



Office of Defects Investigation

2005-07-11 09:54

VOQ Confirmation

Your Complaint Information is successfully submitted.

Your Confirmation number (ODI Number) is: 10110279

add to 10110279

Your Complaint Information

Consumer Information

Name : [REDACTED]
Org. Name :
Address : [REDACTED] CA [REDACTED]
mail to [REDACTED]
City, State, Zip : Cedar Glen, CA [REDACTED]
 USA
Daytime Phone : [REDACTED] **Ext. :**
Evening Phone : [REDACTED] **Fax :** [REDACTED]
Email : [REDACTED]

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Complaint Information

Description : While driving on CA Hwy 18, our 2004 Olds Bravada spontaneously caught fire. A passing motorist shouted to my husband that his car was on fire. He pulled over; the fire dept. responded. Car was towed to GM dealer; USAA Ins. determined that it was totaled. It was towed to their yard in No. Hollywood where it now is. GM hired an engineer to check the car. GM then told us that a photo taken after the fire & tows showed the transmission fluid dip stick had not been properly secured & this caused the fire. The car had had one oil change about 2 months prior to the fire. In writing, GM said "After careful investigation of your case, none of the available data suggests that the product allegation has any merit..." & referred up back to our ins. co. USAA hired an engineer & their conclusion states: "The cause & origin of the fire was a failure of a power steering hose in the lower right of the engine compartment. The failed hose sprayed power steering fluid on the right side exhaust manifold and the catalytic converter where it was ignited by a spark from the spark plugs and/or heat from the catalytic converter." I have the full report which also states "The right underside of the vehicle was covered with power steering fluid...The power steering fluid reservoir was melted downward from the top. The power steering hoses in the lower right of the engine compartment were damaged. Power steering fluid spray patterns were found beneath the right side of the engine compartment and along the front of the catalytic converter. The fire ignited quickly after the power steering fluid leak began as the power steering pump still turned freely... No other fire causes or contributors were found..."

Incident Date : 10/21/2004 **Fire :** Yes
Num. Failures : 1 **Property Damage :** Yes

*NAR
 2/3/05*

Num. Deaths : 0
Num. Injured : 0
Referral Source : INTERNET

Crash : No
Police Report : No

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Vehicle Information

VIN : 1GHDT13S142 [REDACTED]
Manufacturer : GENERAL MOTORS CORP.
Year, Make and Model : 2004/OLDSMOBILE/BRAVADA
of Cylinders : 6
Engine Size : 6.6l
Cruise Control : Yes
Current Mileage : 5200
Failure Mileage : 5200
Body Style : SUV
Fuel Type : GAS

Purchase Date : 3/13/2004
Original Owner : Yes
Trans. Type : AUTOMATIC
VehicleDetails Usage : RECREATIONAL
Antilock Brakes : Yes
Speed : 40
Powertrain : ALL WHEEL DRIVE
Fuel System : FUEL INJECTION
Vehicle Type : TRUCK

Vehicle Component Information

Component 1 : STEERING:HYDRAULIC POWER ASSIST SYSTEM
OEM: Yes

Vehicle Dealer Information

Dealer : 1
Name : William L. Morris Oldsmobile & Chevrolet
Address : 1024 W. Ventura Street
 Fillmore
 CA 93015
Dealer Phone: 805 524-0333
Dealer Fax: 805 524-1471
Email: NONE

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[REDACTED]
Cedar Glen, CA [REDACTED]
February 22, 2005

Mr. G. Richard Wagoner, Jr.
GM Chair & Chief Executive Officer
Mail Code: 4820B38-A68
P.O. Box 100
100 Renaissance Center
Detroit, MI 48265-2000



Dear Mr. Wagoner:

My husband and I have been long-time Oldsmobile owners; currently owning a 2004 (one of the last 500 – collector's edition) and a 2003 Bravada; a 2001, 2000, 1998 and 1997 Bravada; one of the first Aurora's that came out (and subsequent Aurora's); Toronado; Cutless Sierra, Olds 98s. Most of these have been purchased from the same dealer, William L. Morris in Fillmore, California. Obviously, we have been well satisfied with GM/Oldsmobile Cars for over 40 years.

On October 21, 2004, the engine of my husband's 2004 Bravada spontaneously caught fire. The car had approximately 5,200 miles on it – and a "bumper to bumper" warranty. Unfortunately, we don't have any bumpers left. The car was totaled.

To be as brief as possible, we were assigned to work with GM's Adam Jones who was completely disagreeable, didn't return calls, gave us misinformation, and otherwise was unpleasant and unhelpful. After engineer's from both GM and USAA (our insurance company) inspected the totaled car we were told by Mr. Jones that a photo showed a transmission fluid dip stick was "not properly secured" and that transmission fluid is very flammable and would easily catch fire. He declined to send us a copy of GM's engineering report, saying that it was proprietary. Instead, we were sent a brief letter that said our allegations of product malfunction were unsubstantiated and he was referring us back to our insurance company. No signature: a typed "General Motors Corporation" on the bottom.

On the other hand, I have a copy of the full report from Garrett Engineering that unequivocally states the fire was caused by failure of a power steering fluid hose; power steering fluid was all over the place; and there were no other contributing factors to the fire. And... the transmission fluid was found to be at its proper level. I have enclosed a copy of the report from Garrett Engineering (as well as all other pertinent information). I phoned Mr. Jones with this information & left it on his voice mail; he never returned my call. I emailed General Motors on January 21, 2005. They never replied.

Mr. Wagoner, we are paying for a \$40,000 car we don't have, and we feel that unless GM can prove otherwise, the fire was caused by failure of the power steering fluid hose. We would like to be made whole; i.e. replace the car with a comparable car. We both work part time; we live in the mountains of Southern California – hence our need for a 4-wheel/all wheel drive vehicle. It's

snowing right now, and I cannot get to my job because even though my daughter has loaned me her Volkswagen Jetta – you don't take that out in snow & ice.

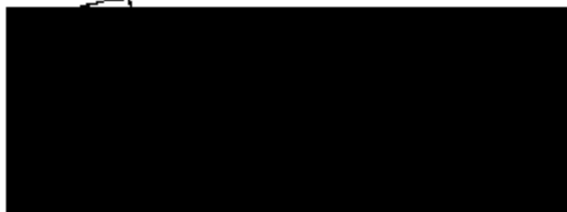
Because GM has thus far failed us in the handling of this complaint, we have filed complaints with the:

- National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, Office of Defects Investigation
- California Department of Consumer Affairs
- Michigan Department of Attorney General, Consumer Protection Division
- California New Motor Vehicle Board
- Arbitration Certification Program (California)

Needless to say, I have had to spend many hours on this which, since I still work, has taken its toll. My husband just turned 68; I will be 60 in May.

In addition to the Garrett Engineering Report, and your denial letter, I have enclosed copies of relevant contact persons, numbers, etc. Please feel free to contact me if you need further information. We would appreciate a speedy resolution as we have already been without a car since last October, and my husband has been taking my car to work.

Sincerely,



cc:

Mr. Robert Lutz, Product Development and Chairman
General Motors Corporation

Mr. John Devine, Chief Financial Officer
General Motors Corporation

Mr. Adam Jones
General Motors Corporation

Mr. Stephen Barron, Customer Relationship Manager
Oldsmobile Customer Assistance Center

Mr. Henry Salazar, Total Loss Department
USAA (United Services Automobile Association)

Mr. Thomas J. Lepper, Tire & Automotive Consultant
Garrett Engineers, Inc.

Mr. Bill Alexander
Engineering Analysis Associates

} *declined to give me his address,*

Mr. Chapman Morris, Jr.
William L. Morris Chevrolet & Oldsmobile

✓ National Highway Transportation Safety Administration

Michigan Department of Attorney General, Consumer Protection Division

California Department of Consumer Affairs

New Motor Vehicle Board (California)

Arbitration Certification Program (California)

Jonathan Stevens, Esq.

Well, we used to have a collector's edition –
We *had* one of the last 500 Oldsmobiles manufactured.





P

 Oldsmobile

Customer Assistance Center

ATTN SARAH UNRUH

#561227

December 20, 2004

[REDACTED]
Cedar Glen, CA [REDACTED]

Service request: [REDACTED]

Vehicle Identification Number: 1GHDT13S142 [REDACTED]

Customer Relationship Manager: Adam Jones

Dear Mrs. [REDACTED]

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to review the product allegation involving your 2004 Oldsmobile Bravada.

After careful investigation of your case, none of the available data suggests that the product allegation has any merit. If you'd like to provide us with any additional evidence that you feel would further support your claim, please contact us again. However at this time, General Motors is unable to assume responsibility for damages and we suggest that you resolve this matter through your insurance carrier.

Sincerely,

General Motors Corporation



UNITED SERVICES AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 659462, San Antonio, TX 78265

[REDACTED]
CEDAR GLEN CA [REDACTED]

January 10, 2005

Policyholder: [REDACTED]
Reference Number: [REDACTED]
Date Of Loss: October 21, 2004
Loss Location: San Bernadino, California

Dear Captain [REDACTED]

Per your request, here is a complete copy of the cause and origin report that was performed on the remains of your vehicle.

