSpeed (Gets team out of jams.)
- Sam Lopez - Gorilla Wraps (Livery Install)
- Josh McGuckin - Gates and Project Baja (Fabrication Mentor)
- Brian McGuire - Yarnco ("Make it work" mentor)
- Alex McCulloch - Geo Shelly Auto Brokers (Vintage BMW Nut)
- Jeff Miller - Essex Brakes / AP Racing (Brake Tech Consultant)
- Cory Rowan - Vis-Sue Creative (Designer & Project Manager)
- Steve Schardt - Forging Wheels (Wheel Fitment & Design)
- Scott Sarjano - Line of Electric (Welding Supplies)
- Andy and Scott Norton - Cars Remember When (Body Restoration)

...so they decided to use their wild card under the hood, and Cory brought a wrecked F80 (2014-2018) M3 at auction, strictly for the motor. The F80 runs BMW's S55 engine, a twin-turbo inline-6 making 444hp. To put BMW's modern technology into the analog E30 chassis, was going to cause major pains in all the asses, respectfully. No easy feat. And no one had done it. But out between the capable team of mentors on this project... they had the networks & know-how to theoretically get it done. And... it was gonna put these students straight in the deep water lol. If they could pull this off, everything else would be easy. Here's how it went down:

2017-2018 // DISASSEMBLY

DEC 2017 We disassemble & categorize every part, nut, and bolt on the donor E30 M3.

FEB 2018 Body work on the E30 M3 begins with Cars Remember When. F80 M3 bought at auction, & complete disassembly of that car.

MAR 2018 E30 M3 goes to bare metal. 325E test car arrives & is torn down. This car acts as the template for the transplant.

APR 2018 Initial S55 engine fitment in the 325E.

MAY 2018 Students travel across country to Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Georgia to work with mentors from CRC Industries, BimmerWorld, and Motion Control Suspension.

JUN-AUG 2018 Fabrication and electronics to make the S55 engine run.

SEPT 2018 The S55 engine runs for the first time inside the E30 325E. The team is elated!

2018 // REASSEMBLY

SEPT 2018 The E30 M3 returns, and the mad rush begins. SEMA is 6 weeks out. The drivetrain has to be transplanted along with a full reassembly. Any sense of a normal life ends for the next month.

OCT 2018 The M3 is as close to finished as it's been, and the chassis transition & drivetrain transplant are complete. While working on the car at each fuel stop, the drive through the night from Denver to Las Vegas begins.

MON 10/29 2018

The car arrives at SEMA minutes before the first round of judging for the Battle of the Builders. The car is complete, but totally untested. At the last point, the team is simply relieved to make it to Las Vegas. They're exhausted. The honor to be judged for the BOTB is a monumental achievement.

TUE 10/30 2018

Tuesday, the first official day of SEMA. The car is dramatically displayed in CSF Radiator's booth. To our surprise, the car is announced as a Top 40 SEMA BOTB Finalist. The car ran in testing, but not in its final configuration. Everyone knows that a running car is required to move forward in the competition. This kicks off the fury of late-night testing. Some basic issues are found & resolved thanks to help from local BMW shop, Sin City BMW. There would be a slight sense of relief if an electrical issue hadn't reared its ugly head while servicing the clutch.

WED 10/31 2018

The Honest Assembly team makes their way to the lunchtime Top 12 announcement of the Battle of The Builders in the SEMA Grand Lobby. It is a Hollywood style affair on a lit stage with TV cameras and SEMA executives. Our team was announced as a Top 3 finalist in class. Moving to the next stage of competition means that our car has to drive across the SEMA floor and onto a TV stage for thousands of spectators no later than Friday at 8am. The celebratory atmosphere quickly fades & was replaced with the anxiety of prepping the car. There would be no sleep for the next 44 hours.

WED 10/31 2018

A strict rule of SEMA is: No running cars inside the building. That means the team can't confirm if the car actually runs. So every sensor and connection is physically checked by the team with help from Ryan at BimmerSpeed, and ECU communication to each connection is remotely confirmed by the tuner, Mike at BPM Sport.

Non-stop work continues through Wednesday & Thursday night as new issues surrounding the wiring migration from the '85 to the '88 are discovered. The team is given a deadline of 9pm on Thursday by the contest organizers.

