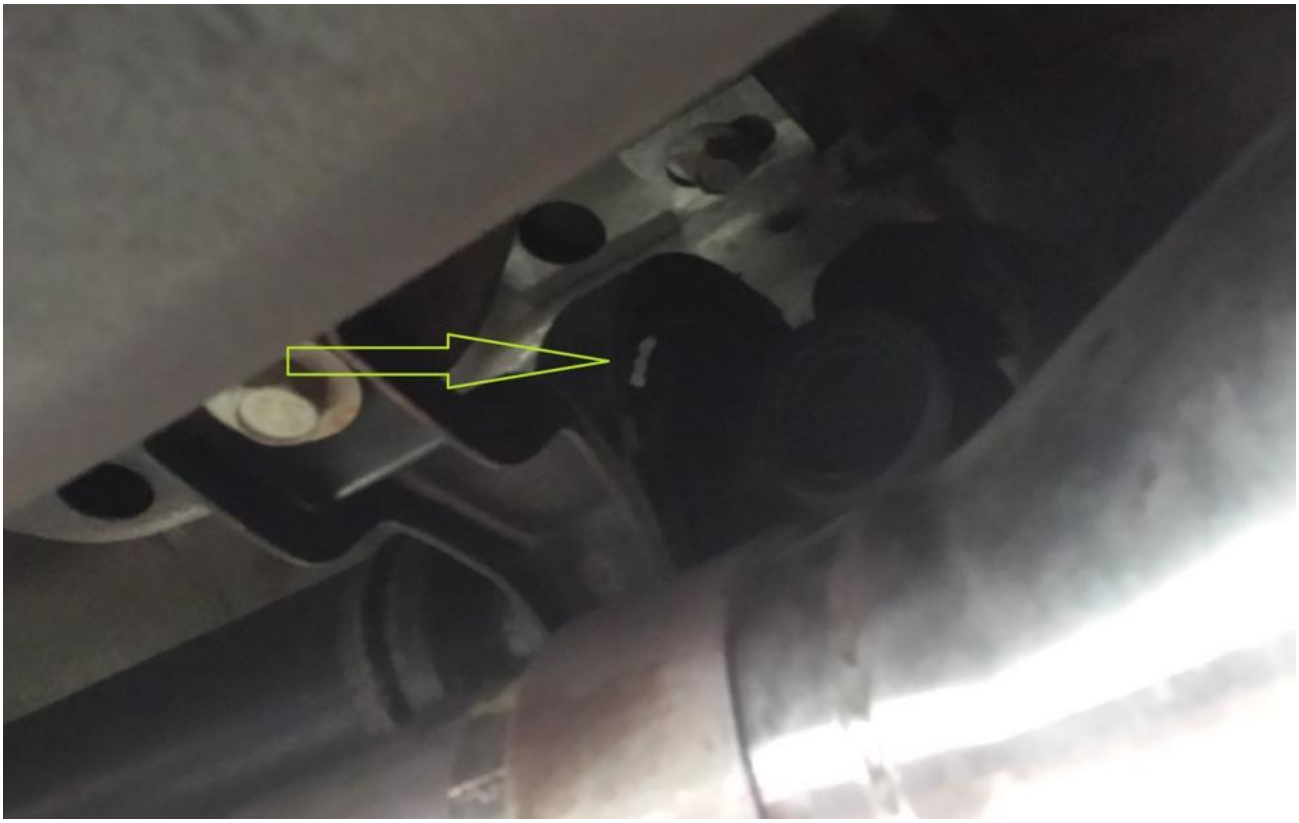
Gen 5 GTO Carrier Bearing Replacement

by **Brian O'Sullivan**



While driving my GTO on one of the recent club cruises I noticed a vibration while under medium to moderate acceleration. It almost felt like the car was driving over a rumble strip on the highway. I initially thought it was perhaps wheel hop, which in these cars has a tendency to occur. Then I thought back to something that I noticed a week or so earlier under the car while installing a cat back exhaust. I remembered seeing this… (Photo Above)

What that is, is a tear in the rubber that surrounds the driveshaft carrier bearing (or center bearing). It's impossible to tell from the picture, but that tear ran ¾ of the way around the shaft. The vibration that I was feeling was the driveshaft bouncing around in that bracket under load. I checked a few sources online including LS1GTO.com and did a bit of research on replacing the bearing. I found that GM calls this a "non-serviceable" part and is therefore unavailable. They require that you replace the entire drive shaft, and GM in their infinite wisdom has since discontinued it. So it's left to the aftermarket. Luckily GTOG8TA.com not only has the correct complete drive shaft ($729.00), but they also sell just the carrier bearing ($69.00). I ordered just the bearing and decided to see how unserviceable it really was.

