

 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Part 475</b> NATIONAL SAFETY HOTLINE <b>VEHICLE OWNER'S QUESTIONNAIRE</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">NATIONWIDE 1-800-424-9393 DC METRO AREA 202-366-0123</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FOR AGENCY USE ONLY</b></p> <p>DATE RECEIVED <b>RECEIVED</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>00 FEB 26 AM 8:26</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OFFICE DEFECTS INVESTIGATION</b></p> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: 24pt;"><b>551077</b></p> <p>REFERENCE NO. _____</p> <p>DAY TIME TELEPHONE NO. (AREA _____) _____</p>
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**OWNER INFORMATION (TYPE OR PRINT)**

NAME and ADDRESS: [REDACTED] **COPIED**

Do you authorize NHTSA to provide a copy of this report to the manufacturer of your vehicle? YES  NO

In the absence of an authorization, NHTSA WILL NOT provide your name or address to the vehicle manufacturer.

SIGNATURE OF [REDACTED] DATE **2-15-00**

**VEHICLE INFORMATION**

VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NO. <b>146DW527 XPR19305</b>	VEHICLE MAKE <b>CADILLAC</b>	VEHICLE MODEL <b>FLEETWOOD</b>	MODEL YEAR <b>1993</b>
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\*LOCATED AT BOTTOM OF WINDSHIELD ON DRIVER'S SIDE

CURRENT ODOMETER READING <b>77860</b>	DATE PURCHASED <b>6-93</b>	DEALER'S NAME, CITY & STATE <b>KEN BATCHELOR SAN ANTONIO TX</b>	ENGINE SIZE (CID/CYL) <b>5.7L</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> TURBO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DIESEL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GAS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FUEL INJECTN
TRANSMISSION TYPE <input type="checkbox"/> MANUAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AUTOMATIC	ANTILOCK BRAKES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	RESTRAINT SYSTEM <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DRIVERSIDE AIRBAG <input type="checkbox"/> MOTORBELT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PASSENGERSIDE AIRBAG <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3-POINT BELT <input type="checkbox"/> 2-POINT BELT	CRUISE CONTROL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	DRIVE TRAIN <input type="checkbox"/> FRONT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REAR <input type="checkbox"/> 4-WHEEL

**FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION (REPORT TIRE INFORMATION ON BACK)**

COMPONENT <b>SHOULDER BELT RETRACTOR</b>	PART NAME(S) <b>SEAT BELT ASSY.</b>	LOCATION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LEFT FRONT <input type="checkbox"/> RIGHT REAR	FAILED PART(S) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL <input type="checkbox"/> REPLACEMENT
NO. OF FAILURES <b>1-TOTAL</b>	DATE(S) OF FAILURE(S) <b>12-99</b>	MANUFACTURER CONTACTED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	NHTSA PREVIOUSLY CONTACTED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	MILEAGE AT FAILURE(S) <b>77823</b>		
	VEHICLE SPEED AT FAILURE(S) <b>-0-</b>		

**APPLICABLE ACCIDENT INFORMATION**

ACCIDENT <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	FIRE <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	NUMBER PERSONS INJURED <b>0</b>	NUMBER OF FATALITIES <b>0</b>	PROPERTY DAMAGE ESTS <b>NO</b>	POLICE REPORTED <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO
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**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF FAILURE(S), ACCIDENT(S), INJURY(IES)**

**SEE ATTACHED TYPED NARRATIVE**

**CONTINUE ON BACK IF NEEDED**

The Privacy Act of 1974 Public Law 93-579  
This information is requested pursuant to authority vested in the National Highway Traffic Safety Act and subsequent amendments. You are under no obligation to respond to this questionnaire. Your response may be used to assist the NHTSA in determining whether a manufacturer should take appropriate action to correct a safety defect. If the NHTSA proceeds with administrative enforcement or litigation against a manufacturer, your response, or a statistical summary thereof, may be used in support of the agency's action.

### Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire

Accompanying Narrative Re: Seat belt safety deficiency reported by  
Col. [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], TX 75624, PH: (800) 268-4663

Vehicle Identification Number: 1G6DW527 XPR19305

Part that failed: Driver's side shoulder belt retractor, a component of the seat belt assembly part number 12516403.

