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CONNOR RHODES, A MERCILESS HENCHMAN

The *Fast & Furious* rogues' gallery is so full of talent that it is hard to stand out from the crowd. In order to do that, newcomers have to be incredibly evil, like for example, the cold cruel killer Connor Rhodes.

To surprise the audience, the *Fast & Furious* team decided to reveal an important plot development in the eighth movie of the franchise by introducing a new character. Screenwriter Chris Morgan masterfully created the character of Cipher, a legendary hacker supremely capable of manipulating people and pulling strings using really explosive tactics and strategies. Of course, to bring such a striking personality to life it was necessary to have the presence of a first-rate star, Charlize Theron.

"I couldn't have asked for more," the popular actress confesses. "Not only did they offer me a great role in one of the major film franchises, but I would be the first truly evil woman in the series. I considered it a total honor. Cipher is really serious about what she does and she is driven by greed, which says a lot about the role. As an actress I like characters who come on the scene and take possession of what they want, as and when they like, and they do it unexpectedly."

THE LOYAL HENCHMAN

Cipher does not work alone. Around her, she has a small, implacable army of collaborators. Outstanding among them is her henchman Connor Rhodes, a cruel, violent man who is absolutely loyal to his boss. Director F. Gary Gray wanted to give this part to an actor whose face would already be as charismatic as it was menacing. The character Tormund Giantsbane, from the series *Game of Thrones*, immediately crossed his mind. For the actor who played him, Kristofer Hivju, it was a complete surprise to be offered a part in *The Fate of the Furious.*

Just as they did in previous adventures in the saga, a new villain was introduced into the story. This time it was the cruel killer, Connor Rhodes, played by Kristofer Hivju.

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KRISTOFER HIVJU

Born on December 7, 1978, in Oslo, Norway, Kristofer Hivju has become one of his country's most popular international stars. The son of two famous actors, Erik Hivju and Lieselotte Holmene, he grew up fascinated by acting and everything to do with it. He began his professional career in 2001, working on some Norwegian TV series. After having a small part in the horror film *Manhunt* (2008), he took the opportunity he was offered to work in Hollywood, appearing in the remake of the classic science-fiction movie *The Thing* (2011), and in *After Earth* (2013), starring Will Smith. His time in the United States led him to be chosen to play the brave warrior Tormund Giantsbane in the series *Game of Thrones*, a part that made him hugely popular. With his characteristic long red beard, Hivju has continued to work in the movies, with roles in *In Order of Disappearance* (2014), *Force Majeure* (2014) and the historical epic *The Last King* (2016). His performance as the merciless killer Connor Rhodes in *Fate of the Furious* has become his most impactful film role.

"I grew up with the franchise and I always loved all the movies," Hivju says. "It's quite funny to begin as a fan and then, suddenly, to be there, rubbing shoulders with the people you've seen on the screen. It's a magical experience."

When, blackmailed by Cipher, Dom Toretto betrays his team and takes off with the cyber-terrorist's group. He immediately comes across Connor, who blocks his path. The tension between them immediately grows. Faced with Dominic's threatening attitude, Rhodes smiles and says: "I'm gonna love this."

