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UNDERCOVER AGENTS

Occasionally, to expose the activities of criminals, law enforcement agents have to take a huge risk and try to infiltrate criminal organizations. Many film directors have focused their attention on these dangerous operations, and have recreated them in their movies. However, few films have managed to do it better, when showing the work of undercover agents, than those in the *Fast & Furious* franchise.

It has to be said that the director Rob Cohen really surprised audiences when he revealed that his movie *The Fast and the Furious* was not just another film about races and car lovers. The story was in actual fact about an undercover operation for which the Los Angeles Police Department and the FBI had joined forces. Their objective? To capture a group of drivers in fast cars specialising in robbing freight trucks on the highway. We have to wait until almost minute 30 in the movie before all is revealed: Brian, the young driver who is trying to impress Dominic Toretto to get close to his group, is actually an undercover cop.

UNDERCOVER

After taking part, and losing, in a street race with Toretto, as a result of which he owes him a "ten-second" car, Brian O'Connor is driving through the streets of Los Angeles when a car forces him to pull over. Two plain-clothes detectives order him to get out of the car, they handcuff him and take him to a luxurious mansion in an exclusive neighbourhood where a group of specialist agents have set up an operations base. Only then does the driver reveal that he is one of them and he complains about how tightly they have handcuffed him. "You never know who's watching, Brian," Sergeant Tanner, the man who turns out to be his superior, tells him.

What leads a young man like Brian to take such a big risk by getting into the world of street racing without revealing his true intentions? The answer is obvious: promotion. "You want that detective badge fast, kid. Well the FBI can help if you come through for us," says Agent Bilkins, a high-ranking agent in the FBI, which has hooked up with the Los Angeles police to investigate a wave of truck robberies that is making a lot of people nervous. "We're

After the presumed death of Letty Ortiz (in the picture), Brian O'Conner confesses to Dominic Toretto that she had offered to work undercover in one of the agent's operations.

in the political crosshairs now, Brian. That's why you're undercover," says Sergeant Tanner.

In two months there have been four robberies. The losses are stretching into the millions. And the prime suspect is Dom Toretto. Brian's mission consists of gaining his trust to try to find out what he really knows about the matter. And, to do this, he's just going to have to pass himself off as an extraordinary driver who is totally fearless when he takes part in a race.

ON A KNIFE EDGE

Anyone can imagine the enormous risk that an agent of the law runs when he infiltrates a crew of drivers. In the *Fast & Furious* franchise, we have had the chance to see some police officers in very tricky situations, like Monica Fuentes, who ended up having to live with Carter Verone, a dangerous drug trafficker, in *2 Fast 2 Furious*.

In *The Fast and the Furious*, Brian wants to believe that Toretto is innocent, because deep down he respects him. This leads him to investigate other possible suspects. For this reason, in the middle of the night he breaks into the garage of another regular participant in the street races in Los Angeles, Hector and his group of Latino drivers, looking for clues that might implicate them in the robberies. Drawing a blank, Brian leaves the building and bumps into Vince, Toretto's right-hand man, no less. After a fight with Vince, Dom emerges from the shadows, and in one of the most exciting scenes in the movie, says: "Brian, this is one of those times you need to be clear about what you say."

Undercover cops are trained to keep their false identity a secret until the end, and not to lose their cool even in the worst circumstances. Brian offers a master-class in the film when he begins making up the story of being worried about the "Race Wars" and that this has led him to snoop furtively around some garages to find out what engines his rivals will be competing with. Vince doesn't want to believe it and shouts: "He's a cop!" Toretto looks the guy up and down suspiciously, and fixing him with his penetrating stare, he asks him straight out: "Are you a cop?" Brian shakes his head.

