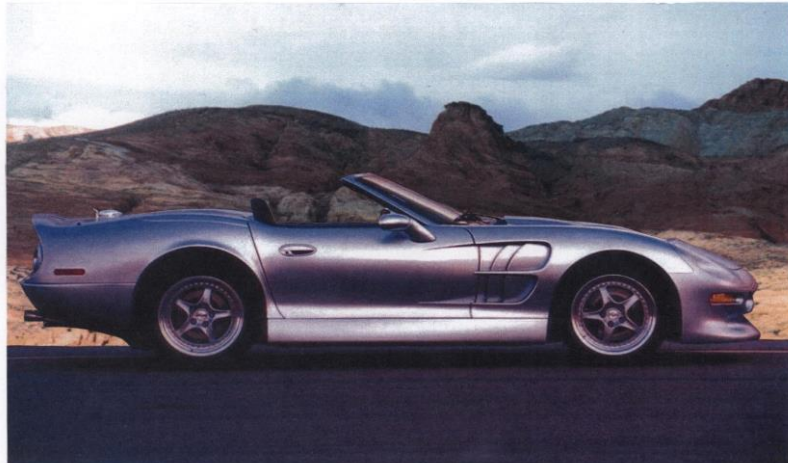


The sleek little silver bullet - a Shelby Series 1 Roadster finished in high-gloss Millennium Silver - shot northward up the long straightaway of Blue Diamond Road beyond the extreme northwestern outskirts of Las Vegas at sunrise, its convertible top down...



The CSX-5000 Series (otherwise known as the Series 1) is the creation of legendary American racing-car icon, Carrol Shelby. Crafted in the Cobra tradition, it is the only car actually built by the famous Las Vegas gambler from the ground up.

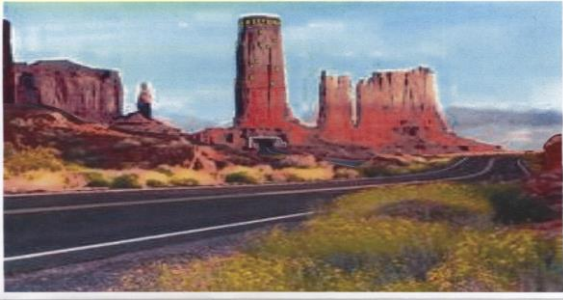
A former professional gambler himself, the man at the wheel purchased this outstanding example of fast-rolling sculpture the previous year, in 2000, directly from the Shelby America factory in Las Vegas. One of the last of only 249 built there, this rare GT had become part of something not usually found connecting a typical car and driver: An interactive partnership that, for this particular driver, is more than a luxury---it's an absolute necessity. And he loved it dearly.

Deeply concerned as the new Millennium approached that a corrupt and secrecy-minded, fully militarized Super-Police State was quickly rising to power in America - and worse, people didn't seem to care - Mark Diamond set-aside his Private-Jet-Set lifestyle as a sophisticated high-stakes International Gambler and risked it all on a near-impossible long-shot. He beat the odds. Now, he's a man leading a dangerous life, for a noble purpose:

Having been extensively trained in the use of both American Law and Intelligence Methods, he's become the leading Legal-Intelligence Specialist for the A*R*C* Institute (the first three letters are the acronym for Americans for the Reinstatement of the Constitution). With his know-how - and raw courage - he now combines these two disciplines of Law and Intelligence to fight-back against those who would destroy America, and our uniquely American way of life. Which (to say the very least) makes him *extremely* unpopular with the government these days.



Mark Diamond continued to race his Shelby along fast this early summer morning to be punctual for an important meeting with the Chairman of the A*R*C* Institute, at their recently constructed headquarters, a towering stronghold on sovereign ground cloistered deep in the wilderness of Red Rock Canyon some 20 miles Northwest of the city. Not to be confused with the prestigious Southern Military Institute, this mammoth new fortress's solemn purpose as a watchtower for Freedom dictated its name: The Citadel.



Diamond had never been summoned to Headquarters in this manner before: By the Chairman, personally. That fact led him to feel that this meeting might not have been arranged purely with his pending clearance to return to active duty after an extended medical leave in mind. His now dramatically sharpening instincts were telling him something far more meaningful was developing...

Perhaps under different circumstances, an easy smile might have creased his distinctive-looking face; a face that is, in its own way, enigmatic. It is a uniquely handsome face that doesn't fit today's popular standards. It is distinctly masculine--some say a bit on the roughly-chiseled side. And though clean-shaven, it might even give the vague impression it should belong to a man from another era, like a dashing Cavalier in the age when bold men like him once ruled these lands for Spanish kings.

Diamond slung his left elbow over the driver's-side door sill, and the breeze tossed a thick strand of his dark, stylishly cut mane across his eyebrows; nearly straight, dark slashes that upturned slightly at the outside corners above his brown eyes, adding a dash of mystery to his attractive features.

When challenged however, his easy smile would quickly disappear. And his dark eyes would smolder with the fire of his inner strength and determination, wrought by fighting his wars *his* way, and on many different battlefields. Those powerful warrior qualities showed in the set of his jaw when challenged, as well.

But under everyday circumstances, as Diamond genuinely liked women, those making his casual acquaintance usually found his rakish good looks and personable smile irresistible. And most that came to know him personally were easily won-over by the combination of his masculinity and overpowering charm...qualities which had netted him a number of highly desirable playmates.

