



BmerMeUp's E91 Roof Rail Delete (Railectomy!)

My Car

2008 E91 328xi (N52 North American)

Mine is non-LCI, but the parts are the same for LCI models with the same body style. So don't worry too much if the model/LCI/year comes up wrong but you think it should be right – they didn't change the roof right away, so the part numbers should be correct. Plan for a full day's work – I went slow and took two.

This is **not** a STEP-by-STEP DIY – it is a photo-diary of "What worked for me," in case it helps you!

Parts

You will need to have the mouldings painted to match your car after you get them. Also, they are long thin delicate strips of metal – nobody will risk shipping these (at least to Canada - the only one who would be outrageously expensive), so I had to get them from a dealership. Given that no Canadian dealership would give me a fair price (of course...), I had to order them from a nearby American dealer (Towne Auto in Williamsville, NY – Andy Ucci in parts was great), then get them over the border myself:

- 1 x Roof Rail Moulding Primed 51137124257 (left side)
- 1 x Roof Rail Moulding Primed 51137124258 (right side)

9 x Clip 51137073553 (you'll need two packages)

I had originally thought, based on the parts schematics, that I would also need:

- 6 x Nut 07147195759 (only comes in a pkg of 10)

Unfortunately I bought those for no reason as I should have also grabbed:

- 6 x 07147174961

Which is apparently a threaded rubber gasket jobbie. They are used for sealing the hidden holes left behind by the rail mount - I had to improvise without these.

Tools

You will need normal screwdrivers and some standard TORX screwdrivers, I think 15, 20, 35 something like that – don't quote me, just make sure you have a set. I have a basic set and had the 3 different sizes I needed. Most are the middle sized one, sunroof is the smaller, trunk has a couple of the bigger. Metric socket set too of course, with an extension, to remove the rail bolts.

I also wished I had grabbed the body-parts tool set from ECS I saw there for something like \$15. Instead I very carefully used a fat-flat screwdriver with a long neck, my wife's bamboo spatula-spoon thing and her thin plastic "Pampered Chef" specialty pan-scraping tool – thin, semi-ridged slippery plastic surface – perfect, thanks Hon! ☺ She wasn't too impressed when she found out however...

You may also need a pair of super-long-nosed hobby pliers and/or some ingenuity for fishing fallen trim plugs or screws out of the most ridiculous places they might fall into. One piece for example was recovered using a dismantled coat hanger with some semi-dried silicone caulking stuck to the end...



First, Remove Everything Attached to the Headliner:

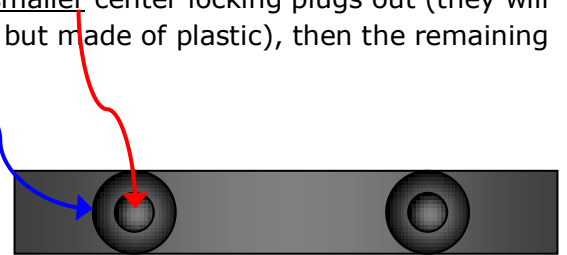
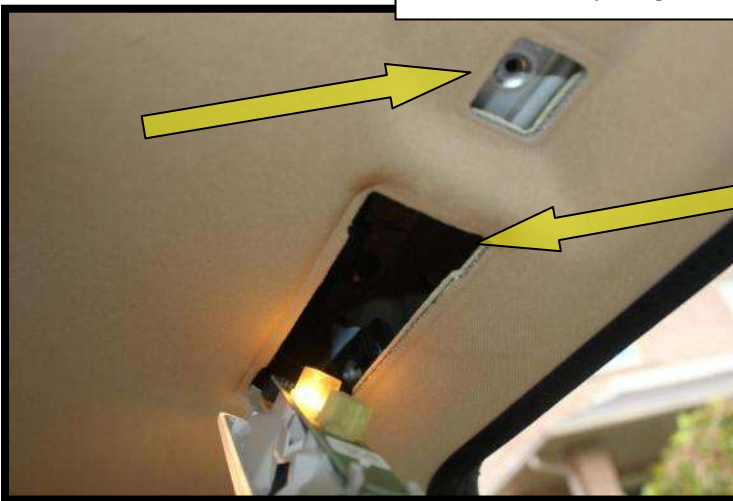
Visors, lights, grip-handles, everything. You will also need to pop out the "AIRBAG" signs on your A and C pillars – **there are bolts underneath**. I managed to pop the covers off by using a #1 (very small) flat screwdriver, gently inserting it under the right edge of the "G" and just popping them out. There is a high potential of marring the soft plastic "AIRBAG" plug so go easy. ChiTown somehow did it without removing "everything"... I went the long-way around.

The cabin lights in the rear just pop out - push towards the rear of the car, carefully slip a thin flat screwdriver along the edge facing the front of the car, you need to disengage a spring clip in there.

The front map light/sunroof switch module also needs to come out, that is a bit more unnerving, but it comes out all as one piece. If you remove the frosted plastic covering first (see pics that follow here), then pluck the two map-light globes out (they are just friction-mounted) you can SEE the two metal clips you need to defeat. The metal clips are along the front edge (near the front of the car). You need to disengage those the same as the cabin lights (gently insert a thin screwdriver), but they are much tighter. Once the light module drops out, there are two, two-part plastic plugs holding the module frame to the ceiling metal (no pictures, sorry). Gently pry and pull only the smaller center locking plugs out (they will come completely out – they are the same shape as a wood nail, but made of plastic), then the remaining larger plugs can be gently popped like a regular trim plug.



