



Hightstown Police Department

415A Mercer Street

Hightstown, New Jersey 08520

Phone: (609) 448-1234 ~ Fax: (609) 443-0310 ~ email: police@hightstownpd.org

Frank Gendron

Chief of Police

[REDACTED]

NHTSA
Office of Defect Investigation Team
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
West Building
Washington, DC 20590

To Whom It May Concern:

On this date, [REDACTED], my agency responded to a reported vehicle fire. Upon arrival, smoke and flames were billowing from the trunk of the vehicle; an investigation to the cause of the fire resulted in the matter being classified as accidental due to an electrical issue. The vehicle in question was a 2010, Dodge Challenger, two (2) door, with VIN# [REDACTED].

A further investigation revealed that the battery for the vehicle is located in the trunk, within a well, which has no safety cover. The fire was started by a metal, vice grip, which was not secured in the truck of the vehicle, finding its way into the well containing the battery, and connected with the positive terminal of the battery, which created an arc; the arc resulted in the vice grip being welded to wires/terminal of the battery, facilitating the conduction of heat, resulting in a fire.

I believe this to be a serious safety issue and vehicles with the battery located in the trunk space/area should be required to have a safety cover over the battery and its components, thwarting items interfering with connections and causing a fire, and potential power disruption, which may result in vehicle collisions, damage to property, and potential for injury and/or death. I am hopeful that your department may investigate this concern further. My research of operating manuals for Dodge vehicles containing a battery in the trunk resulted in no safety covers for any Dodge containing the battery in the trunk of the vehicle.

I have enclosed a copy of the investigative report, with owner information, along with photographs I took at the scene. I am hopeful this will assist in your investigation. If you require additional information, or wish to discuss my concerns further, please do not hesitate to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]

Sgt. Benjamin L. Miller
Hightstown PD
(P) 609-448-1234 x 508
(E) bmiller@hightstownpd.org



Hightstown Police Department

415A Mercer Street, Hightstown, NJ 08520

Phone: 609-448-1234 Fax: 609-443-0310 Mun. Code: 1104

Investigation Report



Incident Details:

Case Number	Time Reported	Date Reported	Time Occurred	Date Occurred	Occurrence Between Date / Time of	Time Occurred	Date Occurred	911	Completed
[REDACTED]	07:26	[REDACTED]	07:26	09/21/22				X	

Incident Type:

Fire

Incident Location:

Street # Street Name Intersection / Cross Street of:

Business / Common Location Name

Contact Information: Victim Suspect Complainant Witness Driver Arrest Patient Missing Location Other

Code	Contact Name #1	MI	Suffix	Age	Sex	Race	DOB	SSN
C	[REDACTED]	L		[REDACTED]	F	1B		
Address						Home Phone	Cell Phone	
[REDACTED], Hightstown, NJ [REDACTED]						[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	
Code	Contact Name #2	MI	Suffix	Age	Sex	Race	DOB	SSN
D1	[REDACTED]	E		[REDACTED]	M	1A		
Address						Home Phone	Cell Phone	
[REDACTED], Hightstown, NJ [REDACTED]							[REDACTED]	
Code	Contact Name #3	MI	Suffix	Age	Sex	Race	DOB	SSN
Z1	[REDACTED]	F		[REDACTED]	M	1A		
Address						Home Phone	Cell Phone	
[REDACTED], Hightstown, NJ [REDACTED]						[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	
Code	Contact Name #4	MI	Suffix	Age	Sex	Race	DOB	SSN
Address						Home Phone	Cell Phone	

Property Information

Value of Stolen Property	Currency	Jewelry	Furs	Clothing	Auto	Misc.	Total
Value of Stolen Property Recovered							

Automobile Information:

1	Vehicle Code	Year	Make	Body Type	Color	State	VIN
	Veh. 1		Dodge	4 Dr.	Blk	NJ	[REDACTED]
2							
3							
4							

Narrative:

On Wednesday, [REDACTED] at approximately 07:30 hours, I was dispatched to the area of the [REDACTED] for a report of smoke emanating from a parked vehicle.

Upon arrival, I located a black Dodge Challenger (NJ: [REDACTED]) on [REDACTED] stopped in the street (northbound) with fire and smoke coming from the trunk area of the vehicle. I contacted police dispatch and confirmed the vehicle fire. Upon exiting my patrol vehicle #4, I grabbed a fire extinguisher to extinguish the flames that were coming from underneath the trunk. Sgt Miller arrived on location to assist with traffic and closed off [REDACTED] at the [REDACTED] entrance. Smoke from the trunk

Officer of Record: Date: Other Reports Filed: Reviewed By:

Ptl. Kenneth Larsen 1122	09/21/22	MVA Arrest DV DWI DWIQ Tow SD CI TRO SHA Prop. Evdn UOF Prst Supp Juv Bias Pris	
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Narrative Continued (Page 2)

Case Number

and rear seating area began to intensify as the Hightstown Fire Department and Robbinsville EMS arrived on location. The trunk area of the vehicle was propped open by HFD and the fire was extinguished with water. After further investigation, a pair of loose pliers that were in the trunk had grounded itself to the vehicle's battery, causing the vehicle fire (see attached pics). The vehicle sustained extensive smoke/fire and water damage to the rear seating and trunk area. The driver, [REDACTED] made arrangements to have the vehicle towed to City Auto for further body work and vehicle maintenance.