DEEP COVER

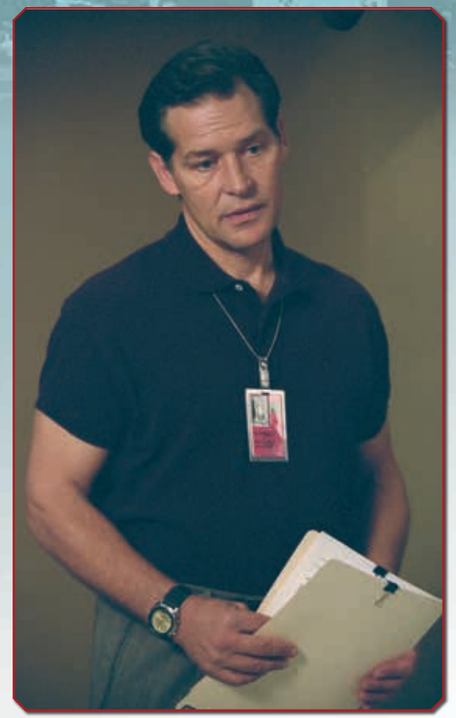
Of course, the success of an undercover agent's mission depends basically on how convincingly he plays the part. It is about giving up your own personality, taking on a different identity, and living a new life 24 hours a day. But of course, when someone gets too deeply into their character they run the risk of identifying closely with the people around them. This is why, at the start of *2 Fast 2 Furious*, Agent Bilkins mistrusts Monica Fuentes: she's been with Verone for too long and this leads him to wonder: Is she still clear about her mission, or has she gone over to the other side?

In some ways, something similar happens to Brian O'Connor when he penetrates the fascinating world of Dom Toretto in *The Fast and the Furious*. As the days go by, the undercover agent finds himself doubting even his own principles. Something that definitively influences this is the attraction he immediately feels for Mia, Toretto's sister. So when, in another interesting moment in the film, Brian begins to justify his target's actions to his superiors, another agent comments that what is happening to him is that Mia is blurring his vision. Feeling offended, Brian lunges at him out of control and Sergeant Tanner has to pull them apart, shouting, "What! Are you going native on me, Brian?"



Agent Monica Fuentes has been working undercover for some time in Carter Verone's criminal organisation. There are even those who suspect that the police officer could have gone over to the other side.

Agent Markham of the Customs Service (played by James Remar) agrees to the FBI once again recruiting Brian O'Conner to work as an undercover agent in the on-going operation against Verone.



UNDER PRESSURE

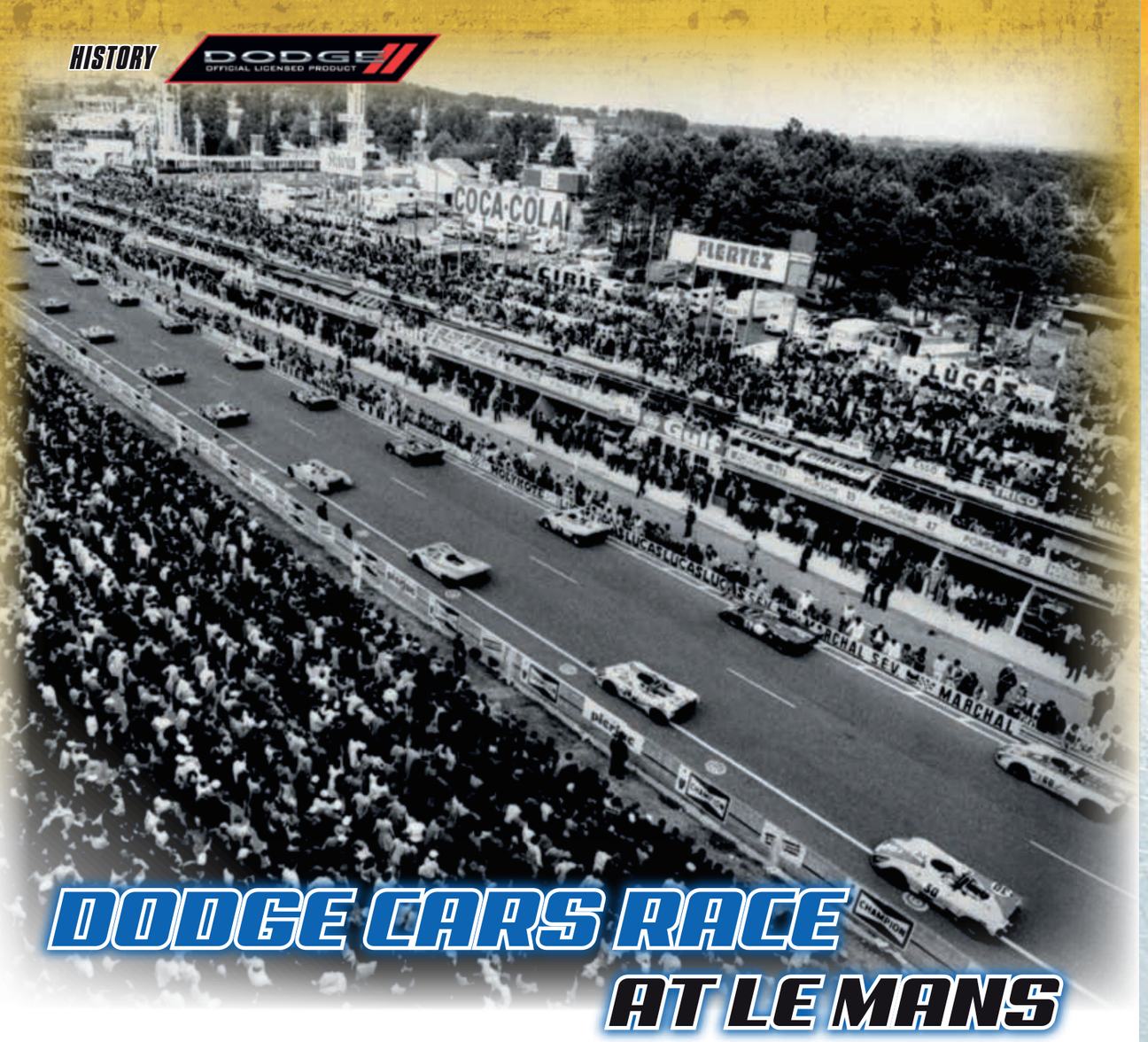
Undercover agents work under enormous pressure. Their bosses demand rapid results, but they know that if they make any mistakes, no matter how small, and they get too hasty, they can ruin months of work and put their life at risk. In *The Fast and the Furious*, we see that Brian O'Connor cannot escape the pressure of the FBI. After the failed operation against Johnny Tran, which shows that the Asian gang has nothing to do with the truck robberies, Agent Bilkins gives Brian an authentic ultimatum: "Let me tell you. I don't care if you have to aim at someone. You've got 36 hours to crack this case, or you might want to think about another career."