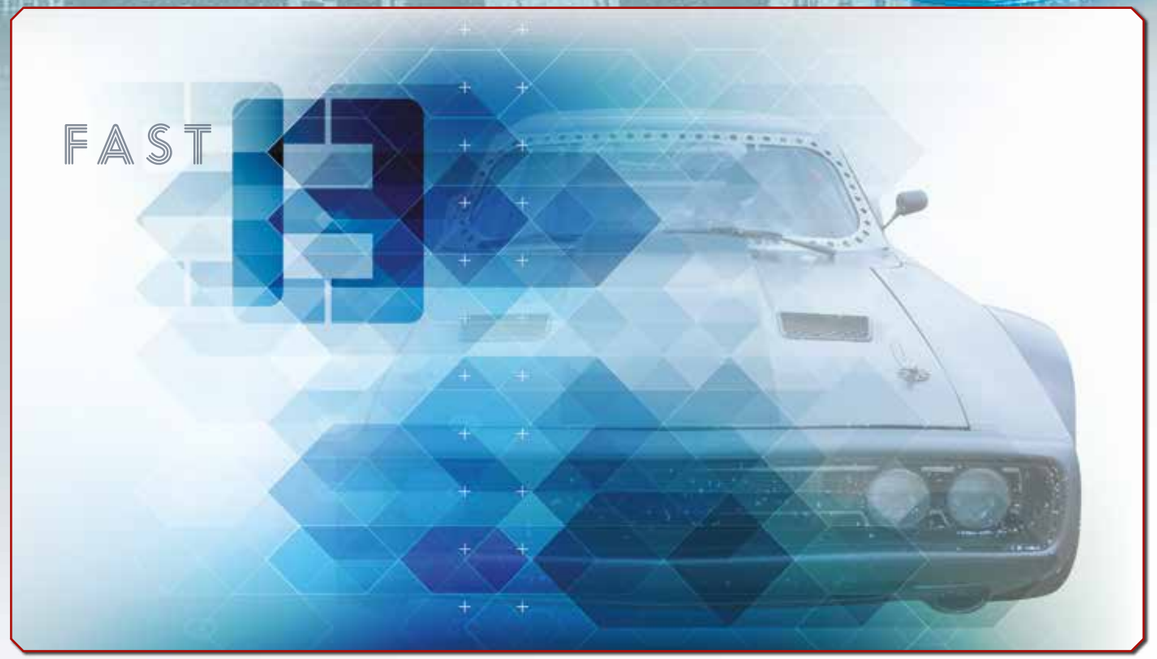
Surrounded by the most advanced technology, Cipher also needs the help of a strong right-hand man who will take care of her violent reprisals. This is where Connor Rhodes enters the storyline.

YOU CAN FEEL THE TENSION

Although his companions believe that Dom really has changed sides, he has no option but to follow Cipher's orders, since she has kidnapped Elena and Toretto's son and is holding them hostage on the airplane that the mercenaries use as a hideout and a base of operations. The audience can therefore clearly see that the hero has not lost his values, nor has he betrayed his family; just the opposite. In fact, he has to break the law again precisely to protect his people. This difficult situation means that Dom does not get along with Cipher and her henchmen at all, especially Rhodes, towards whom his attitude is one of constant confrontation.

One of the main clashes between them takes place in Manhattan. Cipher has sent Toretto to New York, where the Russian defense minister, who has some valuable documents, is staying. After an explosive operation, in which Cipher manages to remotely move thousands of vehicles to spread chaos in the Big Apple, Dom gets hold of the briefcase containing the documents. But in a rapid manoeuvre, Letty snatches the briefcase and gets away. Toretto, of course, goes after her and he even fires into the air to try to stop her escaping.





Letty, however, is sure of one thing: Dom will never shoot her. Just when it seems that she is about to escape, Rhodes blocks her path and puts a gun to her head. Toretto threatens to shoot Cipher's henchman and the scene is very tense. Letty eventually has to give up the briefcase and looks on helplessly as the two men disappear.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE SET

Filming *The Fate of the Furious* was a real challenge for Kristofer Hivju. Not only did he have to be on top form to make his confrontation with Toretto credible, but he also had to learn to move around in very small sets. This is because Cipher and her team spend most of the time hiding inside an airplane. This way it is impossible to track the cyber-terrorist; she's always on the move, never spending too long in one place to avoid being traced. This is why she has made a jet aeroplane with a huge flight range her permanent home.

Several scenes in the movie take place inside this plane. The director F. Gary Gray wanted Charlize Theron, Vin Diesel and Kristofer Hivju to be able to work comfortably and be free to incorporate the setting in their performances without feeling cooped up in such a small space. For this reason, instead of filming inside a real plane, he asked production designer Bill Brzeski to create a set from scratch.

Taking his inspiration from the new Boeing 787 Dreamliner, Brzeski designed a totally modern space, combining grey colors with dark shades and very eclectic touches for the purpose of obtaining a more intellectual, aesthetic atmosphere. Besides creating the luxurious space in which Cipher lives, where the operations room and her small arsenal is, a second set was also built, representing the bottom of the plane reserved for the cargo and the bowels of the jet airliner. The whole crew was pleasantly surprised by the set.

"I thought the design was wonderful," says Charlize Theron. "Working on this set was great and it gave me a lot more possibilities than I thought I would have to start with. All my concerns about working in such a small space vanished because it offered me a lot more than I was expecting."

