

The \$700+ Rear View Mirror

I needed to work on my rear view mirror on my 2007 Benz R320CDI but couldn't find much info on how to get inside of it. I needed to fix the "ball joint" of my mirror because it got loose in late 2012 (it slips down when you drive). From what I could tell, it wasn't fixable so I had the unfortunate opportunity to replace it. Dealer wanted \$705 MSRP (\$564 wholesale) just for the part (no error on the decimal there – SEVEN HUNDRED FIVE dollars), but I replaced it with one from a junker on ebay (\$200). I went ahead and pulled apart the old one and thought I'd share what I found. Looking back, I wrote a bunch below about this stupid mirror, but I guess it helps make me feel better that I paid for a car that has a \$705 mirror.

For the record, this mirror has the following features: auto-dimming; integrated garage door remote; built-in down-facing lights; and some sort of sensor that faces forward (for auto-dimming headlights?). Here's the mirror installed in the car:



By the way, I did try a variety of methods to tighten the ball joint, such as rubber bands, form-a-gasket, etc. and nothing worked.

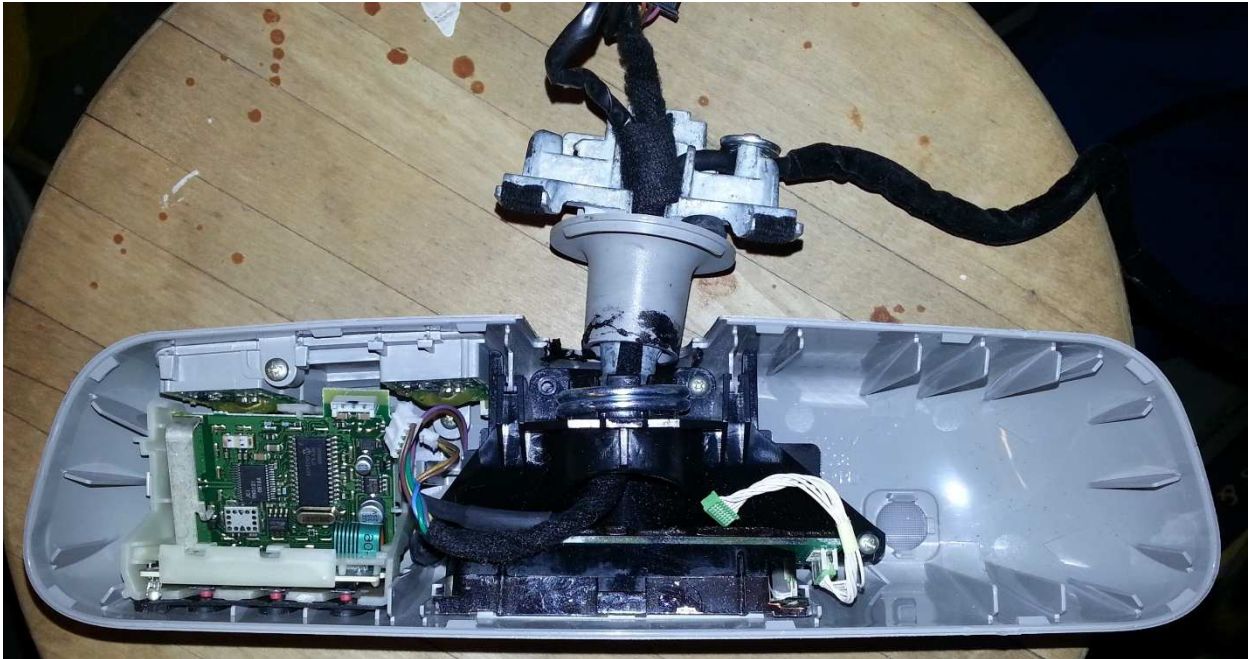
- 1) Opening it – the bezel along the front edge does just pop off. I didn't care about damaging the plastic so I didn't worry about it. However, the plastic is pretty soft so you want to be careful. Here's the front bezel, removed, showing all of the "click-in" points. All are shown – there aren't any along the ends.



