

True Facts About The 440 Li'l Red Express

The 2, so called 440 Li'l Reds, have been discussed many times before, as to whether they are real or not. I am in possession of the VIN's of both trucks and the Equipment ID label for one of them and the Certification label on the other. To be a Li'l Red Express truck, it must have the YH6 Little Red Truck Package listed on the Equipment ID label on the 1978 models, only. Also, it must have an "S" in the fifth digit of the VIN, indicating the High Performance 4bbl 360 engine (that's what makes it a Li'l Red). It also must have 7"X15" Chrome rims on the front and 8"X15" Chrome rims on the rear with **GR60** series radial tires on the front and **LR60** radial tires on the rear.

The 2 trucks have a "D" in the fifth digit of the VIN, indicating a 440 engine, VIN #D13BD8J504891 & #D13BD8J504892. They also have 8"X15" chrome wheels on all 4 corners, with **H70 X15"** non-radials tires. There is no mention of the YH6 Little Red Truck package listed anywhere on the Equipment ID label. I am assuming they also had the stacks, wood sideboards and decals of the Li'l Reds, but have no way to know. So, in summing up this dilemma, bottom line, these trucks are not Li'l Red Express Trucks. They are a standard Dodge Utiline 6' bed pickups, with a 440 engine.

To muddy up the waters even more, there are now 2 more, supposed 440 Li'l Reds, 1, according to the letter written to David Dolmer, from S.W. McDowell, at Chrysler, that lists VIN #D13BD8J504894 as being another supposed 440 Li'l Red. I have no information on that truck, other than the letter from Chrysler, but it is not a Li'l Red either, because, like the other 2, it has a "D" in the 5th digit of the VIN. And 2, VIN #D13BD8J505234, owned by Jerome Job, who claims it also is a 440 Li'l Red, only unlike the other two, it has 78 series, non-radial tires, it has the larger H78X15" on the front and smaller G78X15" on the rear!!

These 440 trucks are all supposedly pre-production trucks that were built for Canadian show purposes. This is another reason I know they are fakes, the earliest VIN I have for a Li'l Red is "500609" the first 2 trucks are "504891" and "504892", the next 2 are "504894" and "505234". As you can see, these trucks were built over 4000 trucks after the first Li'l Reds, so they could not have been pre-production trucks. Just another fact!!

Now to address this letter, that has been floating around for the past 36 years, it was written on March 5th, 1983, by a guy whose title was

“Manager, Vehicle Safety Engineering”. I would like to know how a Vehicle Safety Engineer, was able to find out information that Chrysler did not have and doesn't have to this day. I would think that in all these years, if there really was a 440 Li'l Red, something would have surfaced by now, other than this one lonely letter!!

Now whether Dodge or Creative Industries or a Dodge dealer did something else to them i.e., Decals, Stacks, Wood on bed or whatever, they still aren't real Li'l Reds. There were only 2 original "Prototype" Li'l Reds, both had the high performance 360 engines with the "W2" racing cylinder heads, Holly Carbs, plus a few other items that never made it to production trucks, but they were true Li'l Reds, not just something somebody hung some stacks, wood and decals on and called the a Li'l Red Express. So, until somebody can produce an Equipment ID label with the “YH6 Little Red Truck Package”, a “D” (440), in the VIN and 70 or 78 series, non radial tires, I am considering these trucks to be clones!!

John C. Roberts (Lil Red Dad)
Co-Founder & Senior Judge, NALRETO (National Association of Li'l Red Express Truck Owners)