#### Narrative

December 1999 As I entered the vehicle, I pulled on the shoulder belt to provide adequate slack to secure the buckle. (I have never jerked on it.) After fastening the buckle, the shoulder belt would not retract. I pulled on the belt again, fully expecting it to retract properly. *Instead, it completely unwound and wouldn't retract a fraction of an inch!*

I removed the left-hand center pillar trim and saw the rewind spring had dislodged from a slot and was partially protruding from a hole in a white plastic cap. (See photos #1 and #2.)

At the bottom of the pillar, I could see a black disk, about the diameter of a quarter, which I later recovered. (It is shown in the three photos attached.) Apparently, it was intended to hold the rewind spring in place in the retractor. However, only friction held the cover in its intended position.

3 January 2000 I had the GM dealer in Kerrville, TX (Atkinson Motors) order a new seat belt assembly. Before installation, I placed duct tape over the plastic cover to assure it would be held in place thereby, perhaps, preventing another failure. I kept the inoperative seat belt assembly and, on examination, found that the lap belt retractor mechanism had a solid plastic cover over the rewind spring and was secured by four screws, two of which are visible in photo #3.

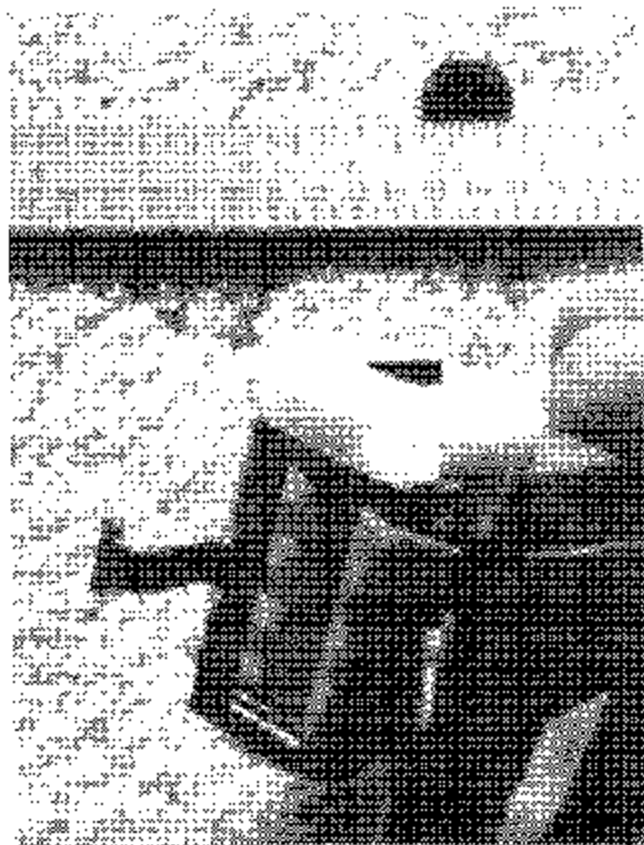
6 January 2000 Curious about the reliability of the passenger side seat belt assembly, I removed the right-hand side center pillar trim. I found not a plastic disk covering the hole over the rewind spring but; *I found a piece of duct tape covered the hole!!!* (That piece of duct tape is attached to the NHTSA questionnaire. The imprint of the hole it covered is clearly visible through the tape I covered it with.) The plastic disk probably had fallen out of sight at the bottom of the pillar. Using the disk I recovered from the left-hand pillar, I covered the hole and secured it in place with duct tape. (I could see the rewind spring was still in its designed place.)

