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TO Plymouth Rock Assumes Corporation

P.O. Bex 9112 **Essay Station** Boston, MA 02112

ATTENTION Detail Byros.

DATE December 4, 2002

## VEHICLE ANALYSIS - SDL# M28036.1

PLE# 430-281183

VEHICLE 1998 Ford F150
VIN 2FTZX18W8WC

ODOMETER Usknown - burned

DATE OF LOSS October 24, 2002

#### Background

The 1998 Ford F150 was reportedly parked and abut off is the serly morning of October 24, 2002. We spoke with the instruct regarding the incident. He indicated that he was sleeping when the horn of his Ford was beard sounding. He looked out and saw smoke coming from the work. He went outside to the track and observed famos visible in the cals. He opened the driver's door and any flames coming from the deal. He stated that the tire then sugarified the onlys can delain. He attempted to extinguish the fife using two extinguishers but was unsuccessful. The tire department arrived and extinguished the fire. There was no reported recent services work performed, and the track was running fine prior to the loss.

## Objective

Examine the Ford F150 and determine the origin and cause of the fire. Determine the mechanical and cosmetic condition of the vehicle at the time of the loss.

DATE INSPECTED October 30, 2002 LOCATION Copert, Bellingham, MA

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#### **DETAILED FINDINGS**

### Vehicle Equipment

YEAR 1998 MAKE Ford MODEL P150

BODY 3-door extended cab

ENGINE 4.6 liter, fuel injected V8 engine, mounted inline

TRANSMISSION Automotio prensulssion with 4-wheel drive

FEATURES Air conditioning, cruise control, alloy wheels, power windows, power looks,

power mirrors, storeo cassette radio, front and rear bench seate, tilt steering

column, dual air begs

AFTERMANICET Electronic security system

#### Cosmetic Condition Prior to Loss

The second secon

The Ford F150 has body-on-frame construction. There was no evidence of substantial prior collision repairs to the frame or body penols. The Ford appeared to have the original factory painted finish. It was in good connectic condition prior to the loss.

# Burn Pattern Analysis -----

The Ford was burned throughout the passenger comparisonst and a portion of the engine comparisonst. The fire did not progress to the engo bad or to any other components at the rear of the vehicle. The enterior burn patterns consist of scorching to the roof and the roof pillars and to the hood panel. The center of the aluminum hood had melted through. There was no burning to the front humper, lights, grille, or the front of the hood. There was no scorching to the whosis, these, or any of the lower body panels. The exterior burn putterns show the fire originated in the cab or the rear of the engine comparisons. The doors appeared to have been closed at the inception of the fire. Some of the paint on the inner decriped are adjacent to the left side door was scorched, and the recker still trim was charred. However, the westher-stripping and the paint on the westher-strip flungs along the lack edge of the door were not beened and were only slightly decreaged. The innered reported that he opened the door in the early stages of the fire in an attempt to extinguish the fire.

Within the passenger compariment, most of the available combustible materials were consumed. The fire had fully engalish the interior of the cab. The Ford has a split front beach sent and a reer folding beach sent. Most of the sent enshioning, upholitary, door trim, and interior trim were command by the fire. Some fragments of contioning remained on the rear banck sent, but otherwise only the storched metal sent frames remained. The inner structures of the door and cab were

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scorched. Dropdown dobris had accumulated on the floors of the trock during the fire. We examined the dropdown debris and exposed the surpeting. The curpeting was singled but was not burned through. We did not detect patterns or odors consistent with the presence of a liquid accelerant.

The dash astembly is constructed mostly of plastic materials shounted to a metal framework. Most of the plastics and other combustible materials in the center and right side of the dash were consumed. A large quantity of charred plastic still remained on the left side of the dash. The steering column shrouds and other plastic components of the column were commoned, but the alloy column structure remained intact. The starter switch on the undements of the column was charred but the damage occurred during a later stage. The wiring extending from the switch and other wiring within the left side of the dash showed only minor classing of invalidon.

The radio, climate control panel, and other stricts panels in the center of the dash were extensively burned. The components had falled downward from the center of the dash. When harmesters within the center and right side of the dash showed consumption of wire insulation and searching of wire strands. There was extensive scoroking to the passenger-side air bug module, the top of the firewall, and the right side of the dash crossmember. The remains of the glovebox had falled down from the right side of the dash. Some charred plastic and papers still remained. The extent of destruction within the passenger compenhants was greatest within the right side of the dash and right frost area.

Within the engine compartment, there was actionaive communicion of materials in the extreme right rast, just in front of the firewall. The extent of destruction diminished toward the frest and just side. Plantics and house along the left and right forcer funders and along the radiator support were charted or partially melted by radiant and convection heat only. Some plantics on top of the V8 enginewere consumed and wires were sorreised. The origins has electronic final injection. The field inlet and return line connections on the right rast of the engine remained intext and were only slightly damaged by the fire.

The upper right side of the firewall and the cowl were extensively accorded near the right rear of the engine compartment. The sheet metal was heat-discolored. By contrast, paint still remained on the left side of the firewall, and the left side of the plastic cowl was intact. Wiring hereases and a solentid located adjacent to the right side of the firewall showed extensive according and complete communities of wire intuition. The wires were brittle and some were broken. The damage to the wires could not be distinguished between the cause and effects of the fire. There was no evidence of a direct ground short. The bettery located on the right inner funder panel showed slight charring and melting of the pinetic case only. The burn patterns show the fire in the engine compartment progressed from the right side of the firewall area.

# Fire Origin and Cause

The fire had fully enguifed the cab and a portion of the engine compartment. The have pathway show the fire originated in the area of electrical components near the firewarl or the dark assembly toward the right tide. The insured reported first

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observing the deah on fire within the cab of the truck. There were several extensively burned electrical wire harnesses in the center and right side of the deah and near the right side of the firewall.

The Ford truck was reportedly parked and shut off when the fire started. Several electrical circuits remain energized even when the vehicle is parked with the ignition off. A malfunction in an energized wire or other electrical component could cause overheating and ignition of surrounding combustible materials. The doors and windows were closed at the inception of the fire. A fire ignited by incendiary means would starve for exygen with the doors and windows closed. An electrical malfunction could provide a persistent heat source capable of sustaining combustion. It appears the fire initially vented upward through the right side of the cowl. It is evident that when the insured opened the door, the fire then quickly engulfed the cabdue to the increased oxygen. There was no remaining evidence to show that the fire was incendiary in nature. The fire appeared accidental and related to an electrical malfunction.

-- The actual cause of the fire cannot be determined because of the degree of demage to the electrical system.

#### Mechanical Condition

The 4.6 liter V8 engine could not be run due to the extent of fire damage. The engine rotated by hend and was not seized. The motor oil registered within the correct operating range on the dipatick and was not emulsified with engine coolent. We removed the oil filter from the engine and extracted the element for analysis. The oil filter element contained no metallic particles. There was no evidence of failure or excessive wear in the engine. The automatic transmission fluid registered on the dipatick, was not discolored, and did not have a burned odor. There was no indication of wear or failure in the transmission. The remaining drivetrain components were intact. There was no indication of a mechanical deficiency existing in the drivetrain.

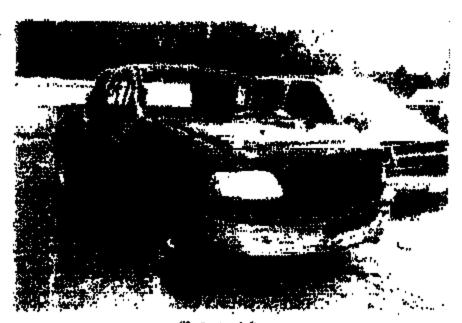
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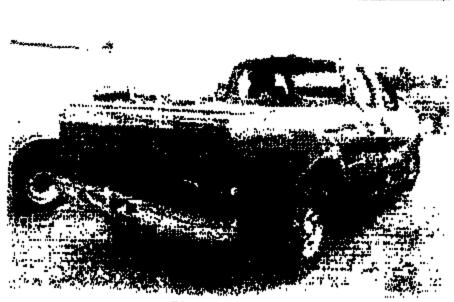
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Photograph 19

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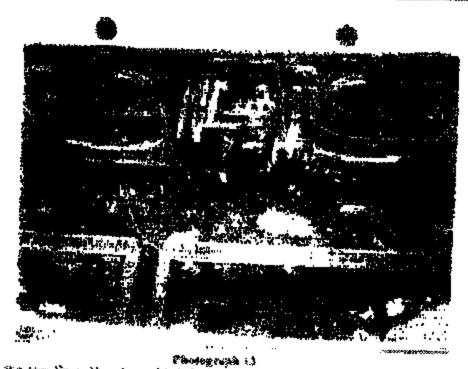
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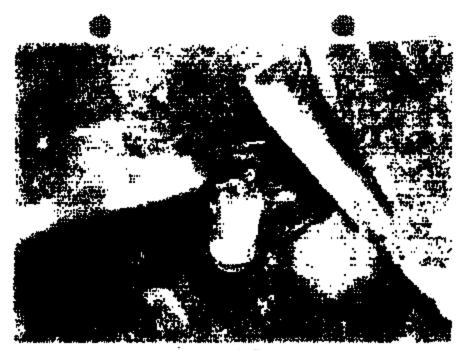


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Passigraph 32

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Protograph XI

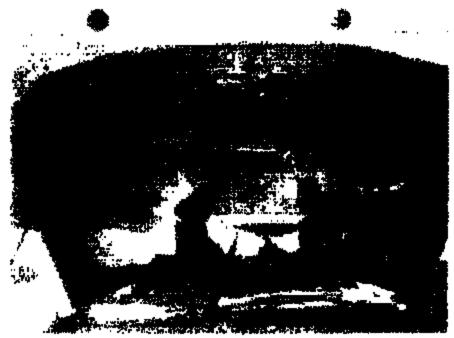
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Photograph 34.

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Page: 024-030



Photograph 35 View of the existed in the base.



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Photograph 16
View of the left over or the common comparisons. Photograph who insultive showed single charant way.

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Phillipraph 11

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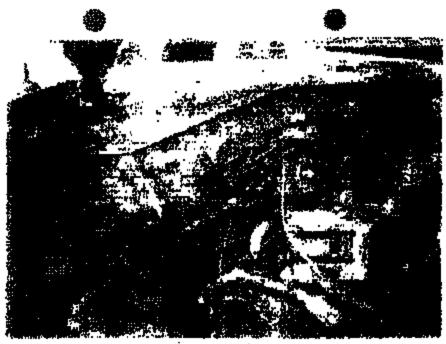
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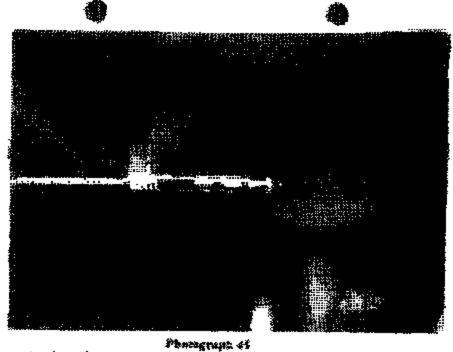


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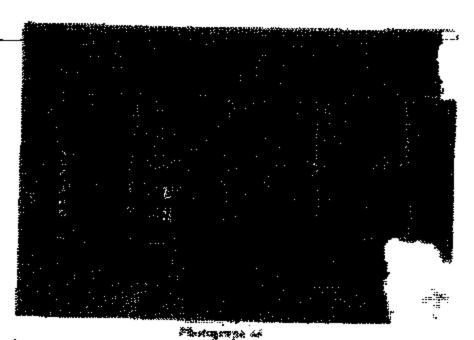


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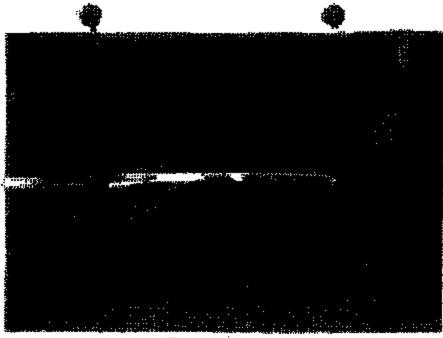
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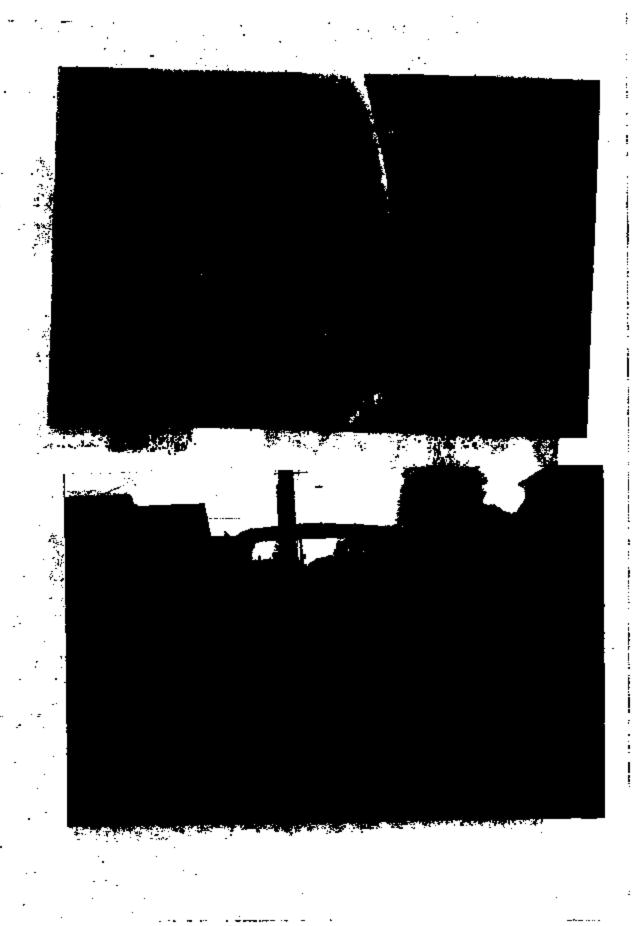
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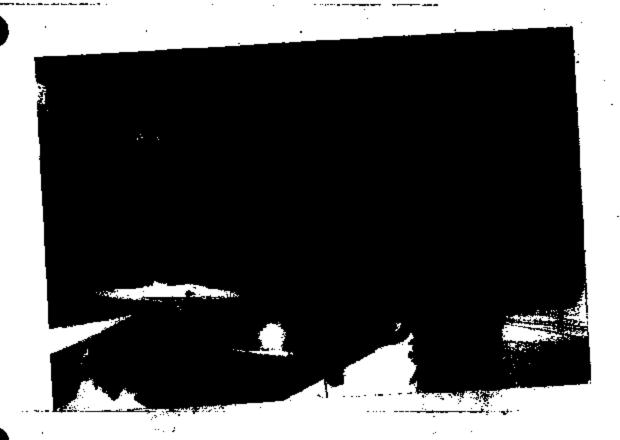


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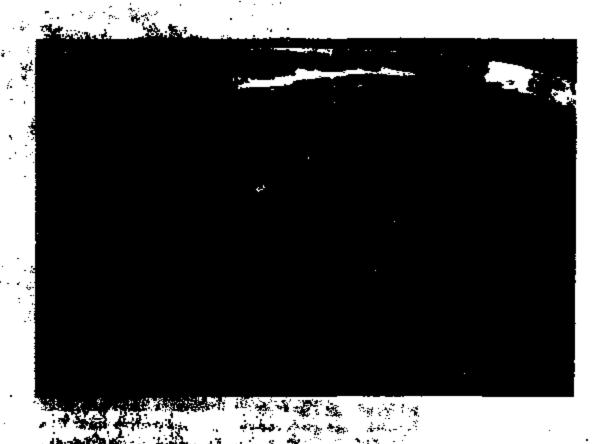


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## BAKER, BRAVERMAN & BARBADORO, P.C.