Brian is running out of time and his mind keeps looking for a way out. He envies Toretto's freedom and his way of thinking when he gets behind the wheel of a good car and drives at top speed, leaving all his problems behind. The young guy really is facing a delicate dilemma because he has fallen in love with Mia and he feels a growing admiration for her brother. Sergeant Tanner realises that his pupil is full of doubts and so, like a father, he warns him: "You're either with him or you're with us, Brian. And that's a choice you're going to have to make."

As always happens, events unfold quickly and unexpectedly. In the end, Brian has no option but to reveal to Mia his true identity to try and stop Dom and his crew from falling into an ambush set by armed truck drivers. Toretto will not forgive him for his betrayal, even though Brian helps him later to face up to Johnny Tran's dangerous gang. The confrontation between both racers will be unavoidable: a duel on wheels from which only one can emerge victorious. However, the young agent of the law will demonstrate in a final gesture that he is a real man of honor, even though this means the end of his career in the Los Angeles Police Department. Brian has made his decision: now he knows which side he wants to be on.

Erik Bergquist

Erik Bergquist is one of the creators of the original screenplay for *The Fast and the Furious*. Born in Los Angeles on February 13th, 1968, he grew up in Palos Verdes and studied at the Chadwick School, where his fellow pupils included some names who would later be successful in Hollywood, like actor Brandon Lee or producer Michael Saltzman. Clearly drawn toward the world of show business, Erik studied Literature and Drama, and he directed an interesting documentary as an end-of-year project entitled Backstage, in which he focused on all the details of a student production of the classic West Side Story. After graduating, he had the chance to work with screenwriter Michael Frost Beckner, the man responsible for the screenplay of *Spy Game* (2001) and the creator of the TV series *The Agency* (2002), who became his mentor. Luckily for Erik, Rob Cohen included him in the team of screenwriters of *The Fast and the Furious*, together with Gary Scott Thompson and David Ayer. It goes without saying that he made a decisive contribution to creating the world of Dominic Toretto and his friends.



DODGE CARS RACE AT LE MANS

The Dodge brand won trophy after trophy in the big sporting events in the United States, but very rarely took part in races outside the continent of North America. In 1976, however, a NASCAR Dodge Charger was entered for the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

American cars have often done well in the 24 Hours of Le Mans. To the four consecutive victories of the Ford GTs in the late 1960s we must add the class triumphs that the Chrysler Viper and the Chevrolet Corvette achieved in the early years of that century. Less well known is the participation, in 1976, of a Dodge Charger in the classic French race. An agreement between the organisers of Le Mans and Bill France, a NASCAR executive, allowed two American teams to race at Le Mans. One of them, belonging to Hershel McGriff, entered a Charger for the team's owner and his son Doug. They chose McGriff because of his experience on non-oval circuits because he won the Carrera Panamericana in 1950, and had raced in the Daytona 24 Hours. The American team had to install headlights, rear lights, rear-view mirrors and windscreen wipers in their NASCAR car, which caught the eyes of all the fans. Unfortunately, the American-bred cars struggled to adapt to the French endurance race. After two engines overheated in practice, the Dodge car, starting from the back of the grid, broke down on lap two. The other NASCAR car entered, a Ford Torino, started last and suffered transmission failure at the eleventh hour.