Sincerely,

Sarah Unruh

Sarah J. Unruh
Senior Claims Representative
USAA Western Regional Office
Phone: 1-800-531-8222 Ext. 46929
Fax Phone: 1-800-531-8877



G A R R E T T
ENGINEERS, INC.

PREPARED FOR

MS. SARAH UNRUH

USAA

2241 HARVARD STREET

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95815-3315

CONCERNING

LEAHY OLDSMOBILE FIRE

CLAIM NO. [REDACTED]

OUR CASE NO.: [REDACTED]



G A R R E T T
ENGINEERS, INC.

December 29, 2004

Ms. Sara Unruh
USAA
2241 Harvard Street
Sacramento, California 95815-3315

Re: LEAHY OLDSMOBILE FIRE

Date of Loss: 10/21/04

Your Insured: [REDACTED]

Claim [REDACTED]

Our Case No.: [REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Unruh:

ASSIGNMENT:

GARRETT ENGINEERS, INC. was assigned to inspect the insured's 2004 Oldsmobile Bravada, California license number [REDACTED] to determine the cause and origin of the fire.

CONCLUSION:

The cause and origin of the fire was a failure of a power steering hose in the lower right of the engine compartment. The failed hose sprayed power steering fluid on the right side exhaust manifold and the catalytic converter where it was ignited by a spark from the spark plugs and/or heat from the catalytic converter.

DISCUSSION:

The vehicle was inspected at Insurance Auto Auction, 7245 Laurel Canyon Boulevard, North Hollywood, California on December 9, 2004. The pertinent vehicle data is as follows:

YEAR, MAKE AND MODEL:	2004 OLDSMOBILE BRAVADA
COLOR AND BODY:	BURGUNDY, FOUR-DOOR SEDAN
STOCK NUMBER:	01020027
LICENSE PLATE:	[REDACTED]
STICKER:	MAR 2005
VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER:	1GHDT13S142 [REDACTED]
DATE OF MANUFACTURE:	01/04
ODOMETER:	ELECTRONIC - UNREADABLE
SERVICE STICKER:	11-16-04 6,752
TRANSMISSION:	AUTOMATIC
DRIVE:	FOUR WHEEL
KEYS:	YES
DRIVEABLE:	NO
BRAKES:	VACUUM BOOSTER - ABS
AIR BAGS:	DUAL - NOT DEPLOYED SIDE - NOT DEPLOYED

Bill Alexander of SPX Engineering Analysis Associates was also present for this inspection.

L He is GM's engineer.

The vehicle had sustained an engine compartment fire. The fire slightly intruded into the interior at the right front foot well area. The fire consumed all of the rubber and plastic components in the engine compartment and presented a definite right side bias. Overheated and burned fluid residue was found on the catalytic converter on the right underside of the vehicle.

The engine compartment electrical system did not cause or contribute to the fire. The top of the battery was melted. The alternator was lightly damaged but still turned. The engine compartment fuse box was lightly heat damaged. No short-circuits were found in the engine compartment wiring harness.

The water pump still turned. The idler pulley still turned. The engine oil was one quart low.

The fuel injection system did not cause or contribute to the fire. No signs of fuel spray or fuel wash were found at or near the fuel injectors. The fuel supply and return hoses were intact.

Neither the automatic transmission or its fluid caused or contributed to the fire. The automatic transmission fluid was found at the proper level. The automatic transmission fluid cooler lines were intact.

The air conditioning system did not cause or contribute to the fire. The air conditioning hoses in the fire area were consumed as were most of the remaining air conditioning hoses. Many of the air conditioning aluminum lines had melted. The air conditioning condenser was more severely burned than the radiator. The air conditioning compressor still turned.

The cause and origin of the fire was a failure of a power steering hose. The failed hose sprayed power steering fluid on the right side exhaust manifold and the catalytic converter where it was ignited by a spark from the spark plugs and/or heat from the catalytic converter. The right underside of the vehicle was covered with power steering fluid. A small sample was wiped off on a paper towel (see photo 19). The power steering fluid reservoir was melted downward from the top. The power steering hoses in the lower right of the engine compartment were damaged. Power steering fluid spray patterns were found beneath the right side of the engine compartment and along the front of the catalytic converter. The fire ignited quickly after the power steering fluid leak began as the power steering pump still turned freely. The power steering hose was loose but its plastic nipple had been melted off of the power steering reservoir.

No other fire causes or contributors were found. No signs of vandalism or the use of an incendiary material were found in the vehicle.

As of the date of this report, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recalls that were associated with this year, make and model vehicle did not cause or contribute to the fire.

Thank you for calling Garrett Engineers, Inc. If you have any questions regarding this report, or if you need any further assistance, please contact our office.

Respectfully submitted,
GARRETT ENGINEERS, INC.

William Broadhead

In the absence of

Thomas J. Lepper
Tire and Automotive Consultant

This report and its conclusions were prepared by Thomas J. Lepper, but signed and shipped in his absence to expedite delivery.

TJL/hs

Enclosures: 26 Photographs



Photo 1. Direct rear view of the 2004 Oldsmobile Bravada.



Photo 2. Left front view of the vehicle.

I apologize for the poor quality of the photos. Photocopies of photocopies do not come out very well. USAA has the originals, and I am sure they would be willing to have good copies made should you need them.

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Photo 3. Right front view of the vehicle.

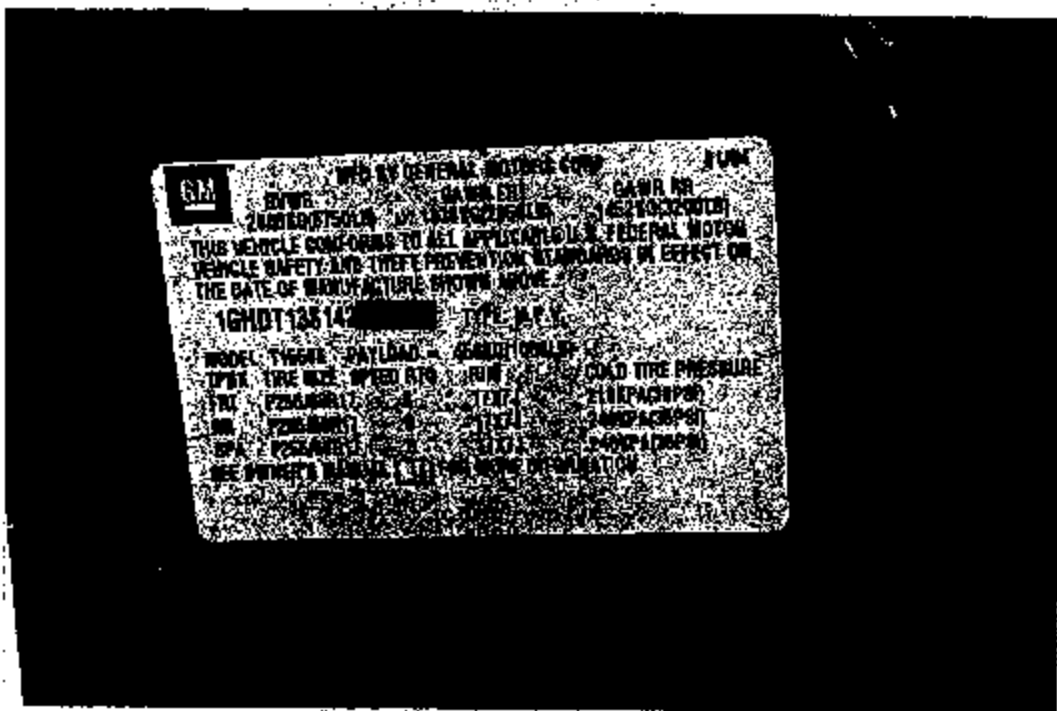


Photo 4. Vehicle Identification Number sticker



Photo 5. Interior of the vehicle as viewed through the driver's open door.



Photo 6. Fire intrusion into lower right front of the interior.

