

Try our energy quiz to see if you're saving money

Are you an energy wise homeowner? Try this quiz to find out.

1. When insulation work is undertaken, it is important to meet or exceed the recommended thermal resistance values. Can you match the value or range of values listed below to the correct area?

- a) RSI 4.7 (R 27)
 - b) RSI 2.2 (R 13)
 - c) RSI 4.7 to 7.1 (R 27 to 40)
 - d) RSI 3.0 to 4.5 (R 17 to 26)
- 1) roof or ceiling
 - 2) floor over unheated spaces
 - 3) frame walls
 - 4) basement walls

2. True or false?

a) The thermal resistance value of insulation is based solely on thickness. 25 millimetres of any type of insulation will always insulate as well as 25 millimetres of another.

b) Increasing insulation is always the first step homeowners should take to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. It's the best investment for your energy conservation dollar.

c) Fluorescent light use 60 to 75 per cent less energy to produce the same amount of light as incandescent bulbs - and last longer.

d) For each degree you set your thermostat above 20 C (on a 24-hour basis), your fuel consumption will increase an average of 5 per cent.

e) Caulking materials are all the same. Any one type can seal the different joints in your house as well as another, so it makes sense to buy the least costly product.

f) Because hot air rises, insulating the attic will generally make a house passably energy efficient.

Answers

1. a-2; b-4; c-1; d-3.

2. a) False. The thermal resistance of insulation is not based solely on its thickness. It is measured in RSI (metric) or R (imperial). The higher the RSI or R value, the better the material insulates. In some cases, two millimetres of one type of insulation can have a lower thermal resistance value than one millimetre of another material.

b) False. No single efficiency measure will always be most appropriate in every case. Assess other air leakage in your home, existing levels of insulation and the condition of the heating system before beginning an energy conservation program.

c) True. Small energy saving measures like changing from incandescent to fluorescent fixture can really add up.

d) True. And the reverse is also true: for each degree you set your thermostat below 20 C on a 24-hour basis, fuel consumption will drop by about 5 per cent.

e) False. Some caulking materials are safe or appropriate only for use outside. Others are designed for special applications, such as areas subject to high moisture levels. Some materials dry clear and others can be painted over after they are dry.

It is always best to choose carefully as many materials as required for the applications you have

planned. Inexpensive caulking materials may not be very durable or effective.

f) False. Heat moves in many directions - up, down or sideways as long as it's moving from a warm spot to a colder one. Attic insulation will help improve the energy efficiency of your home but by itself will not make your home energy efficient. Other measures, such as comprehensive draftproofing and basement wall insulation, also warrant serious consideration.

Give your home a fall tune-up

Once again, it's the time of year to pack away the beach balls, lawn chairs and other summer paraphernalia and brace your home for the onslaught of cooler weather.

And while winter may still seem like a distant reality, it will arrive on your doorstep sooner than you think - literally.

So, before you get "left out in the cold," with a drafty, poorly insulated home, now's the ideal time to give it a thorough fall tune-up to make sure it operates at peak level this fall and winter.

Much like the engine of a car, your home deserves ongoing maintenance. And since your home likely represents the largest single investment you've ever made, doesn't it make sense to treat it to some tender loving care?

Check Windows and Doors

It's a good idea to start with a thorough check of your windows and doors. Cracks around these areas can let in chilly drafts while letting valuable heat out.

You can check for drafts quite easily by holding up a feather or a piece of tissue paper suspended from a hanger to the areas where you suspect there may be leaks. If the feather or tissue moves independently, you've located a draft.

To solve this problem, you can caulk or apply weather stripping. These can be purchased at your local hardware or building centre. Both materials are available under a wide variety of product names.

If your windows or doors are in extremely poor shape, you may want to think about replacing them altogether with some of today's energy-efficient alternatives.

Also make sure there are no drafts coming in around your power outlets. These should be properly insulated as well.