THE MOST HATED MAN

It was on this set where Hivju had to do his most delicate scene. In the movie, Cipher is not wholly satisfied by Toretto's behavior so she decides to take reprisals against her hostage, Elena. Of course, she never gets her hands dirty doing this kind of thing; she has her henchman, Rhodes, to do that for her. With extreme coldness, and almost enjoying it, the henchman carries out Cipher's orders, aware that Toretto will never forgive him for it.

Hivju did a great job, just as he would later on in the final clash between Connor and Dom, although as a big fan of the series he was sorry to have to become one of the most evil characters in the franchise.

A digital illustration designed to promote *The Fate & the Furious*, the eighth episode in the *Fast & Furious* saga in which evil villains Connor Rhodes and Cipher made their debut.



DODGE MAGNUM 2005 MODEL

Once featuring heavily in the catalogues of every American brand, models with station wagon bodywork have gradually disappeared due to the fact that there is little call for them, the result of the launch and popularisation of SUVs. In the Dodge brand's range, the last model in this style was the Dodge Magnum, produced from 2005 to 2008.

A Dodge Magnum with RT finish (the sportiest until the arrival of the SRT-8). This car, more than five metres long, was the last Dodge model to have station wagon bodywork, known as "break" in Europe.

It is rather unusual for a brand to change the name of a station wagon version with respect to that of the sedan from which it is derived, but in 2005 the Dodge company chose to revive the name Magnum, which it had already used in earlier models, to refer to the contemporary Dodge Charger's station wagon bodywork.

The Dodge Magnum was over 5 metres long (5.02m to be exact), with five seats and a boot that, while it was no bigger than that of the Dodge Charger saloon, could be filled up to the roof, making it possible to transport larger objects. Only on sale for four years, it had the 2.7-litre Pentastar V6 engine as the basic option, another 3.5-litre V6 as an intermediate choice and a 5.7-litre V8 HEMI® as the top of the range. The brand offered different automatic gearboxes for the V6s and V8s (four and five-speed) and the possibility of having four-wheel drive.

In 2006 the SRT-8 sports version was launched with a 6.1-litre HEMI® producing 425hp, 20-inch wheel rims, Brembo brakes, and a clearly more aggressive exterior look. The brand eventually produced a variation for police departments on this same base.



In this picture of a Dodge Magnum police car (left) we can see the obvious similarities with the four-door Dodge Charger from which it was derived.



ASSEMBLING THE BONNET

In this assembly session you will be working on the bonnet. Therefore, put the pieces you received with this stage in a safe place until you need them.

PIECES FOR THIS STAGE

98A



98B



98C



98A Boot lid

98B Left hinge boot lid

98C Right hinge boot lid

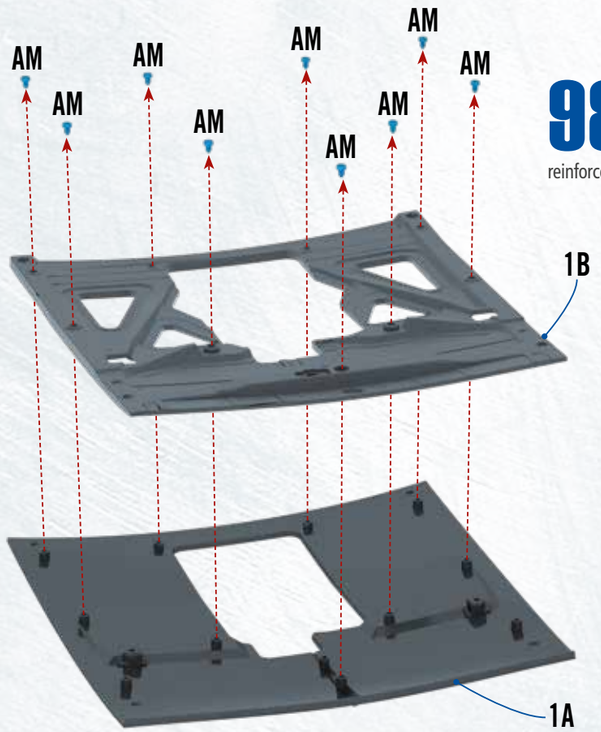
Editor's note: The parts shown here may differ slightly from the parts supplied with this issue. This does not affect the quality or the assembly instructions in any way.