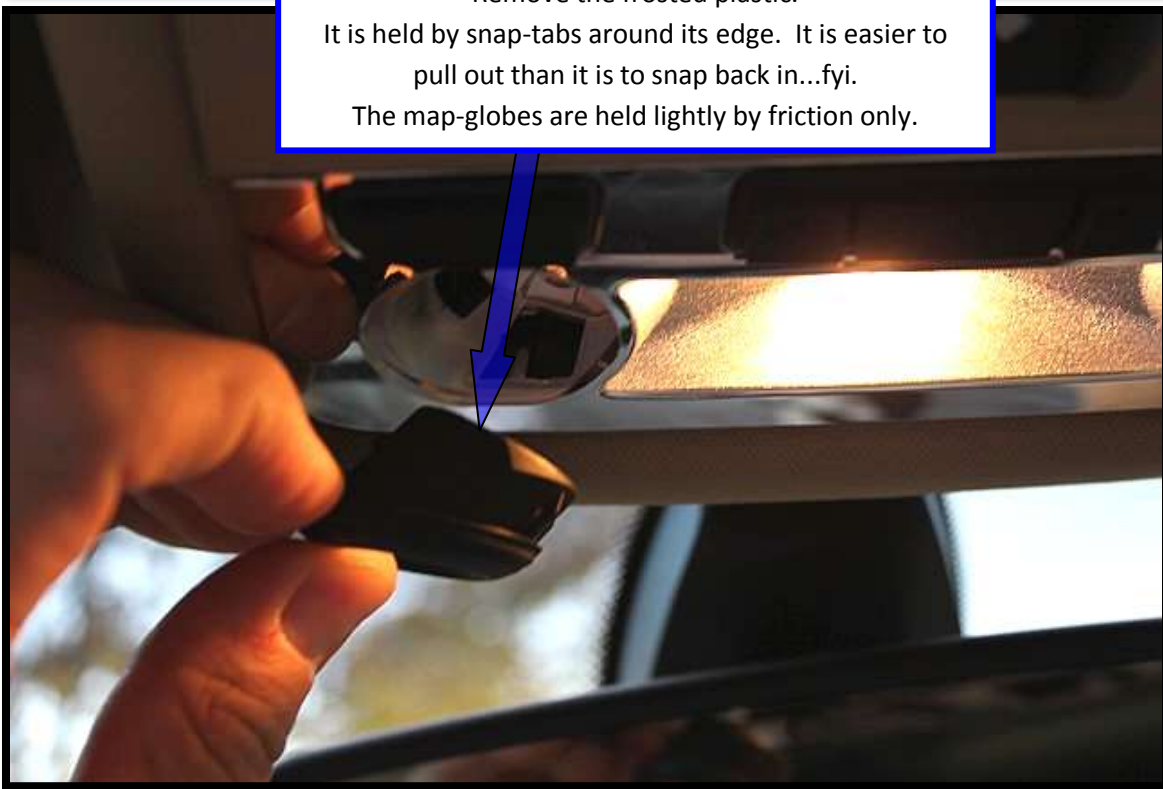
Remove everything attached to the headliner

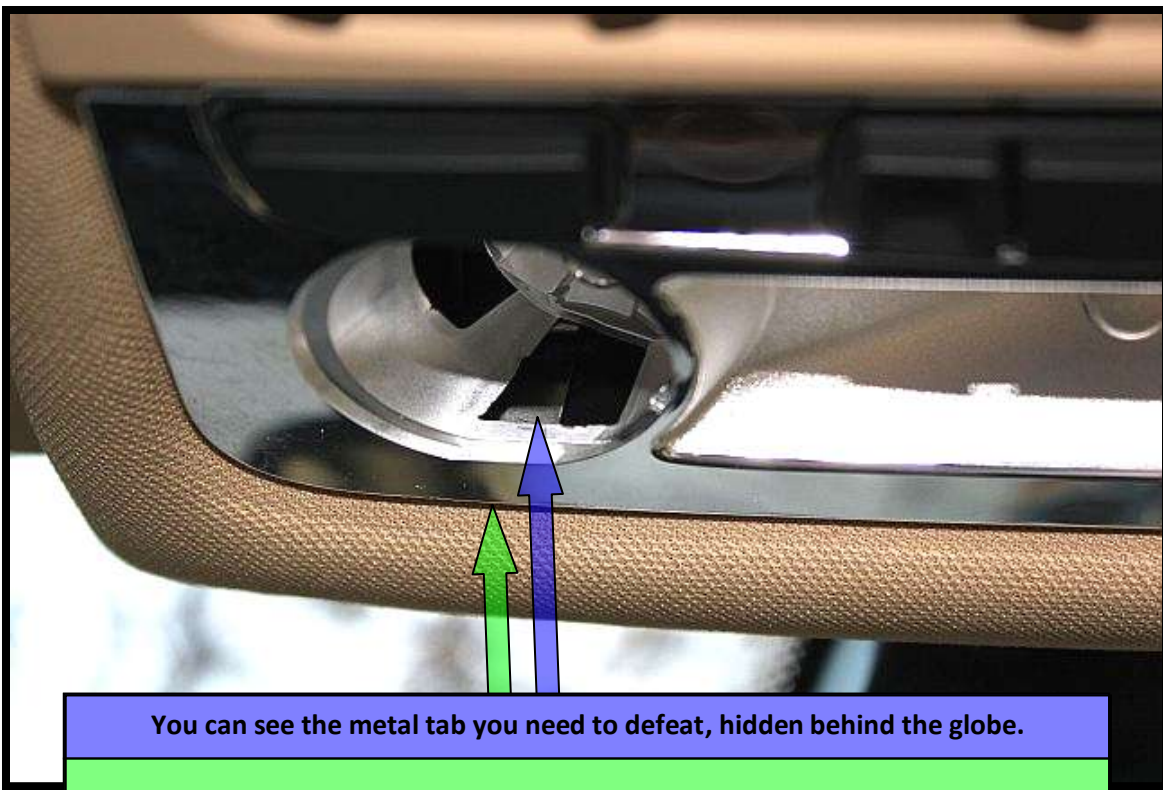


Looks sort of like this behind the module, attached to metal ceiling.



FOR THE FRONT LIGHT/SUNROOF CONSOLE:
Remove the frosted plastic.
It is held by snap-tabs around its edge. It is easier to pull out than it is to snap back in...fyi.
The map-globes are held lightly by friction only.





You can see the metal tab you need to defeat, hidden behind the globe.

You need to very carefully slide a thin flat tool here (#1 screwdriver or better).