THU 11/1 2018

9pm rolls by and the car only sputters. The deflated team is visited by many of the other Top 12 contestants. Maybe it's seeing the words of encouragement from other builders in the Top 12, or maybe the show organizers just realize how hard we've worked to get this far, but we somehow get a second chance. The producer of the television show covering the contest, Bud Brutsman, extends our deadline to 8am.

One more all nighter for the Honest team seemed to be a strange gift, but we were grateful. Reinforcements were brought in again from BPM Sport and BimmerSpeed to help diagnose the issue.

FRI 11/2 2018

It's 6:30am and only a handful of the team are still awake. The first crowds of show employees and presenters start arriving for the day. There is no choice but to fire-up the car & pray. A few stumbles & it fires! Immediately an announcement is made over the PA system, "No SEMA cars are allowed to be started in the convention center." ... but it didn't matter. It was showtime!



The car never makes the cut for Top 4 of the show. But that doesn't seem to matter to a group of young builders and the mentors supporting them. In 11 months, the team had gone from average enthusiasts looking for junkyard parts to modify their daily drivers... to being in front of thousands of fans on television. All week, show visitors & industry icons stopped by the booth to meet the young team behind the car. The feeling when you're mentioned in the same breath as your heroes was more than any member of the team could prepare for.

And ladies & gentlemen - this is how we inspire!

Think about the lives this car has touched, and the ripple-effect it will have. College students - who's career paths & careers goals have been shaped, molded, and honed-in. These kids have found confidence, experience, and an insane surge of motivation to pursue their passions. Industry professionals & mentors - who were able to pass down what they know & who they know... and pay it forward to the next generation. Being able to give back like that, is a huge measure of success in my book. Children unfairly having to fight cancer at such an innocent age... are gonna beat it one day soon. They may be part of the first generation that never drives a gas-powered car. But their lives were touched because we did.

You say cars are superficial... materialistic. Maybe. But I'm not. And I don't think the culture is either.

You can say that baseball is just a game. Or that music is just a poem with noise. But for people whose lives have been touched by these things... they're so much more than the sum of their parts.

The point is: It's about shared mindsets... and shared character. It's not about a car. You & I?? We speak through cars - yeah. Others?? they speak through baseball. Or music. Or whatever. And we speak to each other! We hear each other across demographics, and over the chatter. Maybe Cory's Honest Assembly speaks to someone reading this mag who plays baseball. And that guy gets inspired to do something similar within his sport. And a musician catches wind of that in the stands... and is inspired to write a song. A song that comes through the speakers and hits someone who works at a bank, and inspires him/her to get creative & do more for their local community. At its current pace, social media is pushing us. Pushing us to become more & more dependent on likes, subscribers, and followers. Push back.

ENGINE / DRIVETRAIN

- 550hp/560tq F80 M3 engine (S55B30) and 6-speed transmission
- First swap of its kind in the world
- Custom coding & performance tuning from BPM Sport
- 6 F80 coolers & pumps with custom plumbing, 4 fans, and controllers
- CSF charge cooler & heat exchanger
- Differential machined for 4 clutches, custom ramp angles, and a 3.38 ratio from Diffsonline
- Stainless steel oval exhaust from Ouroboros Fabrication

WHEELS/BRAKES/SUSPENSION

- F80 M3 ABS (converted to 4-channel)
- F80 brake master cylinder/booster (modified pedal box)
- AP Racing Radi-Cal calipers designed for the F80 from Essex Parts Services
- Motion Control Suspension (MCS) 3-way remote dampers and true rear coilovers
- Custom subframes
- Tubular suspension with custom geometry from SLR Speed
- Forgeline custom designed 18x8.5 centerlock wheels to accommodate unique suspension and brakes

CHASSIS

- Chassis consulting & components from BimmerWorld, professional BMW race team & parts manufacturer, cober founded while racing an E30 M3
- Extensive chassis reinforcements
- Bare metal nut and bolt restoration with parts and consulting from James Day of BimmerWorld and BimmerWorld Racing
- Bodywork performed by nationally award-winning team at Cars Remember When
- Fabrication consulting by VW factory backed Project Baja and Flaherty's Fabrication
- Carbon fiber spoiler and Gurney flap

INTERIOR

- Cardinal red napa interior sourced from Germany to match BMW's current leather texture
- Napa black leather-wrapped dash, steering wheel, console, and pillars
- New plastic, rubber throughout

STUDENTS

- Justin Bruch / Parker Brown / Reece Cochran
- Isaac Gesundheit / Peter Golledge
- Zach Lagarenne (Lead Student Builder)



● HONESTASSEMBLY