↑ There were two American cars in the 1976 24 Hours of Le Mans, a Dodge Charger and a Ford Torino, which the French press affectionately called *les deux monstres* (the two monsters) due to the stir caused by the appearance of the imposing vehicles from Detroit in European races.

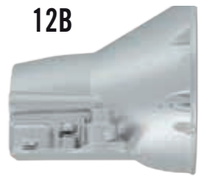


ASSEMBLING THE GEAR BOX

In this assembly session, you will assemble the clutch and gearbox parts for your model.

PIECES FOR THIS STAGE


12A


12B


12C


12D


12E


12F


12G


12H

AM

AP

CM

12A Gearbox housing, left side
12B Gearbox housing, right side
12C Output shaft housing, left side
12D Output shaft housing, right side
12E Gearbox oil pan
12F Flange for gearbox oil pan
12G Starter motor, piece 1
12H Starter motor, piece 2
AM Screw 2 × 4 mm, (x 10)*
AP Screw 1,7 × 4 mm, (x 2)*
CM Screw 1,7 × 3 mm, (x 3)*

* Some of the parts are spares.

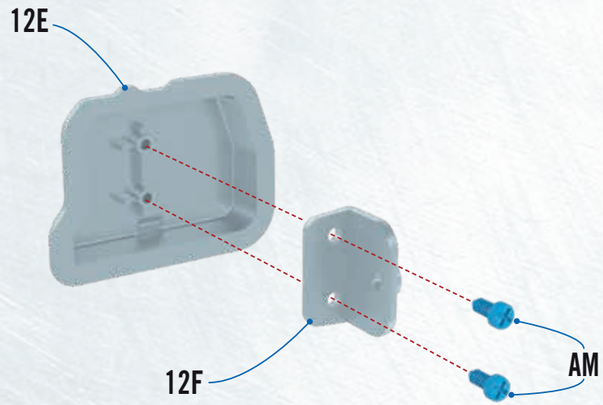
Editor's note: The parts shown here may differ slightly from the parts supplied with this issue. This does not affect the quality or the assembly instructions in any way.

ASSEMBLY AREA

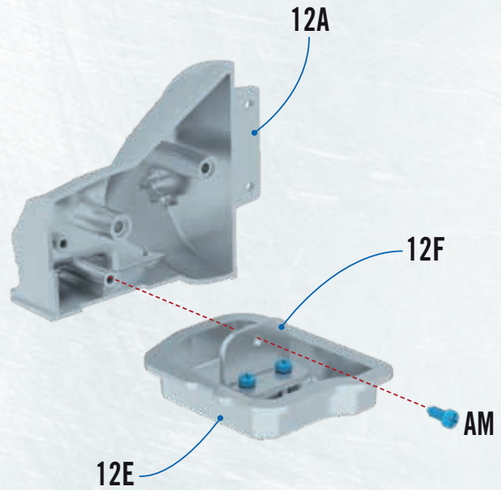


GEAR BOX

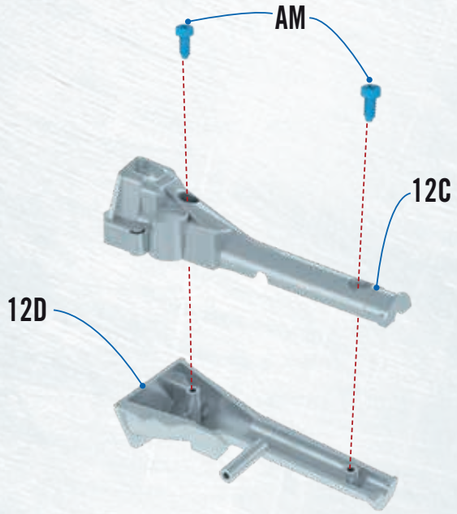
Assembling the gear box



12.1 **PUT** the flange **12F** and the gearbox oil pan **12E** together, ensuring that the pieces are facing the same way as those in the illustration. Join them together with two **AM** screws. ◄