## ATTORNEYS AND COUNSULLORS AT LAW

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OF COUNSEL, WILLIAM B. GOLDEN WILLIAM R. SWEETER, II DOENTHY O'VLAHERTY NEDELMAN

June 2, 2004

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED AND REGULAR U.S. MAIL

Ford Motor Company c/o CT Corporation 101 Federal Street Boston, MA 02110

Re:

Craig Cooper - 1998 Ford F150 VIN: 2FTZX18W6W

To Whom it May Concern:

Please be advised that this law firm represents	of Ouincy.
Massachusetts in regard to damages that he sustained to his 1998 For	rd F150 truck on
October 24, 2002. In 2000, purchased the F150 from Qu	tirk Ford in Quincy.
Massachusetts for approximately \$26,000.00. He applied for and ob-	tained financing
from the Ford Motor Credit Company. In the Branch made all payment	
fashion through the date of loss. The truck functioned well for	
approximately two years that he owned it, requiring only brake work maintenance.	and routine
On October 24, 2002, at 12:15 a.m. Treturned to h	is home on West
Street in Quincy and parked his F150 in the driveway in front of his I	house. At
approximately 2:45 a.m. mother was awakened by the	sound of the Ford's
horn. The sound was persistent as if someone was leaning on the hor	
mother woke him and when he looked out the window he saw smoke	
truck. went outside to the truck and saw flames visible it	n the cab. When he

Ford Motor Company June 2, 2004 Page 2

opened the driver's door, the flames grew and he noted that they were coming from the center of the dashboard. The fire spread quickly despite the dashboard thempt to put it out using two fire extinguishers. The fire department arrived shortly thereafter and controlled the fire.

There had been no work performed on the vehicle in the months before the loss and the truck appeared to be running fine. The truck had been parked in the driveway for more than two hours before mother heard the horn and they discovered the fire.

Shortly after the incident filed a claim with his insurance company, which paid \$15,870.00 for the total loss settlement of the vehicle. That amount was paid directly to the Ford Motor Credit Company towards his loan. However there remained a \$1,060.20 balance on the loan that satisfied in December of 2002. In sustained the loss of miscellaneous personal addition to the loss of his F150, I property and other out of pocket expenses due to the fire in the truck. An electricism by had his tool box and portable boost box in the cab of the truck, containing approximately \$5,000.00 of electrical tools and equipment, including, but not limited to, various screwdrivers, outters, keyhole saws, hammers, knives, awls, tool punches, ohumeters, adapters, drivers, picks, probes, sockets, pliers and detectors. Additionally missed two days of work as he spent October 24, 2002 at the hospital and visited a pulmonary specialist on the next day due to the inhabition of chemical fumes. Fortunately there appear to be no lasting affects evident from the inhalation. The pulmonary specialist indicated that it is impossible to know whether there would be an adverse impact on his future health. Furthermore, expenses to rent a car during the period that he was without use of a vehicle. The blue book value of the Ford F150 of a truck with the mileage and condition of was approximately \$18,250.00 at the time of the loss.

The fire investigator assigned to the case, S. Dennis Lyons, investigated the cause and origin of the fire and determined the fire appeared accidental and related to an electrical malfunction. However, the actual cause of the fire could not be firmly established because of the degree of damage to the electrical system of the truck. The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration reports that there have been several incidents involving apontaneous combustion in the 1998 Ford F150, specifically relating to the wiring and the front underhood. This is precisely where the fire began in truck.

As a local design defect in the 1998 Ford F150, which is requesting that Ford compensate him for his lost personal

Ford Motor Company June 2, 2004 Page 3

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property and other out of pocket expenses that he incurred as a result of the fire. His demand of \$7,750.20 is based on the following assessments:

- Money paid out of pocket on the balance of the loan to the Ford Motor Credit Company (\$1,060.20);
- b) Lost value of his truck (\$1,000.00);
- Replacement automobile rental (\$240.00);
- d) Value of lost personal property (\$5,000.00); and
- e) Work missed (\$450.00)

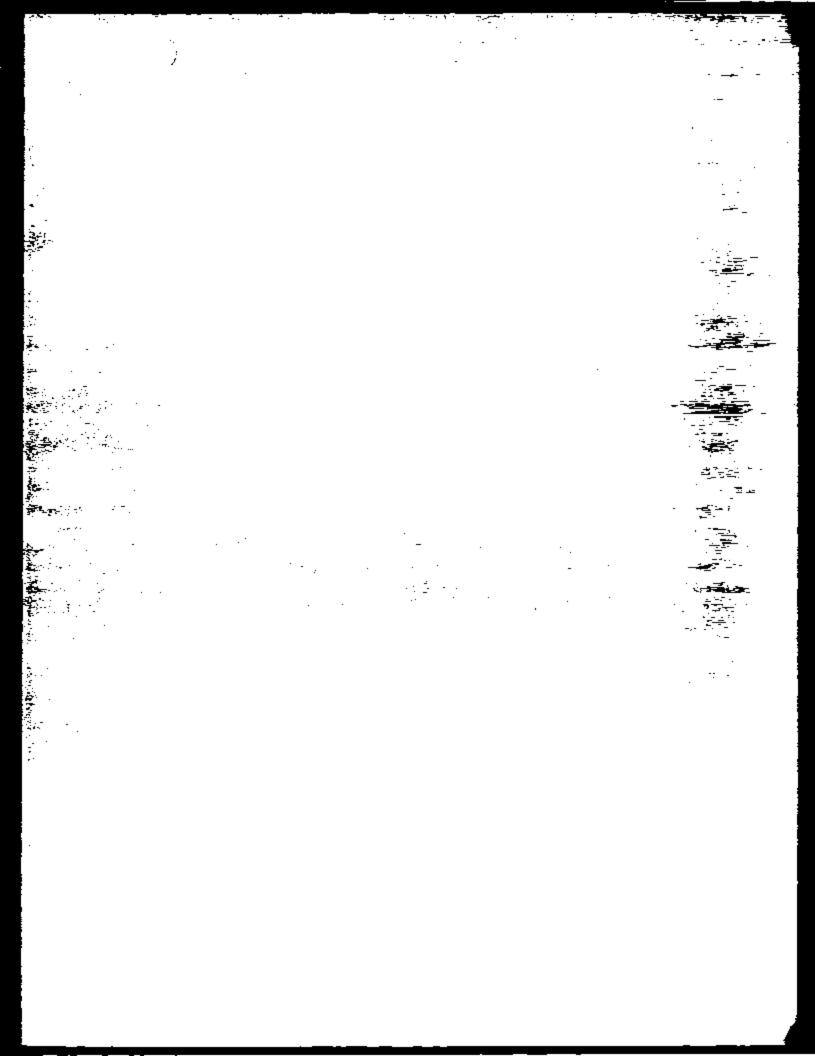
Total

\$7,750.20

Please notify me within thirty (30) days whether or not Ford intends to compensate for his losses. We are hopeful that we can reach a fair resolution to this matter without having to institute litigation. Thank you very much.

Sincerely.

Michael Murphy
Michael P. Murphy



May 26, 2004

IN RE:

Allstate Claim No. H&A File No. 04-0883 VF Date Received: May 14, 2004

#### PREDICATION:

This report is predicated upon the request of Ms. Carolyn White, Alistate Senior Claims Representative, to conduct an investigation into Steven Dodge, with special reference to the fire loss of a 1997 Ford, Expedition.

#### INSPECTION:

On May 17, 2004 at 12:00 p.m., this Investigator arrived at 5019 Stroups Hickox Road in West Farmington, Ohio, to conduct an investigation into the fire loss of a 1997 Ford, Expedition.

Once at the scene, a close inspection provided the following information:

SEE ENCLOSED INVESTIGATION REPORT

Prior to leaving the scene, several color photographs were taken and are enclosed.

#### ORIGIN AND CAUSE INVESTIGATION:

On May 17, 2004 at 12:00 p.m., this investigator arrived at in West Farmington, Ohio, to conduct an origin and cause investigation into the fire loss of a 1997 Ford, Expedition, green in color, Vehicle Identification Number 1FMFU18L1VI

Upon arriving at the residence, the vehicle is located in the driveway adjacent the residence, and is identified by its Vehicle Identification Number located on the federal manufacturer's label on the driver's door.

Initial observations reveal evidence of a fire to have originated within the engine compartment, that extended to the melting and cracking of the windshield, both driver's side door windows and the right front door window. The fire further extended to blistering of the painted surfaces of the front clip and roof. Further, the aluminum hood has been consumed during the course of the fire.

IN RE:

Allstate Claim No. H&A Filo No. 04-0883YF

May 26, 2004 Page 2

The examination of the fuel tank, fill tube and fuel cap reveals all are intact, and there is no evidence of any fuel leakage. The examination of the underside reveals it is free of any fire origin.

At this time, the examination is focused to the rear cargo area, where high burning is present throughout. Continuing forward, the rear passenger compartment also reveals high burning present, where the fire penetrated the windshield, entering the passenger compartment leastning in degree. The examination of the front passenger compartment further reveals high burning present, seat cushion material still remains, the floor areas are intact, and there is no evidence of any low burning.

The examination of the dashboard reveals exposure fire damage present to the top of same, where the fire again penetrated the windshield, causing the damage present.

The examination of wiring traveling along the dashboard reveals charred wiring insulation present, and a substantial amount of the combastible dashboard remains, and there is no evidence of any fire origin. After completing the inspection of the passenger compartment and reur cargo area, no evidence of any tire origin could be found.

At this time, the examination is focused to the engine compartment, wheretipon examining same, extensive fire damage is present within the top of the engine, pointing toward the right or pastonger's side. The examination of the left front tire reveals partial consumption, deflating same. The examination of the right front tire reveals partial consumption as well, deflating same. The examination does, however, reveal some fiberglass headlight housing remaining on the right or passenger's side, and lack of same on the left or driver's side.

The examination of the front section of the engine compartment reveals combustibles hoses remaining, air conditioning condenser and radiator present on the ground, and there is no evidence of any fire origin.

The examination of the wiper motor in the cowl on the left or driver's side reveals fire damage present, combustibles do remain in this immediate area, and there is no evidence of any fire origin.

The examination of the power distribution center at the itmer left fender reveals abundant and other combastibles still surrounding same, however, as you examine wiring traveling from same, there is evidence of electrical faulting present.

IN RE:

Allstate Claim No. 04-0883VF

May 26, 2004 Page 3

The examination of the left rear of the engine compartment reveals the fuel lines are intact, fuel line connections and retainer clips are intact, and there is no evidence of any fire origin. The examination of the main wiring harness which travels across the bulkhead on the left or driver's side does reveal it is void of insulation and is brittle, falling apart to the touch.

The examination of the right or passenger's side of the engine compartment, specifically the inner right funder, reveals the battery is fire damaged, exposing the plates. The battery cubies reveal they are void of insulation, however, as you trace same, some insulation does become intact and there is no evidence of any electrical failure that could be found and attributed to the cause of the fire.

The examination of the top of the engine reveals aluminum products melted, pointing toward the right or pessenger's side as the area of origin. The examination of the alternator in the front on top reveals melting present to the housing, exposing the windings, indicating the fire damage present is high in nature. Further, the intake manifold, which is of aluminum construction, reveals melting present, pointing toward the right or passenger's side as the area of origin.

The examination of the solenoid in the right rear of the engine compartment reveals extensive fire damage present. The cable which travels from the alternator as well as from the power distribution center and positive battery reveal they are void of insulation. Further, electrical activity is noted in the cable traveling from the power distribution center closest the solenoid. The lugs at the solenoid reveal melting present to the connectors. Further, the lug and cable which traveled to the positive battery terminal reveals electrical activity present with little cable remaining.

At this time, a subsequent check of the fluid levels revealed the brake, power steering fluid and coolant all drained during the course of the fire. The transmission fluid level is full and clean, and the oil dipatick annual be removed unless cutting of the dipatick tube occurs.

At this time, after completing the above inspection and examination, it is the opinion of this Investigator that the fire was accidental in nature. It is further the opinion of this Investigator that the fire originated within the engine compartment on the top, in the center to right or passenger's side, where there is evidence of electrical activity in the immediate area of the solenoid at the bulkhead, to include the cable traveling from the power distribution center to same, sufficient to ignite the wiring immediate and immediate combustibles into open flame, with the fire extending upward and outward from that location, causing the damage present. The fire is deemed to be an accidental fire, electrical in nature.

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IN RE:

Allstate Claim No. H&A File No. 04-0883VF

May 26, 2004 Page 4

#### NICB VINASSIST:

A review of the NICB Vinassiat indicates that the 1997 Ford, Expedition, four door,  $4 \times 4$ , is equipped with a 5.4 liter, V8 engine, and was assembled in Wayne, Michigan.

## ALL DATA SYSTEM:

A search of the All Data System produced fifteen recalls pertaining to 1997 Ford, Expeditions equipped with 5.4 liter engines. Upon review, none were found to pertain to the fire in question.

A further search was conducted of the technical service bulletins, producing numerous bulletins and upon review, none were found to pertain to the fire in question.

## NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC & SAFETY ADMINISTRATION:

A search of the National Highway Traffic & Safety Administration, Recall Database, produced six recalls, and upon review, none were found to pertain to the fire in question.

A further search of the Defect Investigations Database produced five records and upon review, none were found to pertain to the fire in question.

## INTERVIEW (Summ Dodge):

On May 17, 2004 at 12:30 p.m., Investigator John Adams conducted an interview with Susan Dodge, one of the titleholders, named insured and last operator of the vehicle prior to the fire. When questioned regarding any complaints or problems with the vehicle prior to the fire, it was learned that the driver's window would go up and down by itself and the door looks would look and unlock by themselves when going over a bumpy road.

The fire occurred on May 13, 2004 at 1:30 a.m., with the weather conditions listed as clear. The location of the fire was listed as 5019 Stroups Hickox Street in West Farmington, Ohio. The wind was blowing from front to reer, however, mostly from passenger's side to driver's side. Subsequently, Mrs. Dodge contacted 911, and the West Farmington Fire Department responded in approximately 20 to 25 minutes and extinguished a fire involving the 1997 Ford, Expedition equipped with a 5.4 liter, V8 engine.

IN RE:

Alistate Claim Ne H&A File No. 04-0883VF

May 26, 2004 Page 5

The vehicle was purchased used from Bob Ferando Ford in Gerard, Pennsylvania. A thirty day/1,000 mile warranty was issued.

Recent service work performed to the vehicle included upper and lower belt joints, the rods and brakes. JCB Auto in West Farmington completed said repairs prior to the fire.

The last person to have entered the engine compartment was Mrs. Dodge, to change the oil. Oil changes are secured on a regular basis, and no oil or other fluids are ever added in between oil changes.

The mileage at the time of the purchase was approximately 60,000 miles and the mileage at the time of the fire loss was approximately 150,000 miles. Since ownership, no recall notices, campaigns or correspondence have been received from the manufacturer. No aftermarket accessories have been added since ownership, and it has not been involved in an accident since ownership.

At the time of the fire, the vehicle had been parked for approximately seven hours, and upon hearing noises and looking out the window, smoke and flames were observed emenating out from the center to rear through the aluminum hood. During the course of the fire, all doors and windows were closed.

The firemen believed the probable cause was electrical, and the insured believes the same. A handheld computer, a grading stick and other items were removed from the vehicle after the fire. Items not recovered due to the fire within the vehicle were sunglesses, a cellular telephone, and a inverter for the computer.

