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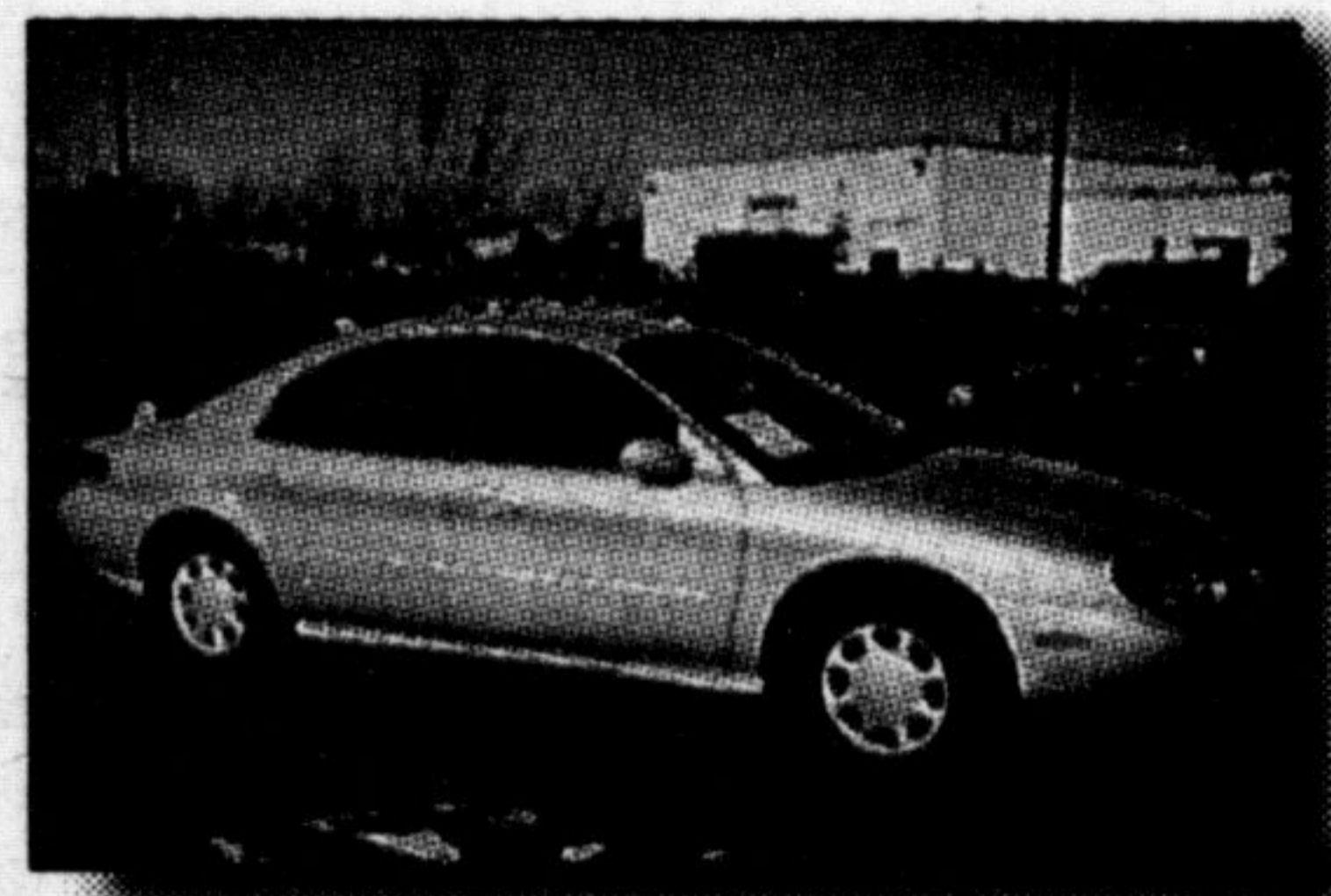
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Police identify explosion victim

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

The Champion

A 54-year-old man has been identified as the victim of a mysterious explosion that destroyed an historic home just north of Campbellville.

Halton Regional Police confirmed that Rudy Stotyn — recently separated from his wife Slobodanka Stotyn, who was listed as the property owner — died in the blast that levelled a Guelph Line residence early Thursday morning.

He was living alone in the farm house, built in 1830, at the time.

His body was found amid the ruins at 7:20 p.m., roughly six hours after a 911 operator received a call from a passing motorist who discovered the two-storey structure levelled and in flames.

Mr. Stotyn, identified through fingerprints, was confirmed as the only victim when the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office finished sifting through the wreckage Saturday.

Death caused by explosion

Initial evidence showed that the deceased — whose widow resides in Caledon East but was unavailable for comment — had no injuries other than those inflicted by the explosion.

Police said no foul play is suspected with regard to the body, but the cause of the fire remains under investigation. The home was not heated with natural gas or propane.

"We have our own theories about what happened, but nothing can be confirmed until tests come back from the Centre for Forensic Sciences in Toronto," said Detective Sergeant Jackie Gordon of Halton Regional Police Service.

"It may be some time before we have anything to divulge."

The body of the victim was found in the southwest corner of the home when local firefighters searched through the debris at first light Thursday.

They arrived 11 minutes after the initial call for help and discovered the house aflame. Hose lines had to be set up in order to protect a three-car garage and office located behind the home.

Debris was scattered as far as 100 feet to the north and west and startled residents as much as a quarter of a mile away.

The owner of a computer resale company in Mississauga, Mr. Stotyn had purchased the house in 1997 for \$500,000 and put it in his wife's name. It carried a \$390,000 mortgage.

Couple in midst of property settlement

The couple had split up in the summer and were in the midst of a property settlement at the time of the blast.

Before moving in two years ago, Mr. Stotyn conducted extensive research into the history of the home. His inquiries included a visit to Guelph Line neighbour John Currie, who was born in the house in 1922.

"He was very interested in its history," said Mr. Currie Thursday morning, displaying an old photograph of the home. "However, he only came over that one time. I probably wouldn't know him to see him."

An official statement from police as to the cause of the explosion is not expected for at least a couple of weeks.



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