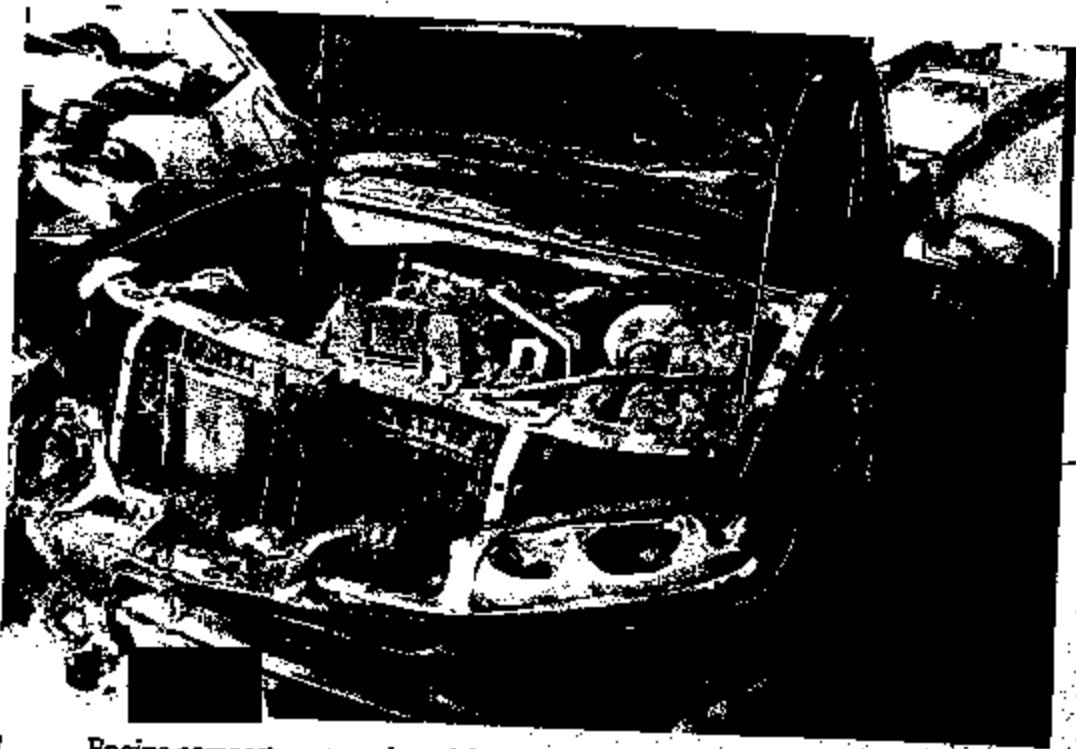


Photo 7. Engine compartment as viewed from the left.

24

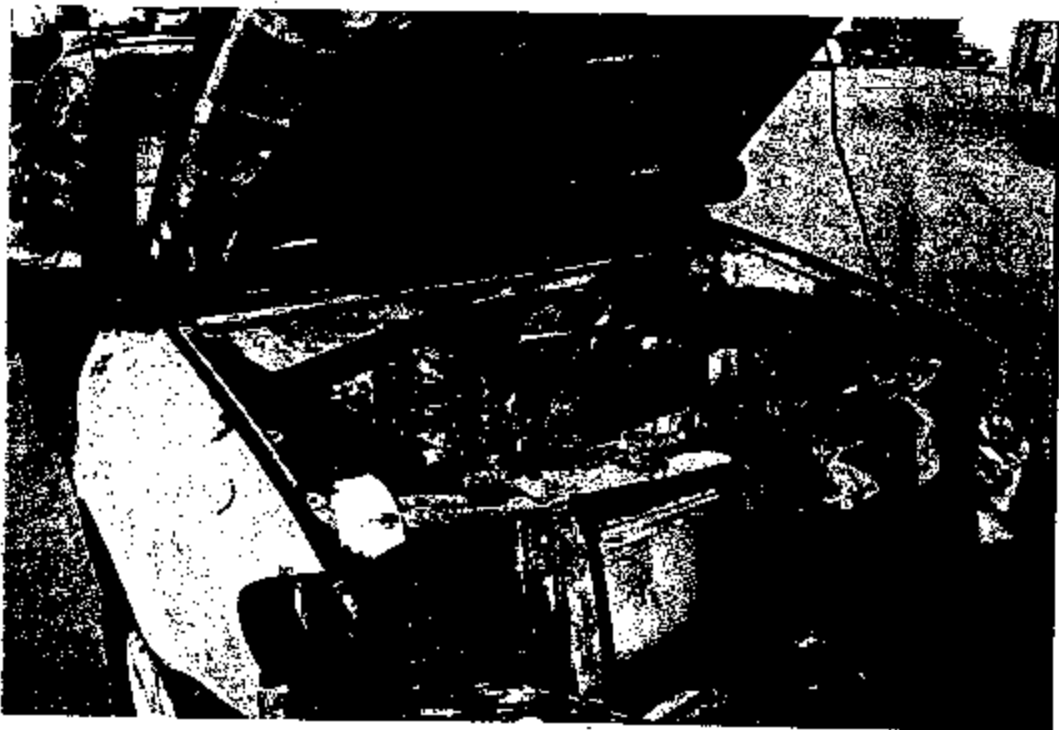


Photo 8. . . Engine compartment as viewed from the right.

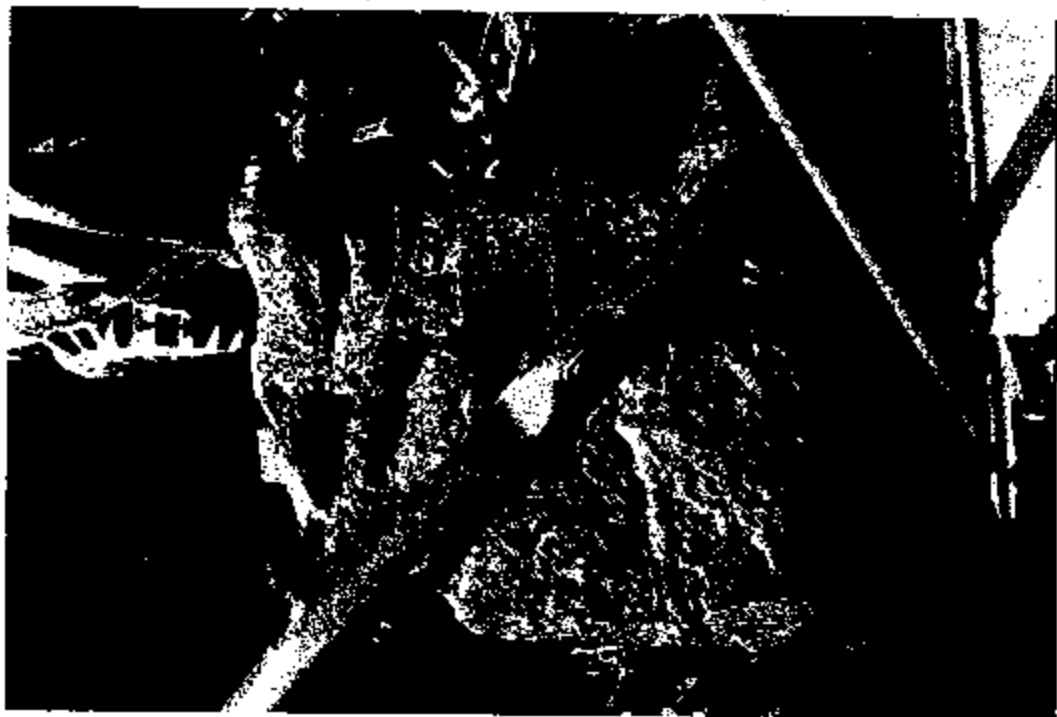


Photo 9. . . Remains of the battery.

25

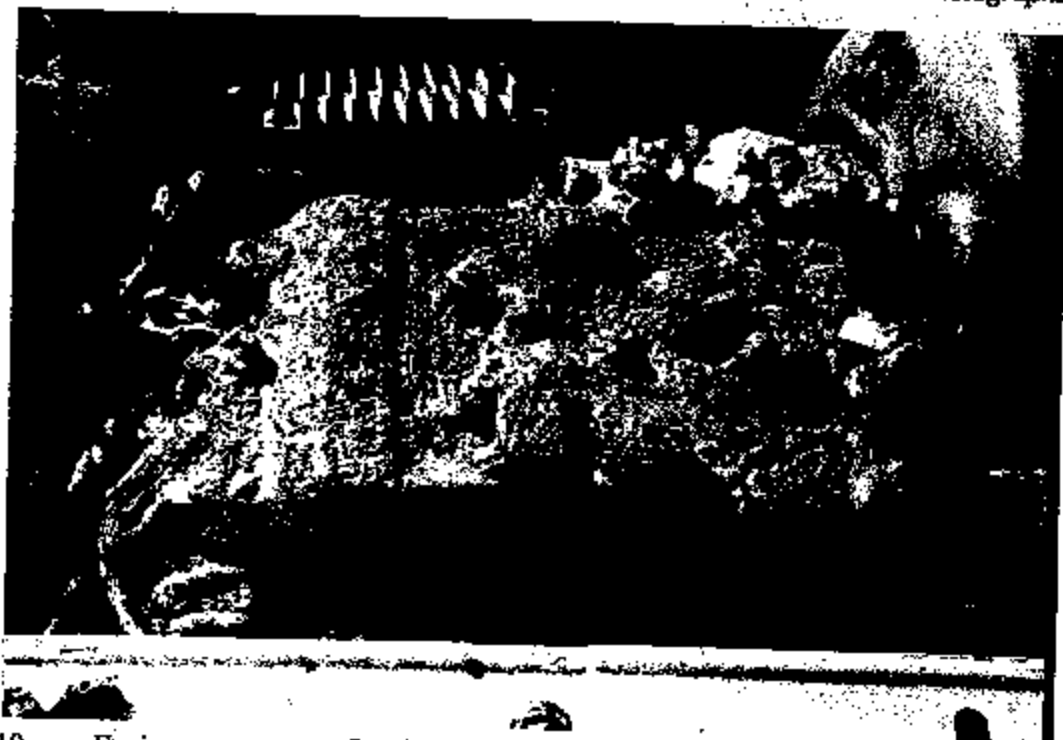


Photo 10. Engine compartment fuse box.