As a result, no other vehicles or property were damaged, however, Mrs. Dodge was concerned about the pend which is utilized for drinking water as it is hooked up to a filtration system and upon extinguishment, all of the combustible fluids within the water were running down into the pend.

At this time, no further information could be obtained, and the interview was terminated.

IN RE:

Allatate Claim No

H&A File No. 04-0883 VF

May 26, 2004

Page 6

#### WEST FARMINGTON, OHIO FIRE DEPARTMENT:

Correspondence has been forwarded to the West Farmington, Ohio Fire Department, requesting a copy of their fire report pertaining to the vehicle fire in question. Upon receipt, it will be forwarded to the Claims Representative.

## CONCLUSION:

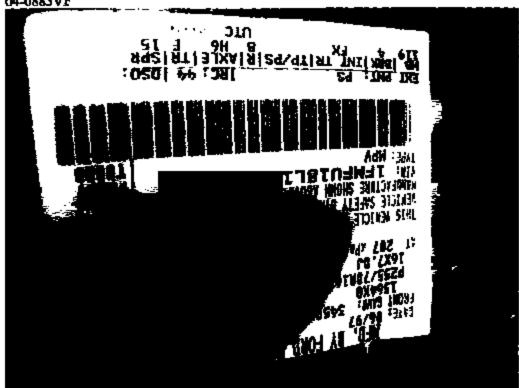
Having completed an examination of the vehicle, reviewed an interview obtained from the insured, conducted research pertaining to the vehicle in question, order the fire report, and based upon all of the information known at the time of the preparation of this report, it is the opinion of this Investigator that the fire was accidental in nature. It is further the opinion of this Investigator that the fire originated within the right rear of the engine compartment, in factory wiring traveling from the solenoid at the bulkhead, where there is evidence of electrical faulting, inflicient to ignite the wiring insulation and immediate combustibles into open flame, with the fire extending apward and outward from that location, causing the damage present. The fire is deemed to be an accidental fire, electrical in nature.

At this time, all requests for services have been completed, we are closing our file and forwarding our report and photographs for your review.

Timothy P. Herndon

TPH/kp

04-0883VF



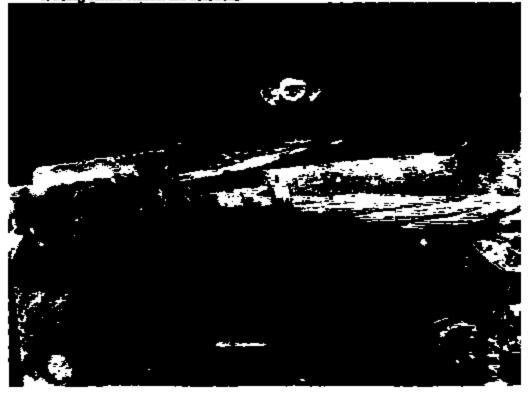
 A close-up view of the Vehicle Identification Number located on the Federal Manufacturers Label identifying the 1997 Ford, Expedition.

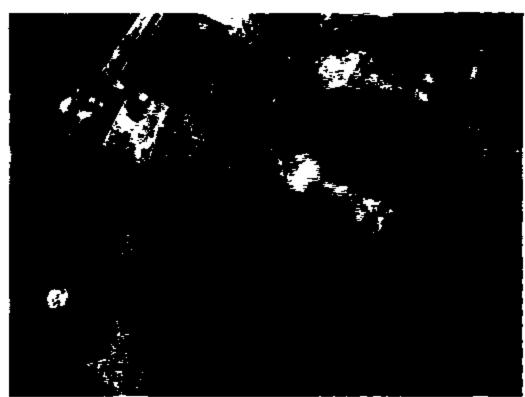




35. A close-up view of the power distribution center cable traveling toward the solenoid where it is fused, brittle and broken approximately two inches from the lug at the solenoid.

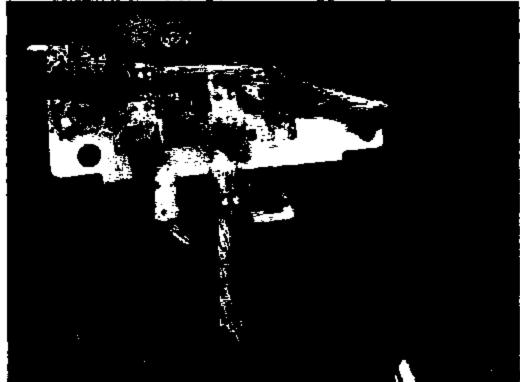
36. A close-up view of the lug and remains of the cable broken in two due to fusing and it being brittle closest the solenokl.





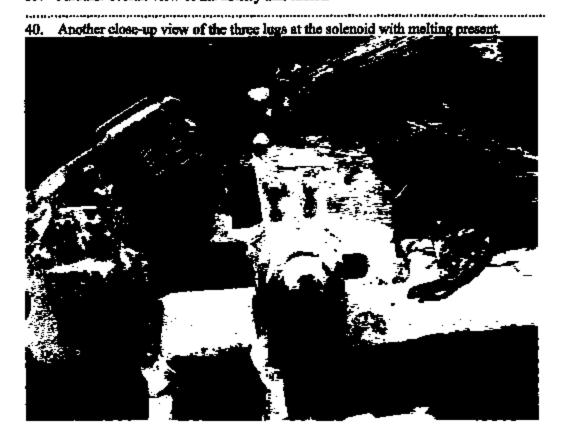
37. A close-up view of the lug and remains of the cable, which traveled from the positive battery terminal to the cylinder with evidence of fusing present.

 Another overall view of the area where the solenoid would be with the cables trayeling from same revealing evidence of fusing present.





39. Another overall view of the bettery and cables.

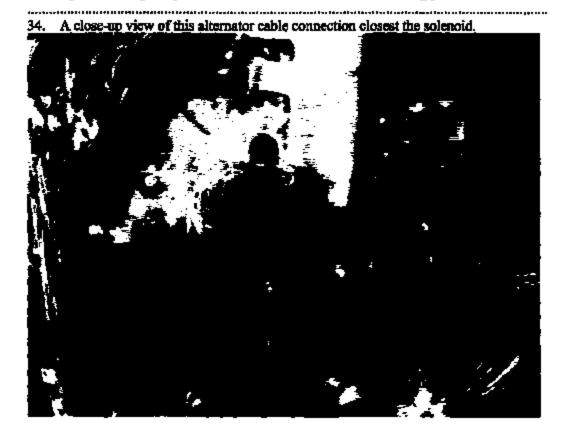




41. Another overall view of the cast aluminum components on top of the engine indicating melting present on the right or passenger's side pointing toward the right or passenger's side as the area of origin.

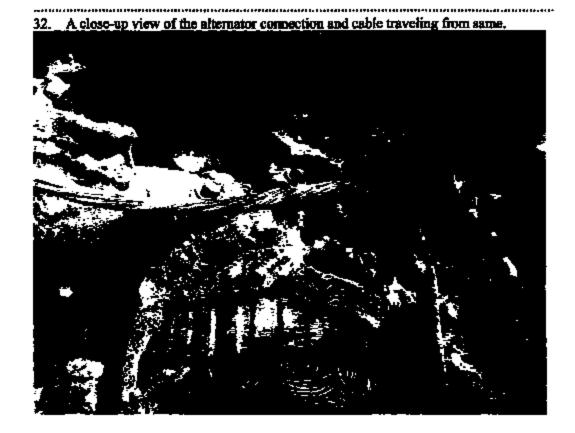


33. An overall view of the routing of this alternator cable traveling to the solenoid in the right rear completely void of insulation with evidence of fusing present.





 An overall view of the solenoid in the right rear of the engine compartment and cables and connections traveling to same.





 A close-up view of electrical faulting in wiring traveling from the power distribution center, which is in the left rear of the engine compartment.

30. An extreme close-up view of the electrical faulting in the wiring traveling from the power distribution center.



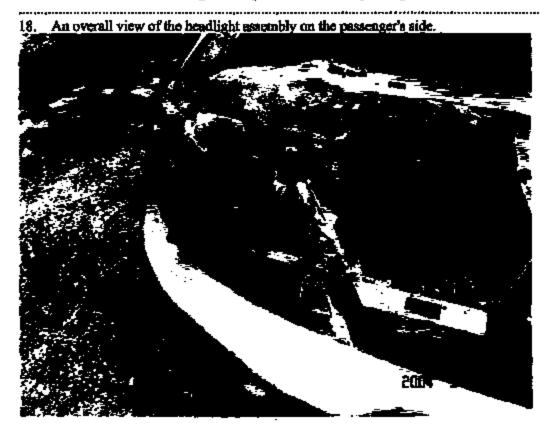


 An overall view of the remains of the power distribution center in the inner left fender.





17. An overall view of the engine compartment from the passenger's side.





9. An overall view of the rear cargo area.





11. An overall view of the rear passenger compartment from the passenger's side.





13. An overall view of the front passenger compartment from the driver's side.





 Another overall view of this main wiring loom as it travels to the right or passenger's side.

28. An overall view of the routing of this main wiring loom traveling towards the right or passenger's side.





25. An overall view of the alternator and cable traveling to same.

26. An overall view of the main wiring loom traveling along the bulkhead on the left or driver's side.





21. An overall view of the bettery and cables along the inner right fender.





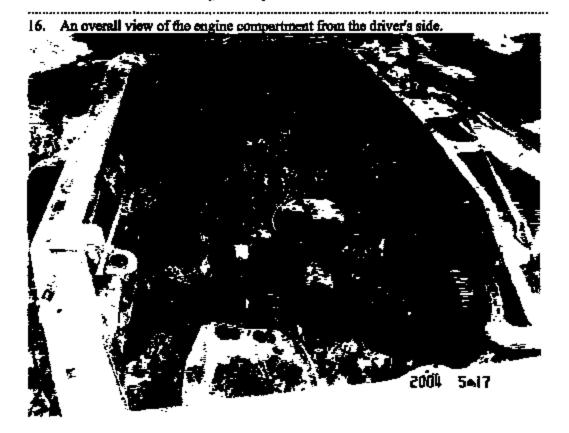
19. An overall view of the lack of headlight assembly on the driver's side.

 An overall view of the remains of air-conditioning condenser and radiator on the ground in front of the vehicle.



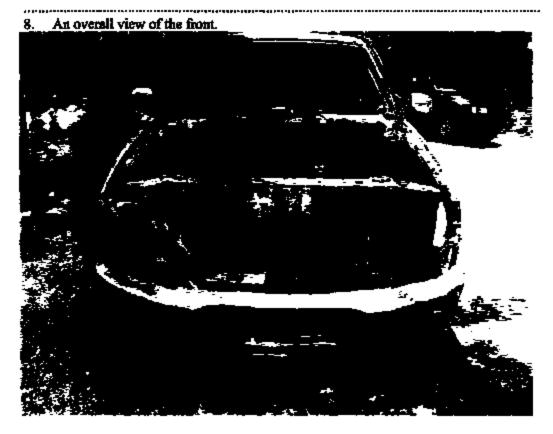


An overall view of the engine compartment from the front.





7. An overall view of the right front.





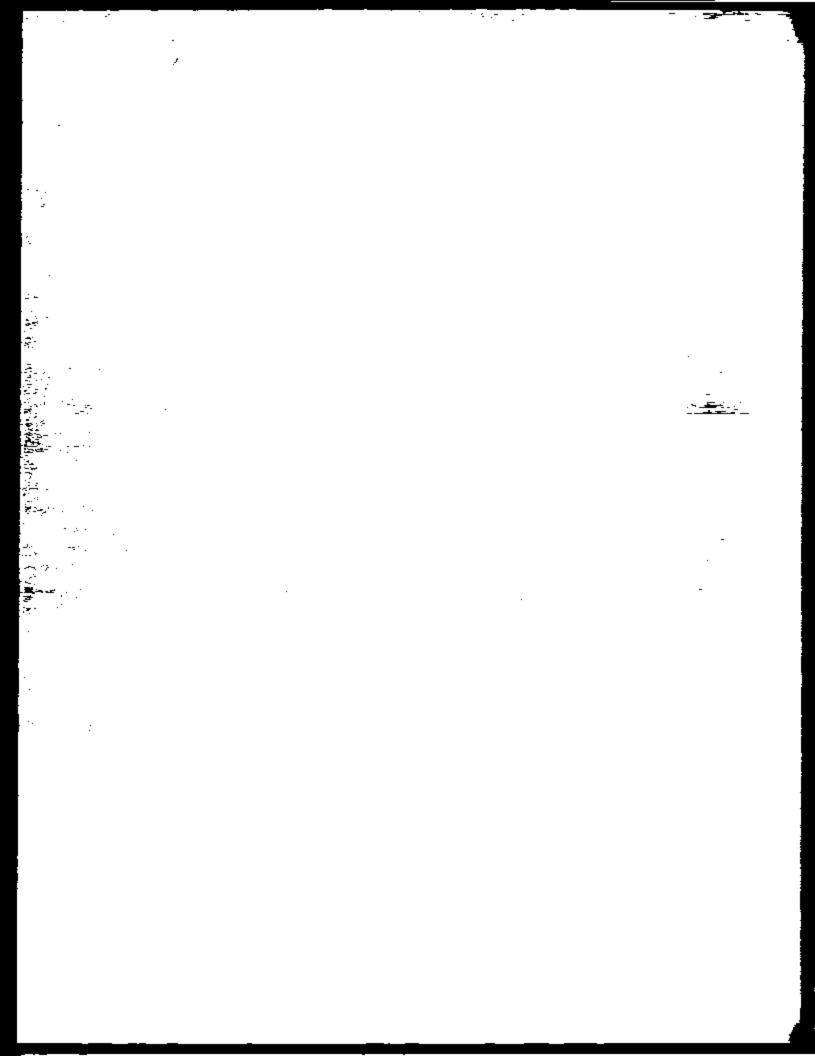
An overall view of the driver's side.