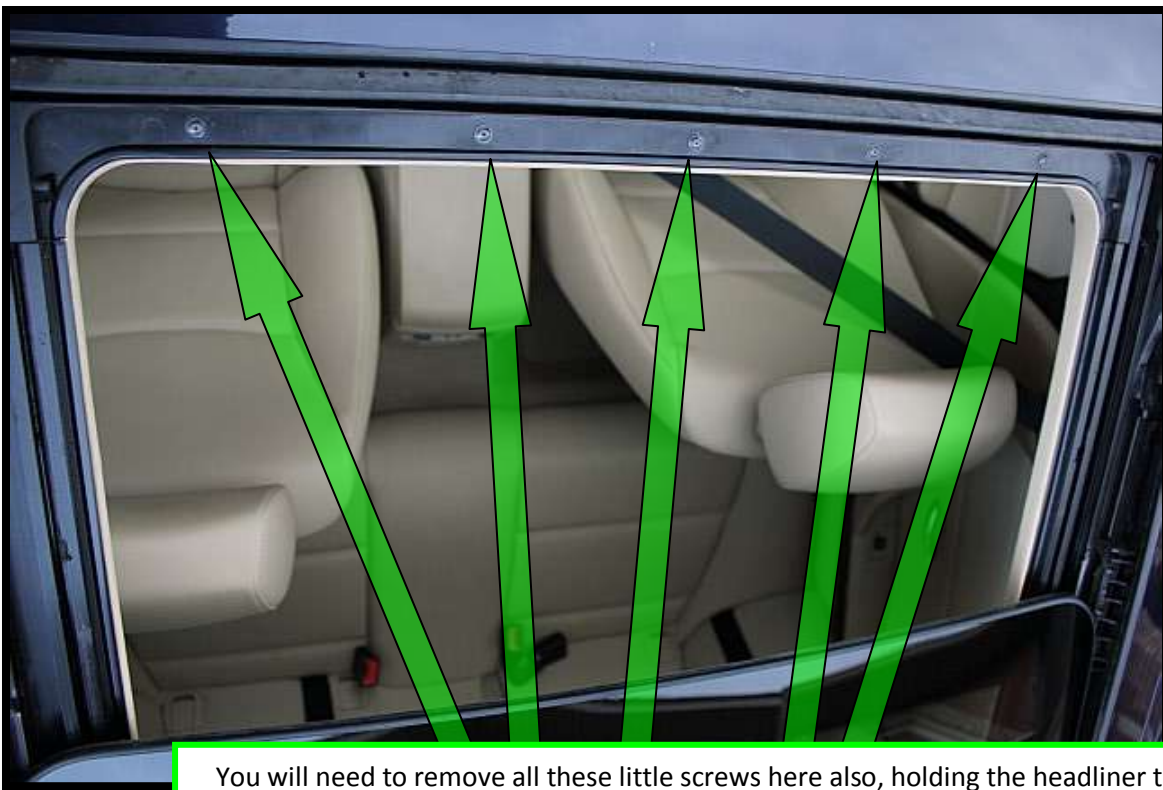
Being able to see it while you are trying to stab at it makes it easier to target. Be very careful not to fudge-up your plastic light housing or fabric liner. Be gentle.

Once the light module drops out, there are two, two-part plastic plugs holding the frame to the ceiling metal (no pictures, sorry). Gently pry and pull only the smaller center locking plugs out (they will come completely and straight out – they are the same shape as a wood nail, but made of plastic), then the remaining larger plugs can be gently popped like a regular trim plug.

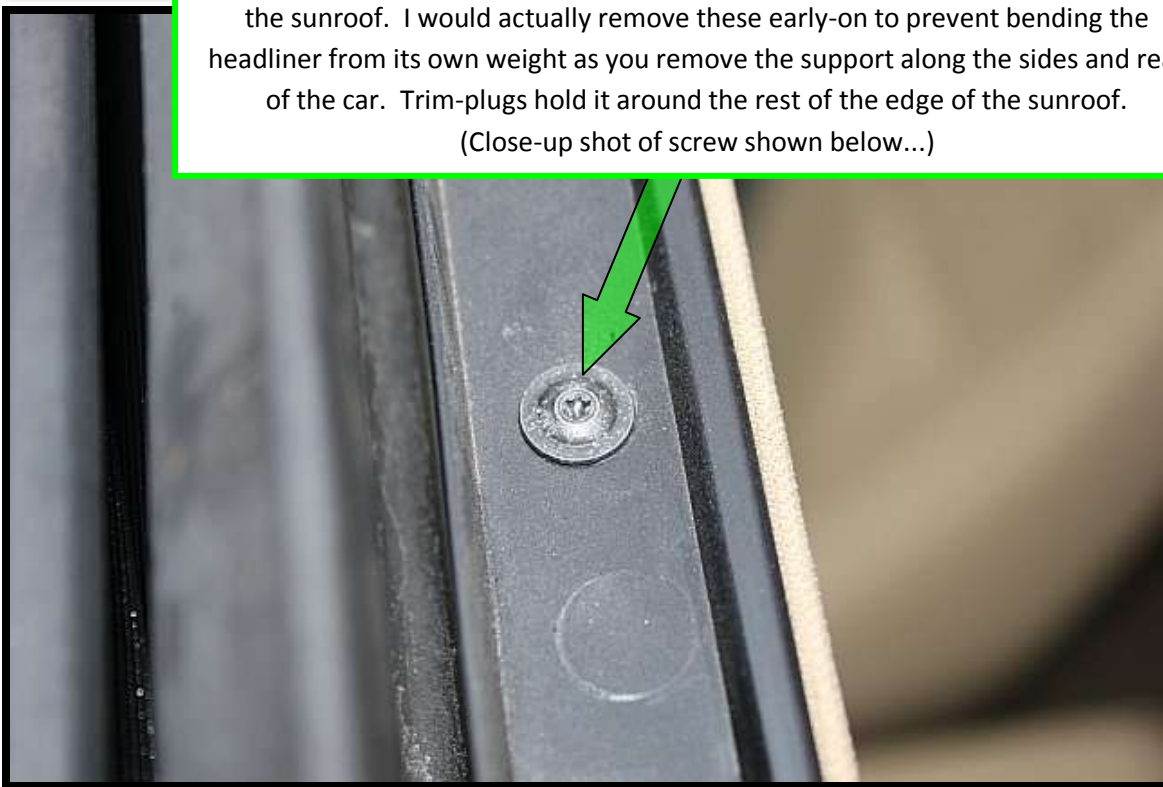


Looks sort of like this behind the module, attached to metal ceiling.