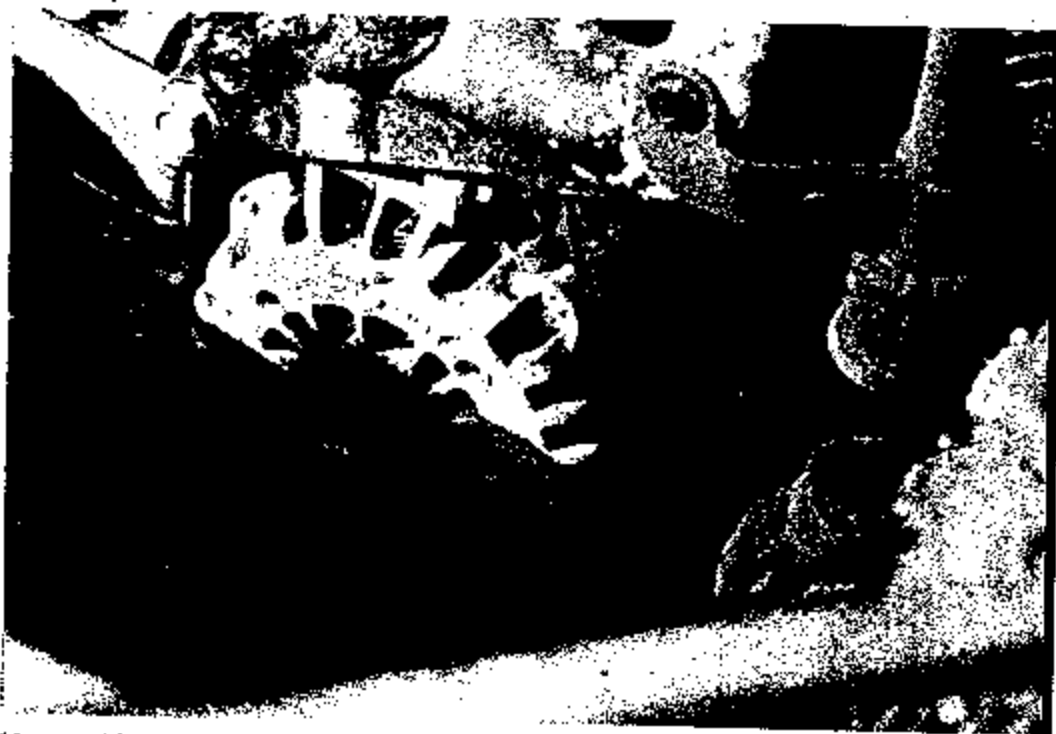


Photo 11. Alternator.



Photo 12. Fuel line connectors.

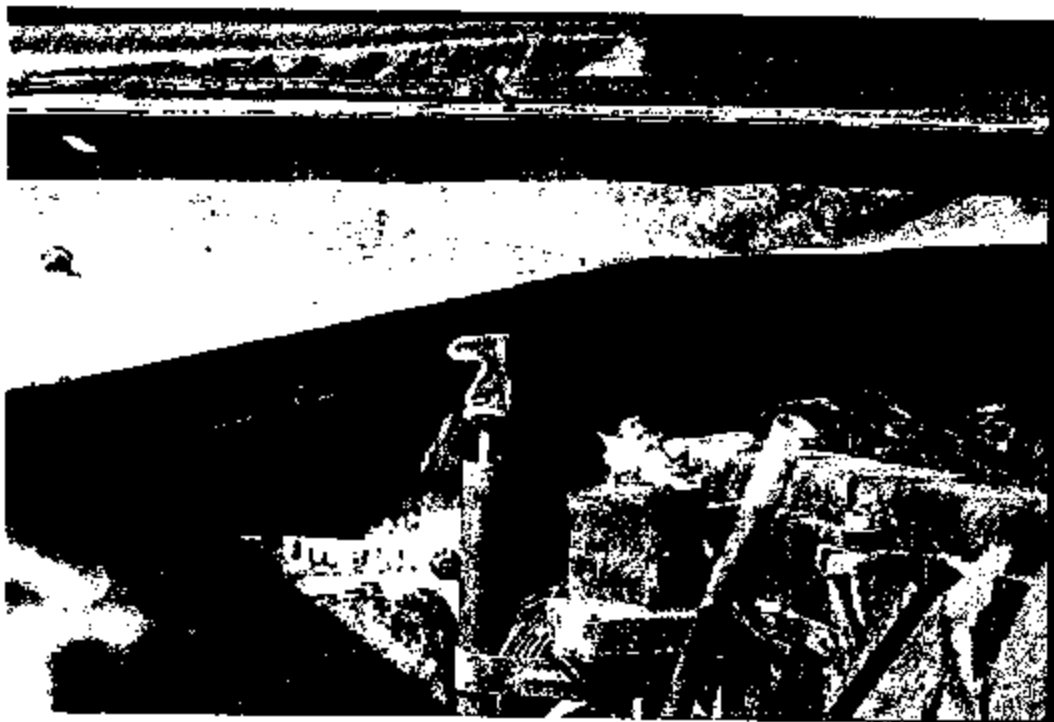


Photo 13. Automatic transmission dipstick as found.

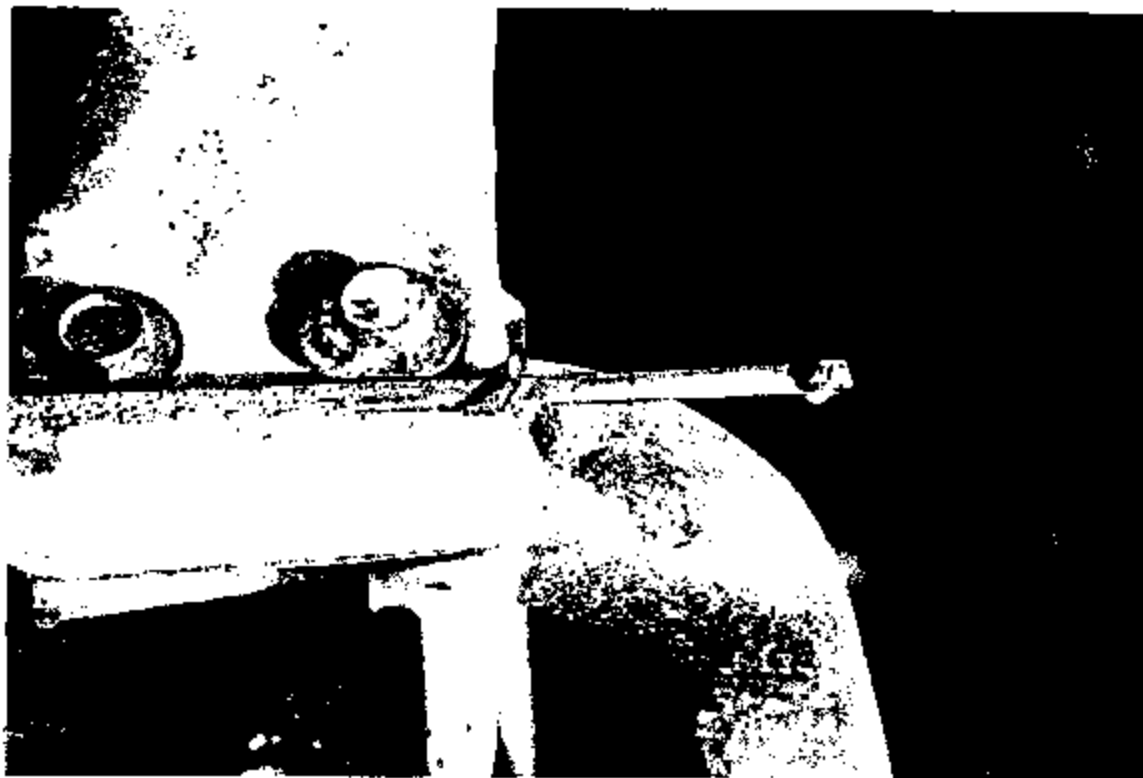


Photo 14. Automatic transmission fluid level and condition.



Photo 15. Center of the fire area.



Photo 16. Remains of the power steering pump and reservoir.



Photo 17. Power steering hose loose from the reservoir.



Photo 18. Burnt residue on the catalytic converter.