Officer of Record:

Date:

Ptl. Kenneth Larsen 1122



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Case Management for 22-11291



Incident Time	Incident Date	Time Reported	Date Reported
07:26		07:26	

Incident Type

Fire

Officer of Record

Ptl. Kenneth Larsen 1122

Street # Street Name

Apt. #

Academy Street

Operations / Investigation Report...X

Arrest Report.....

NJ Crash Report.....

D.V. Offense Report.....

Property Report.....

Biased Incident Report.....

Evidence Report.....

Use of Force Report.....

Vehicular Pursuit Report.....

DWI Report.....

DWI Questionnaire.....

DWI Last Drink Location Report.....

DWI Potential Liability Report.....

DWI Implied Consent.....

Stationhouse Adjustment.....

Juvenile Complaint.....

Short Term Custody Report.....

MV Summonses Issued.....

Prisoner Log.....

Medical Examiner Report.....

Towed Vehicle Report.....

Supplemental Report(s).....

Street Gang Incident Report(s).....

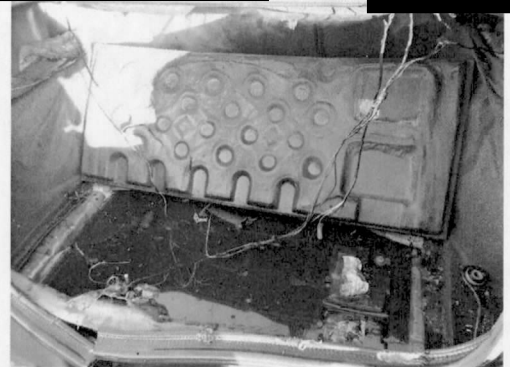
Detective Assigned

Case Status



Subject / Description

Subject DOB



Subject / Description

Subject DOB



Subject / Description

Subject DOB



Subject / Description

Subject DOB



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Photo Record



		Time	Incident Type
[REDACTED]		07:26	Fire



Officer	Subject / Description of Evidence
Ptl. Kenneth Larsen 1122	[REDACTED]