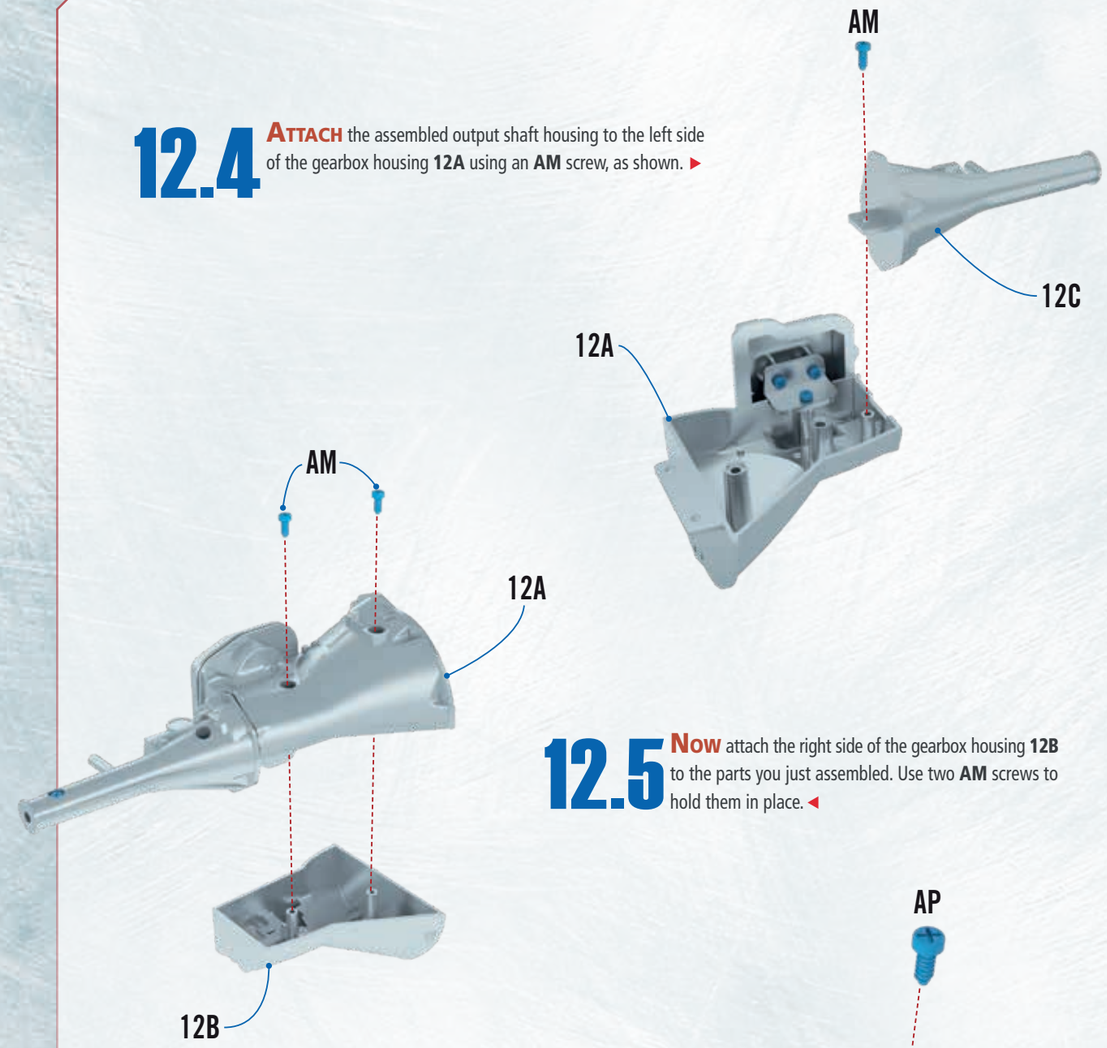


12.2 **TAKE** the left side of the gearbox housing **12A** and align the hole in its screw post with the hole in the oil pan flange **12F**, as shown. Look at the illustration carefully to ensure that the pieces are facing the right way. Join them together with an **AM** screw. ►