ASSEMBLY AREA

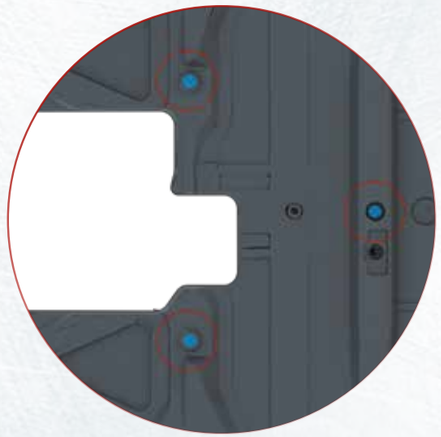


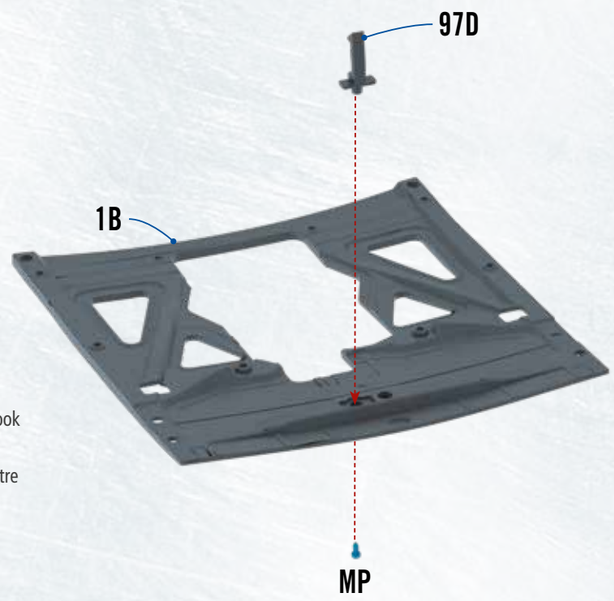
BONNET

Assembling the bonnet

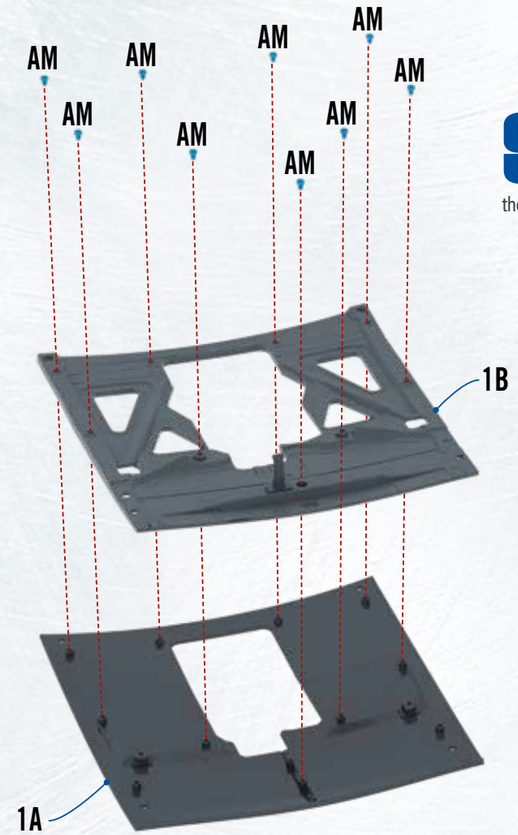


98.1 **RETRIEVE** the assembled bonnet, **1A** and **1B**, and remove the nine **AM** screws indicated in the illustration. This will allow you to separate the inner reinforcement panel **1B** from the bonnet **1A**. ◄