5. A close-up view of the fuel cap intact.





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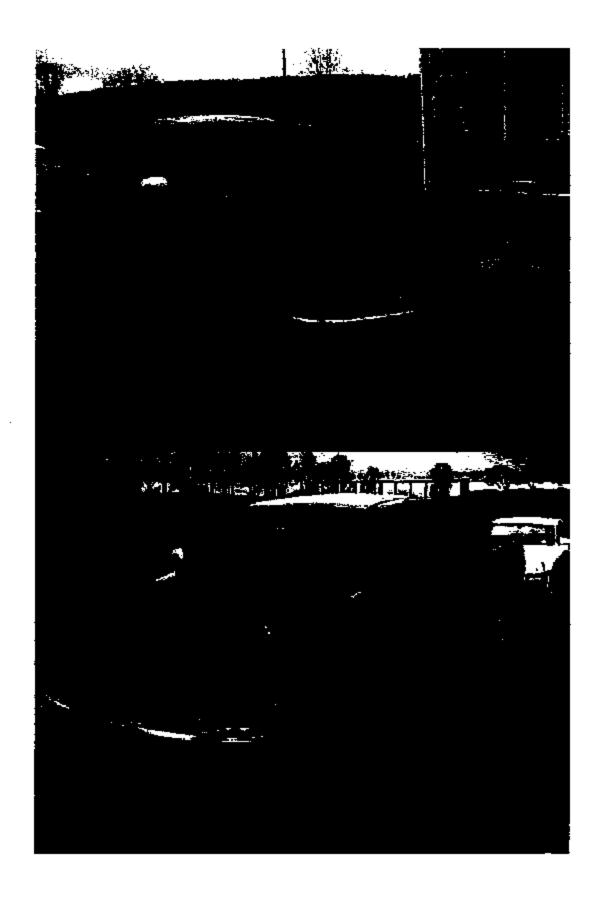
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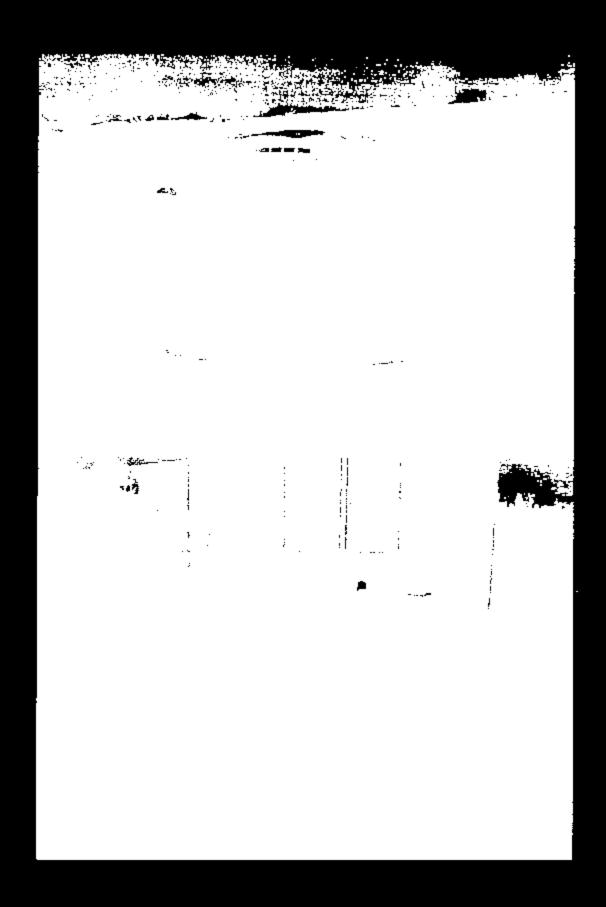
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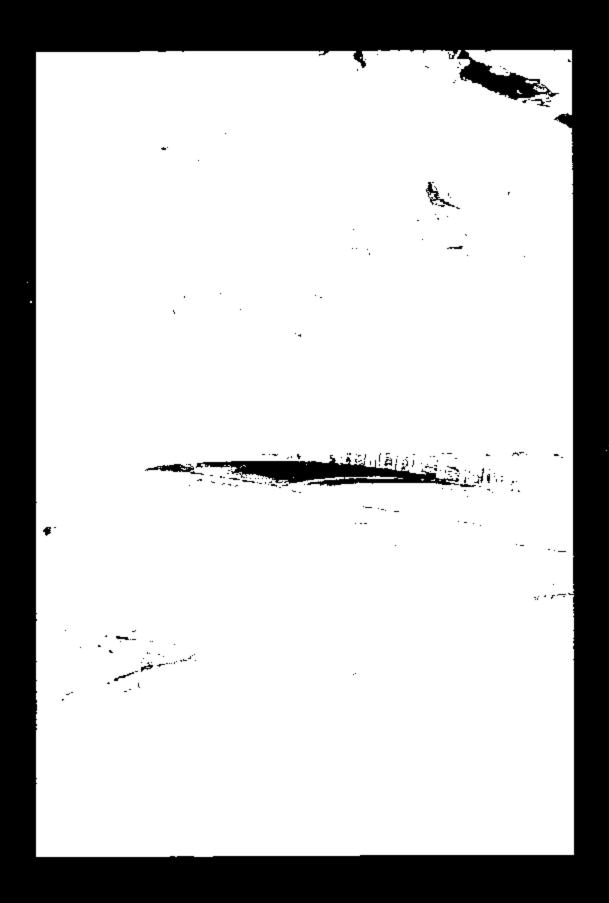
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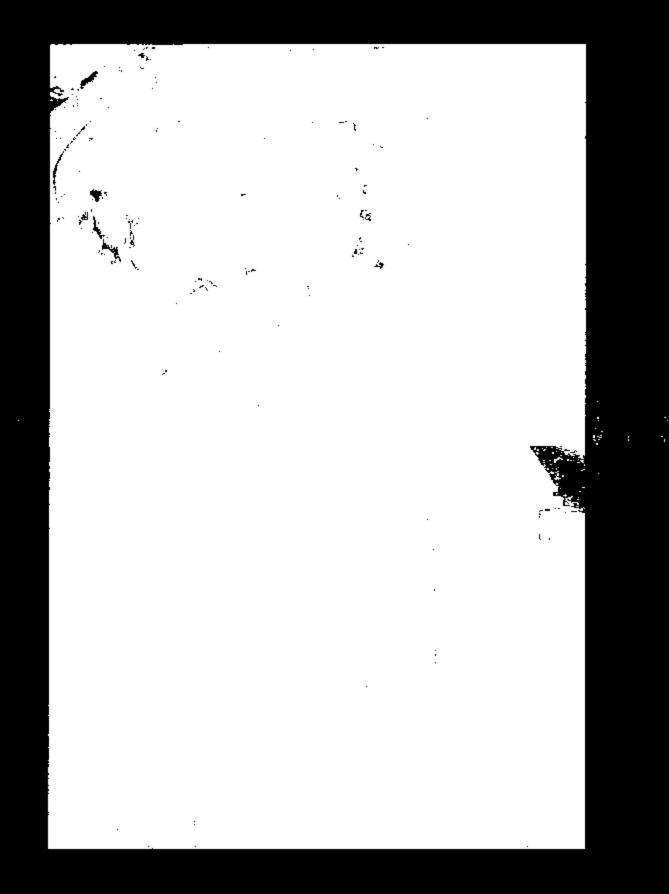
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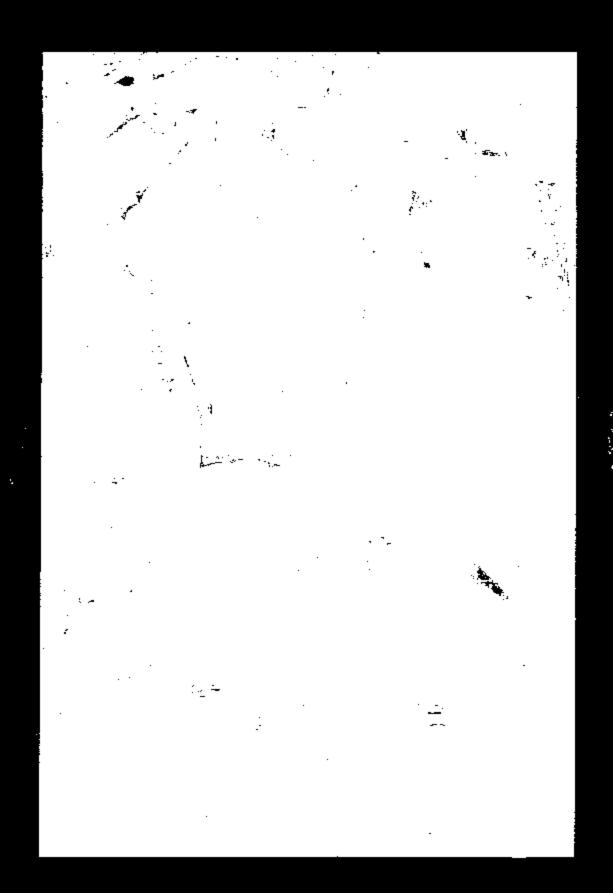
\*OCHESTER CLAIMS













A Professional Corporation

Corporate Headquarters 108 Main Street Hackensack, NJ 67601 Tel 201 487 8861 Fax 201 487 1283 experts@petervalles.com

Date of Report:

December 30, 2004

No. of Pages: 13

No. of Pages Faxed; 04 (does not include photosistationals)

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<u>Southern PA Regional Office</u> Pennsylvania Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19130 Tel 215 564 2488

DE Regional Office New Cestle Corporate Commons 42 Reads Way New Cestle, DE 19720 Tel 302 323 0987 Fax 302 323 0957

FL Regional Office 3546 South Ocean Blvd -724 Palm Beach, FL 33480 Tel 888 782 5527 To: Mr. James Egloff

Erie Insurance Company

P.O. Box 11308 Syracuse, NY 13218

Fex: 315-455-5762

E-malt James edoff@erieinsurance.com

PVA #: 043840

C/F#: 010930087744

Re: Wayland, NY

Policy #:

Date of Loss: November 24, 2004

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JAN O Calas

TOCHESTER CLUMAN

## **INVESTIGATIVE AUTO FIRE REPORT**

In accordance with your request, this organization conducted an inspection of the insured's vehicle in reference to the origin and cause of the fire. The assignment also includes the issuance of a written report based on our analysis.

An inspection was conducted on Tuesday, Decamber 28, 2004. Present at the time of my inspection was the insured,

### DESCRIPTION OF THE VEHICLE

The subject vehicle is a 1999 Ford F150 SuperCab XI color green. The vehicle identification number is 2FTRX17W6X0 and date of manufacture is November 1996.

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Page 2 of 13 File No. 043640 Insured:

#### INSPECTION AND OBSERVATIONS

The subject vehicle was parked in the driveway on the south end of the mobile home. The fire damage originates in the engine compartment and extends horizontally and vertically into the passenger compartment through the windshield. The fire patterns on the engine compartment extend out of the wheel wells and involve the fires. The five then extends vertically towards the windshield and across both the driver and passenger doors. The window glass was completely consumed in the fire. There is heavy fire damage to the combustible components of the passenger compartment. However, it was noted that the dashboard is still partially intact and the ignition is in the locked position on the steering column.

The engine compartment hood was completely consumed in the fire (aluminum). The front bumper gritl and radiator were also consumed in the fire. The engine compartment has a 302 cubic-inch V8 engine with automatic transmission. The battery is located in the right front corner. The wiring shows extensive heat and flame implingement damage only. Inspection of the transmission cooling lines revealed that they terminated at the left side of the radiator location. The brake master cylinder and brake fluid reservoir were consumed in the fire.

The engine sustained heavy fire damage to the top aluminum manifold and air intake. The two fuel lines entered from the left rear up to the fuel rails. The fuel rail and injectors on the left side of the engine were still intact. It is noted that the fuel rail on the right side was lying on top of the remains of the melted aluminum and two of the injectors at the front were missing.

### OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

Interviews with the insured, the insured prevealed that he purchased the vehicle used at approximately 36,000 miles at that time. He stated that the vehicle had approximately 48,000 miles on it when the fire occurred. On the date of loss, he had filled the gas tank at around 9:00 a.m. and drove to his garage and parked it until approximately five minutes of 11 when he drove from the garage around the corner to his home where he parked it in the driveway. He went in the house and approximately five minutes later looked out and saw smoke and then fire coming from the right front of the vehicle.

I asked the insured if he had been notified of any recalls on the vehicle and he stated no and that he had had no problems with the vehicle other than replacing the front springs.

Internet research on the 1999 Ford F150 revealed that a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration campaign number 96V194000 was issued on August 14, 1998. The summary of the recall is flight duty pickup trucks. The fuel pressure regulator O-ring may have been damaged when the fuel pressure regulator was installed in the engine fuel rail. If the O-ring is damaged, fuel vapors or leakage could occur."—"If an ignition source is present, a fire could result."

#### CONCLUSION

Based on the on scene inspection, interviews and analysis to date, it is the opinion of this organization that the fire originates in the engine compertment. The point of origin is at the fuel rail and/or fuel pressure regulator. The cause is the ignition of leaking fuel vapors.

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### COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Ford Motor Company be put on notice in reference to potential involvement of the recall in the cause of this fire.

We recommend that the vehicle be retained, secured and protected regarding any further testing or inspection by other interested parties or specialized engineers associated with our firm, when needed. We also reserve the right to be present and observe any and all inspections or testing of the vehicle by any other concerned parties.

PETER VALLAS ASSOCIATES, Inc. reserves the right to amend and/or supplement this report in the event additional information, documentation or evidence becomes available.

We want to thank you for the opportunity to have been of service to you. If any additional information is required or follow-up is to be conducted, please contact us.

Respectfully submitted,

PETER VALLAS ASSOCIATES, INC.

David R. Redsicker

Corporate Director of Investigations

R. Reduck

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Page 4 of 13 File No. 043640 Insured:

### PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX

- Overall view of the vehicle from the right side.
- Overall view of the rear of the vehicle.
- Overall view of the left side of the vehicle.
- View of the manufacturer's identification label.
- Overall view into the passenger compartment from the driver side.
- Overall view into the passenger compertment from the right side.
- View of the steering column. Arrow indicates the location of the ignition tock, which is in the locked position.
- Overall view of the front of the vehicle.
- Overall view of the engine compartment from the left side prior to clearing of the snow.
- 10. Closer view of the left side of the engine showing the fuel rail and fuel pressure regulator.
- Close up view of the two fuel line connections indicated by the arrows.
- View of the left side fuel rall indicated by the arrow.
- 13. Overall view of the engine compartment from the right side prior to clearing of the snow.
- 14. View of the melted aluminum manifold. Arrow indicates the location of the pressure regulator.
- 15. View of the fuel injection rail on the right side of the engine indicated by the arrow.
- Another view from the right side of the engine compartment. Again, the fuel rail is indicated by the arrow.
- Closer view of the fuel rail from the right side of the engine compartment. Arrows indicate the two injectors that are missing.

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Insured:

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- 12. View of the left side fuel rail indicated by the arrow.
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Page 5 of 13 File No. 043840



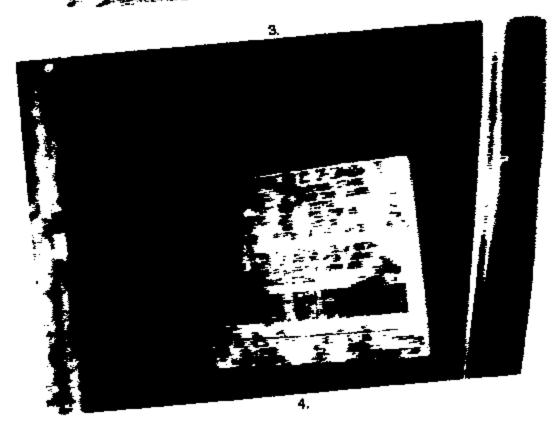


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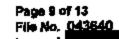
Page 8 of 13 File No. 043640 Insured:







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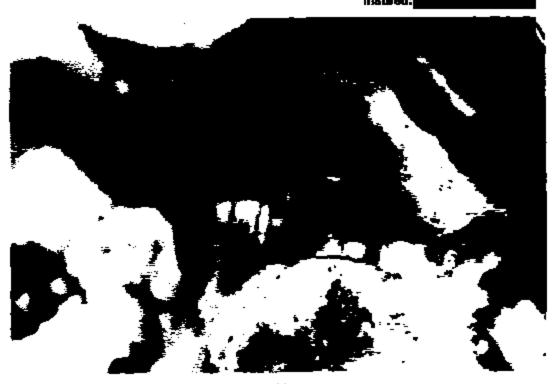






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Page 10 of 13 Flie No. <u>043640</u> Insured:





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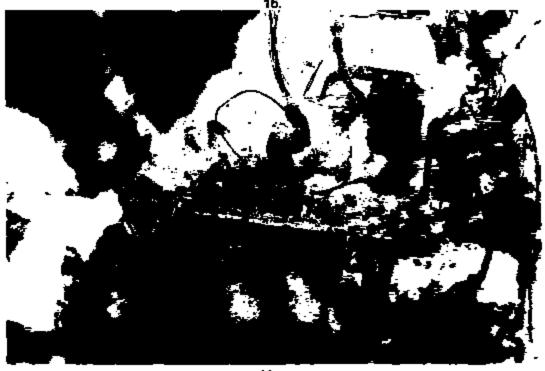
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Page 12 of 13 File No. 043840

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## ERIE INSURANCE COMPANY ERIE INSURANCE COMPANY OF NEW YORK

CONSUMER AFFAIRS SECTION

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JAN 1 1 2005

Ford Motor Corp P O Box 6248 Deserboin, MI 48126

Attention: Claim Dept

FORD MORNATER MARGO. RECEIVED JAN 1 \$ 2005 OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

Erie Insured Re: Erie File No.

