

Auto Buyer Consumer

Survey, Project No. P154800

I am writing in regards to my experience this weekend 2/12/16-2/13/16 at Naples Nissan on 3640 Pine Ridge Rd, Naples, FL 34109. On Friday, 2/12, I heard on ad on the radio that caught my attention stating if you have a 580 credit score or higher you qualify for a new Rogue for \$299/month, \$0 down, and 0% interest for 72 months. The recorded ad is attached to this comment. During my work day I heard the ad twice more and listened closely in case I was missing something. I text an inquiry to Naples Nissan and they let me know it applied to 2015 Rogue Selects. I called at the end of the day and let them know I was coming as soon as I got off of work and would be there between 5:30 and 6.

When I arrived I expressed to the sales rep that my credit score was way above the minimum and my debt to income ratio was negligible, but I did already have an open car loan. I was not trading my car in (which I'd appreciate if the FTC looked into trade in practices as well). He asked if I wanted to do the credit application first to be pre-approved. So I did and he took it to be reviewed and came back and said I had been approved and was good to go. So we went to the lot, I selected my car, we took it for a test drive, and I fell in love with it knowing I was approved. We came back inside and he went back to the office, came back, and suddenly I was no longer qualified! His offer was something like \$1000 down and \$399 month! They told me the additional cost was interest because of my credit score. That's quite the interest rate. This back and forth happened several times with equally ridiculous offers. I believe the highest offer involved trading in my car, they'd "give" me the payoff of \$10000, and I'd pay \$1000 down and \$499/month. When he told me there were no other offers, I asked to speak with whoever he was speaking with. He went back to the office yet again and told me the gentleman said he wasn't coming out that he doesn't do that. I said that was fine, that I could go to him. The sales rep informed me that the gentleman was no longer there, he had gone upstairs. I thanked him for his time and headed towards the door.

On my way out I had to walk past the office where the sales rep kept going. I decided to walk in and see what had happened and where the discrepancy had occurred. I have never tried to haggle a price or complain about a price, but this situation was unjust. I asked the gentleman behind the desk if he was the finance man. He told me he was not, he was a sales manager. I expressed that I was very upset with what just occurred. He apologized and said he was not involved with the situation, but would help me. I went back to the rep's desk and waited while he went into another office to speak with someone. The 3rd gentleman came out and introduced himself to me as the finance director. We sat down and he acted apologetic while referencing the "miscommunication." I inquired where the "miscommunication" occurred and he said between finance and sales. My two points were that the ad explicitly stated the deal and the requirements, and that I had been approved for it upon arrival. His validation for the ad was that with a 580 credit score or higher, you are qualified to buy the car, but not necessarily for the deal. He continued the trail of discrepancy by saying my credit score was totally fine for the deal, but that having an existing auto loan was the problem (my monthly debt-to-income ratio is less than 8%).

My credit score is much higher than the minimum 580 and I have excellent payment history. I left that evening after being told they would speak with the owner in the morning. I will say that they did fill my gas tank as I drove 30 minutes there from work, and had to drive over an hour home from there.

The next morning they called and said the owner okay-ed \$334/month without a penny more for 75 months including all costs and fees. I drove over an hour back to the dealership to be told upon arrival that once again we were good to go and the pricing was in writing. After a short wait I went into the finance office to be told once again that I'm not qualified for that pricing! I went back and forth with them for well over an hour before declaring I was not leaving there without that car for that price and heading up the authority chain as far as I could manage. Eventually they did honor that agreement, but not before I made a scene. I have never tried to haggle or complain about a price, but this situation was unbelievable. I am a young female who went into a car dealership alone, and I have no doubt that they thought I would be an easy target. I currently work in financial services and previously worked in property management. Fortunately I knew my numbers and am well-versed in credit reports. It makes me cringe imagining what happened to all the other people in that dealership this weekend. I strongly suspect that I am the only person who walked out with a deal even remotely close to their advertised Presidents' Day sale.

Suddenly, everyone wanted to apologize. The original finance director was sorry for the misunderstanding, the finance manager was "just doing his job", the assistant gm was so sorry for the miscommunication. I was polite but firm the entire time (with a few tears of frustration), so when the assistant gm apologized, I graciously accepted and said I just wanted to let her know if case she didn't that the ad was pretty rough given the situation that just occurred. Her response was that hopefully it would stop running soon.

I am happy with my car, and satisfied with the deal I got, but the situation was incredibly deceitful, unjust, and stressful. I am grateful to see the FTC is taking action towards correcting this major industry flaw and sincerely hope a difference will be made. Thank you.