Men generally liked Mark Diamond, too, and not only for his prowess. Allies knew him to be a man of honor, who commanded and earned their trust, respect, and obedience. And, he was uncompromising. Always taking the high road, he prepared and prosecuted his cases-at-law himself, and he never beat himself by making preventable mistakes.

Conversely, most opponents are disinclined to stand against him in any venue or jurisdiction. The reason is simple: As the Institute's leading Legal/Intelligence Agent, he'll apply his own brand of legal warfare to the Opposition, so even the best don't stand a chance....

He'd never lost sight of the fact that, although he was now a formidable instrument of justice, he really worked for everyday Americans in the Private Sector who'd been abused by the system. And when need calls for him to use his Legal expertise in combination with certain "specialized services" strictly reserved for the Institute's elite corps of Strategic Tactical Agent/Rangers (or, STARS) his overall effectiveness is markedly improved. There are many other distinctions however, that set him apart from his counterparts on the Opposition's side, the Public or Governmental Sector. Among the most important, an unexpected personal distinction that had recently surfaced: Growing new mental powers at his command to develop and use, even as he sped along this fast stretch of road....

With continued practice, these factors might someday determine an Intelligence Mission's outcome; critical factors that, for this STAR, might even make the difference between life and

death. But the most important distinction that set Diamond apart from Federal Agents is this: He'd not been authorized to kill, if necessary, for the government. But rather, because of it.



Ten minutes later and as many miles farther along, Diamond entered the Citadel's outer boundary within a secluded canyon in the desert wilderness beyond Red Rock Canyon. There, he took the Series 1 out of gear, and let it roll to a stop just outside the main gate. Each time he entered the facility, his gaze turned upward to the majestic archway above the gate upon which proudly flew the Official Flag of the United States of America, "Old Glory". Below the flag and engraved in granite for all who entered to see was the Preamble to the Constitution, listing the six significant reasons for its creation. That vital document was penned in its final form by Gouverneur Morris, and approved by great men considered by most to be among the Nation's leading Founders:

"WE, THE PEOPLE, of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty for ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

Below were displayed the first Ten Amendments to the Constitution known as the Bill of Rights, which enumerated these unalienable rights of all Americans:

I. Religious liberty - freedom of speech – right of petition – right to peaceably assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances

II. Right to keep and bear arms

III. In peace, quartering of soldiers in any house without consent prohibited

IV. Searches and seizures regulated; only on probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, with description of person, place or thing to be searched or seized

V. Rights of persons accused of a crime – due process – rights of property

VI. Criminal prosecutions – speedy trial – assistance of counsel for defense

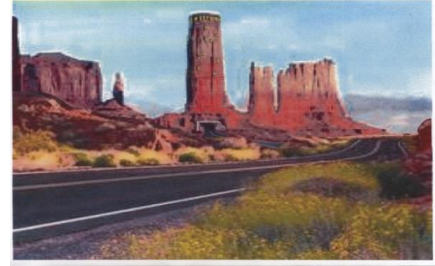
VII. Trial by jury in civil actions

VIII. Excessive bail and cruel or unusual punishments prohibited

IX. All rights retained by the people

X. Powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution nor prohibited by it to the States, reserved to the States respectively, or to the people

Reminded by these covenants of the solemn purpose he had in common with this remarkable organization, Diamond put the Series I into first gear, and let it growl along for another two hundred yards down a winding lane that twisted and turned through a thicket of ancient Fremont Cottonwoods with branches that had interlaced overhead. Diamond steered the Series 1 onward another quarter-mile and rounded a big bend in the lane. Then suddenly - straight ahead and rising majestically upward over a thousand feet from the canyon floor - an enormous and solitary pillar of striated sandstone came into view. Shaped roughly like an obelisk, it was broad at the base and tapered acutely upward to a flat top, and it dwarfed all other features in the canyon.



As he approached the mammoth stone obelisk, brilliant flashes of sunlight briefly lanced down into his eyes, reflected off a ring of armored mirror-glass windows recessed into its pinnacle twenty feet below the top. At the tower's base, the lane became a tunnel through which he entered the yawning mouth of its titanium-reinforced subterranean parking structure. Its cavernous interior was surfaced with coarse masonry infused with dyes that approximated the natural color and texture of the sandstone from which the entire complex had been chiseled.

Diamond gunned the Series 1 up a spiral incline of concrete to the Special Services Level, wherein the spaces marked "Section L Staff" were located. He then nosed it into his reserved parking bay marked "CAPRICORN", one of only a few for that section, most bearing a sign of the Zodiac or a slight variation thereof, plus one marked "WOLFMAN". With two quick taps on the Series 1's accelerator pedal, Diamond revved-up its engine to a gratifying high-pitched howl, and then quickly switched off the ignition.

Moments later, the access elevator at the end of the row of parked cars sped him silently up to the main floor, where he took the elevator at the far end all the way up to the Administration Level. As he stepped out of that one, he felt his anxiousness peaking in anticipation of his appointment with the Chairman. It seemed to underscore the fact that every day and night within this massive structure, extraordinary and oftentimes dangerous measures are taken to ensure that freedom lives on in this, his beloved native land. And now that the deadly hole that had been blown in his life was healed, Diamond was once again ready for battle.