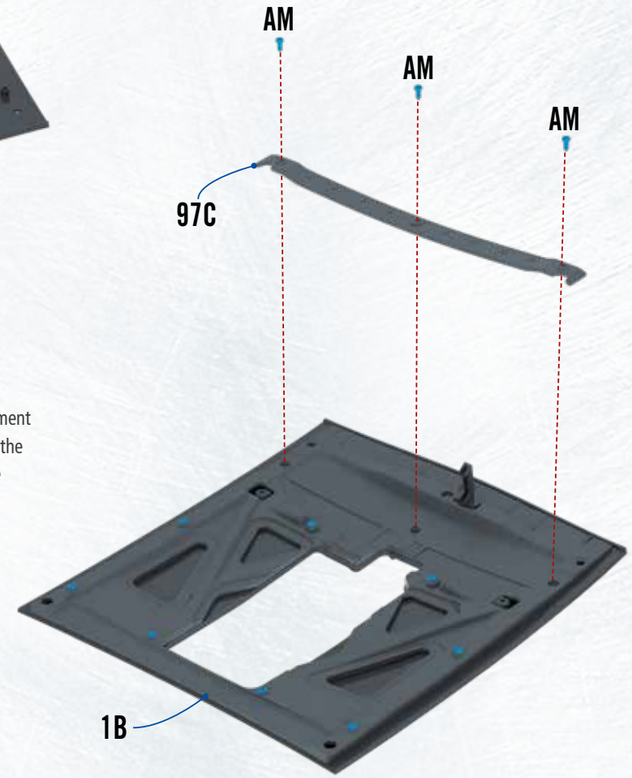




98.2 **ATTACH** the base of the bonnet lock hook **97D** by inserting the small mounting pin into the small rectangular hole in the centre of the front part of the inner reinforcement panel **1B**. Secure the pieces with one **MP** screw. ►

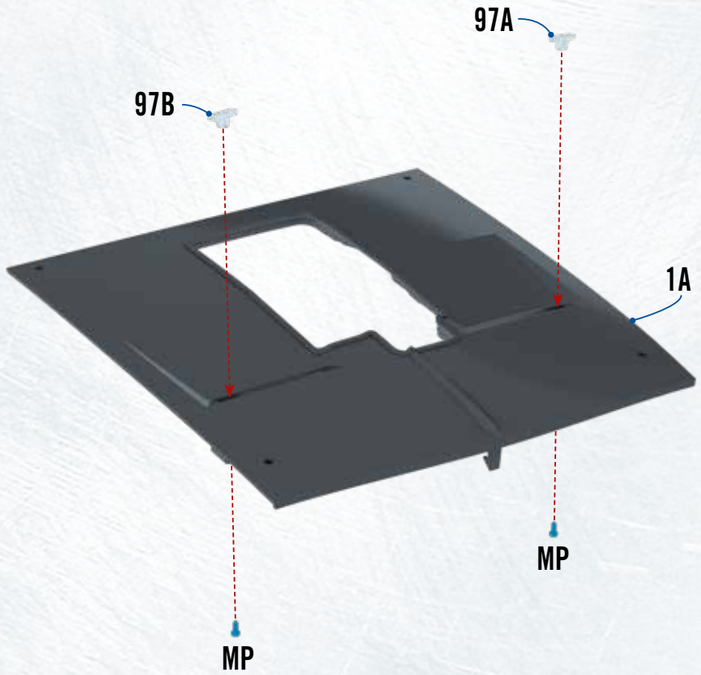


98.3 **YOU CAN NOW REATTACH** the inner reinforcement panel **1B** to the bonnet **1A**. Use the nine **AM** screws you removed at the beginning of this assembly session. ◄



98.4 **ALIGN** the holes in the bonnet reinforcement cross member **97C** with the three holes in the inner reinforcement panel, as shown in the illustration. Secure with three **AM** screws. ►

98.5 **TURN** the bonnet **1A** upside down and insert the left and right indicators **97A** and **97B** into the corresponding slots. Secure each indicator with one **MP** screw. Keep pieces **98A**, **98B** and **98C** in a safe place until you need them. ▼