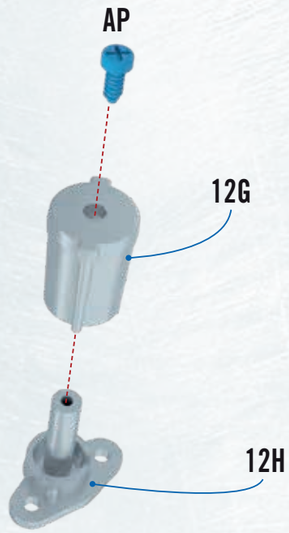
12.3 **MOUNT** the left side shaft housing **12C** onto the right side housing **12D**. Join the two pieces together with two **AM** screws, as shown. ◄

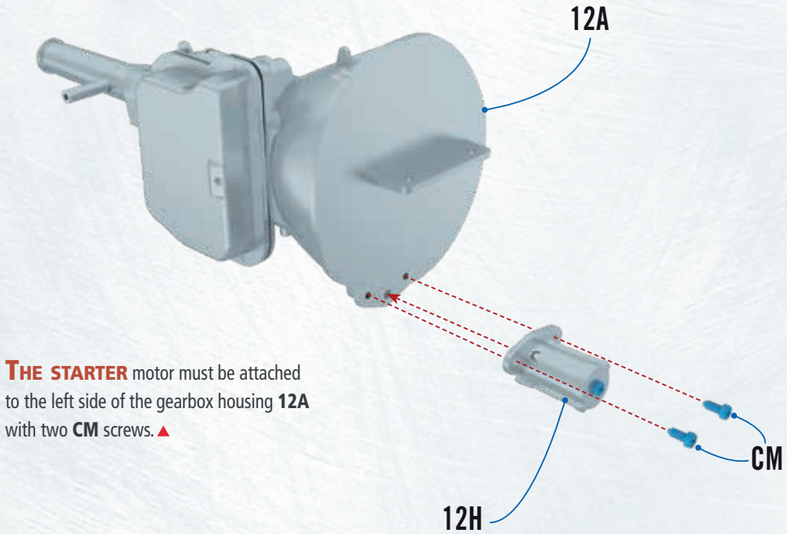
12.4 **ATTACH** the assembled output shaft housing to the left side of the gearbox housing **12A** using an **AM** screw, as shown. ►



12.5 **NOW** attach the right side of the gearbox housing **12B** to the parts you just assembled. Use two **AM** screws to hold them in place. ◄

12.6 **ASSEMBLE** the two pieces of the starter motor **12G** and **12H**. Join them together with an **AP** screw. ►





12.7 **THE STARTER** motor must be attached to the left side of the gearbox housing **12A** with two **CM** screws. ▲

STAGE 12 FINAL RESULT



Here is the gearbox you assembled. Keep it in a safe place until you are ready to install it in your model.

WATARU KATO, DARING AND IRREVERENT



Striking modifications sharp edges and visible rivets: this is the style of the most irreverent Japanese craftsman in the world of tuning, who takes his inspiration from the Kaido Racers to create some of the most audacious super sports cars you could imagine.

Anyone who has been lucky enough to meet Kato, the founder of the Liberty Walk firm, will have immediately realised that there is nobody as charismatic as him in the Japanese motor industry. And to say that he transmits this charisma and expresses it in the cars he makes is an understatement. Kato loves to live life to the max. The word 'conservative' has never been part of his vocabulary. Precisely for this reason, over the years he has managed to win the public's approval.

The work of the Japanese artisan Wataru Kato has a rather irreverent feel to it and he is not intimidated by even the most famous Italian brands.

THE ORIGINS

Kato's story begins in 1993 when, aged just 25, he decided to turn his passion for cars into a profession

and opened his first garage. The space was tiny, there was barely room for three cars, but that didn't stop him. He worked tirelessly and at a given moment he decided that he was ready to present his first bodykit. In 1994, he made his first appearance at SEMA in Las Vegas with a Murcielago that did not make an impression on either the public or the critics. Undaunted, Kato took the blow and continued working. He returned three years later with an even bolder proposal: no bodykits; he had cut the wheel arches off and mounted some glass fibre extensions that he riveted to the bodywork. The Liberty Walk style was born, inspired on the Kaido Racers and the racing cars of the 1970s. An absolute triumph! The project was beginning to take shape. In 2013, his big year, he caused a sensation with a Ferrari 458 Italia and a Nissan GT-R.

