1992 Range Rover County Ignition Switch R&R, @ 99,000 miles

Ignition Switch Temporary Fix after 2 short squirts of WD40 in the ignition key-way did me in...
(in the future, I promise NEVER to use a liquid lubricant in the keyway, only dry graphite)

After reading some responses from a post about my ignition switch being rather stiff to place a key in, and a bit stiff to turn. I thought, yeah, I'll spray just a shot of lubricant in the lock key cylinder... so I did. And darn if it didn't work more smoothly than ever. Should've thought of that first, doh!

Well, later in the day it kept working more and more smoothly.

... and more and more smoothly as the lubricant worked all around... until...

yup, then the damn thing barely stayed in the RUN position! :)

I had to take the ignition key off my key ring and use the key solo, because the weight of the additional keys would jiggle the key enough to -click- the key from run (pos II) to acc (pos I) and of course the engine dies.

In one fell swoop, I went from ok to nearly undriveable... fer cryin' out loud. If you just touch the key, it will pop out of run to accessory position in an instant.

Later that day it wouldn't stay in the RUN position at all. The key would jump from RUN to ACC immediately after starting the engine... all from a couple short bursts of WD40!

To be fair, the real problem was the spring and plastic bits in the "contacts" portion of the ignition switch. The switch is really three parts: 1) The lock/key cylinder, 2) The column mount and steering wheel lock assembly, and 3) The actual ignition switch with wires and current directing contacts. This last part was the worn component. After ordering a replacement and fitting, the new assembly really works fine, snaps back from run, and all key positions are solidly detented, so you know what position the key is in.

Lots of photos below, some redundant, most were for me to be able to document the wiring, or go back and easily take a look at how things were before I dove into the fix. I spent way way too much time on this temporary repair, all for a US$35 ignition switch, but I needed the car the next few days, and the part was 1500 miles away, and it was Saturday. I almost decided to just cut the ignition switch off the wires and add a couple of switches to turn IGN on and a pushbutton for engaging the starter. It would've taken me about an hour to do and make it safe.

The ignition switch was surprisingly easy to get to, I'm used to having to pull steering wheels and more...

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Under dash wiring-

http://www.jpurnell.com/rr/repairs/IgnitionSwitch.htm
The screw heads securing the ignition switch were already messed up, telling me someone else had been in here...

Back side of key switch, showing actual ignition switch mechanism. The black cap with the wires disappearing into it is the actual ignition switch with the sliding copper contacts in it. Be careful of this and the wires that are coming out of it if you are working under your dash, because...

...oops, the contacts fell off when I brushed the wireloom with my hand. Glad THAT didn't happen going down the M5 or I90/94 at a good clip! Later I find that the potmetal clips that secure the plastic contact holder to the metal portion of the switch had vibrated and broken off, leaving the whole assembly very loosey goosey.
The offending portion of the whole deal. Inside the ignition switch is a spring and a ball-bearing on a spring-detent. The spring returns the key FROM start to run position, and the ball-bearing gives you some tactile feel for the different positions as well as actually providing a positive detent mechanism enabling the key switch to maintain its current position... exactly what my switch was NOT doing.

Top of ignition switch has the steering interlock mechanism. Fits into the underside of the steering column, when you turn key, the deadbolt retracts and allows steering wheel to rotate. The deadbolt is retracted inside the ignition switch in this picture.

The repair process that ultimately turned into the "temporary fix process."

To remove the key cylinder, you can just see a straight blade-head screw at the bottom of those threads. This screw secures the cylinder in the keyswitch housing.
This spring was a bit loose, I shimmed it up with a 2 small washers upon reassembly. Shim should be unnecessary with the new ignition switch.

The spring and ball-bearing detent in the actual ignition switch, the electrical part of the show. The plastic piece was very worn, especially where the spring sets in it to create kick back pressure from START to RUN position.

The potmetal tab was broken, causing the electrical contacts at the back of the switch to be very loose, and fall off. I had to pin the plastic piece to the metal housing to make the switch useable, though the spring action was not working. This just meant that I had to turn key back from start position to run position after engine starts, but at least the key stays in the RUN position allowing me to drive the vehicle.

And after all that time spent fussing with that damn switch... it was finally time to enjoy what the manufacturer's marketing arm has termed... "The Land Rover Lifestyle"