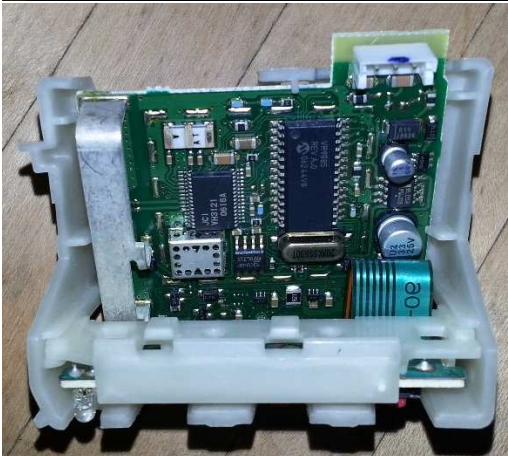
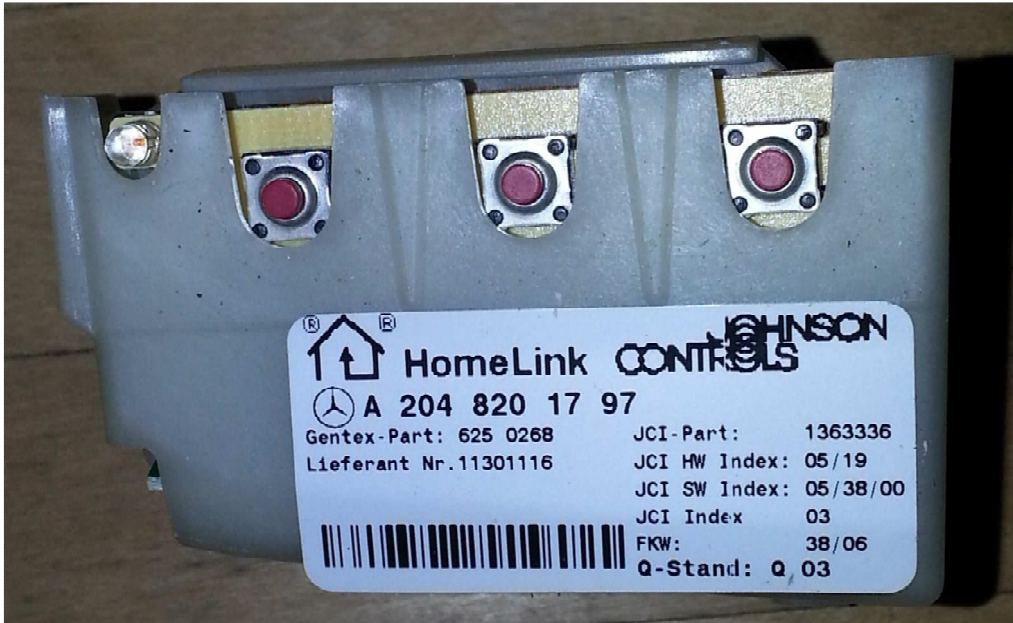
2) Once the bezel is off, the mirror just lifts off. Here's the front and back side of the glass mirror:



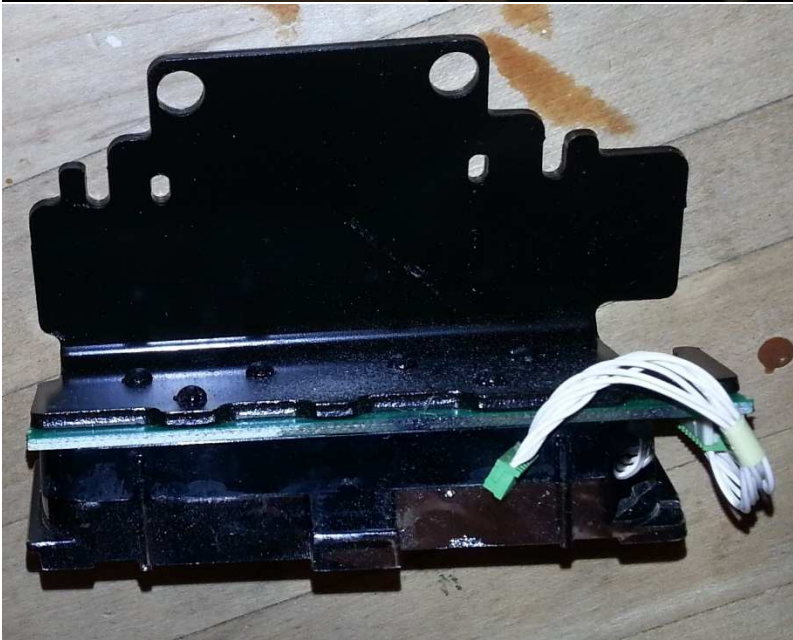
3) Removing the glass mirror, you get:



