

Passengers remain calm as truck slams into train

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in the rear two cars.

Crew member Gilbert Guerra was in the last car when the train hit the truck. He said he heard and felt two loud bumps and then a third, at which time he knew the train was off the track. Mr. Guerra was thrown backward against a refrigerator.

"(The passengers) were very calm," said Mr. Guerra, who has been involved in four derailments in a 27-year career. "These people should be commended."

The truck was torn in two by the impact of the collision. The truck's gravel box lay parallel to the tracks while the rest of the vehicle lay twisted about 40 feet away down a small embankment.

"It was just ripped apart," said Rob Van Ravens, who was working at a neighbouring home at the time of the accident. "We just peeked in. The driver was upside down and we just saw his

legs scrunched up."

Most of the passengers had left the train when the Halton Hills Fire Department arrived about 10 minutes after receiving the call, but several remained inside.

"We did a thorough search of the train to make sure all of the people were safely off," said Halton Hills Fire Chief Bill Cunningham. "Because of the nature of the injuries, we stabilized some of the passengers and brought them out on stretchers, which was a bit of a challenge with the train being a double decker."

Don Trant, vice-president of patients programs at Georgetown Hospital, said passengers were treated for head, neck, chest and knee injuries.

"I was just sitting there and heard a big bang, when we hit. There were some people who landed on the floor, but I was still in my seat. I was actually surprised, I thought it would have been worse. I guess we were lucky, since we sat in the back, away from the crash," said Britt Grant of Toronto.

Bob White, acting fire captain, said people appeared shaken up and very disoriented. Acting Captain White said some of the seats in the train car were twisted.

Mr. Regimbal said speed limits for trains are 70 mph, but drop to 45 mph where the accident occurred. He said that rail line carries mostly freight traffic and is seldom used for passenger trains.

The line was expected to re-open at press time yesterday following a two-day investigation and clean-up.



Photo courtesy of H.A.R.P. Security (Air Division) of Oakville

The VIA Rail train derailed at the Fourth Line crossing north of No. 22 Sideroad in Limehouse.



Firefighters remove an injured passenger from the VIA Rail train that derailed after it was struck by a truck Tuesday morning.



Emergency crews survey the damage to the rail car where the truck hit.