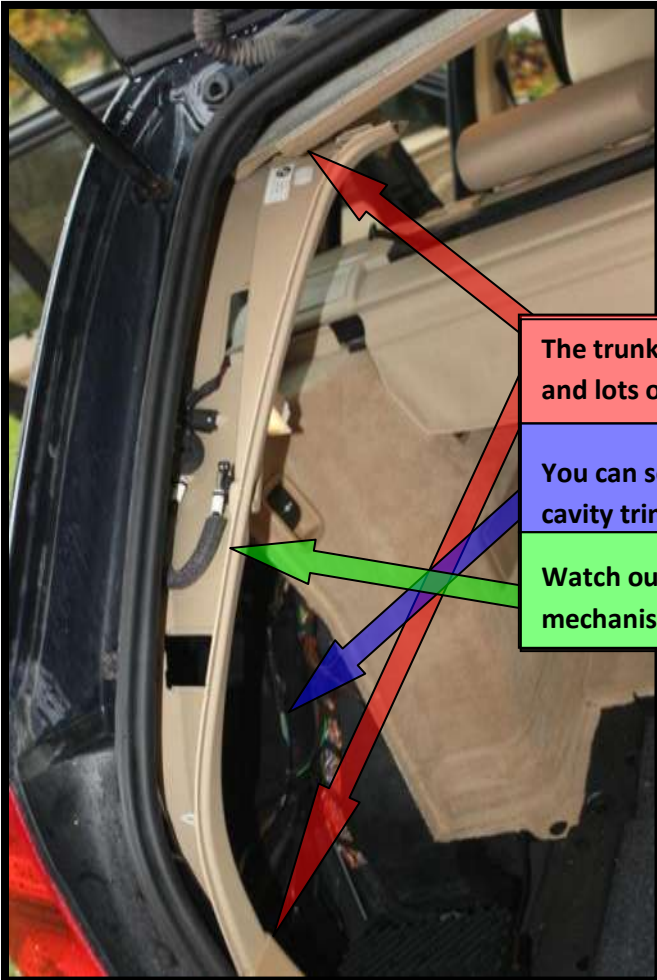




You will need to remove all these little screws here also, holding the headliner to the sunroof. I would actually remove these early-on to prevent bending the headliner from its own weight as you remove the support along the sides and rear of the car. Trim-plugs hold it around the rest of the edge of the sunroof.
(Close-up shot of screw shown below...)



Take a Deep Breath, Start Pulling Your Headliner + Trim Apart:



The trunk was the worst of it – the most screws and lots of interlocking trim.

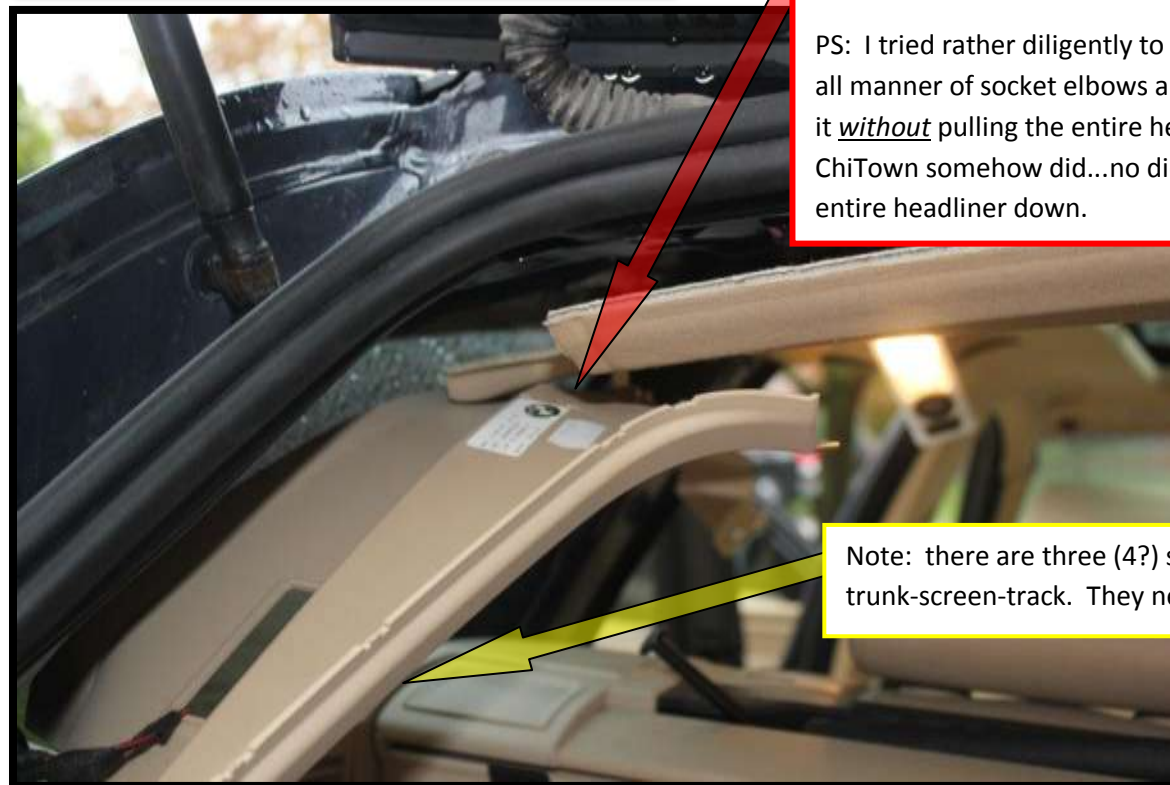
You can see I've removed the entire left side cavity trim to access all the edges