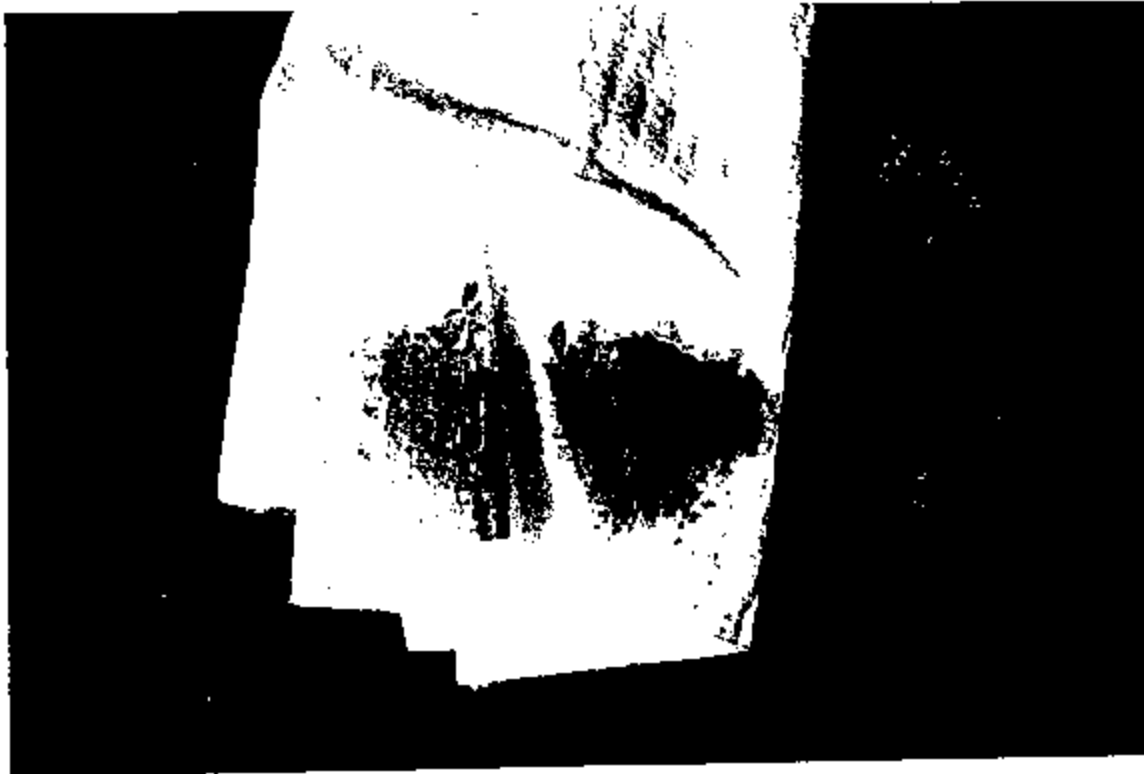


Photo 19. Fluid sample from the right side bottom of the vehicle.

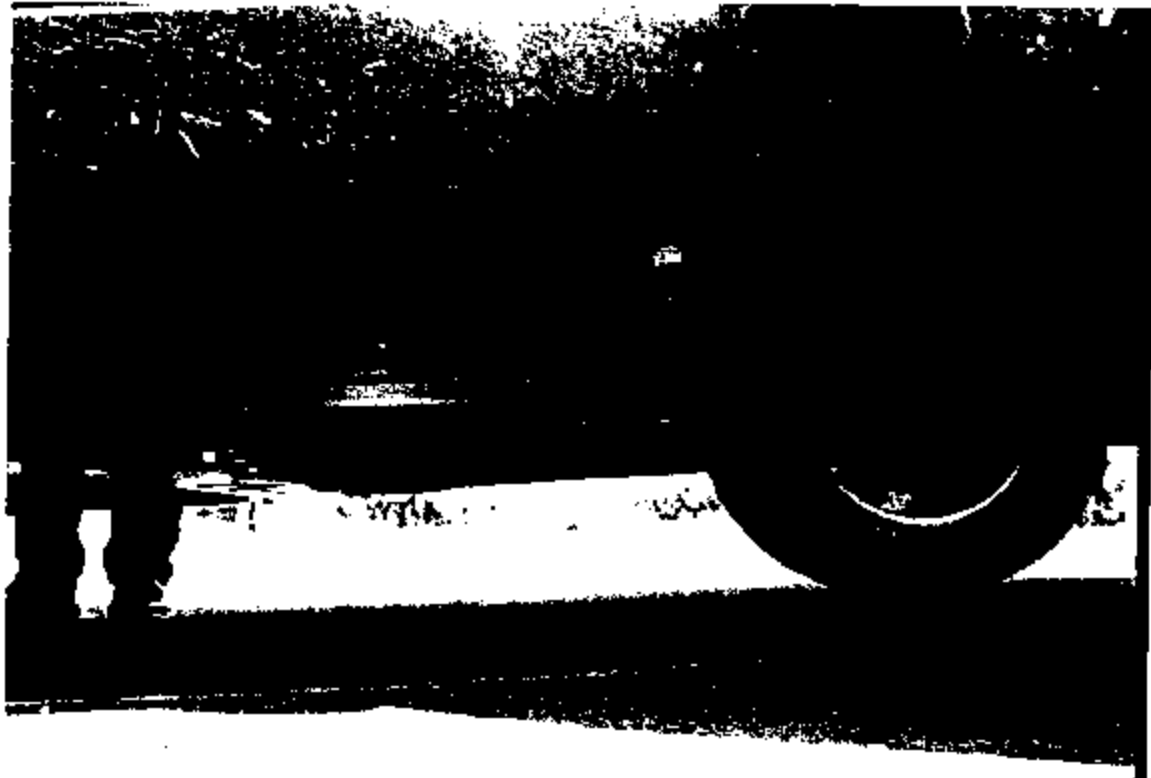


Photo 20. Power steering fluid on the right side frame rail.

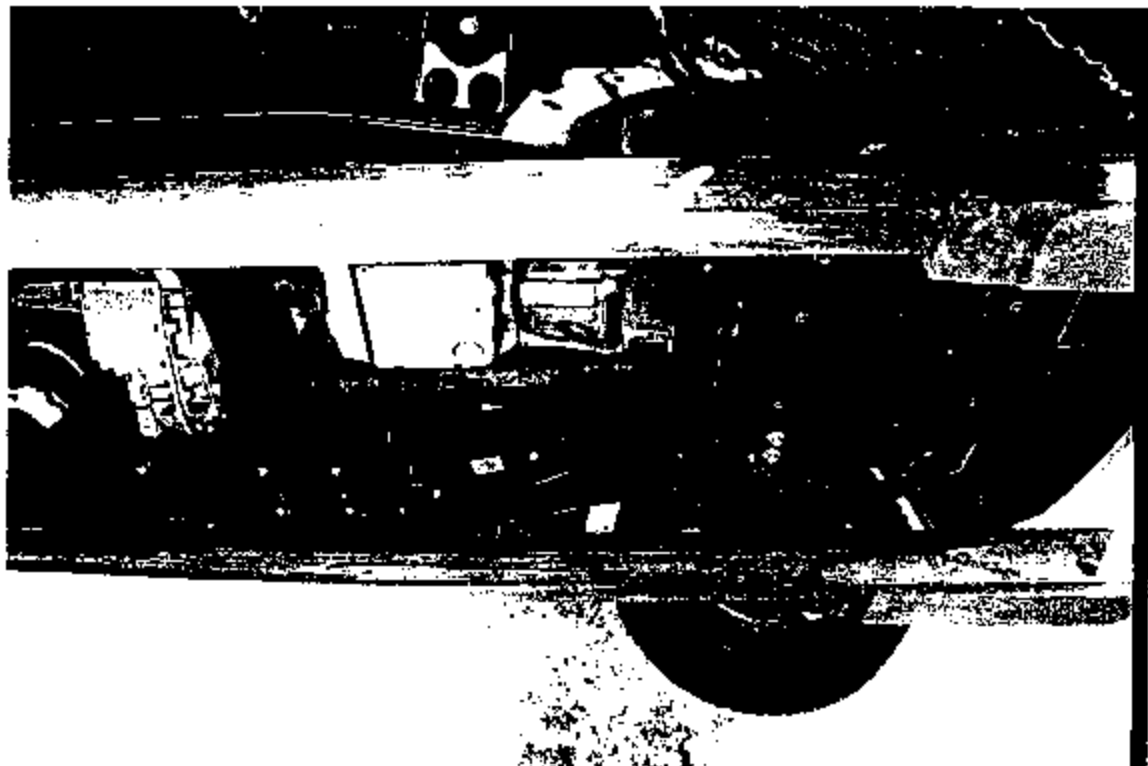


Photo 21. Underside of the engine compartment as viewed from the right.