> Date of loss : 11/24/2004

To Whom It May Concern:

This will serve as notice of our intention to file subrogation for damages from this fire loss.

Based on our investigation Ford Motor was negligent due to a manufacturing defect, which caused this engine fire that destroyed this truck.

We are atoring the 1999 Ford F150 VIN: 2FTRX17W6X at the location below for your inspection. Please notify us if there will be any destructive testing so we are able to have an expert on site.

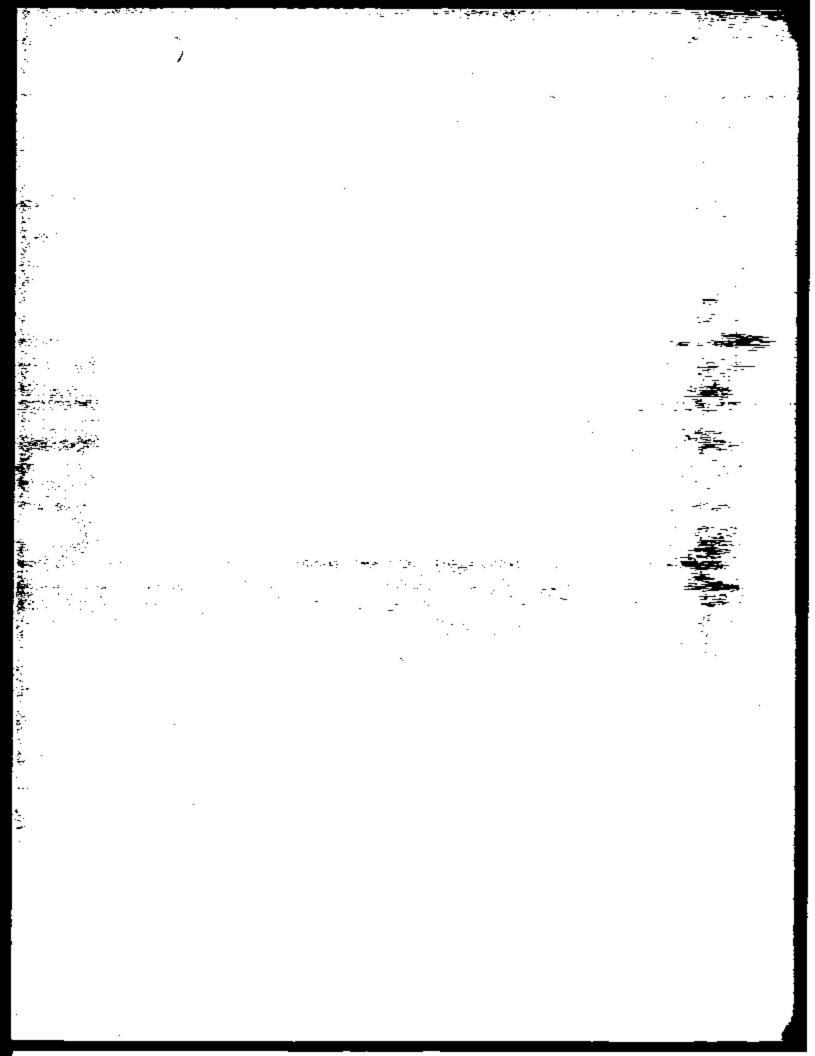
Insurance Auto Auction 522 Trolley Blvd Rochester, NY 14606 PH. 585-426-5420 Stock #1172708 Refer to Brian to inspect.

I request that you please provide us the name of the file handler and your file # once it is established.

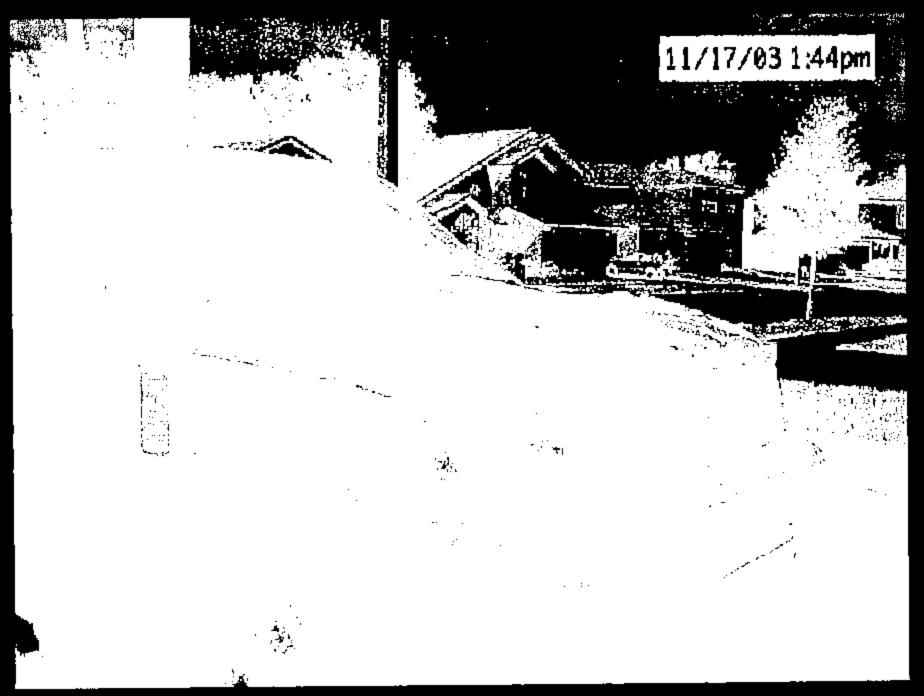
We look forward to your reply.

Claim Representative III

11/24/09/150 11/24

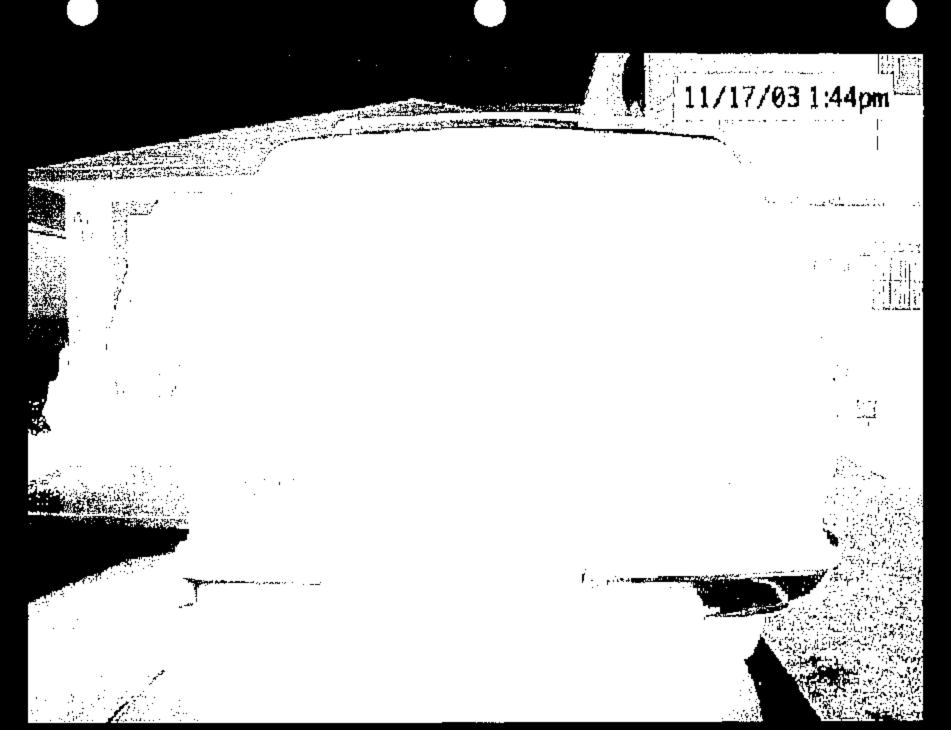


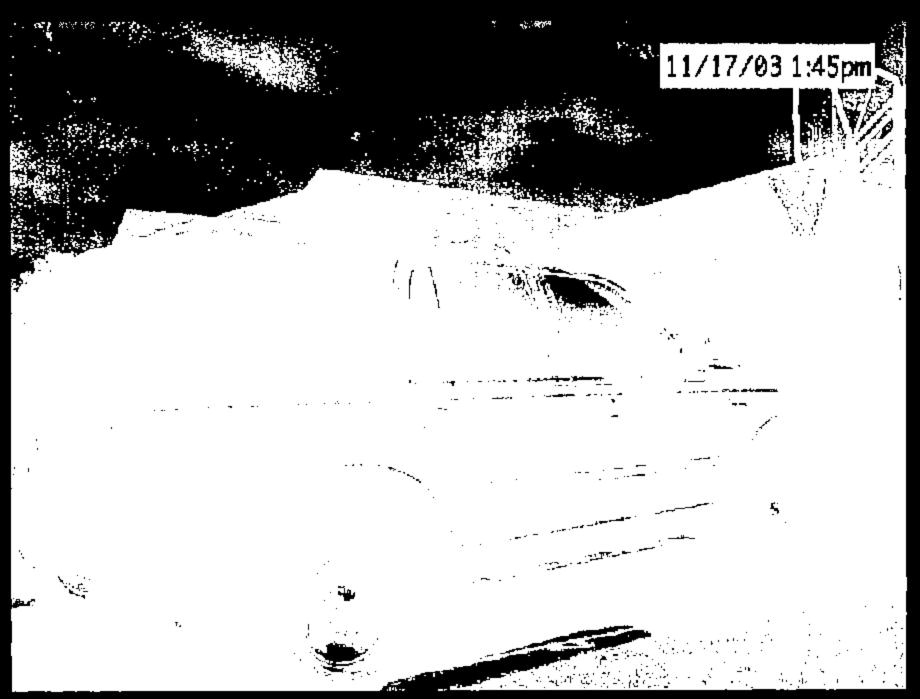






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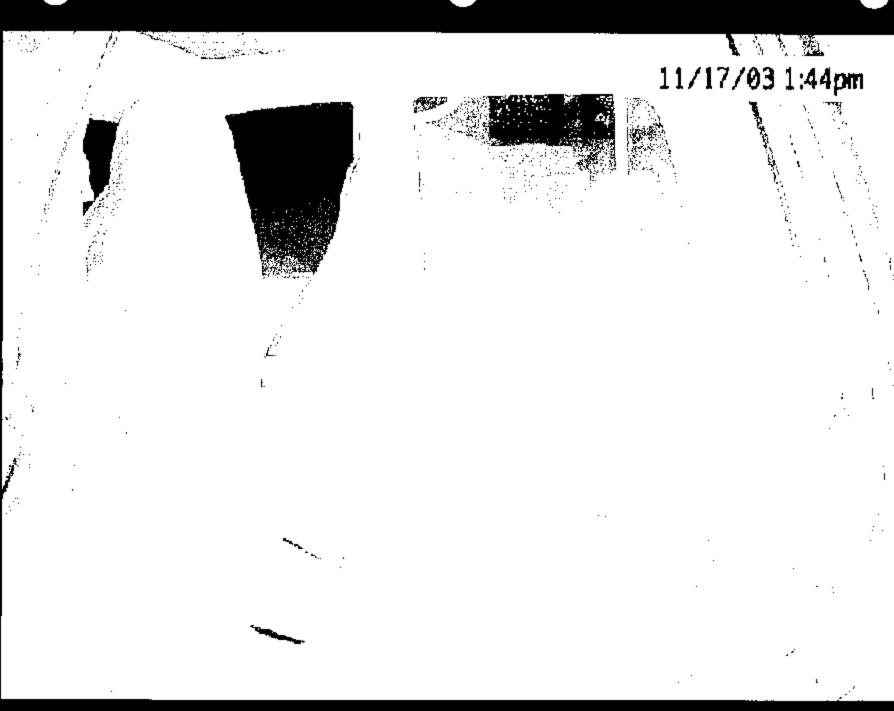


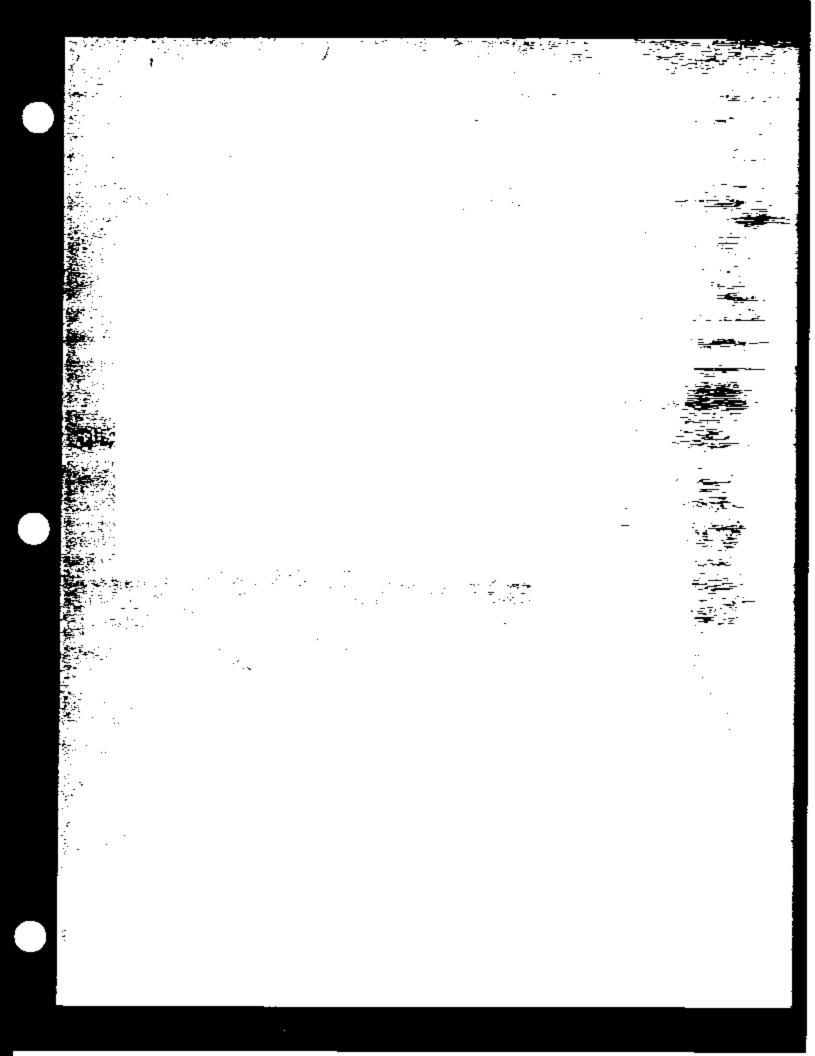
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11/17/03 1:44pm





## Interscience, Inc.



7705 Ann Ballard Road Tampa, FL 33634-2334 (813) 885-4774 Pax (813) 889-9157

Our Project No: K1386-02

Immred:

Claim No:

Date of Loss. Unknown

Date of Notification: December 9, 2003 Date of Inspection: December 11, 2003

> Report Prepared For:

State Farm Fire & Casualty Co. 14055 Riveredge Dr., Suite 500 Tampa, FL 33637

Attn: Mr. David Snively

Report Prepared By:

Sean P. Clince, B.S.M.E.