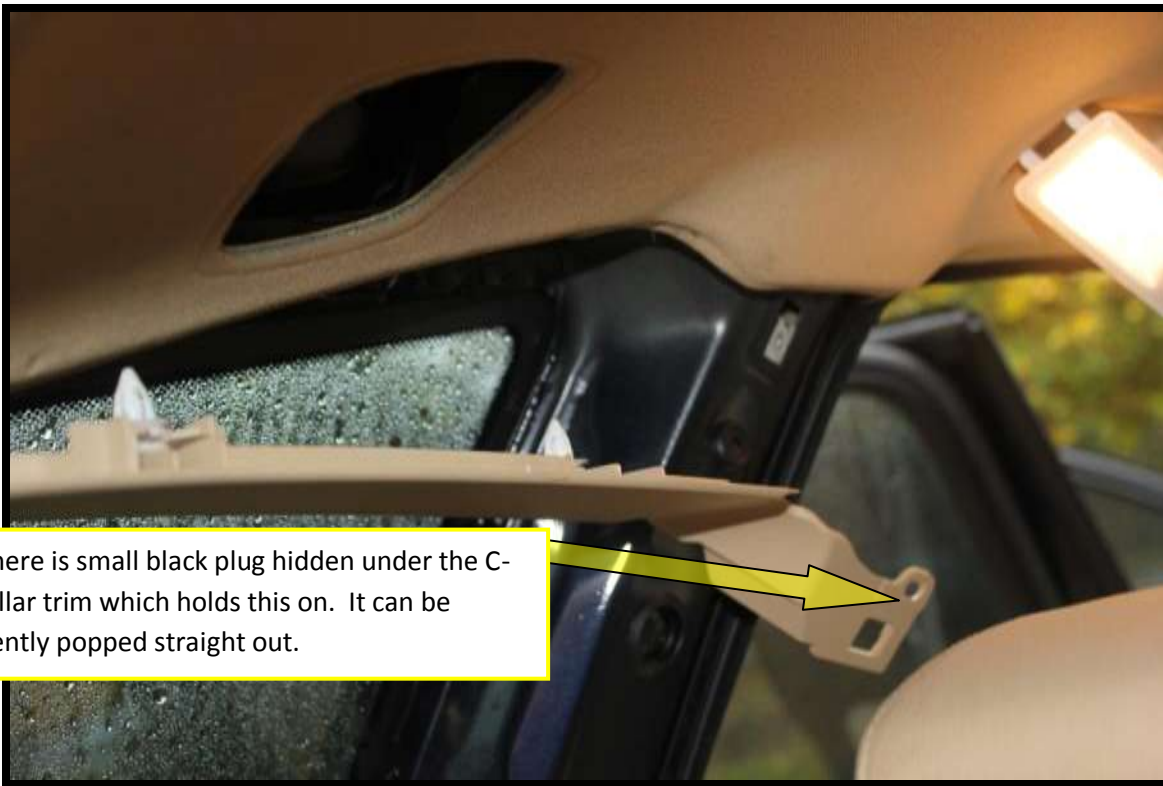
Watch out for the delicate trunk-screen release mechanism.

Interlocking trim parts back here are a pain – be patient and just remove EVERYTHING around them to give yourself enough working room to gently pull them apart. #1 goal is NOT to crease the headliner. ***That would be very bad...***

PS: I tried rather diligently to reach the rail bolt with all manner of socket elbows and extensions to get at it without pulling the entire headliner down like ChiTown somehow did...no dice. Had to take the entire headliner down.

Note: there are three (4?) screws hidden in your trunk-screen-track. They need to come out.





There is small black plug hidden under the C-pillar trim which holds this on. It can be gently popped straight out.



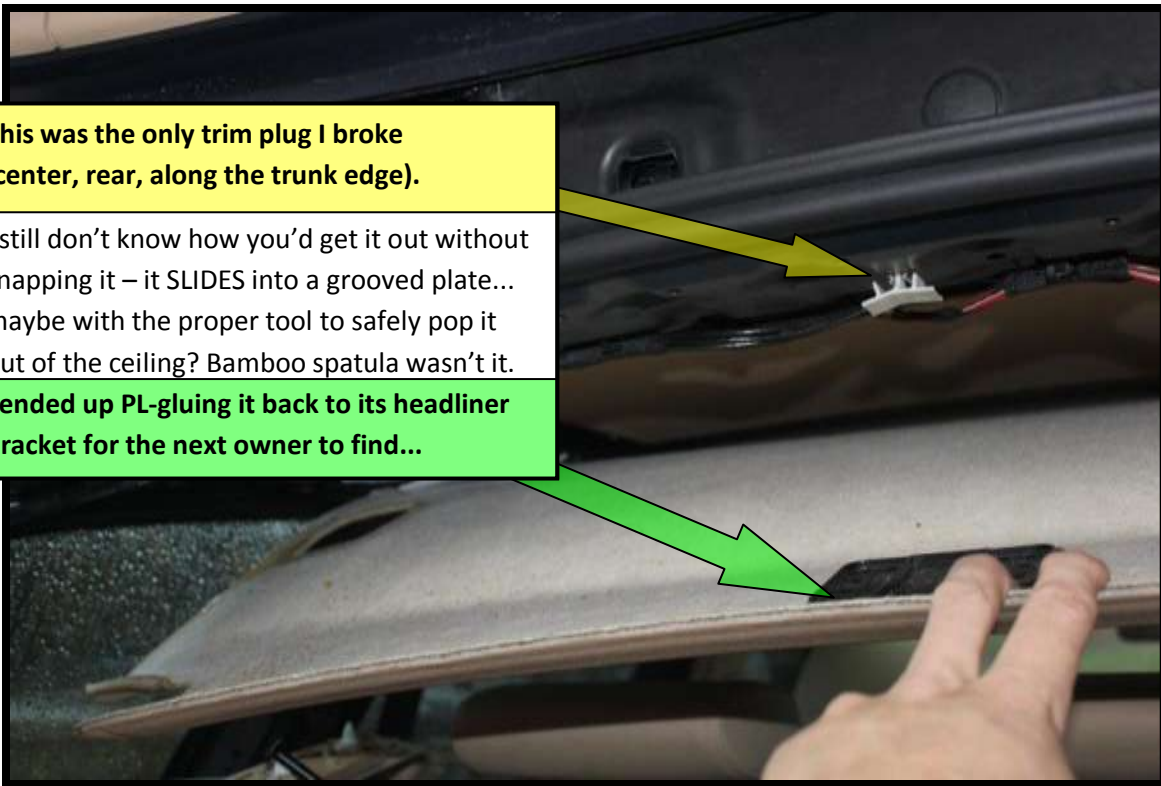
Just don't lose any screws... have faith it will all go back together. The magic bamboo spatula is also pictured here... 😊