- 4) The circuit board on the left is the garage door opener from Johnson Controls. For some reason I took lots of pictures of this:



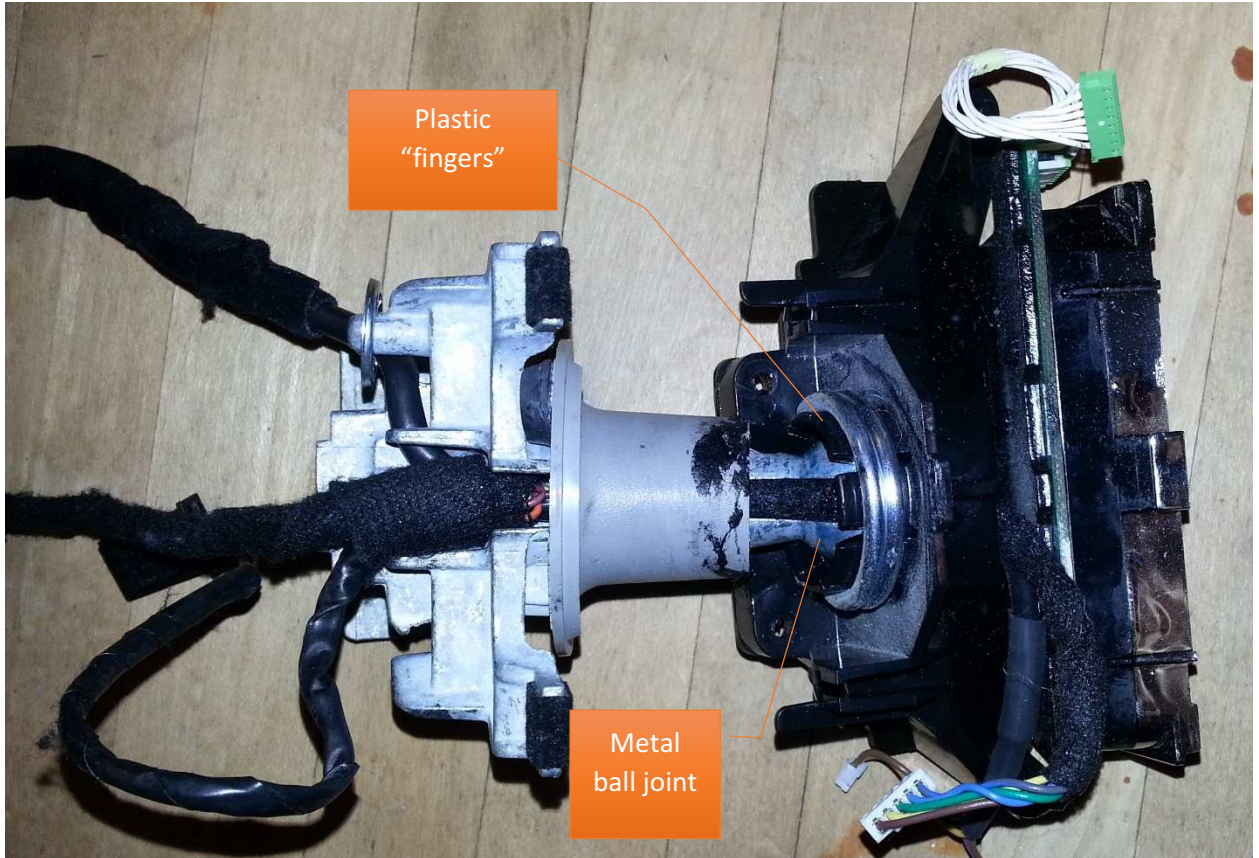
- 5) The lights on the bottom of the mirror are LED's. They are removed with the ball-joint assembly and can then be detached from the ball joint once removed. Again, more pictures than really needed... but I took 'em so I might as well share them.