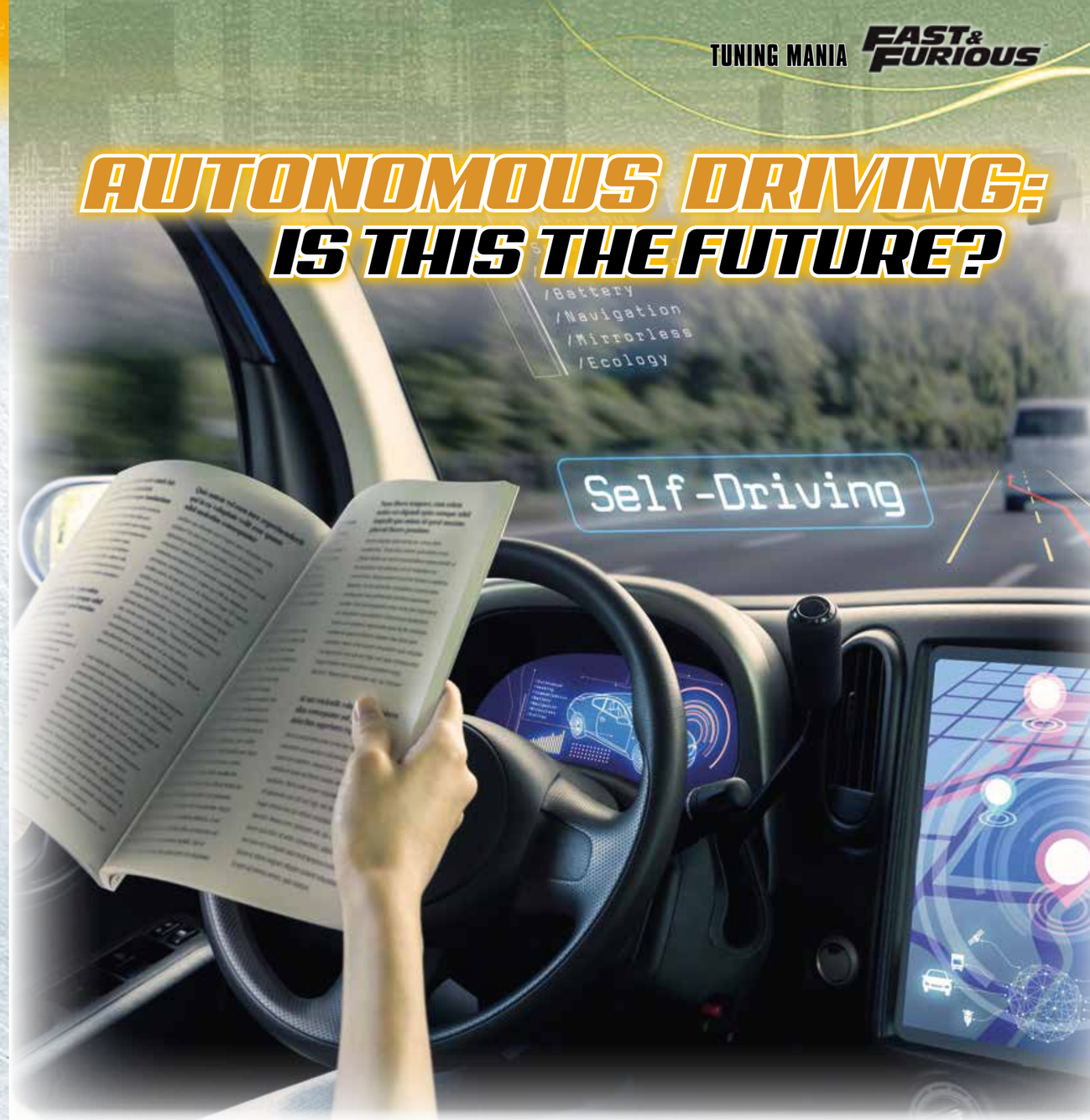


RESULTS OF STAGE 98

You have attached a few new details to the bonnet. Put the bonnet and the other pieces you didn't use in a safe place.



AUTONOMOUS DRIVING: IS THIS THE FUTURE?



Everyone is talking about them, but how close are we to cars that can drive themselves? Autonomous driving is now a reality, even if we cannot fully exploit its potential because the shared responsibility between the driver and the manufacturer has not yet been regulated from a legal standpoint.

What seemed science fiction until a few years ago and was only possible in movies is now becoming a reality. Cars are able to park themselves, maintain a steady speed and distance from other vehicles on the motorways, and can respect speed limits while staying in lane. More and more often, self-driving cars end up on the front pages of newspapers, such as those being used experimentally

by a well-known brand for home delivery of pizzas in America.

Let us begin with a clarification on Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS), which are not the same thing as autonomous driving, although undoubtedly they are useful tools because they use radars, sensors and cameras to ensure the safety of the driver and passengers.

ADAS includes driver assistance devices like Adaptive Cruise Control that maintains a safe distance from the car in front. Lane Assist ensures that the car travels between the lane lines, and the Blind Spot Monitor warns the driver with a visual and acoustic signal if there is something in the vehicle's blind spot, especially when reversing out of a parking space or overtaking. Not only those, but ADAS can also feature automatic high beams, infra-red cameras for night vision, digital exterior mirrors with cameras, various automatic parking systems, and 360-degree cameras.