## Interscience, Inc.



January 5, 2004

7705 Ann Baltard Road Tempa, FL 33634-2334 (813) 885-4774 Fax (813) 889-9157

State Farm Fire & Casualty Co. 14055 Riveredge Dr., Suite 500 Tampa, FL 33637

Attn: Mr. David Snively

Re: Our Project No: K1386-02

Insured:

Claim No:

Date of Loss: Unknown

Date of Notification: December 9, 2003
Date of Inspection: December 11, 2003

Dear Mr. Snively:

As requested, Interscience, Inc. has conducted an examination of the insured vehicle in connection with the subject fire loss, and submits its findings in this report.

### BACKGROUND

It was reported that the subject vehicle had been parked in the garage of the insured's residence. The fire reportedly occurred when the insured was home. The insured had contacted the fire department and the fire was subsequently extinguished.

The insured had service work done on the vehicle approximately two months

prior to the fire. The service records of the vehicle were not submitted to

Interscience personnel for review. The investigation was therefore strictly limited to a physical examination of the subject vehicle.

The incident was reported to State Farm Insurance Company and Interscience, Inc. was subsequently requested to conduct an investigation into the subject claim. The vehicle was transported from the insured's residence to Co-Part located in Orlando, Florida.

### OBSERVATIONS/DISCUSSION

On December 11, 2003, Interscience, Inc. examined the subject vehicle at Co-Part located at 319 East Landstreet Rd., Orlando, Florida. The purpose of this visit was to conduct an origin and cause investigation of a vehicle fire.

The subject vehicle was identified as a black 1997 Ford Expedition, sport utility vehicle, bearing vehicle identification number (VIN) 1FMFU18L0V The odometer reading was 74481-miles at the time of the inspection.

An exterior examination of the subject vehicle was initially conducted. The whole exterior of the vehicle was coated in sout from the subject fire. This confirmed that the vehicle had been in an enclosed space such as a garage at the time of the fire.



The hood of the engine compartment had a hole located on the driver's side of the vehicle. This was caused by the subject fire which had melted the metal of the vehicles hood. The wind shield of the vehicle on the driver's side had sustained fire damage as a result of radiant heat from the eagine compartment.

Essentially no fire or smoke damage was observed on the interior of the vehicle. The interior fuse panel was examined and three fuses were observed to have been blown. The fuses were identified as two 15-smps and one 5-amp. The fuse diagram was not available for identifying the components that the fuses were in line with.

The engine compartment was systematically and thoroughly inspected and photo documented. The area of fire origin was determined to be located within the engine compartment on the driver's side of the vehicle. Evidence remaining indicated that the cause of the fire was most probably electrical in nature. After all debris was inspected in place in an effort to identify any fire causing item or items, suspect electrical components were collected. A preliminary examination of some of these components was conducted on site. These same components were retained for further examination.

An examination of the components retained was conducted at Interscience, Inc. facility located in Tampa, Florida. Examination of the electrical components

Interscience, Inc.

from the engine compartment identified evidence of arcing in and at wiring/components of the distribution box in the area of relays and circuit breakers.

#### CONCLUSIONS

It is the conclusion of Interscience, Inc. that the area of fire origin was located within the engine compartment of the vehicle. The point of origin was within the distribution box located in the engine compartment.

The cause of this fire was most likely short circuiting of the electrical wiring/components of the distribution box resulting in arcing. The cause of the arcing could not be conclusively determined. No other failure was identified during the examination of the vehicle.

Interscience, Inc. operates as an independent contractor. The opinions expressed are based upon information available at the time this report was drafted and draw upon the background, training and experience of the personnel involved in the investigation.

Respectfully submitted,

INTERSCIENCE, INC.

Sean P. Clinca, B.S.M.E.

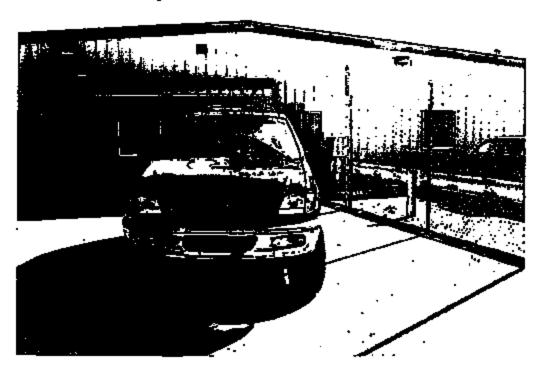
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Reviewed by,

Gene Bullington

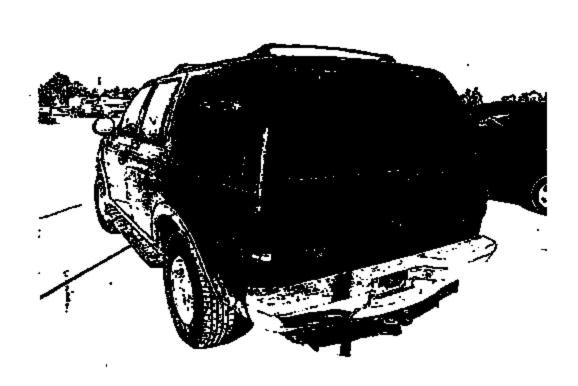
## PHOTO INDEX - K1386-02

1-8. Exterior views of the subject vehicle.



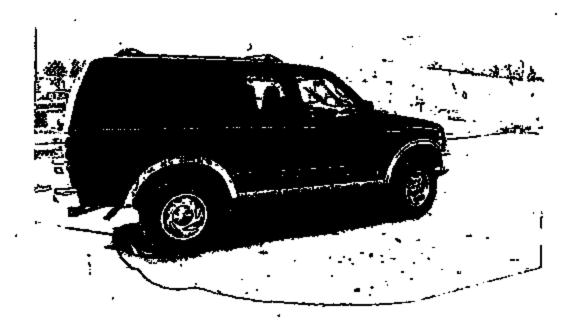


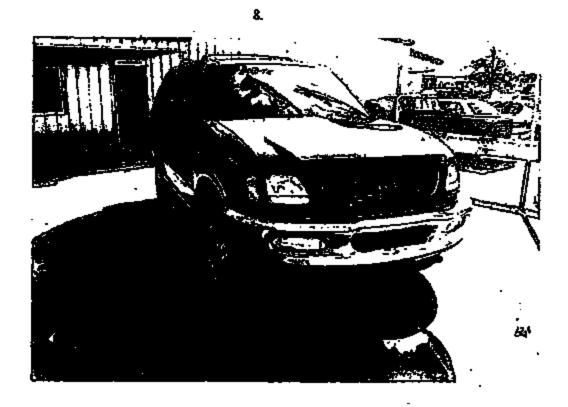




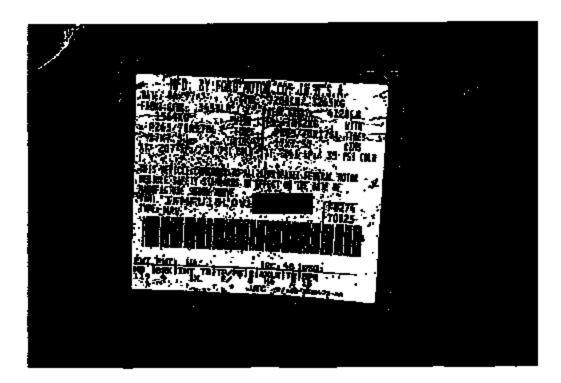








### 9. Vehicle identification decal.



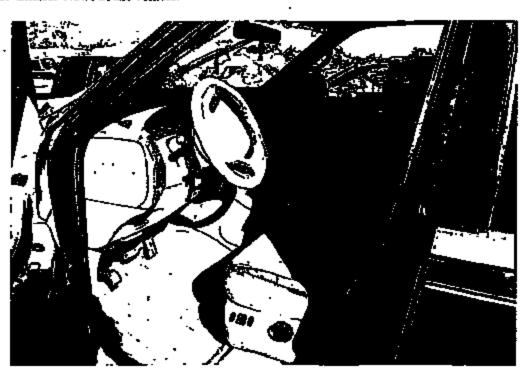
#### 10. Co-Part lot number.



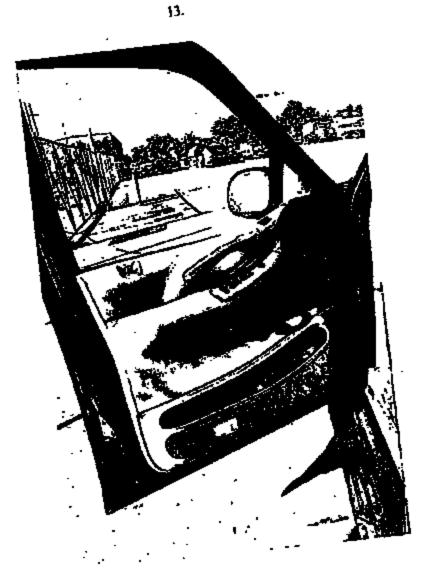
### . 11. Odorneter reading.

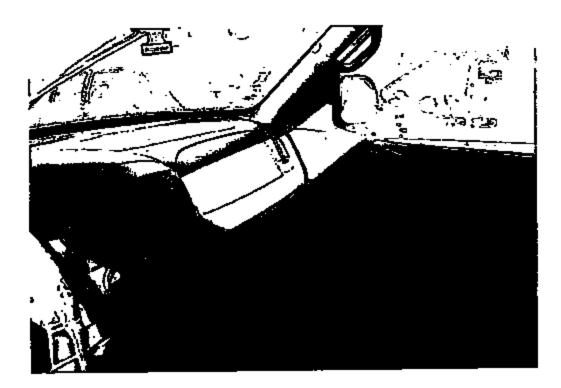


12-25. Interior views of the vehicle.







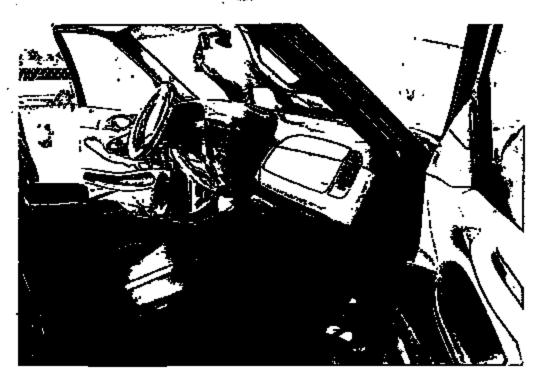








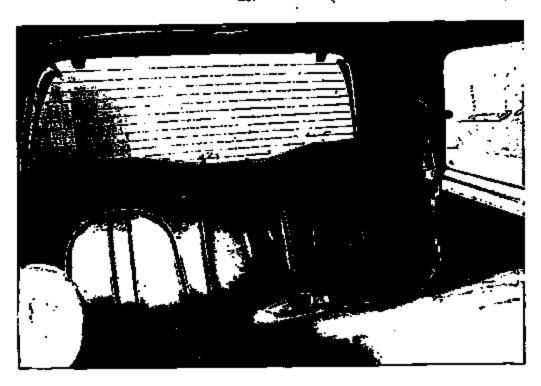


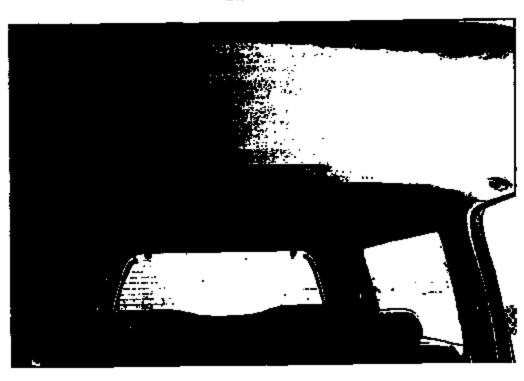


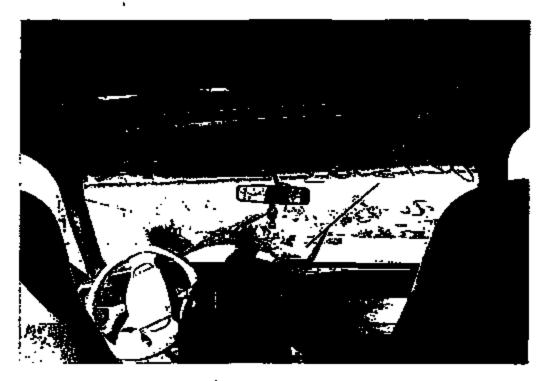




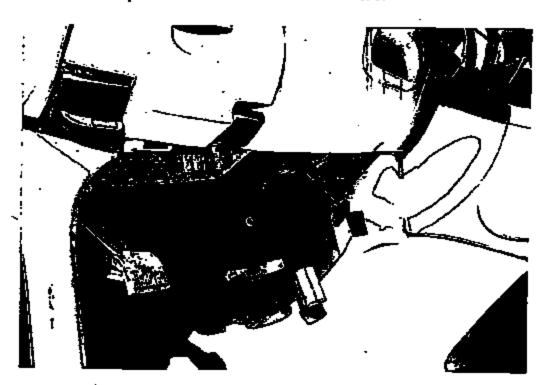




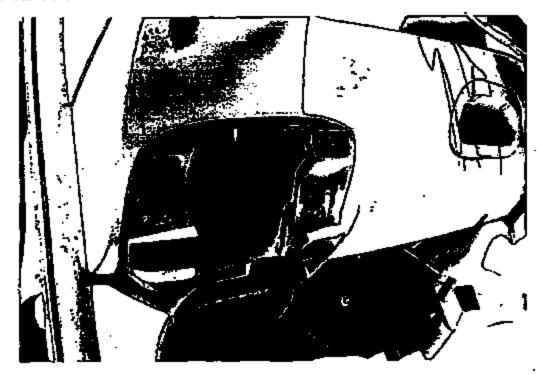


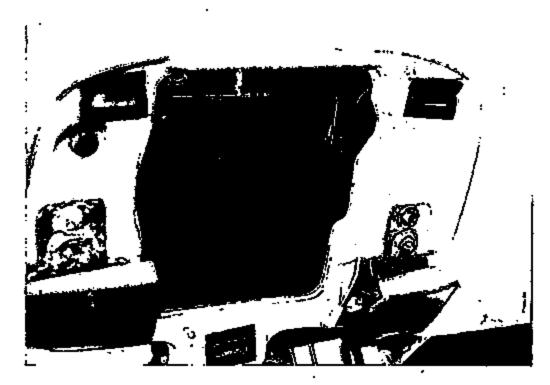


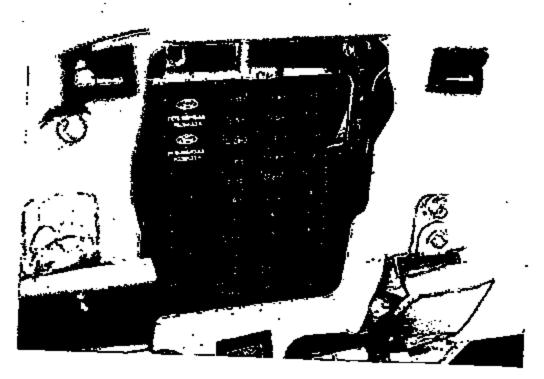
26. View of driver compartment in the location of the interior fuse box.



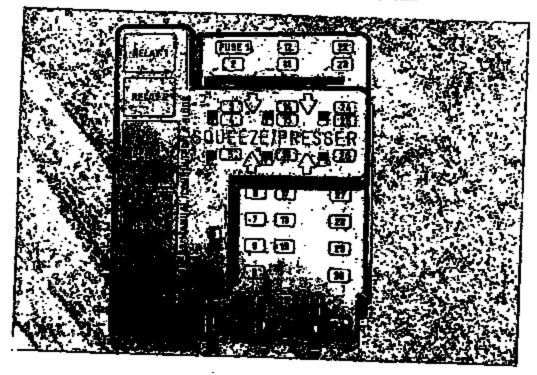
27-28. Views of the interior fuse box.