Synthetic Foams

For large gaps or holes, there are several varieties of synthetic spray-foams that you can buy. A small amount is squirted into the gap and it expands to fill the hole. Excess material can then be removed. This dense filler is an ideal way to insulate around difficult, hard-to-reach areas.

When using any of these products, be sure to read the manufacturer's instructions and follow them carefully, because some substances can irritate skin and eyes.

Check Basement

Conduct the same draft test on all floors of your home - including your basement. And while you're down there, check around for any cracks or holes in the foundation walls - if your basement is unfinished. These should be repaired before they worsen. If you don't think you'll be able to handle the job yourself, consult an expert.

If your basement is unfinished, you may want to think about insulating the whole thing. Again, if you're not particularly handy, you may want to hire a contractor for this type of undertaking.

Furnace or Boiler

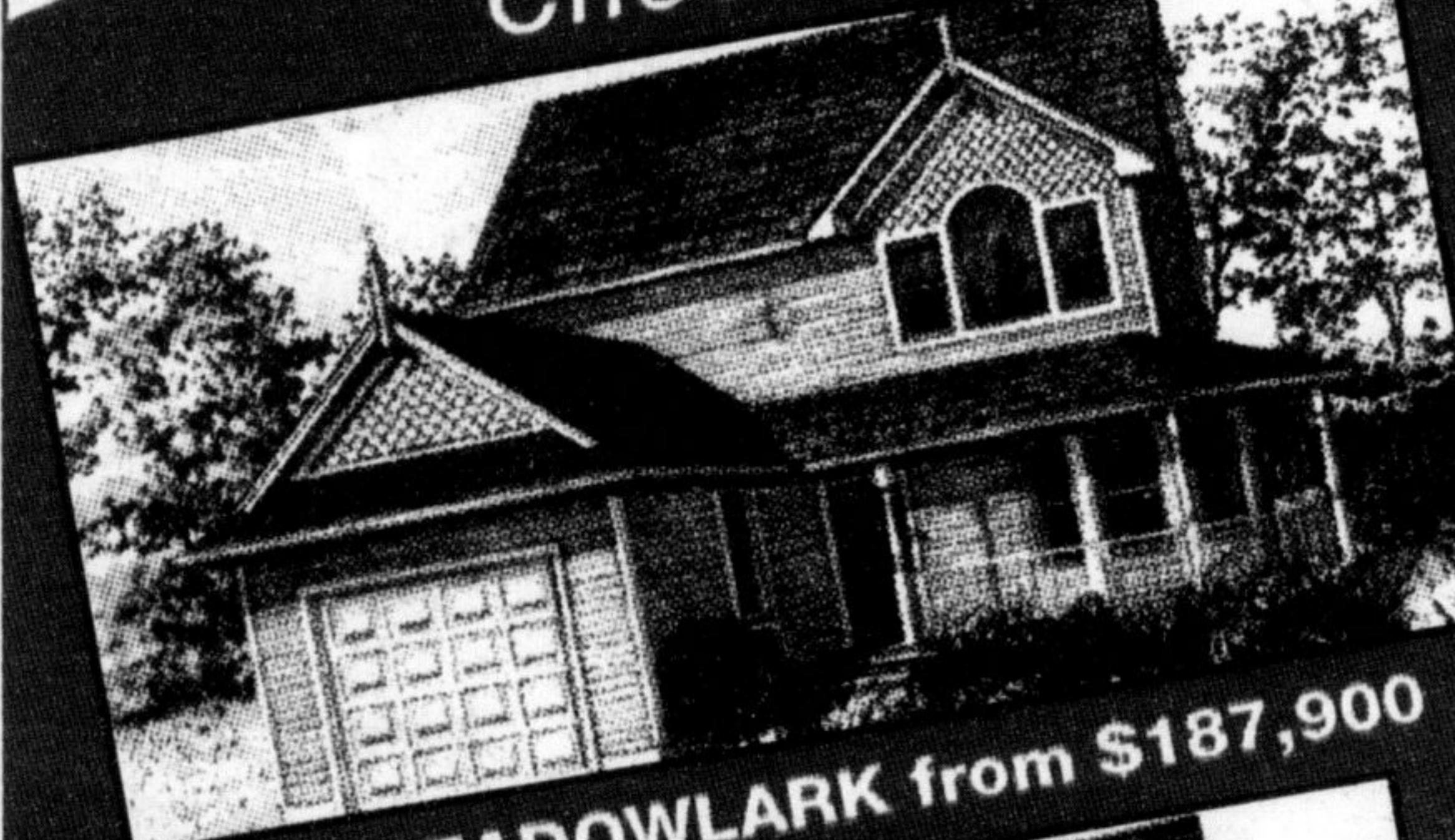
While still in the basement, be sure to check your furnace or boiler. This, after all, is the "hub" of your heating system and requires regular maintenance to give you good performance. Ideally, it should be checked annually by an expert to make sure everything is in good working order.