A SCALE FROM ZERO TO 5

Therefore, we need to clarify and understand under what circumstances a vehicle can take on the duties of the driver if required, and when it is able to free the driver from any activity behind the wheel. To avoid any confusion on a sensitive topic like autonomous driving, S.A.E. International (Society of Automotive Engineers) has established six universally recognised levels of "autonomy".

They start from level zero, where autonomous driving is non-existent, with the vehicle being fully controlled by the driver. The presence of important safety devices, like Stability Control and Anti-lock braking, or the lane and blind-spot monitoring systems with only acoustic or visual warnings for the driver, does not constitute a category change.

Level 1 includes all cars with longitudinal and lateral vehicle control devices, known as "driving assistants", including Adaptive Cruise Control and Lane Assist, which are able to affect speed and direction by acting on brakes, throttle and steering (but not simultaneously). Even at this level, the driver cannot take his hands off the steering wheel but must always be alert and attentive.

Moving to Level 2, we talk about "partial automation" because we are dealing with semi-autonomous driving. The vehicle can control both the brakes and the accelerator while also controlling the steering. Therefore, if our car is equipped with both Adaptive Cruise Control and Lane Assist (Centring), then we are behind the wheel of a Level 2 car.

At Level 3, we start to take autonomy more seriously: Driving becomes truly autonomous, even though the driver is still responsible for the vehicle and may be forced to intervene in case of problems or malfunctions of the electronic systems. Among the devices in this category, we find the Queue Assistant (Traffic Jam Pilot or Traffic Jam Assist), which, once engaged when we are in traffic, takes total control of the accelerator, brake and steering, allowing the car to proceed completely autonomously until it is disengaged.

Level 4 precedes fully autonomous driving and allows the vehicle to drive independently for most of the journey. At this level, we are talking about "highly automated cars" because driving is totally autonomous, although only under certain conditions, such as on the motorway.

Completely self-driving cars, or those in Level 5, demonstrate the concept of "complete automation", where driving is completely autonomous under all conditions. The driver can be considered to be a passenger in the car that transports him from its starting point to its destination, acting completely autonomously on the steering, brakes and accelerator.

Unlike Levels 3 and 4, in Level 5 you do not even have to know how to drive - in fact, you do not even need a steering wheel and pedals because the vehicle takes over all the driving functions. Everyone in the car becomes a passenger, allowing new mobility opportunities to open up for people with disabilities.

A CONTINUOUS CHALLENGE

Achieving fully autonomous driving is a challenge that many carmakers have decided to embrace, but not without



Partially automated assisted steering systems are already available on most new cars. For example, among other options, we can find a steering assistant, a lane control assistant and a traffic assistant, which all make driving the car easier. Self-driving cars can brake, accelerate and control the steering wheel automatically.



Several manufacturers are developing prototypes of self-driving commercial vehicles designed for home delivery of packages or food.

difficulties, since at this stage, the complexity and challenges of the technology are still very demanding.

At the moment, the first prototypes of fully autonomous cars are permitted to move only at extremely low speeds in city traffic (about 25km/h). However, they have shown greater ability on motorways, which is a less treacherous environment with fewer variables than a city centre with crossroads, roundabouts and traffic lights. There are many trials currently underway that aim to create a means of transport that can connect urban centres with the suburbs and vice versa.

MOTORSPORT 2.0

Autonomous driving entered the world of competition in 2015 when Roborace took its first tentative steps. This is a very special championship where full-sized racing cars are unmanned and move thanks to sophisticated autonomous driving software.