#### Conclusion

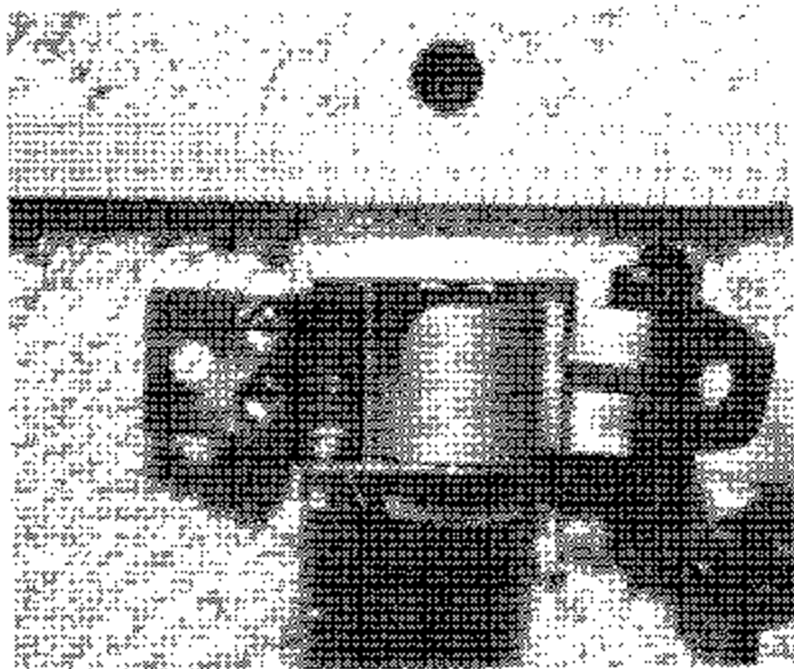
Having been an aeronautical engineer part of my 32 year career in the US Air Force, I am not entirely ignorant of mechanical devices. Therefore, I assert the design of the shoulder belt retractor is flawed for the simple reason that the Cadillac Co. was trying to save a few pennies. *(Meanwhile, how many lives were endangered?)* Furthermore, I have no reason not to believe that this problem is not extant in other GM vehicles.

I do not consider the mileage at the time of occurrence was a contributing factor in this failure. *I consider the flawed design to be the singular cause of this safety defect.*

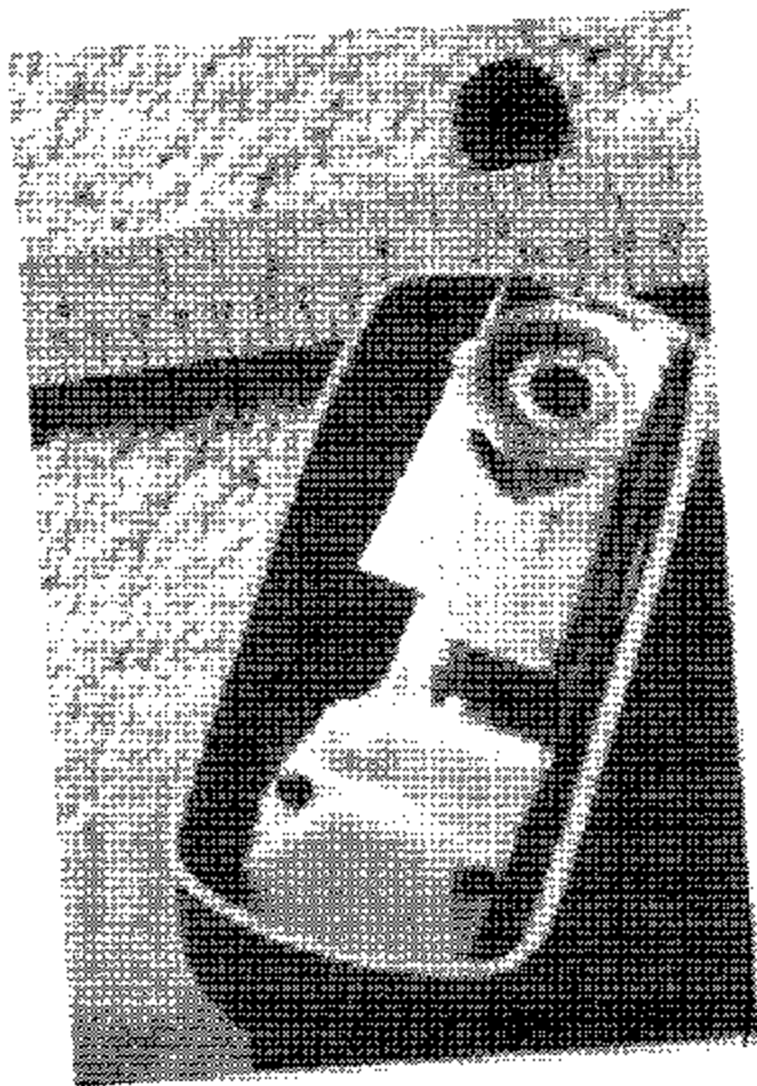
I have retained the seat belt assembly in event your safety engineers take sufficient interest to examine it. (I also question the efficacy of the plastic parts that should lock the rewind mechanism when inertia swings a small cylindrical weight forward in event of a crash.)



#1



#2



#3