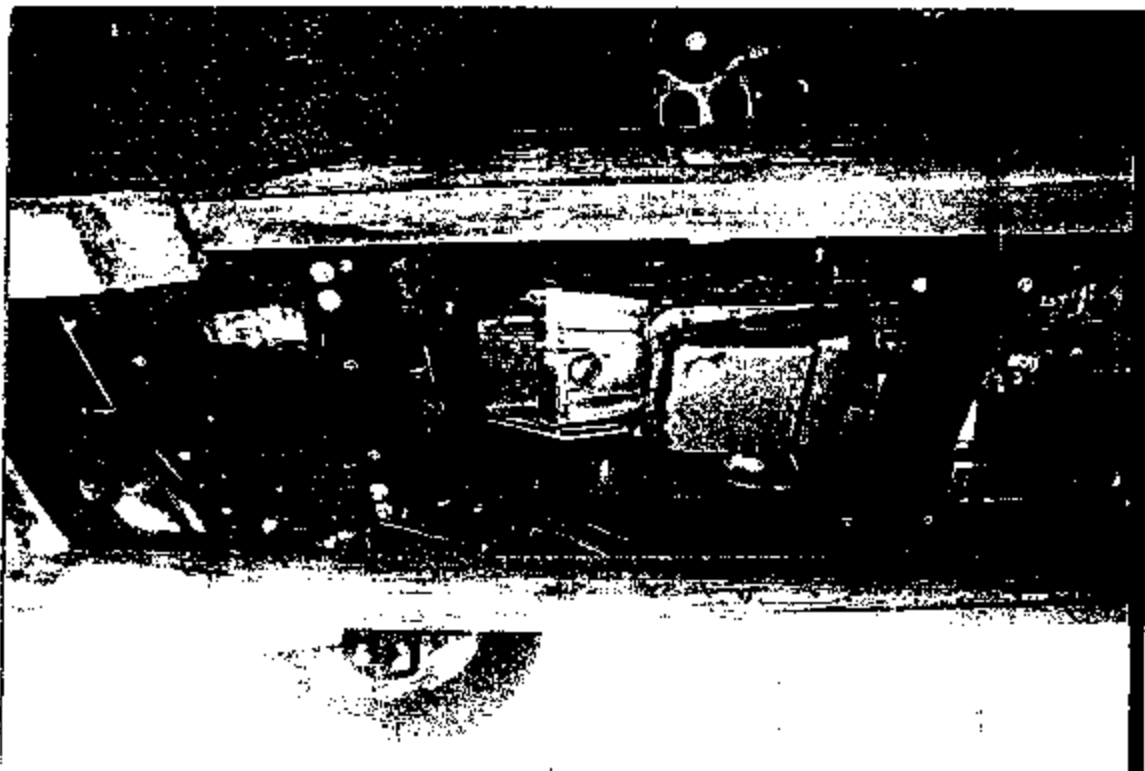


Photo 22. Underside of the engine compartment as viewed from the left.

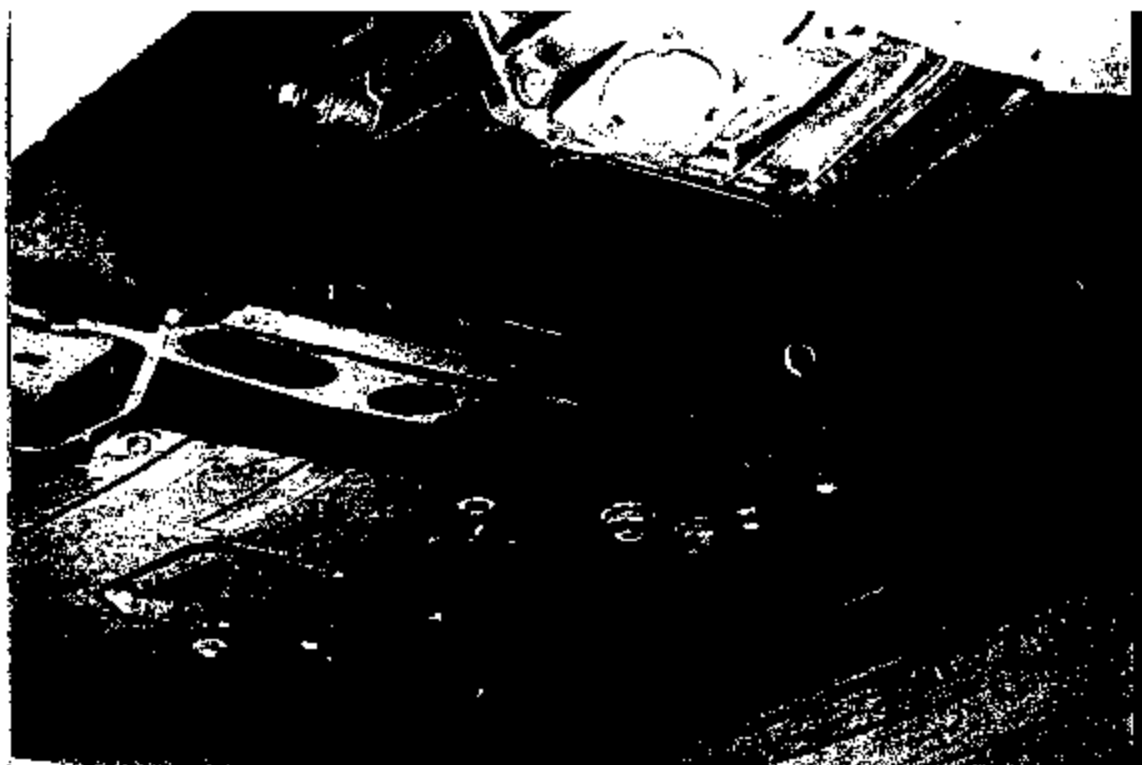


Photo 23. Right front underside of the engine compartment.

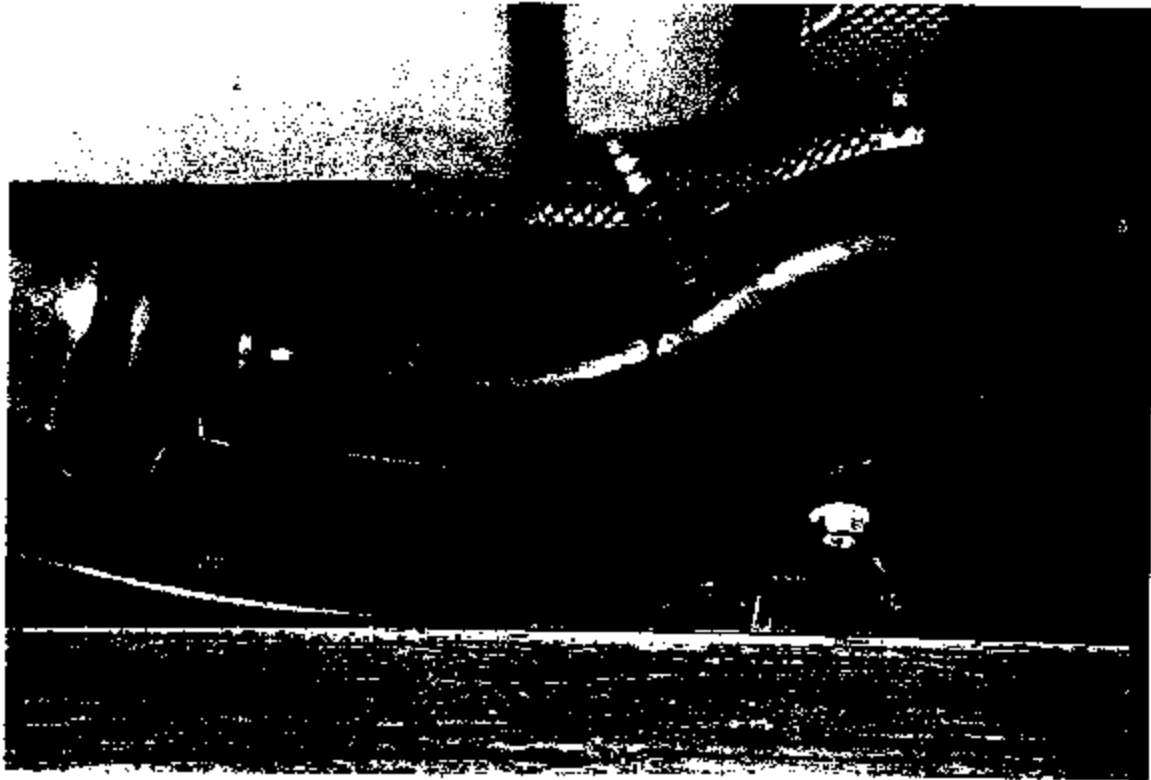


Photo 24. Power steering fluid on the exhaust pipe.



Photo 25. Power steering fluid trails on the catalytic converter.

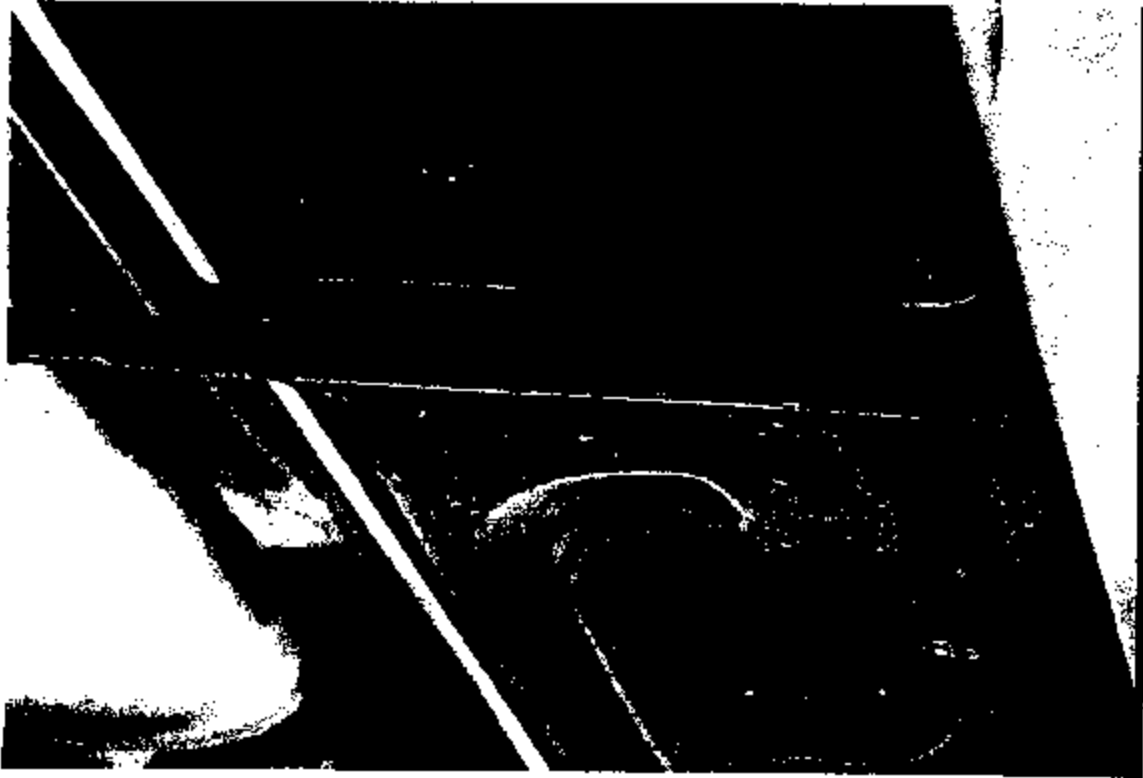


Photo 26. Power steering fluid on the right front underbody.