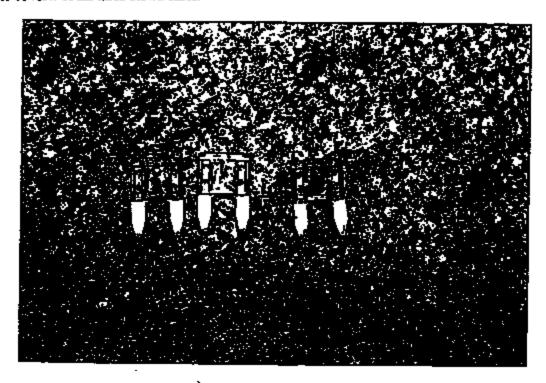




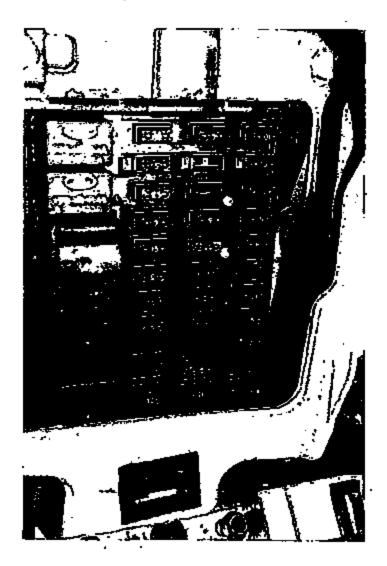
30. The fuse locations indicated by numbers on the exterior of the fuse box.



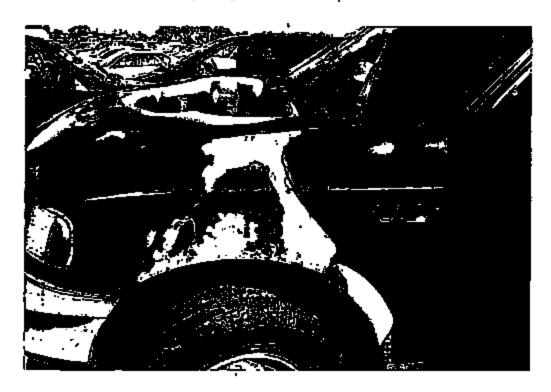
#### 31. A view of the three blown fuscs.



32. A view of the interior fuse panel with the blown fuses removed.

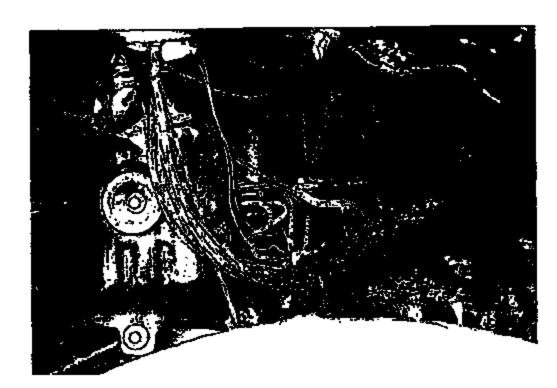


33. Fire damage to exterior front quarter panel on the driver's side.

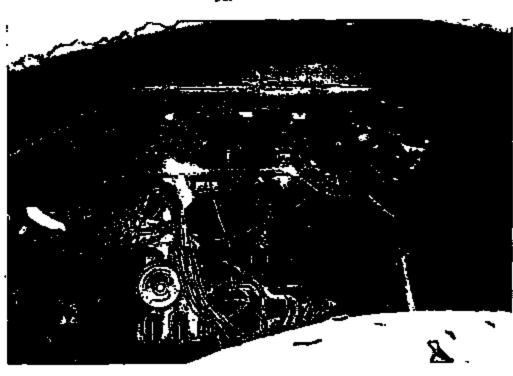


34-36. Views of the fire daringe through the driver side wheel well.





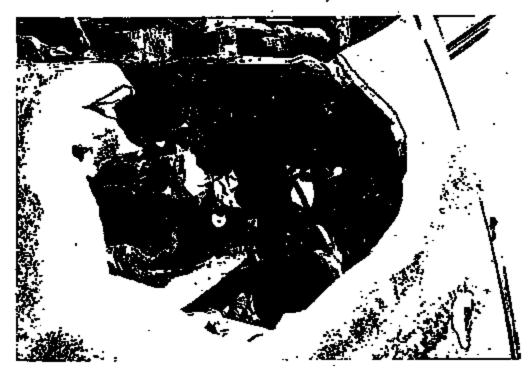




# 37. Fire damage to the front windshield.

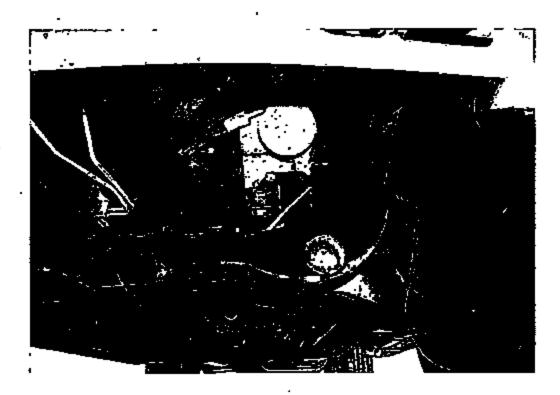


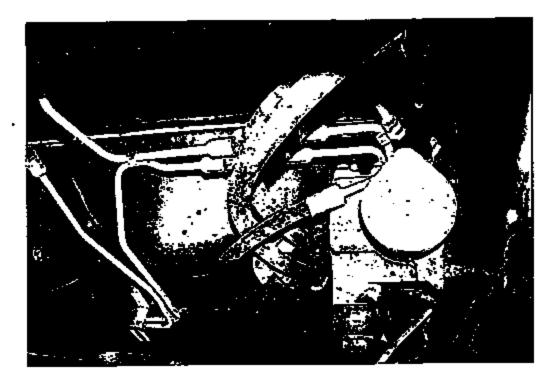
38. Hole in vehicle hood caused by fire.



39-42. Views of the engine compartment from below the vehicle.







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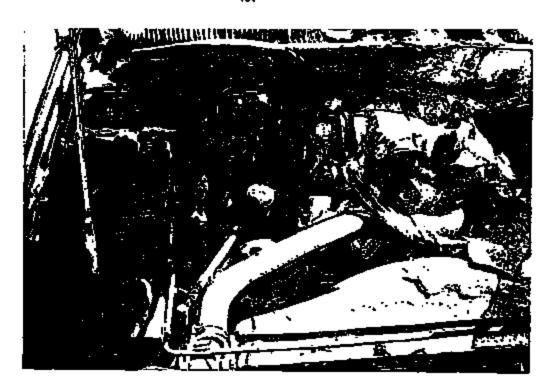


#### 43. View of the under side of the hood.



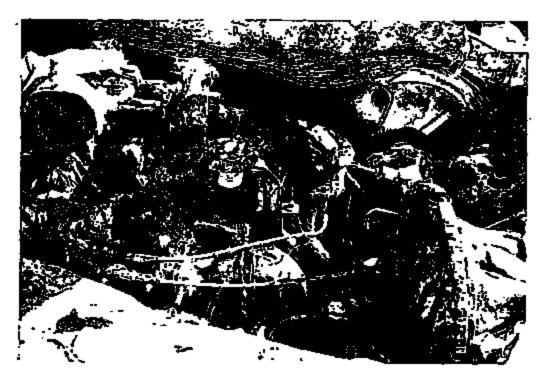
44-47. Views of the fire damage within the engine compertment.



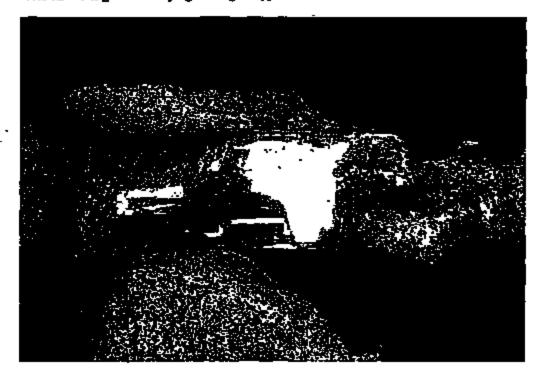






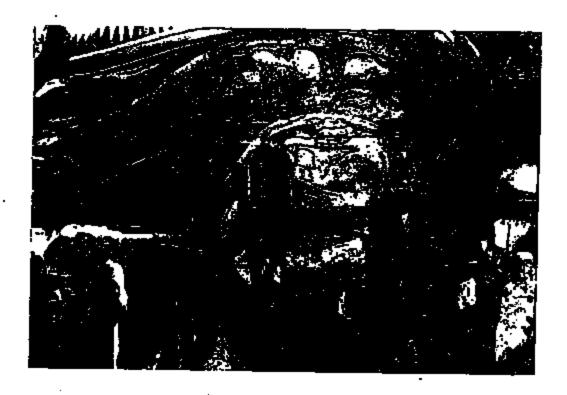


48. Decal on the engine identifying the engine type.



49-50. Damage to plastic components caused by radiant heat.





# 51. A view of the engine compartment fuse box in place.



52. A view of the engine compartment fuse box being removed for examination.



53-54. Views of electrical damage to fuse box components.





55-57. Views of fuse box mounting bracket.







58-59. Views of the engine compartment with electrical components and wiring removed.





60-62. Views of the examination of the fuse box mounting bracket.







#### 63. A view of the electrical components retrieved for examination.

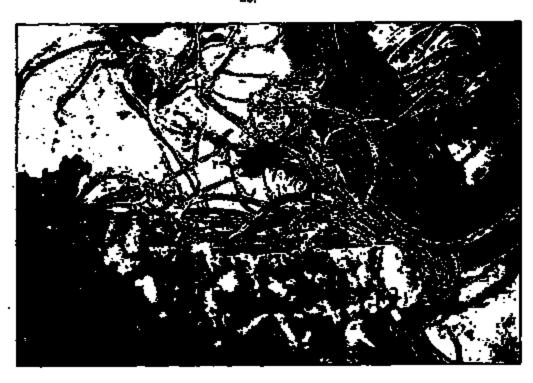


64-66. Views of the examination of the fuse box.

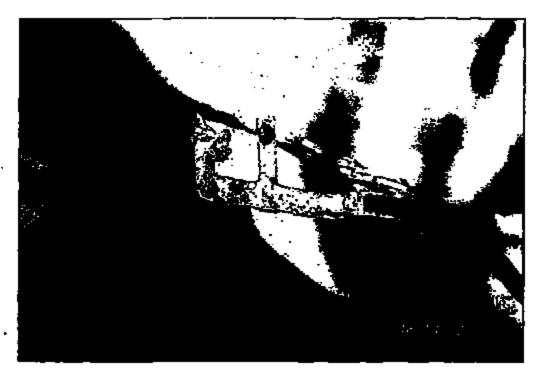




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67-68. Evidence of electrical arcing at an electrical component.





## 69. Evidence of electrical arcing at an electrical conductor.



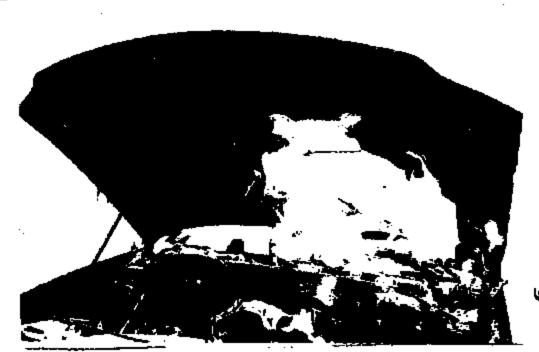
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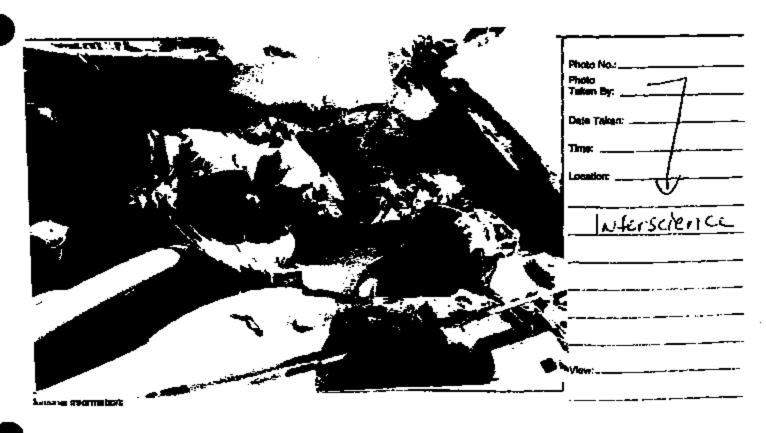
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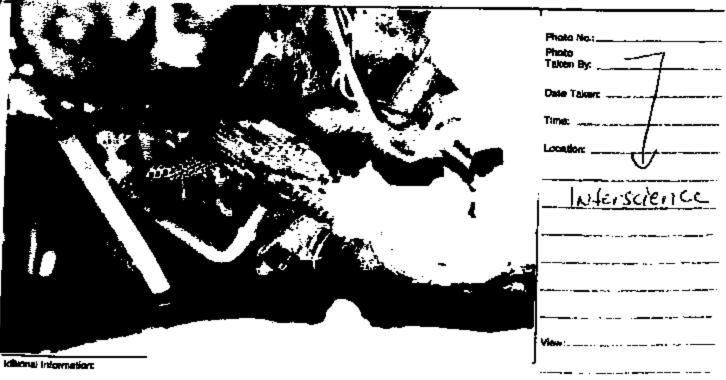


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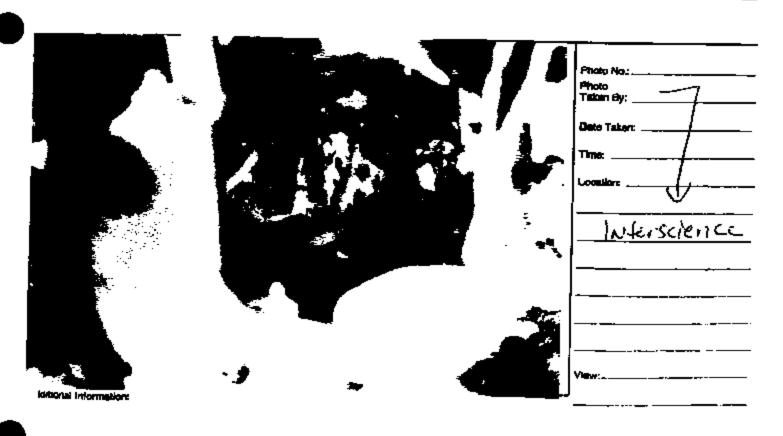
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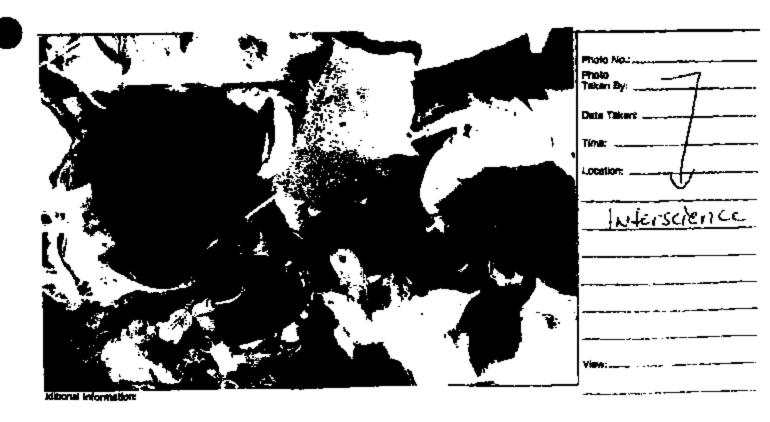