Photos by TED BROWN

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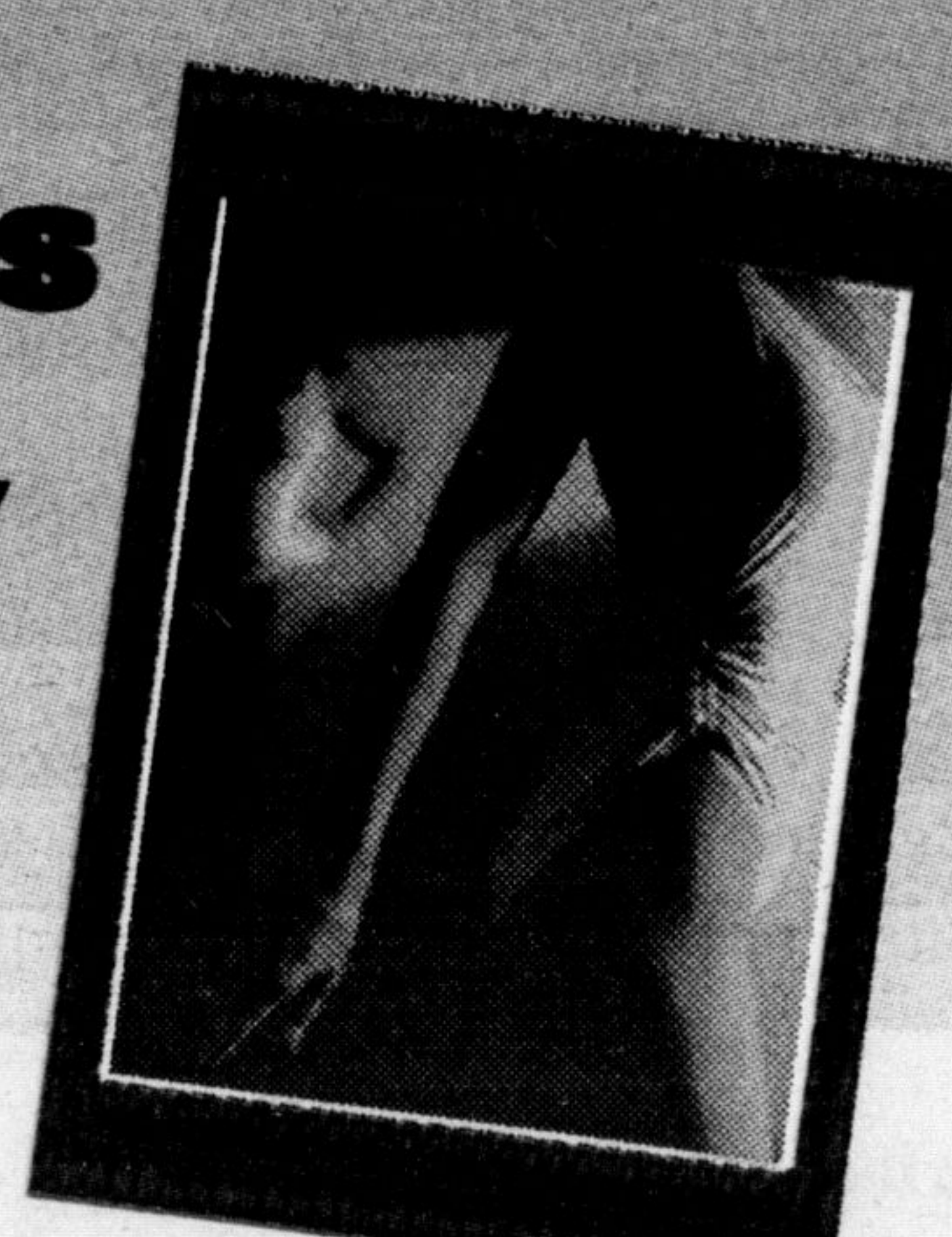
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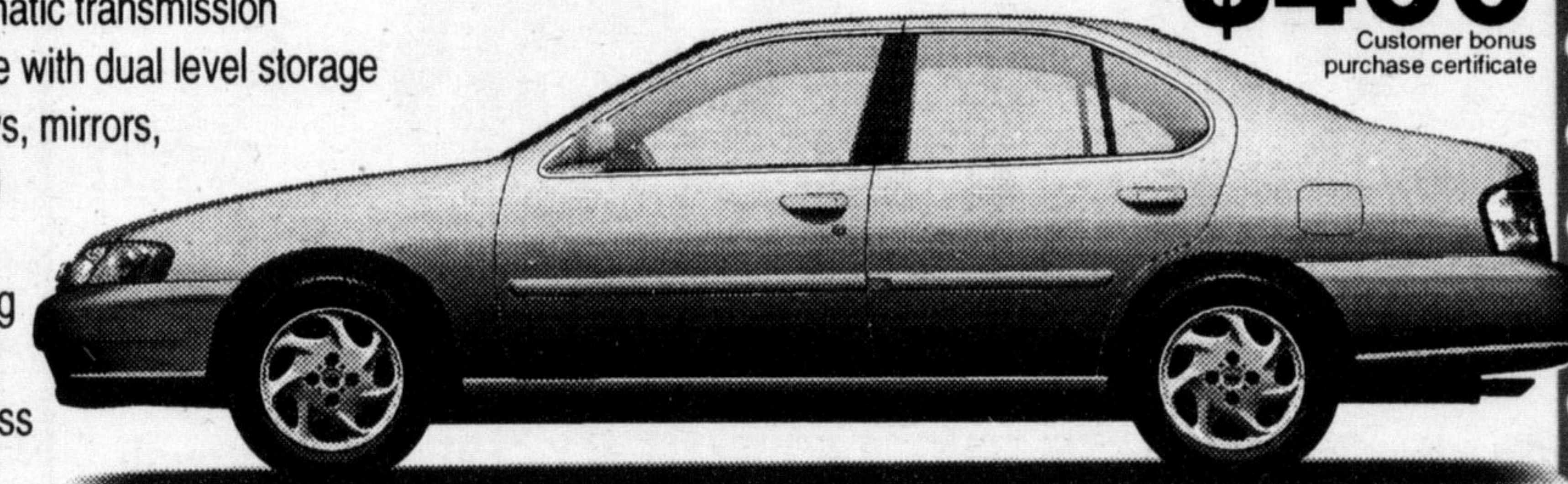
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