Claims Numbers, Contacts, etc.

U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration,
Office of Defects Investigation
NSA-10.01, 400 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590
February 10, 2005
Confirmation #10110279

Michigan Department of Attorney General,
Consumer Protection Division
P.O. Box 30213
Lansing, MI 48909
Email: cp_ocs@michigan.gov
Fax: (517) 241-3771
Complaint ID Number: cp102ea1530a
AG #200501875

California Department of Consumer Affairs
400 R. Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
February 10, 2005
Temporary Tracking #CU-05-767

New Motor Vehicle Board (California)
Consumer Mediation Services Program
1507 - 21st Street, Suite 330
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 445-1888
Fax: (916) 323-1631
Feb. 22, 2005
Email: amvb@pacbell.net
Case No.: Pending

Arbitration Certification Program
BBB AutoLine Complaints
4200 Wilson Blvd., Suite 800
Arlington, VA 22203
Complaint ID #1823708
Feb. 23, 2005
Email: gtello@cbbb.bbb.org

California Dept. of Fire
909 881-6900

Mr. G. Richard Wagoner, Jr.
Gm Chair & CEO
Mr. John Devine
Mr. Robert Lutz
General Motors Corp.
Mail Code:4820B38-A68
P.O. Box 100
100 Renaissance Center
Detroit, MI 48265-2000
GM Claim #1-281257506

Mr. Adam Jones
Customer Relationship Mgr.
1-800-231-18/41 x 57035
Mr. Stephen Barron
Customer Relationship Manager
Oldsmobile Customer Assistance Center
P.O. Box 33171
Detroit, MI 48232-5171
Email: cac#oldsmobile.com
GM Claim #1-281257506

Mr. Henry Salazar
USAA
P.O. Box 659474
San Antonio, TX 78265-9044
1-800-531-8222 x 22425
USAA Reference #501227-7104-207-8243

Mr. Chapman Morris, Jr.
William L. Morris Chevrolet & Oldsmobile
1024 W. Ventura Street
Fillmore, CA 93015
805 524-0333

Jonathan Stevens, Esq.
340 Oldenburg Lane
Norco, CA 92860

Car is presently located at:
Insurance Auto Auction (USAA)
7245 Laurel Canyon Blvd.
North Hollywood, CA 91605
818-487-2222
Stock #1020027



Mike Cox
Attorney General
Consumer Protection Division
PO Box 30213
Lansing MI 48909

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AG# 200501875
GENERAL MOTOR CORP. (DEALT WITH ADAM
JONES EXT 57005

[REDACTED]
CEDAR GLEN CA

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NEW MOTOR VEHICLE BOARD
Consumer Mediation Services Program
 1507 - 21st Street, Suite 330
 Sacramento, California 95814
 (916) 443-1888 (916) 323-1631 Fax
 E-Mail: nmvb@pacbell.net
 Website: nmvb.ca.gov

MEDIATION REQUEST FORM

COMPLAINANT NAME

CASE NO.

FIRST

MI

LAST

CITY

STATE

ZIP CODE

Cedar Glen

CA

TELEPHONE # (Home)

TELEPHONE # (Business)

FAX

Complaint is against: (Check box and fill out all sections completely)

 Selling Dealer Servicing Dealer Manufacturer/Distributor

NAME	NAME	NAME
		General Motors Corporation
ADDRESS	ADDRESS	ADDRESS
		P.O. Box 33171
		Detroit, MI 49232
		GM Claim #1-281257506
TELEPHONE #	TELEPHONE #	TELEPHONE #
		1-800-231-1841

VEHICLE (Make)	(Model)	(Year)
Oldsmobile	Bravada	2004
DATE OF PURCHASE / LEASE	VEHICLE LICENSE NO.	CURRENT MILEAGE
March 2004		5,200
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purchase <input type="checkbox"/> Lease	MILEAGE AT PURCHASE / LEASE	VEHICLE I.D. NO.
	less than 10 (?) miles	1GHTDT13S142
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Used	TYPE OF WARRANTY ON VEHICLE	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturer's <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Extended Warranty <input type="checkbox"/> No Warranty	

Have you given written notice of defects to manufacturer? Yes No

Has manufacturer (or designated agent) attempted repairs? Yes No

If yes, list repair dates: _____

COMPLAINT

Please explain the details of your complaint and the action you are seeking on the reverse side of this form, or attach a typed 1-2 page letter.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: I understand a copy of this complaint may be sent to the dealer(s), manufacturer or distributor. Sections 20 and 3000 of the California Vehicle Code make it unlawful to use a false or fictitious name or knowingly make false statement or knowingly conceal any material fact in any document filed with the New Motor Vehicle Board.

Signature

Date Feb. 22, 2005

BASIS OF COMPLAINT**Mechanical Defects:**

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frame and Body | <input type="checkbox"/> Suspension system |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engine | <input type="checkbox"/> Tires |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transmission & drive shaft | <input type="checkbox"/> Wheels |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brake system | <input type="checkbox"/> Exhaust system |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steering | <input type="checkbox"/> Inoperable accessories |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fuel system | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooling system |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Power Steering Hoses Failure | <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical system |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

Sales:

- | |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fraud |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Damage by dealer during servicing |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Extended service contract |

COMPLAINT- Explain the details of this complaint.

Details of complaint are attached. Also enclosed are substantiating documents

We had a "bumper to bumper" warranty on the car. Unfortunately, we no longer have either bumper.

We would like to be made whole - i.e., for GM to replace our car with a comparable car and, frankly, to reimburse us for the payments we have made on the car since this happened as we have had to make payments on a car we don't have.

Please sign and date on reverse side

On October 21, 2004 the engine of our 2004 Bravada - one of the "last 500" Oldsmobiles - spontaneously caught fire while driving it home. The car had approximately 5,200 miles on it; we had just purchased it in March 2004. A passing motorist yelled to my husband, "Hey mister, did you know your car's on fire!" John pulled over, and another motorist called the fire department which successfully put out the fire.

The car was towed to Crest Chevrolet in San Bernardino, CA. Our insurance company, USAA, sent a representative there and then called to advise us that the car was totaled. It was subsequently towed to USAA's holding yard in North Hollywood where it is now.

[Insurance Auto Auction; 7245 Laurel Canyon Blvd.; North Hollywood, CA 91605; their stock #1020027.]

[USAA - Mr. Henry Salazar, Total Loss Dept.; 1-800-531-8222 ext. 22425; P.O. Box 659462, San Antonio, TX 78288; Ref: 501227-7104-207-90010]

I contacted General Motors and Mr. Adam Jones [1-800-231-1841 ext. 57035] was assigned to our complaint (GM complaint #1-281257506). He was terrible about returning calls; gave us misinformation; and was otherwise very unhelpful. He did have an outside engineering company, Bill Alexander of SPX Engineering Analysis Associates (805-642-9365), inspect the car. Mr. Alexander was also present during the inspection by Mr. Thomas Lepper of Garrett Engineers, as noted on Garrett Engineers report.

[Garrett Engineers; Forensic Division; 1-800-229-3647]

Garrett Engineers was hired by our insurance company, USAA. I don't know if the inspections were done simultaneously or not; however Mr. Alexander phoned me at home to advise that he would be inspecting the car the afternoon of December 9, 2004 - the same day as Garrett, so I suspect they were.

I never received a copy of GM's SPX Engineering report. Mr. Jones at GM said he would call me on December 13. Not hearing from him, I called him on December 16, 2004 and was advised on the phone that "their inspector found that a "transmission dip stick" hadn't been secured properly, that a photo showed that the dip stick was up about an inch; that transmission fluid was more flammable than gasoline and would have easily and quickly ignited, and he was referring us back to our insurance company. I asked Mr. Jones for a copy of the engineering report. He said that it was privileged information and he would not send it to me; that if I wanted an engineering report, I could hire my own engineer and pay for my own report (and that is pretty much the attitude Mr. Jones had with me from our first conversation to our last). He then asked me if I wanted a written statement of GM denying any fault and I said yes.