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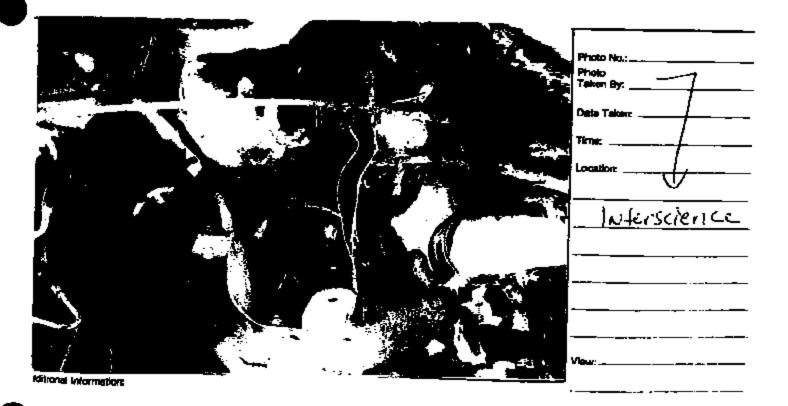
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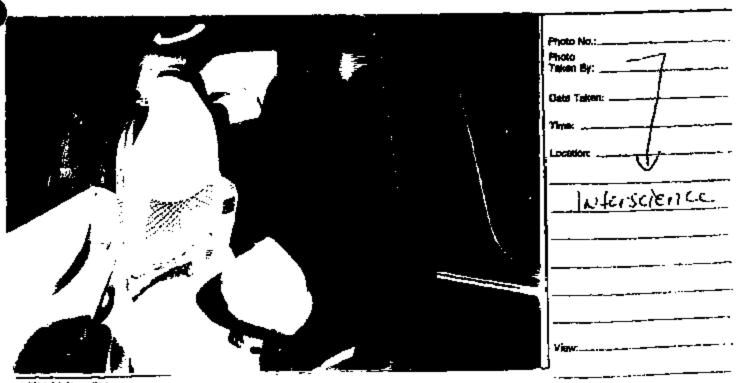
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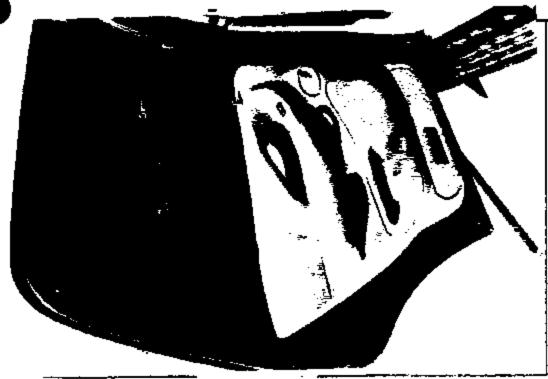


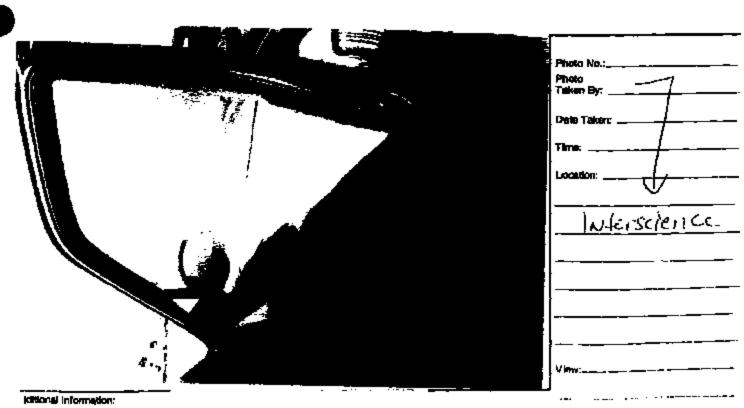
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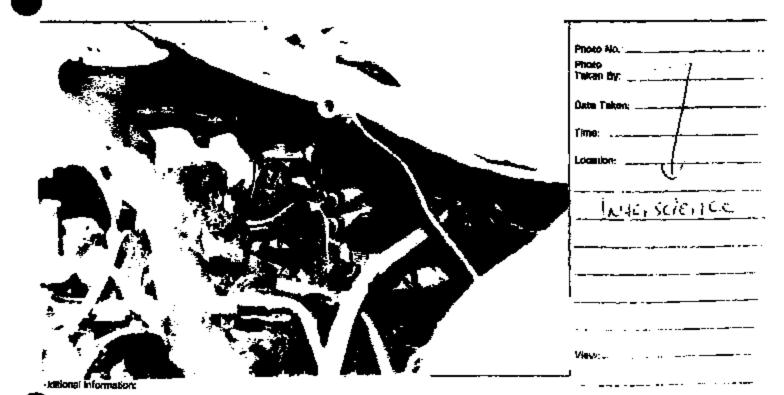
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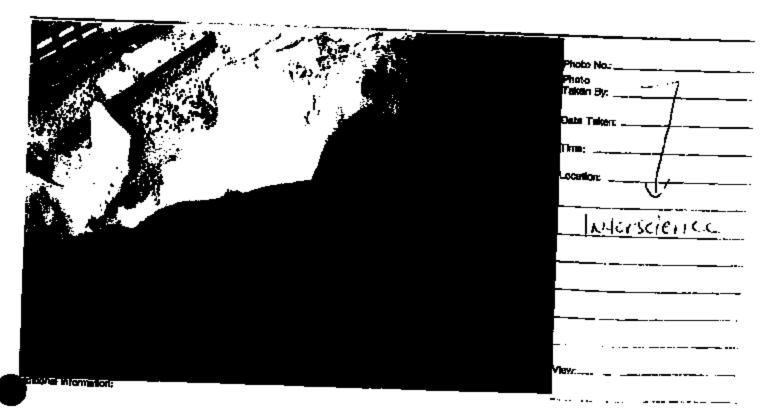
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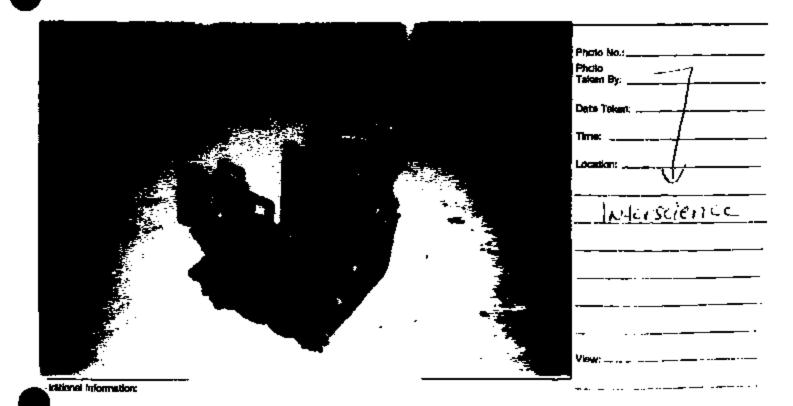
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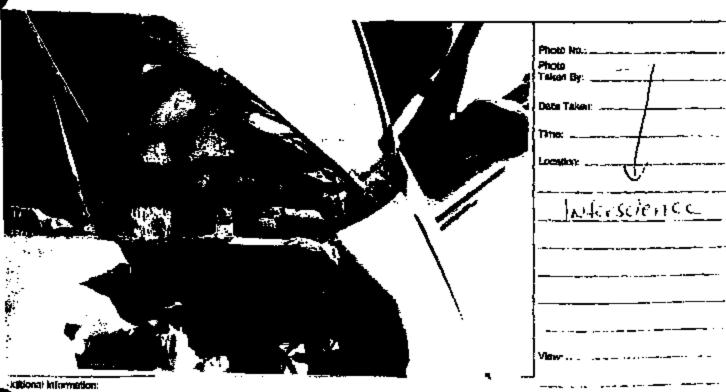
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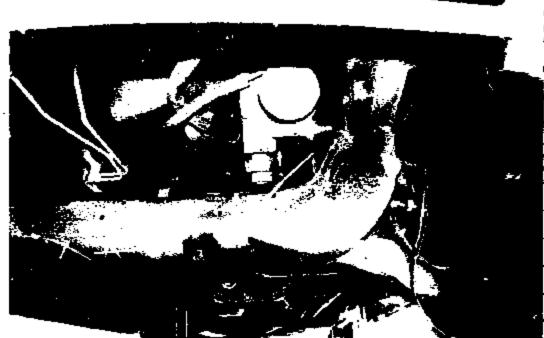
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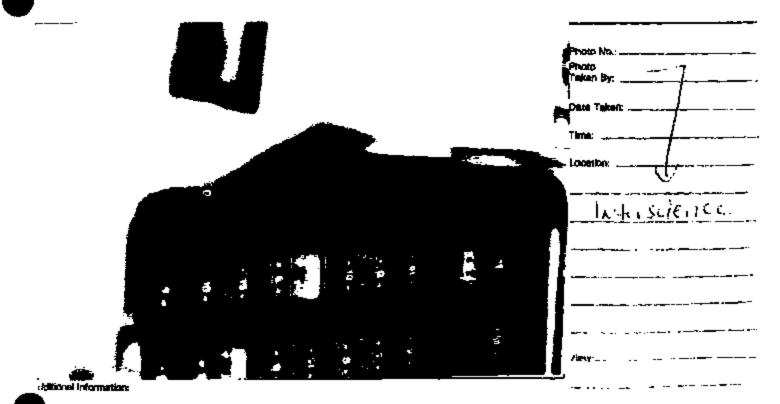
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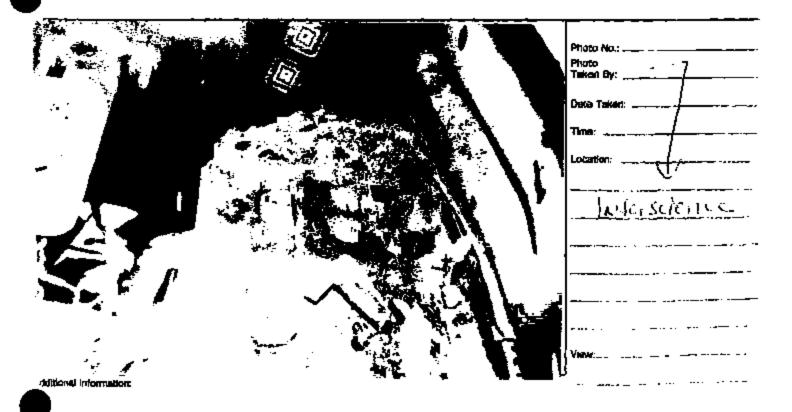
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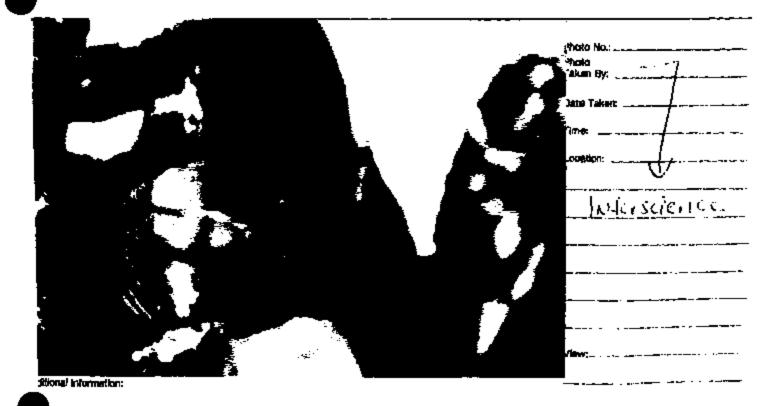
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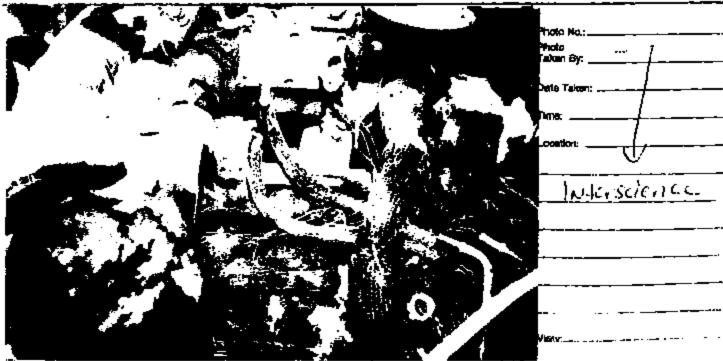
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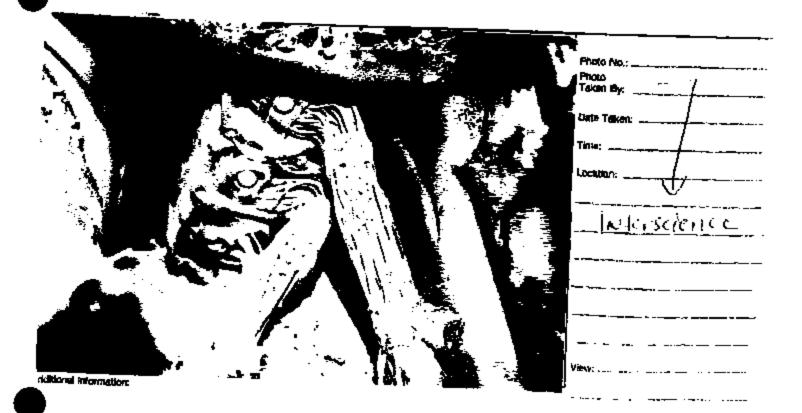
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VANCE, LOTANE & BOOKHARDT, P.A. ATTORNEYS AT LAW 1980 Michigan Avenue

Cocca, Plurida 32922

October 6, 2004

Tulephone: (321) 636-4861

L. Alexander Vance Troy R. Lotana Surred Bookbards, III Pacsimile: (321) 636-4865

Brest A. Hwile Michael R. Cook Eric L. Hostetler

Ford Motor Company Parkiand Towers West Three Parkland Blvd #300 Dearborn, MI 48126

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State Farm Claim No:

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Total Amount of Loss State Farm Claim #: State Farm's Payment

Insured's Payment Your Claim Number Your Policy Number

Your Insured:

November 14, 2003

**514.418.05** 59-Y580-679 OCT 1 3 2004 \$14,168.05 **\$2**50.00 OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

Unknown Unknown Ford Motor Company

Dear Insurance Carrier:

Our law firm is handling the above subrogation claim on behalf of State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company. We have been informed that you are the Insurance carrier for the party designated as your insured in the caption of this letter.

Our investigation establishes that your insured was responsible for the above loss as a result of the accident on the date indicated.

Please accept this letter as a notice of State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company 's subrogation right and request you communicate directly with us in regard to your position on the matter. Kindly make your check payable to Vance, Lotane & Bookhardt, Trust Account and mail it to the address indicated above. Our Federal Tax I.D.

We have enclosed the supports for the above claim. If you have accepted liability, please forward your check to our address above.

Please do not attempt to communicate with State Farm Insurance Company as you will only be redirected to our office. If you need to discuss this matter please call me at 1-800-807-3334 Ext. 132.

Yours very truly,

Pat Hodge

PAT HODGE

Collections Department

PH/fil 30**09129**).