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		07:26	Fire



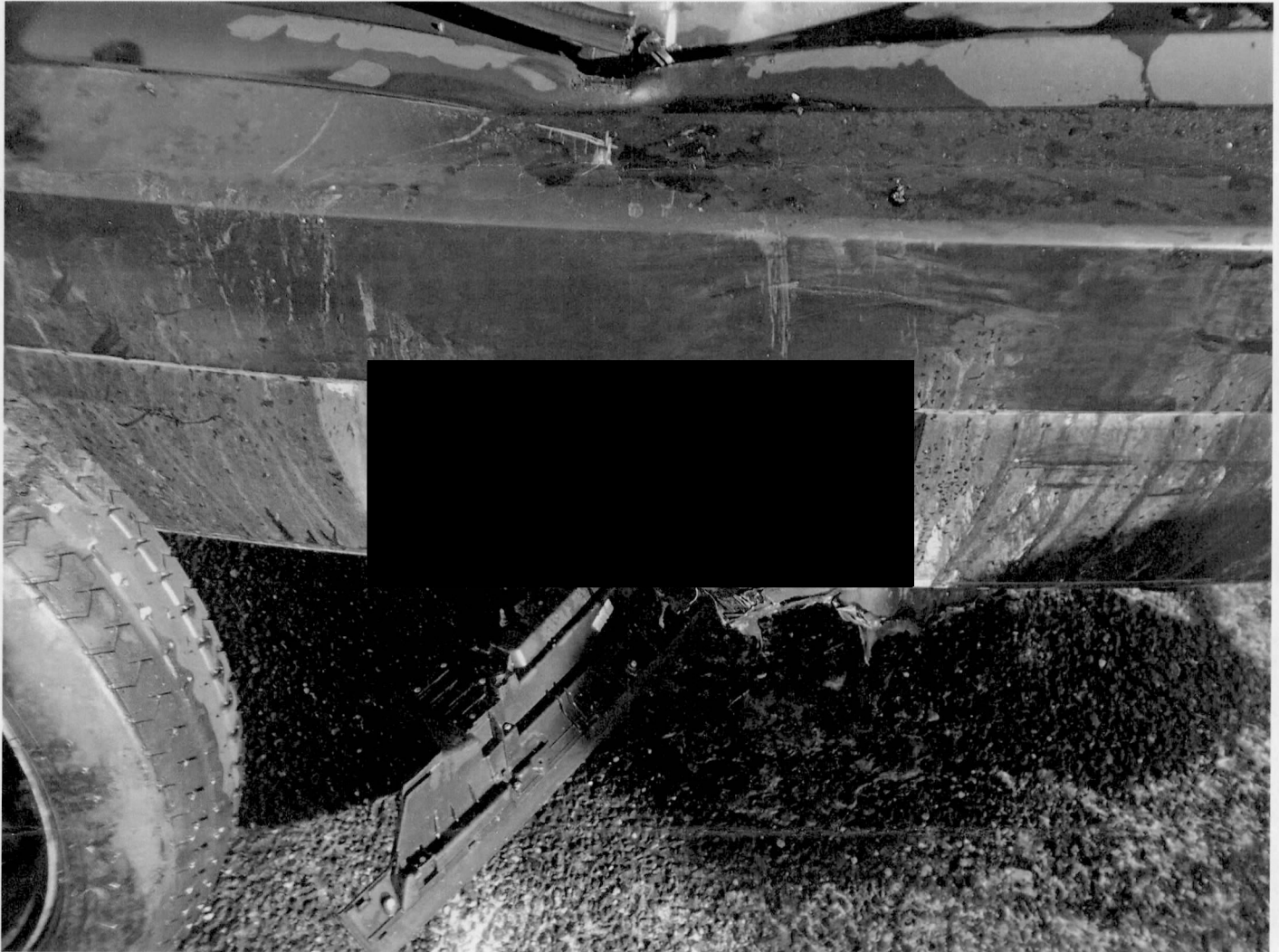
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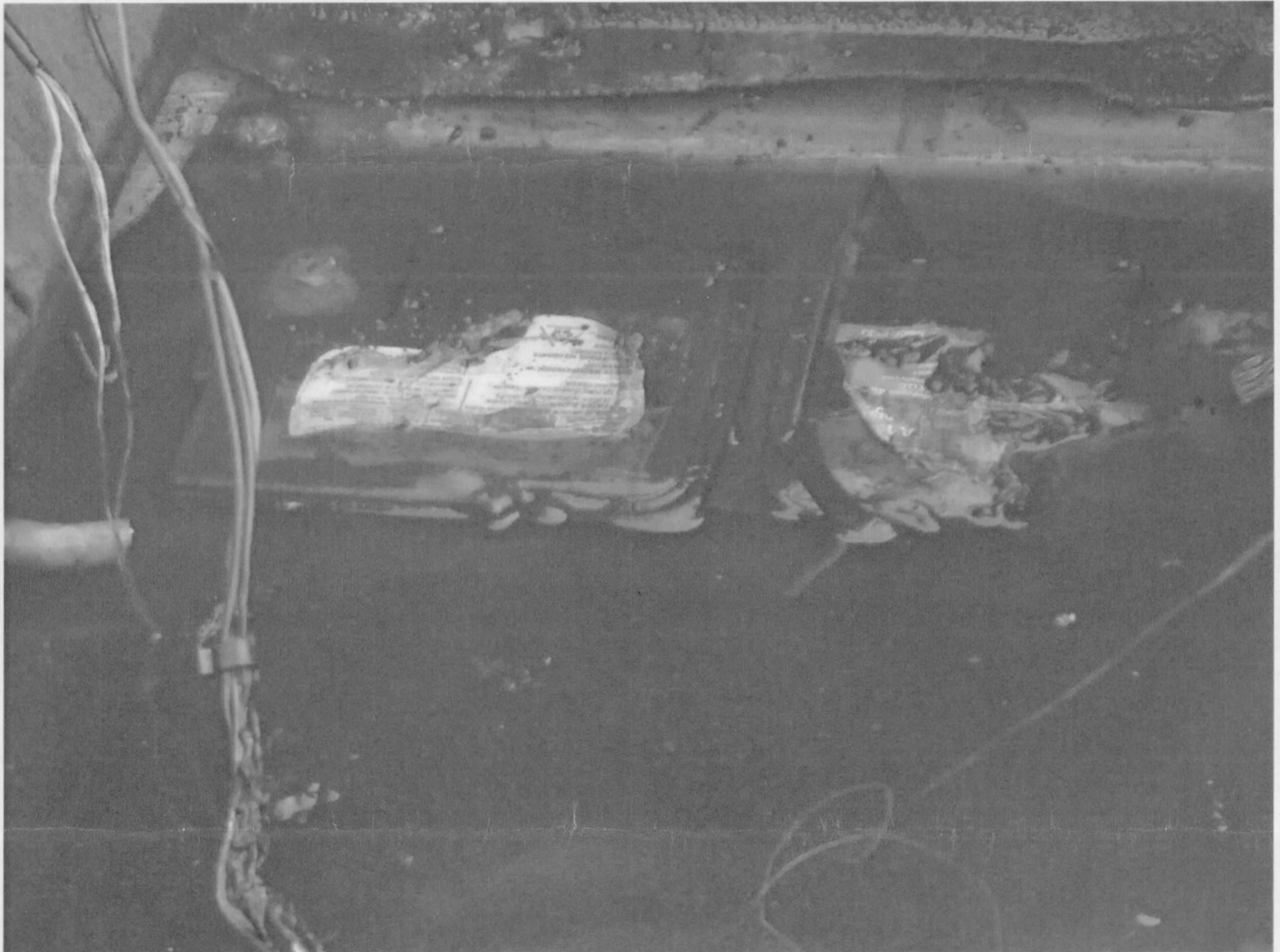
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09/21/2022

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To Protect and To Serve