I'll start by saying that having access to a lift and second person to lend a hand would be ideal. I had the second person (my brother), but no lift. We were able to get things done with jack stands. You will need the following tools:

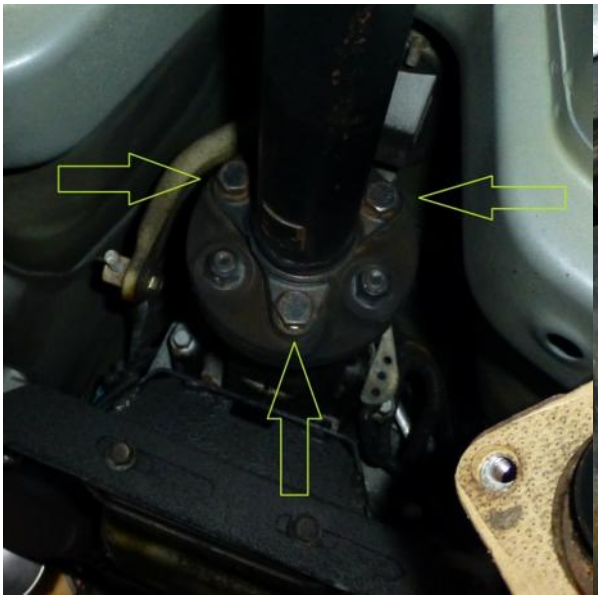
1. Socket wrench with 13mm, 17mm(optional) and 18mm sockets

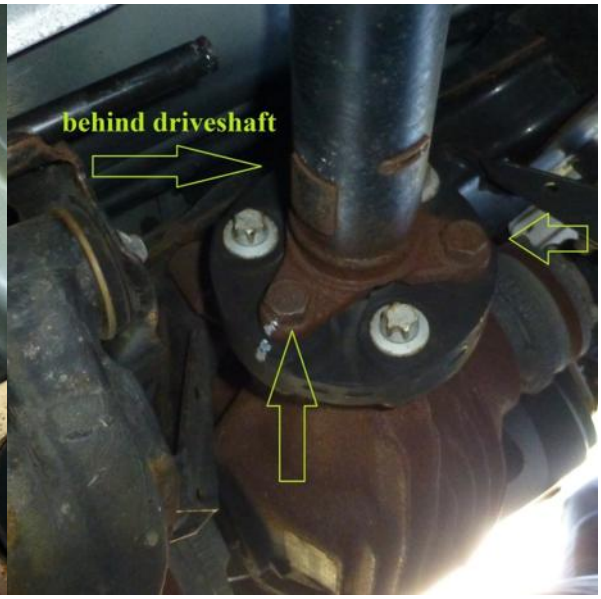
2. 19mm wrench
3. Dead blow hammer or mallet
4. Chisel or pickle fork
5. Bench vise
6. Block of wood

Step 1. After the vehicle is lifted, decide whether you want to remove or drop the exhaust at the cat back. I would suggest that you do so, as things will go much easier for you with the exhaust out of the way. Use the 17mm socket to remove the four bolts at the flanges located just behind the transmission. We didn't run into any issues with this since we had just recently worked on that area of the car. An older exhaust will surely take more work to remove.

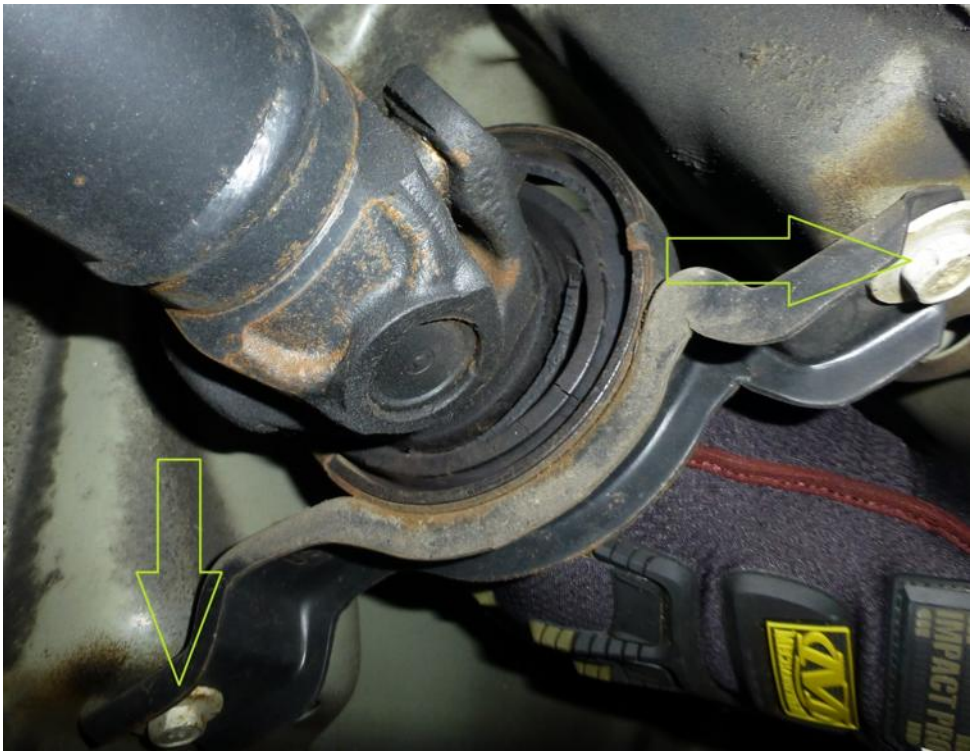
Step 2. Loosen the nuts/bolts at each end of the drive shaft where it meets the two flex discs. There are 3 bolts at each end (see below images). The bolt takes the 18mm socket and the nut takes the 19mm wrench.