**This was the only trim plug I broke
(center, rear, along the trunk edge).**

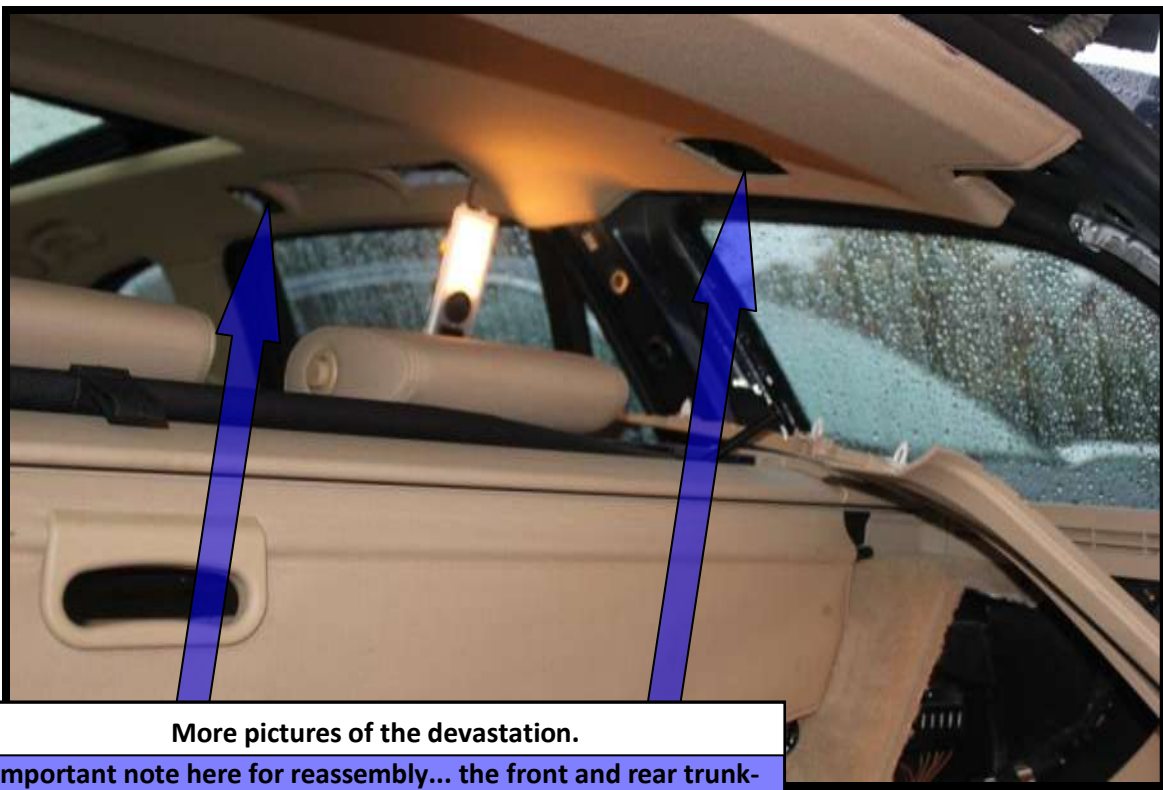
I still don't know how you'd get it out without snapping it – it SLIDES into a grooved plate... maybe with the proper tool to safely pop it out of the ceiling? Bamboo spatula wasn't it.

I ended up PL-gluing it back to its headliner bracket for the next owner to find...



Right side of headliner, looking in from the trunk. That center clip shown in the above pic is actually the only one holding this in place in the back. The rubber gasket and interlocking side trim does the rest of the work.





More pictures of the devastation.

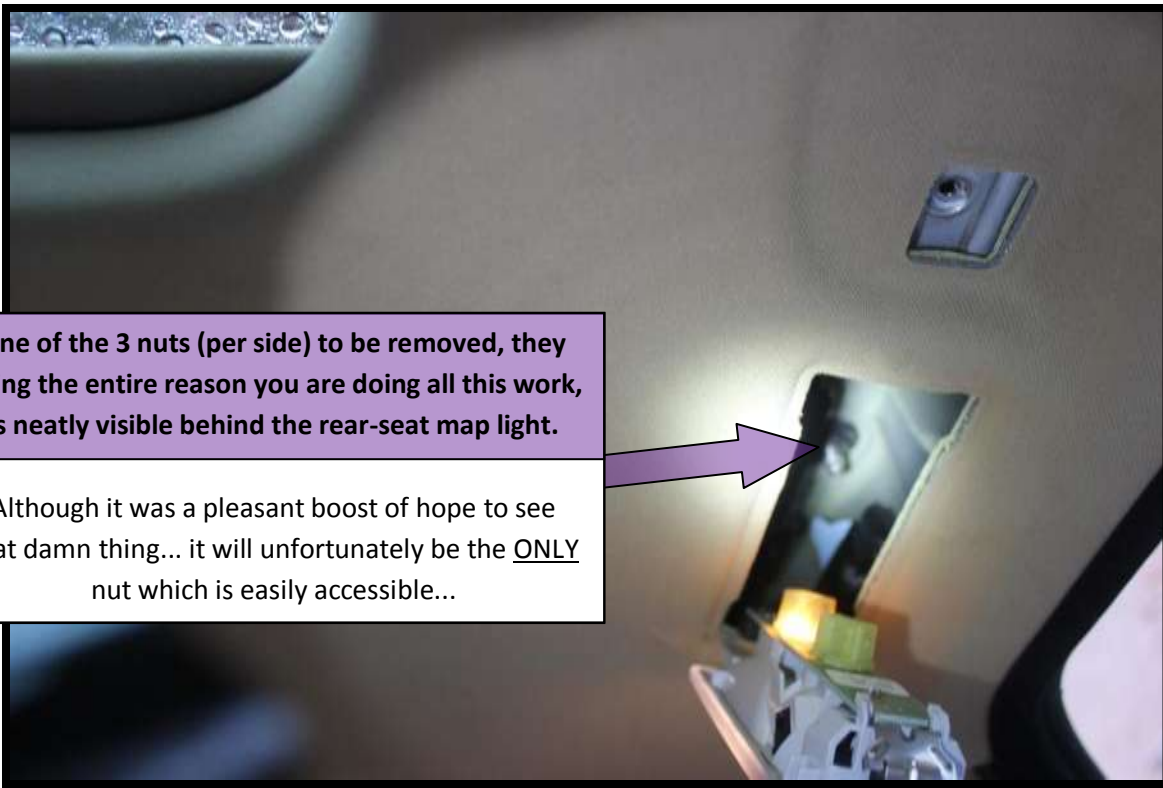
Important note here for reassembly... the front and rear trunk-screen-cover mounting brackets look VERY SIMILAR to each other... strangely enough however, no amount of pushing, prying or swearing will make them fit in the wrong hole, as I eventually discovered...