I received a letter from GM dated December 20, 2004 only stating that "none of the available data suggests that the product allegation has any merit...". No signature; just "General Motors Corporation" typed at the end of the letter. And no mention of a problem with the transmission fluid dip stick.

On the other hand, I received a copy of the full report by Garrett Engineers (a copy of which is enclosed). Its conclusion states: "The cause and origin of the fire was a failure of a POWER STEERING HOSE (emphasis added) in the lower right of the engine compartment. The failed

hose sprayed power steering fluid on the right side exhaust manifold and the catalytic converter where it was ignited by a spark from the spark plugs and/or heat from the catalytic converter."

The report further states, "NEITHER THE AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION OR ITS FLUID CAUSED OR CONTRIBUTED TO THE FIRE (emphasis added). The automatic transmission fluid was found at the proper level. The automatic transmission fluid cooler lines were intact."

In addition the Garrett report states, "The right underside of the vehicle was covered with POWER STEERING FLUID (emphasis added). A small sample was wiped off on a paper towel (see photo 19). The power steering fluid reservoir was melted downward from the top. The power steering hoses in the lower right of the engine compartment were damaged. Power steering fluid spray patterns were found beneath the right side of the engine compartment and along the front of the catalytic converter. The fire ignited quickly after the power steering fluid leak began as the power steering pump still turned freely. The power steering hose was loose but its plastic nipple had been melted off of the power steering reservoir."

Near the end the report states "No other fire causes or contributors were found. No signs of vandalism or the use of an incendiary material were found in the vehicle."

So...how can two engineers inspecting the same car at the same time presumably come up with two different causes of fire? And the GM version has not been substantiated to us.

My husband and I considered settling with our insurance company -- but...

--The car is a collector's edition and cost about \$40,000; we had it for 7 months and put 5,200 miles on it; we financed it for 5 years; USAA would pay about \$28,500 but we're out of pocket \$6,000--and still have no replacement car. My husband (who was just 68 this month—I'll be 60) is driving MY 2003 Bravada for which I am paying car payments on. Is something wrong here???

Then I had the oil changed on my car -- a 2003 Oldsmobile Bravada - and told the service technician what had happened to the 2004 and what GM said was the problem about the dip stick; he was astounded. I asked him to show me how to secure a dip stick -- he said you don't - it's either up or down. That's when I decided against settling with the insurance company and trying to get GM to do something.

I have filed complaints with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Michigan Department of Attorney General, Consumer Protection Division and the California Department of Consumer Affairs, and have written to GM's corporate officers. I hope that someone will "encourage" GM to live up to their responsibilities. My husband could have been killed; the fire could have started another forest fire (we live in the San Bernardino Mountains of Southern California and went through the "Old Fire" a year ago); we have bought Oldsmobiles for about 40 years -- not only the 2004 and 2003 Bravadas, but a 2001, 2000, 1998 and 1997 Bravada; Auroras; Toronado; Cutless Sierra; Olds 98; etc., and most of them from the same dealer.

Customer loyalty doesn't seem to matter too much to GM. Thank you for anything you can do.

[REDACTED]

From: BBB COMPLAINTS ONLINE [webwork@mail.bbb.org]
Sent: Wednesday, February 23, 2005 9:29 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Online Complaint 1823708 for Oldsmobile , ID 24



Fairness in the Marketplace

The following complaint was submitted on 2/23/2005 12:29:08 PM :
Complaint ID : 1823708

Company : Oldsmobile
State : California
Model : Bravada
VIN : 1GHDT13S142 [REDACTED]
Year : 2004
Transmission : Automatic
Mileage : 5200
First Repair Date : October,21,2004
Owner Possession : False
Lease Company Name : GMAC
Phone :
Accident Date : October,21,2004
Damage Description : Car totaled due to spontaneous engine fire

Servicing Dealer : None
City :
State : Select
Selling Dealer : William L. Morris Olds & Che
State : CA (California)US
City : Fillmore
Country : USA
Name On Vehicle Title : [REDACTED]
Leased As : New
Vehicle Titled To : Individual
Lease Date : March,15,2004
Number of Vehicles Owned : 0
Vehicle Titled to: Individual
Problem Description. Current vehicle problems are preceded by an *.

*Car totaled due to spontaneous engine fire GM claims was a transmission dip stick wasn't secure
*- that transmission fluid caused fire Engineering report states fire cause by power steering
*hose that failed - and no other cause Transmission fluid found to be at proper level Power

Steering hose failed; PS fluid all over right side of
*engine & underbody, etc.

Desired Outcome : Replace "last of the 500 Oldsmobile" car with a comparable car; reimburse
for car payments made since Oct. 2004 for no car.

CONSUMER INFORMATION

Title : Mrs
First Name : [REDACTED]
Last Name : [REDACTED]
Middle Name : [REDACTED]
Suffix :
Address1 : [REDACTED]
Address2 :
City : Cedar Glen
State : CA
Zip1 : [REDACTED]
Zip2 : [REDACTED]
Country : USA
DayPhone : [REDACTED]
DayPhoneExtension :
EveningPhone : [REDACTED]
EveningPhoneExtension :
Fax : [REDACTED]
Ema : [REDACTED]

The bureau that will handle your complaint is:
BBB AutoLine Complaints
4200 Wilson Blvd., Suite 800
Arlington, VA 22203 -
Email : gtello@cbbb.bbb.org

[California Home](#)

Thursday, February 10, 2005



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Thank you! DCA's General Online Complaint Form

Thank You for Submitting Your Complaint Online

Your complaint has been received by the:
Consumer Relations Unit
400 R Street, Suite 2000
Sacramento, CA 95814
(800) 952-5210

[VIEW YOUR COMPLAINT](#)

[PRINT YOUR COMPLAINT](#)

- Helpful Consumer Sites**
- [DCA Boards/Bureaus](#)
 - [State Government](#)
 - [Federal Government](#)
 - [Consumer Help](#)

A representative will review the information you provided and send you a letter with a formal complaint number, name and telephone number of the representative assigned to assist you with your complaint, and further instructions on where to send copies of documents you may have to support your allegations.

CA-05-767

Meanwhile, please reference your temporary Online Tracking Number **CU-05-767** when contacting us in regard to your complaint. This number constitutes official receipt of your complaint from our agency. If you do not hear from the above agency in a reasonable amount of time, please call the telephone number above.

The online complaint information you are sending us starts the complaint process. To successfully complete the next phases of the complaint process, you will need to exchange more information with us, most often by phone or mail.

Please write down the phone number and Online Tracking Number we've provided.

**CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
CONSUMER AFFAIRS**
400 R Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
(800) 952-5210
(916) 445-1254

TDD: (916) 322-1700
email: dca@dca.ca.gov

The Department of Consumer Affairs has designed a few short survey questions to help improve our online services and the consumer information we provide to you.

To participate in our online survey [click here](#). Participating in the survey will not effect your complaint.

If you do not wish to participate in our online survey, please choose your destination from the navigational items on the left side of this page.

Business/Professional Name: General Motors Corporation

License Number:

Address (Number and Street): P.O. Box 33171

City, State Zip: Detroit, MI 48232-5171

Telephone Number: (800) 231-1841

Business / Professional E-mail Address:

Person whom you dealt with: Adam Jones (ext. 57035)

Online Tracking Number: CU-05-787, 2/10/05 2:38:36 PM

Complaint Description: The engine of our 2004 Oldsmobile Bravada 'one of the last 500' spontaneously caught fire while driving home on CA 18 (San Bernardino Mtns.). It was totaled. Contacted GM-Adam Jones verbally said that a picture taken by their engineer investigator shows a transmission fluid dip stick not secured and that caused the fire. Their written reply only said 'none of the available data suggests that the product allegation has any merit. The engineer hired by USAA (and I have the full report) also shows a picture of the referenced dip stick; however, the report states 'The cause and origins of the fire was a failure of a power steering hose in the lower right of the engine compartment. The failed hose sprayed power steering fluid on the right side exhaust manifold and the catalytic converter where it was ignited by a spark from the spark plugs and/or heat from the catalytic converter.' It further states that power steering fluid was found all over the car and 'No other fire causes or contributors were found. No signs of vandalism or the use of an incendiary material were found in the vehicle.' When I called Adam Jones after finding this out, he never called me back. I also emailed GM and didn't receive a reply to my last email (the others just referred me to Jones)

Purchase/Incident Date: 10/21/2004

Resolution Wanted: Make us whole again. We are paying for a \$40,000 car we don't have (it was totaled). There's a \$8,000 difference between the loan balance & what the insurance co. will pay. GM should give us a comparable car (this one had 5,200 miles on it).

List of Supporting Documents: Report from Garrett Engineers, Inc.; Letter of decline from GM; copy of my online complaint to NHTS

Have I filed this complaint before: Yes

Agency Information: NHTSA; Office of Defects Investigation; filed online at www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov; ODI Number is 10110279

Name: [REDACTED]

Address (Number and Street): mail to [REDACTED]

City, State Zip: Cedar Glen, CA [REDACTED]

Daytime Telephone Number: [REDACTED]

E-mail Address: [REDACTED]

REPORT YOUR COMPLAINT

I hereby certify under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that, to the best of my knowledge, all of