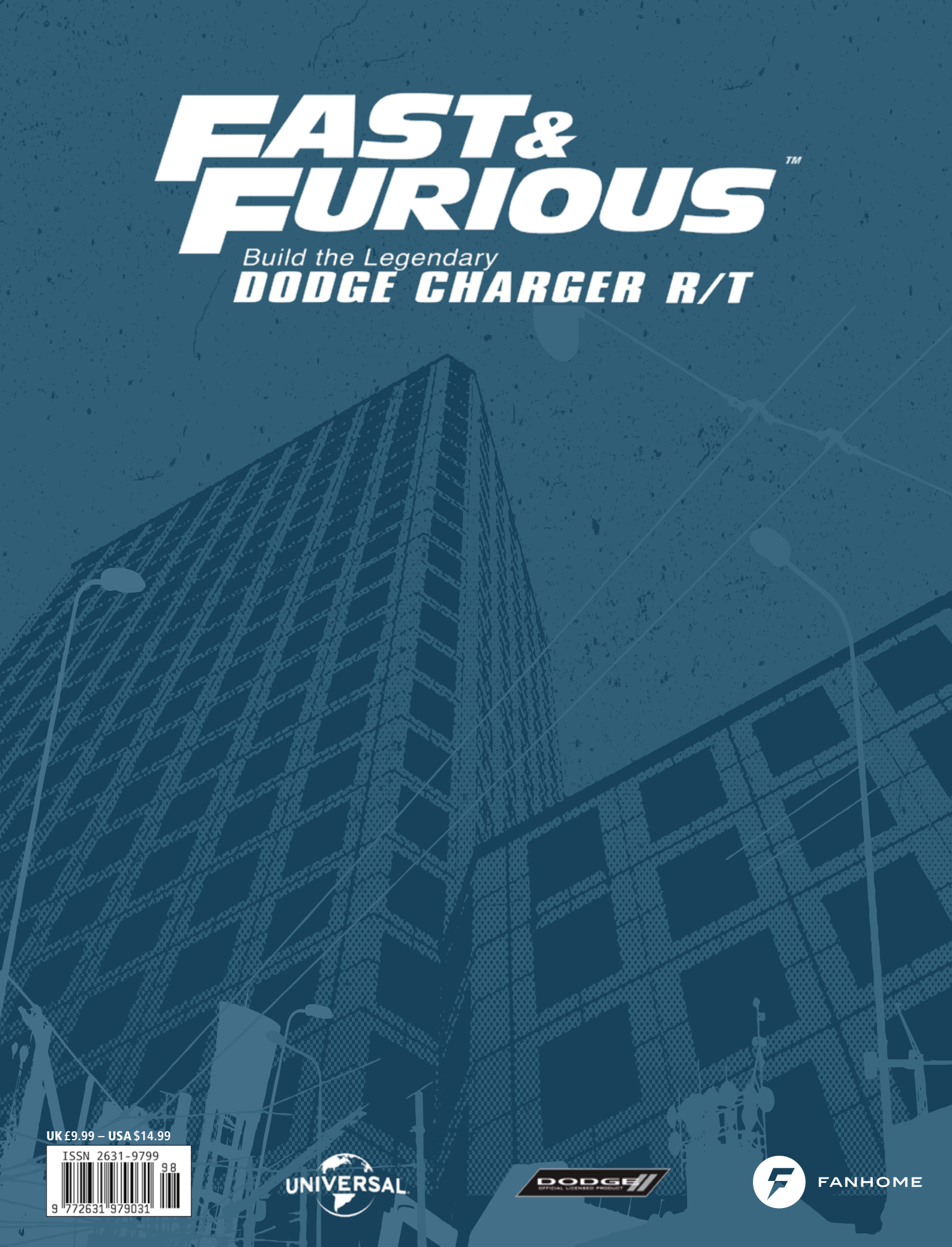
After a long period of development, the competition series got underway in 2020, with a 12-round beta season that allowed the six competing teams to test their technology. The cars, partly derived from Formula E cars, are identical in power, mechanics and sensors. What makes the difference in speed on the track is the software, and only the best programmers can aspire to victory!

The cars take to the track one at a time with the objective of completing a number of laps in the shortest possible time. They must dodge virtual obstacles that cannot be seen other than on a computer screen, thus eliminating the possibility of collisions and real damage. These "obstacles" test the programmers' ability to navigate safely and autonomously. In the future, the organisers want to have real races with all the cars on the track at the same time, allowing overtaking and wheel-to-wheel racing completely controlled by artificial intelligence.

Of course, Roborace is not trying to replace human competitions but instead wants to use sports competition to accelerate and stimulate the development of autonomous driving technologies. After all, the racetrack has always represented a safe environment in which car manufacturers can experiment with innovative technical solutions under extreme conditions. Like Formula E racing, it is a test bench to try out new solutions for the mass production of electric cars.

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