THE WORKS STYLE

In the second half of the 1970s, the production of racing cars experienced a huge boom in Japan. Some teams began to adapt conventional saloons, like the Fairlady Z, the Skyline, the Toyota Levins and the Mazda RX3, to obtain efficient and, above all, highly manoeuvrable models. Bodyworks were extended at the front and the rear, wheel arches were replaced with others, riveted and almost rudimentary, making it possible to fit larger tyres. Thus was created the Works style, which since then has been followed more or less faithfully and which Kato has adopted for the old models that he owns and in the very expensive deluxe cars that he tunes with his brand Liberty Walks LB-Works. He began with the Murcielago and the Aventador, and continued with the BMW M3, the Z4 and the Ferrari 458 Italia.

So much audacity has not aroused too much affection among Ferrari lovers, especially the most conservative ones. More than one must have shown his displeasure upon seeing how a design considered perfect has been altered. Kato doesn't care. He works for his own personal satisfaction. If later he finds someone who appreciates his work and shares his tastes, so much the better.

Thanks to Wataru Kato, deluxe models take on a completely new look and express even greater power and aggressiveness.

Kaido Racers

Kaido Racer cars, which have been part of Japanese culture since the 1970s, correspond to a wish to break with convention by way of extreme customisation, with noisy exhaust pipes, sharp angled bodywork kits and huge mudguards fastened to the bodywork with rivets or resin. Initially, they were inspired on Fuji Grand Championship Series Super Silhouette racing cars, which were very famous in the 1970s and 80s. The style survives, and it is not unusual to see one of those cars at meetings or even driving on a motorway.

When you dare to go completely against the trend, you often end up achieving your goals and moreover, you become very well known. Aware of this, Kato offered Kei Miura, of TRA Kuoto, the designer of Rocket Bunny the aerodynamic kits brand, and one of the most prestigious designers in Japan, a partnership deal. Everything Miura touches turns to gold, so it is no surprise that a lot of people queue up at the doors of his studio to commission him with the development of their own brand of spare parts and bodywork kits. When Kato called him, Miura dropped everything. He knew very well that, at Liberty Walk, he would be able to work on the most daring projects. And the Ferrari 458 and the Nissan GT-R more than demonstrated this.

Miura gave the front of the Ferrari his personal touch, fitting striking, riveted mudguards combined with a





You have to be very brave to pick up an angle grinder and cut the wheel arches off a supercar!

front end with very aggressive lines. Moreover, a very pronounced front spoiler gave the 458 an even more competitive look, if that's possible. It was attached to the car with three adjusters that would keep it in place even when travelling at high speed. Mounting the mudguards required greater technique and experience, since the original metal ones must have been cut to make room for the 20-inch Rotiform LVS wheel rims.

Next, the bodywork was perforated to attach the FRP LB Works bumpers. True to his provocative style, and paying close attention to detail, Kato incorporated a pair of lateral diffusers to reinforce the outline of the side skirts that were attached to the huge wheel arches. Although it might seem a rather artificial addition, they fitted perfectly in the design since they helped to extend the new outline to the rear bumper. And as if that were not enough, Miura added a ducktail spoiler, an accessory that he developed for his Rocket Bunny 6666 kit for cars like the Silvia and the 180SX. In truth, it's not exactly something that you would expect to see on a Ferrari, but in this case it could be thought of as the icing on the cake.

THE GT-R R35

Kato took a step further and began working with a Nissan GT-R R35 to turn it into a car, which although it is inspired on the most modern models in the Super Grand Tourer category, incorporates all the details that have become his hallmark. We can see Miura's hand behind the huge front spoiler. On this occasion, the mudguards were also cut so that the enormous 20-inch wheels could be fitted. The FRP LB Works wheel arches were attached to the bodywork at the front, where the enlargement of the arch followed the outline of the GT-R's Aeroblade Fender until it met the black side skirts. To complete the work at the back, a swan neck spoiler was attached, based on the DTM, in such a way that the spoiler rested on two central brackets. The kit was completed with a rear diffuser, which was also modified and fitted with a Trust titanium exhaust pipe. At the same time, some parts were made lighter, such as the front and central ducts, the Trust suction hose pipe kit, the exhaust valves and the ECU, redesigned to develop more than 600hp of power, which the VE38DET engine generates when it can breathe easily.

The design of the interior is quite luxurious. The original Nissan seats were swapped for padded leather of a much higher quality. Like the Lamborghini, the BMW and the Ferrari that Kato had modified, the GT-R Liberty Walk defines exactly what Kato and his brand are about: creating something far removed from what other tuning professionals offer, as well as the customisation of far more conventional cars. Kato is unquestionably an inspired artist with a very clear purpose: to make an impact. And that is the secret of his success.

