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Sevierville woman's Lexus suddenly accelerates on I-40

May 2, 2007

By **DON DARE**
6 On Your Side Reporter

SEVIERVILLE (WATE) -- A federal safety group is investigating why some new Lexus models suddenly accelerate. It happened to a Sevierville woman last fall as she merged onto I-40. And the reason behind the problem is simple and surprising.

The reports of sudden acceleration come from owners of the 2007 Lexus ES350 and from federal records.

Lexus vehicles are made by Toyota Motor North America. Consumer publications such as *Consumer Reports* list Lexus as one of the most reliable and safest vehicles on the roads. Those are some of the reasons why ██████████ of Sevierville, bought her car.

On October 12, 2006, ██████████ drove her Lexus onto I-40 Westbound from the Sevierville on ramp and started to merge. "I had sped up to about 65 miles an hour."

Then ██████████ says something strange happened. The car began accelerating on its own. "I looked down at my speedometer. It had gotten up to about 70 and I didn't have my foot on the accelerator."

"At about 75, the cruise light came on by itself. So I thought, maybe that's why it started to speed up. So, I took my hand and disengaged the cruise," ██████████ says.

But she says the car kept on going faster. "And then I geared down into neutral and it did nothing. So I kept doing that. Then I just put it in reverse. "

██████████ says she also applied the brakes. "Then, of course, I pushed the emergency brake on. I guess I said out loud, I can't believe this is happening."

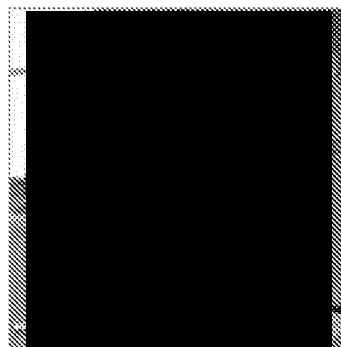
Using the remote phone in her car, ██████████ called her husband, ██████████ "I've been married to her for 35 years. I've never heard the terror in her voice like I did that day," he says.

"I told him I was going 100 miles an hour down the interstate. I asked him if he knew anything else I could do to try to stop the car," ██████████ says.

██████████ says he told his wife to put the car in park. ██████████ says she couldn't do that.

"The good Lord just helped me out here cause I wasn't doing anything different and the speedometer started backing down just a little bit," ██████████ says.

She had gone about six miles when the car began slowing down and she finally stopped it. "It's just times like this that it all comes back to me." Bringing up those terrifying moments still makes ██████████ feel shaky.

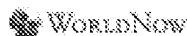


"I looked down at my speedometer. It had gotten up to about 70 and I didn't have my foot on the accelerator," ██████████ says.



██████████ only recently got back in her Lexus. It has a total of 2,700 miles on it.

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