It's probably advisable to try and book a "checkup" or cleaning with your utility or fuel company before the fall rush gets into full swing.


Also be sure and move any items you may have stored near or around your furnace or boiler before turning it on - and make sure the space around it is clean and free of dust or combustible materials.

Only 18 Lots Left


6 Designs to Choose From



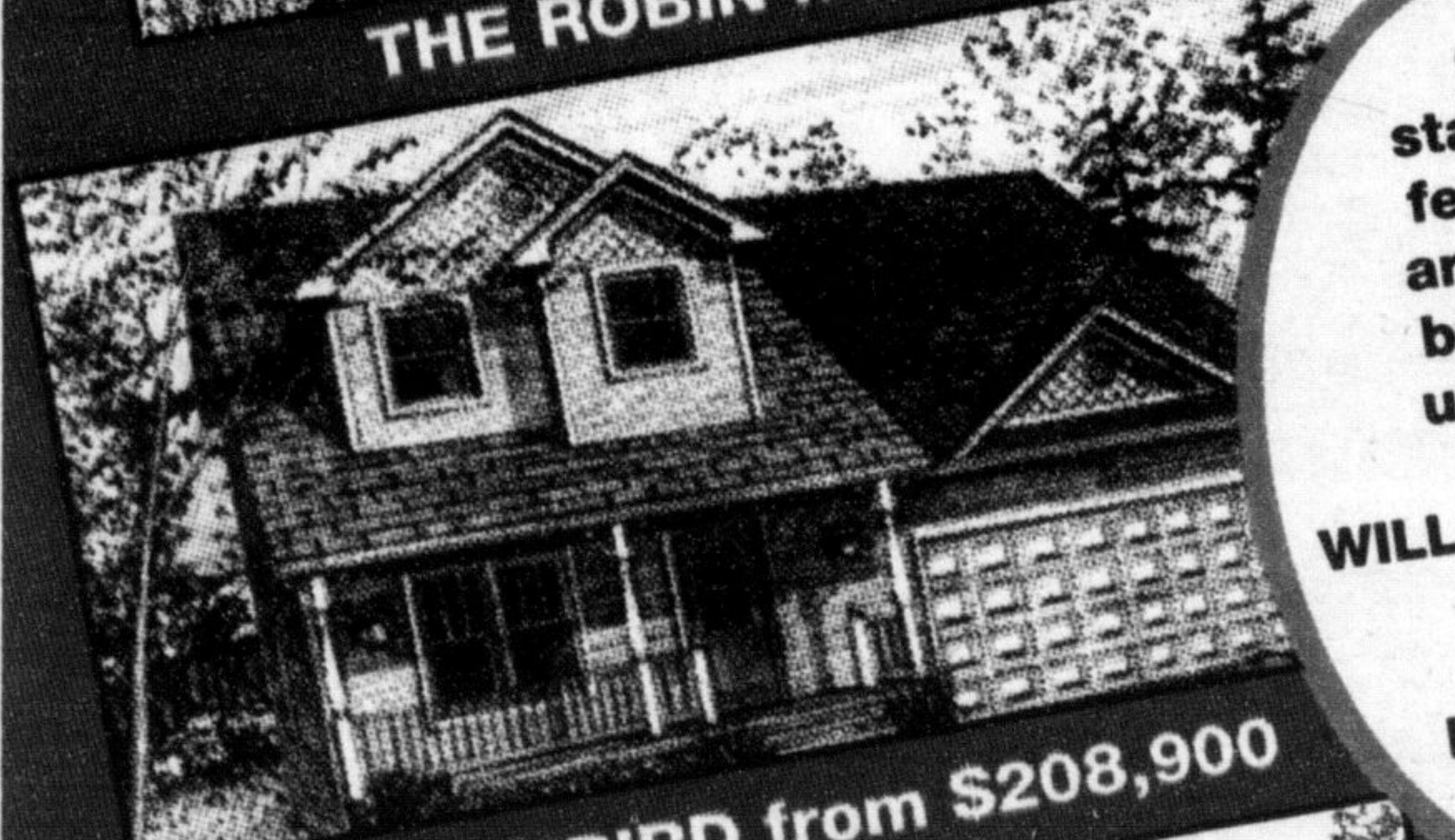
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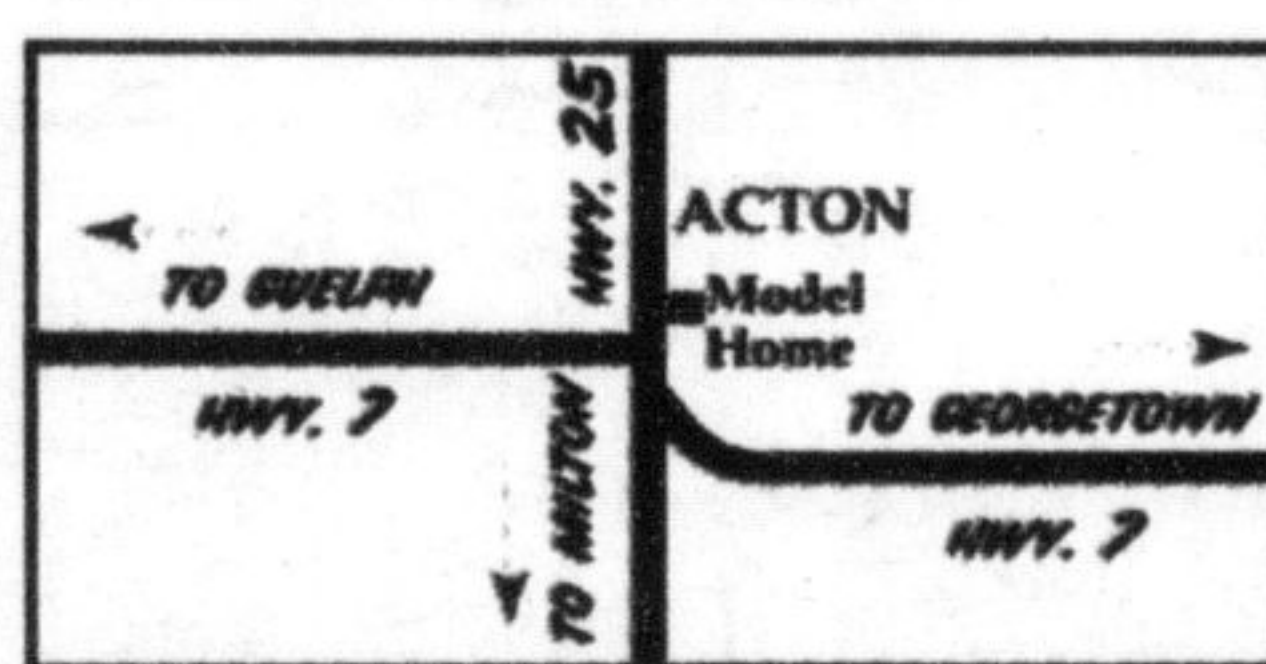