This would also be a good time to inspect the flex discs for cracks and damage, and replace them if needed (replacement of the flex discs requires additional tools). Mine were in good shape so I left them alone. Remove the nuts and washers but leave the bolts intact. Then brace the driveshaft while you remove the 13mm bolts that attach the bearing bracket to the underside of the car. (See image on next page)





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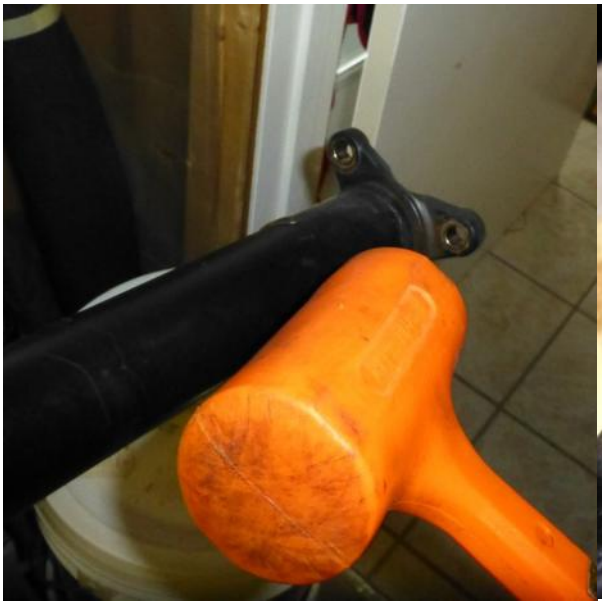
After removing the bolts, continue to brace the driveshaft and have the second person remove the loose bolts from the ends. Remove the driveshaft from the vehicle. With it out from under the car it is much easier to see the extent of the damage.

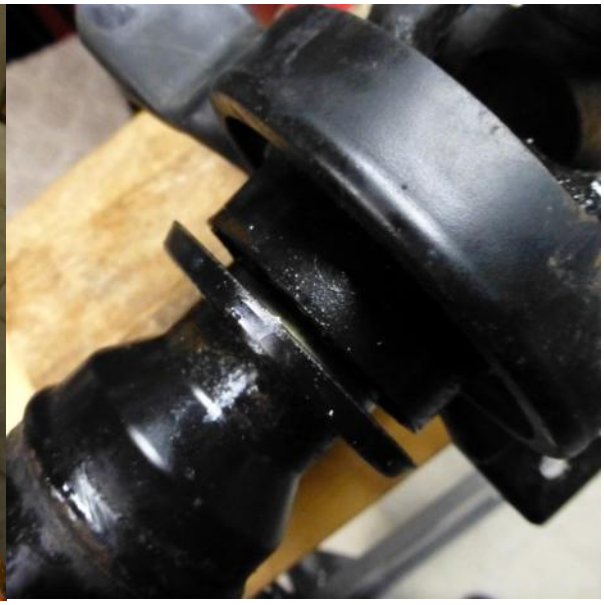


Step 3. Mount the driveshaft to the bench vice by the bearing side u-joint. Then mark the shaft with chalk/pencil/crayon. Line up these marks later when re-installing to avoid balance issues. (See below image) Also, the use of PB Blaster or another penetrating oil may aid you in the next few steps.



Step 4. Now it's time to get out the hammer. Hit the end of the driveshaft away from the bearing (see below image) until the two halves have separated. I'm not going to lie, this will be the most difficult thing to do during this repair. It's going to take time and some elbow grease to get done. As it separates it will begin to look like the second image.





Step 5. Keep the hammer, grab a chisel (or pickle fork if available). Place the chisel between the bearing and the u-joint (see below image) and start hammering. You'll want to work your way around the edge to help keep things from binding. Again…time/elbow-grease.



Here is the new bearing (left) versus the old worn out one (right).



Step 6. Clean up and grease the exposed end of the drive shaft and push the new bearing on by hand as far as you can. Caution: do not use the hammer on the bearing.



Next, realign the loose end of the drive shaft with marks that you made earlier and slide it up as far as you can. With a block of wood at the other end, hammer the driveshaft and bearing back into place.



When everything is seated, it should look like this.



Step 7. Re-install driveshaft and exhaust. Be sure to get the bolts on the flex discs good and tight.