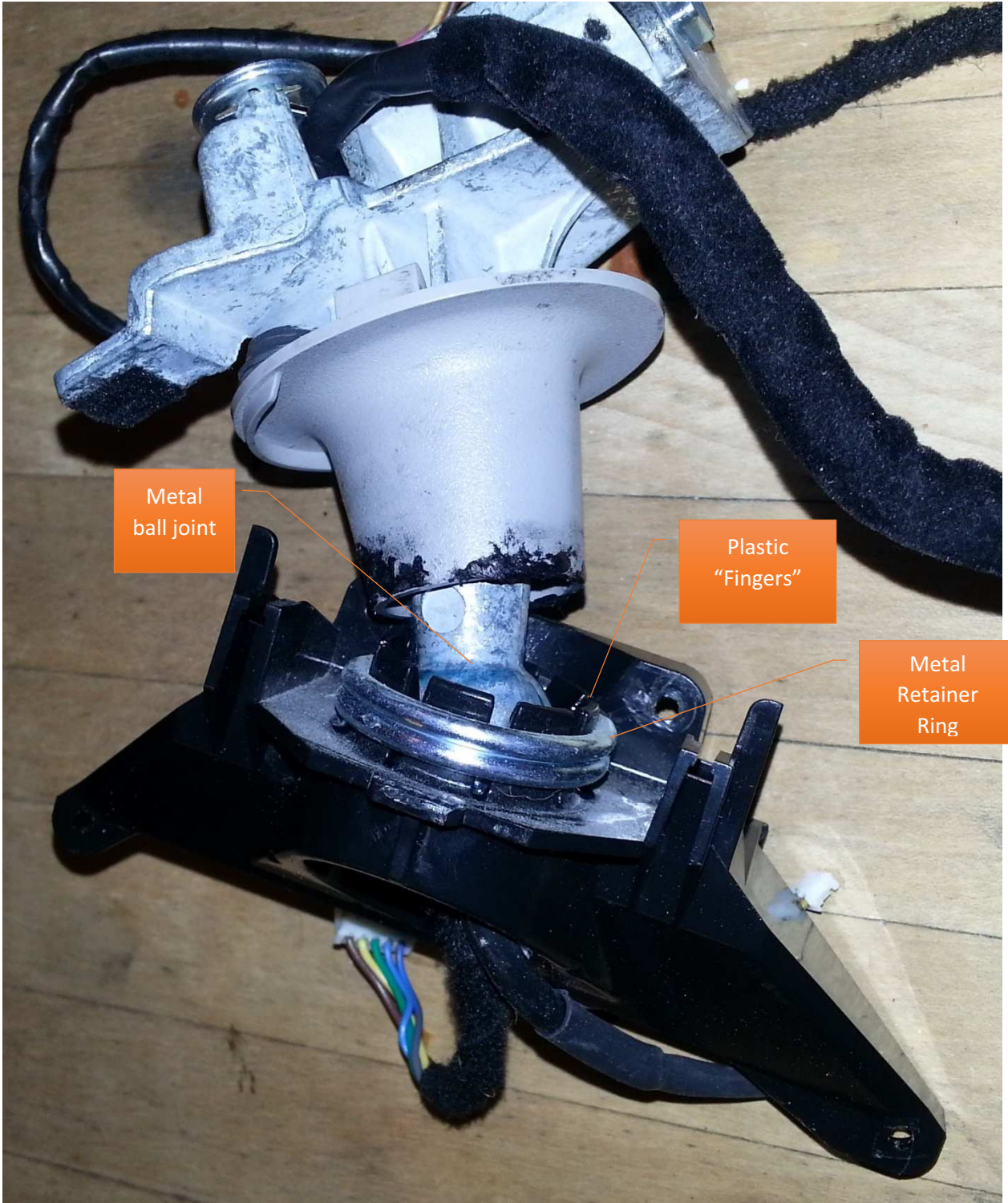


6) Once you remove the ball joint and garage door circuitry you are left with:



- 7) Now for the piece of #\$%& that forced me to replace the mirror to begin with: the ball joint. You'll see the only thing creating the grip on the ball joint are plastic "fingers" that are held in place by a metal retainer ring. My guess is either the metal ring loosened (unlikely) or the plastic fingers just wore out. I know, you're thinking I must've moved it a bunch to get the plastic to wear out, and I'm just as surprised as you are – it wasn't moved that much. Frankly, it's just a crappy design. And, there was no way to fix my problem, 'had to replace it.





Metal ball joint

Plastic "Fingers"

Metal Retainer Ring