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- walk out basement
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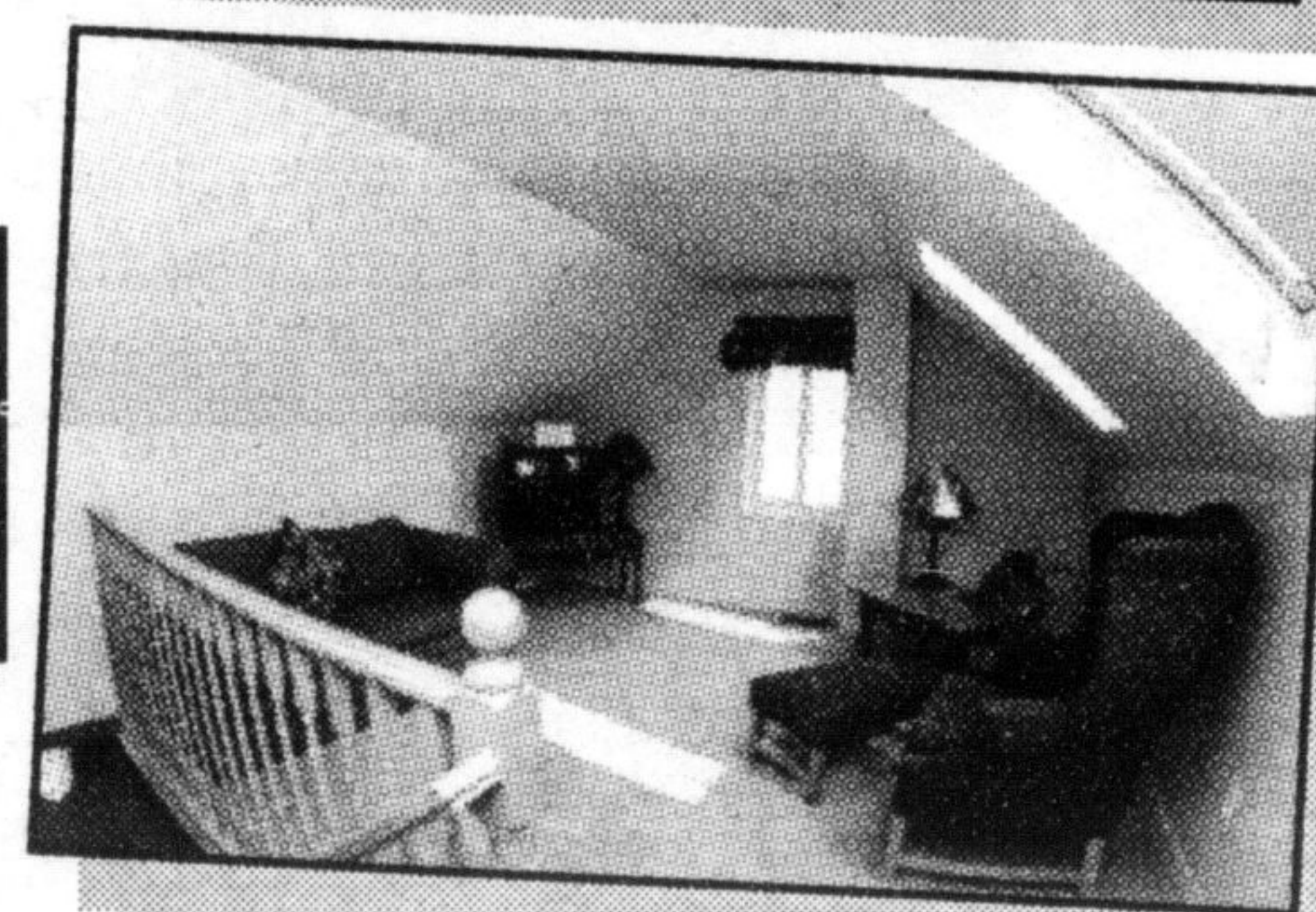
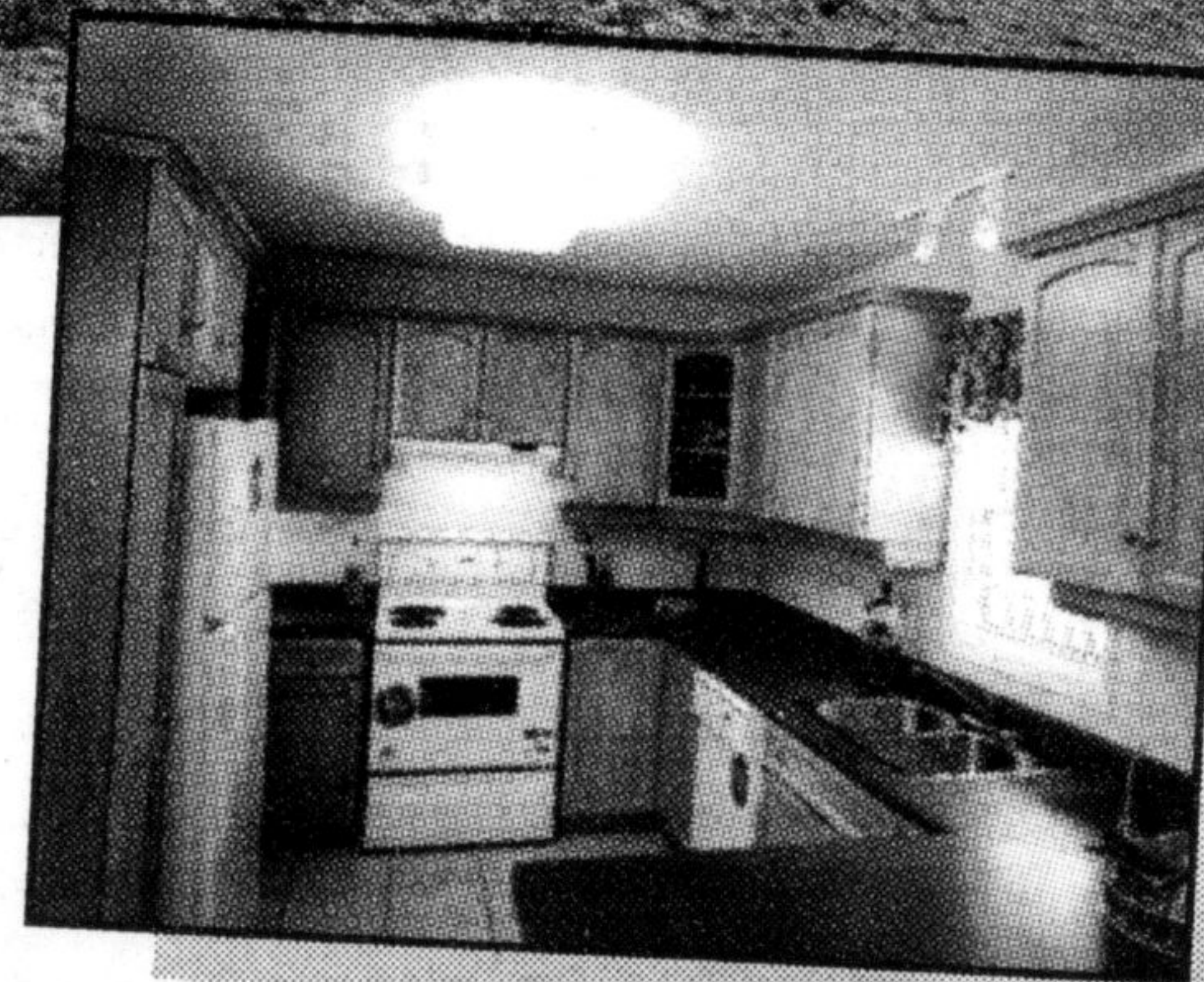
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