☺ "oosp"



Hey! What's this, I see?





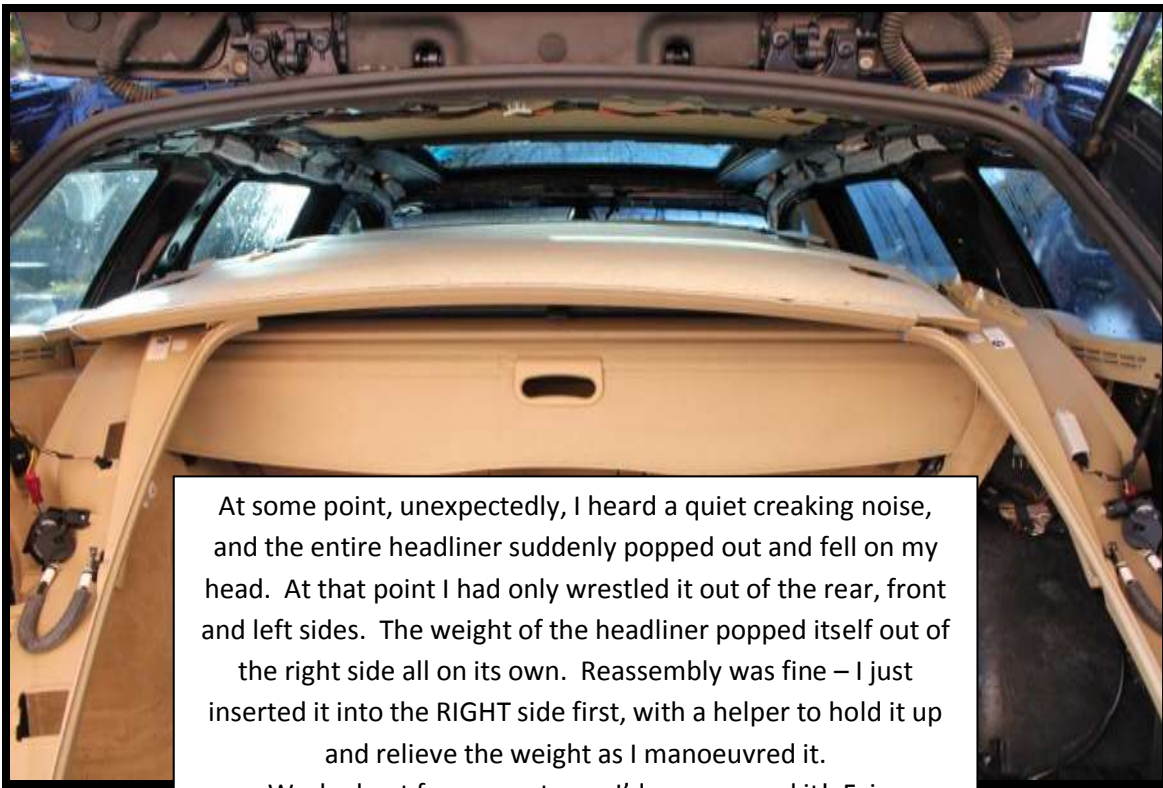
One of the 3 nuts (per side) to be removed, they being the entire reason you are doing all this work, is neatly visible behind the rear-seat map light.

Although it was a pleasant boost of hope to see that damn thing... it will unfortunately be the ONLY nut which is easily accessible...



- This piece is locked at both ends.
- You will need to lift the sill trim,
- To remove the bottom pillar trim,
- To remove the top pillar trim,
- To remove the headliner...

Ya. Ino. I said the same thing... ☺
 The only Good News is: It's all snap-in trim plugs, and once the headliner fell out, I didn't need to do this on the other side for some reason.



At some point, unexpectedly, I heard a quiet creaking noise, and the entire headliner suddenly popped out and fell on my head. At that point I had only wrestled it out of the rear, front and left sides. The weight of the headliner popped itself out of the right side all on its own. Reassembly was fine – I just inserted it into the RIGHT side first, with a helper to hold it up and relieve the weight as I manoeuvred it.

Worked out for me, not sure I'd recommend it! Fyi.
(Bonus though – I didn't need to disassemble the right side B-Pillar)



