



UNDER THE HOOD (LEFT): Senior Rob Taylor listens intently as Zach Butler explains how the throttle body gets put back together. Butler has helped Taylor with a variety of projects. "It's never about working on the car, it's just hanging out and having fun," Butler said. "Rob is the ideal car friend to have. We have a good time and make the car go vroom."

FRANK AND PITBULL (TOP RIGHT): A small cardboard cutout of Pitbull lies against the front left tire of the Lexus. Taylor carries the cutout as a conversation starter. He hopes that it will catch others' attention at car meets and become a topic of discussion. It will allow Taylor to draw people toward Frank, his Lexus SC400, so he can show off his work and make connections.

HARD AT WORK (BOTTOM LEFT): Senior Rob Taylor shines a flashlight on the engine as he cleans the old gasket material. Cleaning is essential before putting the engine back together.

PIT STOPS

- APRIL**
 - Bought Lexus SC400
 - Removed mouse droppings and nests from engine
 - Removed warped window tint
 - Detailed engine bay and interior
- MAY**
 - Stripped interior for carpet stain extraction
 - Installed low profile skid plate
 - Repaired fog lights
 - Installed headlight bulbs
- JUNE**
 - Installed sound system from parts car
 - Cleaned mold from rain water drain tubes
 - Removed broken glass from trunk
 - Painted windshield wipers
- JULY**
 - Installed speakers
 - Cleaned underneath interior panels
 - Replaced spark plugs
 - Polished headlight lenses and wrapped with protective covering
- AUGUST**
 - Adjusted throttle cables
- SEPTEMBER**
 - Replaced distributor caps and rotors
 - Installed new CD Changer
- OCTOBER**
 - Fixed fuel gauge
 - Side marker bulbs and license plate bulbs
- NOVEMBER**
 - Replaced valve cover gaskets
 - Cleaned throttle body
 - Fixed vacuum lines
- DECEMBER**
 - Installed led interior lights
 - Rebuilt instrument panel

FIXING FRANK

Senior Rob Taylor restores red 1995 Lexus SC400 after purchasing off of Facebook Marketplace

Photos and story by Grace Montgomery

The dimly lit garage fills with music spilling from a small JBL speaker. Clicking tools and clanging parts enhance the rhythm as senior Rob Taylor works on his red Lexus SC400. A flexible flashlight shines bright on the Toyota 1UZ-FE V8 engine as Taylor loosens the bolts. He works briskly as he races his friend, Zach Butler, to see who can get the valve cover off their side of the car first. Their overall goal was to replace the valve cover gaskets to stop an oil leak. This is just the most recent project as Taylor works to restore his 1995 Lexus, which he has affectionately named "Frank."

Taylor first met Butler while cleaning Frank at a self-serve car wash. "We own the same vehicle and he was at the self-serve car wash and I happened to drive by," Butler said. "I turned around and I was like, I want to make a friend today. So, I made a friend."

Since then, they have become close and enjoy collaborating on projects. "It's never about working on the car, it's just hanging out and having fun," Butler said. "Rob is the ideal car friend to have. He's a great person to be around. There's never any animosity, there's no negatives. We have a good time and make the car go vroom."

Taylor is very invested in the endeavor. "I'm very passionate about the car and the project," Taylor said. "I care a lot about seeing it go from a barn car to a show car. It's very exciting for me and I just always want to be better."

Taylor has been interested in cars since he was young. As a kid, he would take apart toy cars and put them back together. "He's always been a car guy, ever since he was really small," Raymond Taylor, Taylor's dad, said. "It's in his genes. He is just like his grandad and he is just like me. He has been like this, always."

Taylor took his longtime passion and made it a reality by purchasing his first project car. He found Frank on Facebook Marketplace and travelled to Columbus, Ohio in early spring to pick it up. "Getting the car was a big deal," Taylor said. "When I bought it the owner said 'listen man you made 100 people mad.' I bought it five hours after it was put on sale and then one hundred people tried to buy it right

after I did."

When Taylor bought the car, it was in rough shape. It had become a home for rodents as it sat in a garage collecting dust. Junk was scattered throughout the cabin. There was a broken JBL speaker, a crushed La Croix can and a cassette tape labeled "Country Honk."

Frank also had many cosmetic issues. There were a variety of scuffs, scratches and dents, as well as headlights that did not work, warped tint and missing rubber on the windshield wipers. Despite its flaws, Taylor drove Frank home in what he describes as a "monsoon." He had difficulty seeing through the sheets of rain, but the Lexus was a valuable car and he knew it would be worth it in the end.

Since then, Taylor has completed a variety of projects from fixing the fuel gauge to repairing the cornering lights. With each project comes a great deal of research. Taylor has never worked on cars before, so he is learn-

FRANK'S FAST FACTS	
MAKE	Lexus
MODEL	SC400
YEAR	1995
BODY STYLE	two door
ENGINE	4.0L 1UZ-FE V8

"My car sounds like a muscle car, but it rides like a couch," Taylor said. "The doors are capable of holding the entire cars weight."