LIBERTY WALK, TODAY

Liberty Walk, with a plant in the USA and another in Japan, produces bodywork kits for numerous brands such as Acura, Audi, BMW, Chrysler, Dodge, Ferrari, Lamborghini, Maserati, McLaren, Mercedes, Mini, Nissan and Porsche. They all bear Kato's unmistakable hallmark, and prices range from £2,400 for his more modest versions, to £24,000 for carbon fibre pieces for super sports cars like Lamborghini and Ferrari.

Only a great tuning master would dare to modify a Lamborghini to improve its look and its performance, which are already superb.

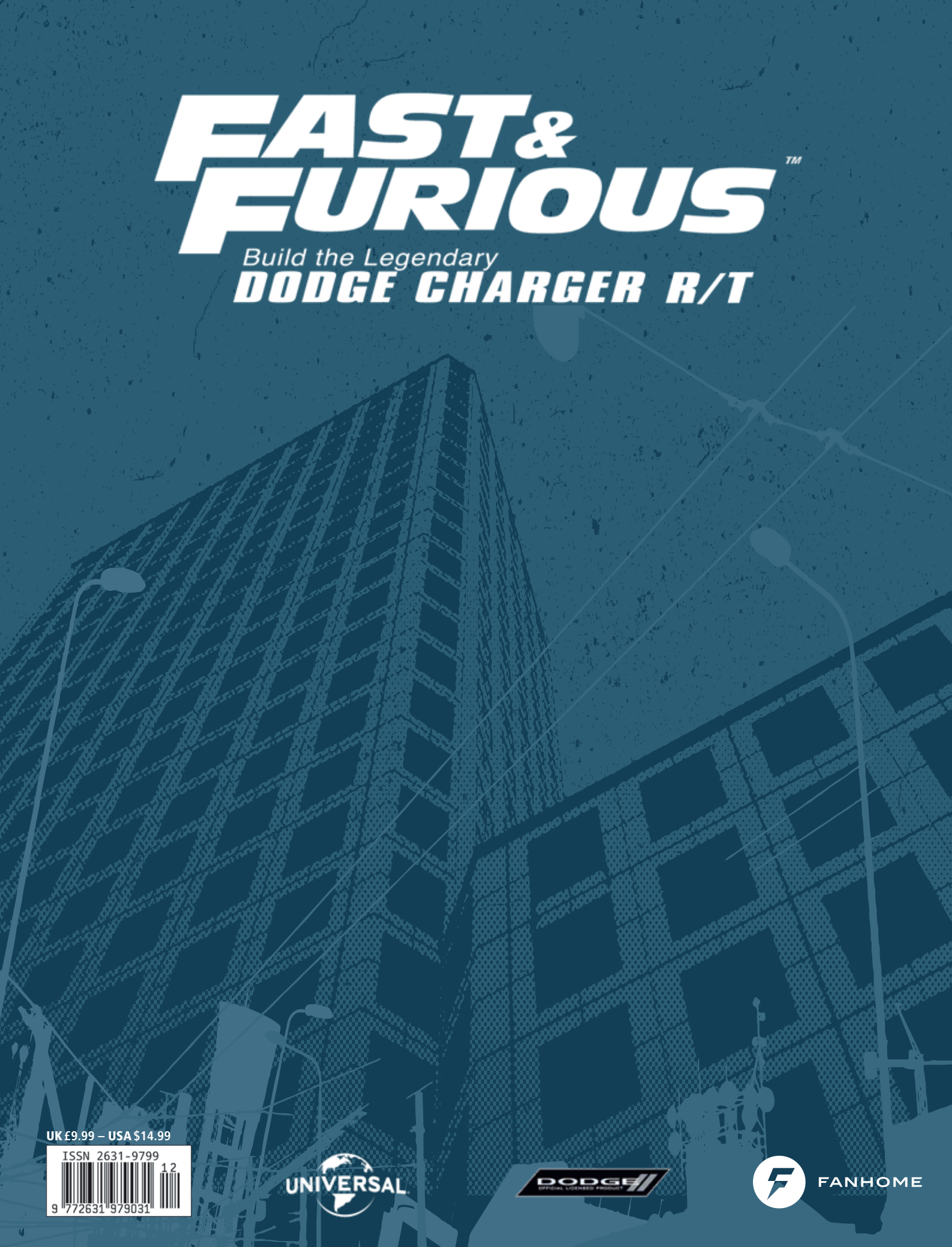


The Liberty Walk style is always excessive, as we can see in its enveloping wheel arches and the use of large-diameter tyres.



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