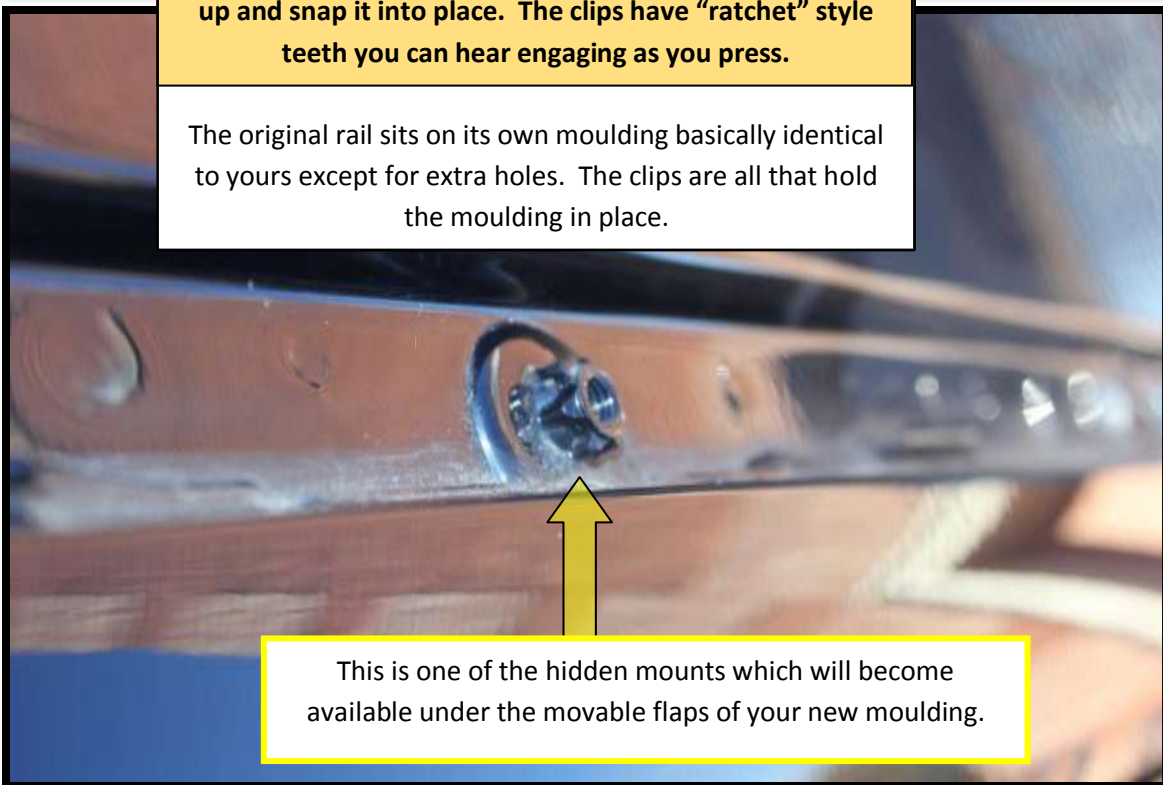
View from the driver's door across to the other. Thankfully the headrests, front and back, caught the headliner from falling too far and getting damaged.



Leftover bolt-hole you will need to seal.

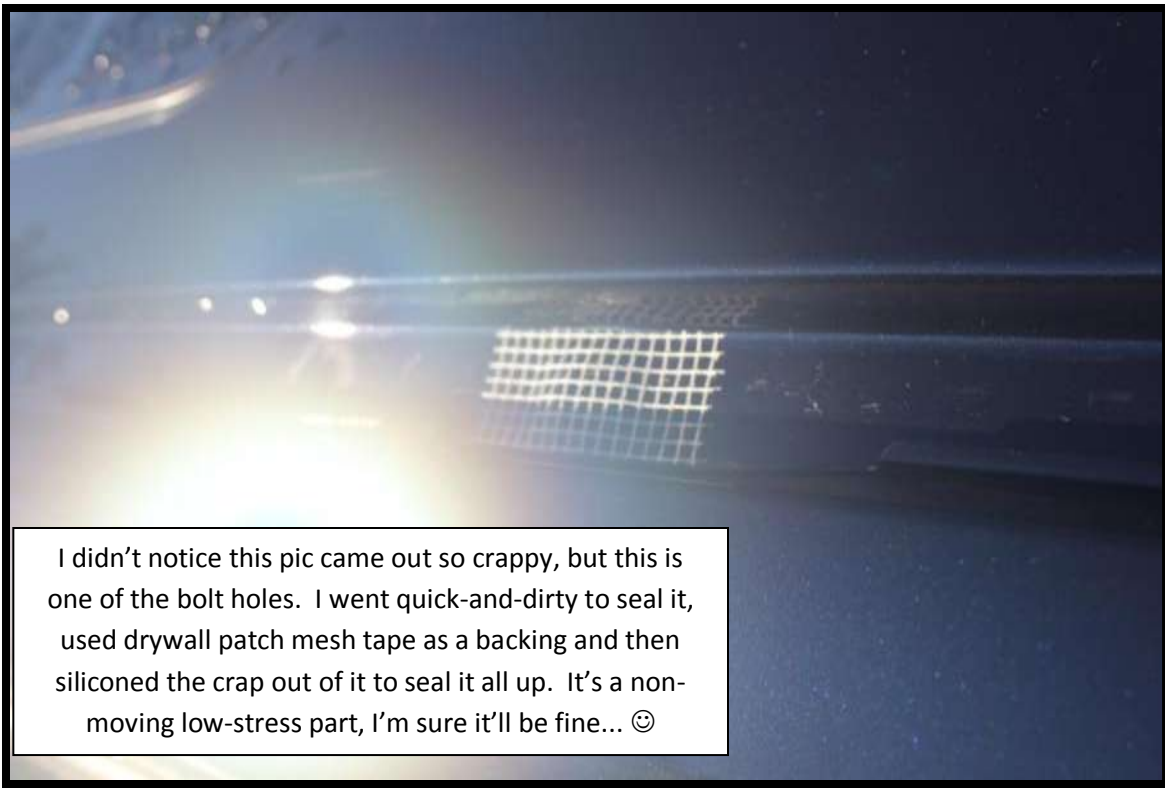
**Also, one of the clips is shown here left behind.
Reassembly is: Attach to the MOULDING first, then line it
up and snap it into place. The clips have “ratchet” style
teeth you can hear engaging as you press.**

The original rail sits on its own moulding basically identical
to yours except for extra holes. The clips are all that hold
the moulding in place.



This is one of the hidden mounts which will become
available under the movable flaps of your new moulding.





I didn't notice this pic came out so crappy, but this is one of the bolt holes. I went quick-and-dirty to seal it, used drywall patch mesh tape as a backing and then siliconed the crap out of it to seal it all up. It's a non-moving low-stress part, I'm sure it'll be fine... ☺



Lop-Sided Before & After Bmer!





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Thanks out to e90Post.com - ChiTown, slupie, krhodes1 and Patman for their inspirational pics and/or suggestions along the way.







PAY CLOSE ATTENTION to the two little strips of rubber which come with your moulding. You will need to mount those strips to your moulding by sliding them into their respective grooves on the moulding. **THEY HAVE A LEFT/RIGHT SIDE AND UP/DOWN FACING!!** That gives you 4 chances to screw it up... 😊 Pay attention to the moulding you removed and match them up – notice especially that one has a teeny-tiny little micro ledge on one side, that helped me out. Some slightly dish-soapy water also helped to gently glide the rubber in the groove – last thing you want is to snap one of those little buggers while tugging on it.





Supah Sexy.. 😊

