

It's a force to be reckoned with

• from JEEPNESS on page B13 with road speed. When it comes to passing, there is not the lag I found in first generation CVTs that can be disconcerting.

What you learn to do is watch the tachometre and the adjacent speedometer. That results in using the strength of the CVT (that puts the correct of amount of grip to the road) to get the best acceleration.

Considering this is a 4WD vehicle, the CVT is superb on fuel economy being rated as 9.9L/100 km (29 mpg) city and 8.2L/100 km (34 mpg) highway.

The Compass comes in three main trim levels.

The base Sport is pretty plain because it is designed to come in at just \$18,495 for the 2WD and \$20,695 for the 4WD. It is equipped with a 60/40 split rear seat with the UltraFloor that is removable and washable, a AM/FM/CD with built in MP3 player jack and advanced front airbags plus side curtain airbags for both rows of seats. But if you're expecting power windows, air conditioning and cruise control, forget it, although some things are optional. But the Sport does come with centre armrest and storage box that slides and has a built-in flip-pocket for a MP3 player or cellphone.

The Compass Limited that starts at \$24,395 (\$28,260 including \$1,350 shipping fee as tested) is equipped with cruise, leather faced seats, leather-wrapped steering



The interior of the 2009 Jeep Compass features doors that open almost 90 degrees and "stadium" seating that gives passengers in the back an elevated view of the road ahead.

wheel with audio controls and 18-inch alloy wheels (optionally chromed) instead of the 17-inch alloys on the Sport and North.

There is also a list of options, the most notable being the Sun/Sound Group that packages a power sunroof with the 458-watt Boston Acoustics MusicGate Power, nine-speaker sound system with cargo wall positioned sub woofer and a two-speaker "boombox" recessed into the tailgate that swings down when the tailgate is raised.

Added for 2009 is the limited production Rocky Mountain Edition with special wheels and trim that starts at \$22,890 in 2WD and \$25,090 in 4WD.

The back row is roomy enough for three with plenty of legroom and it really opens up if you have the North or Limited with reclining rear seat. What I really liked was having a full spare under the cargo floor, not a donut slung under neath as so often is the case these days.

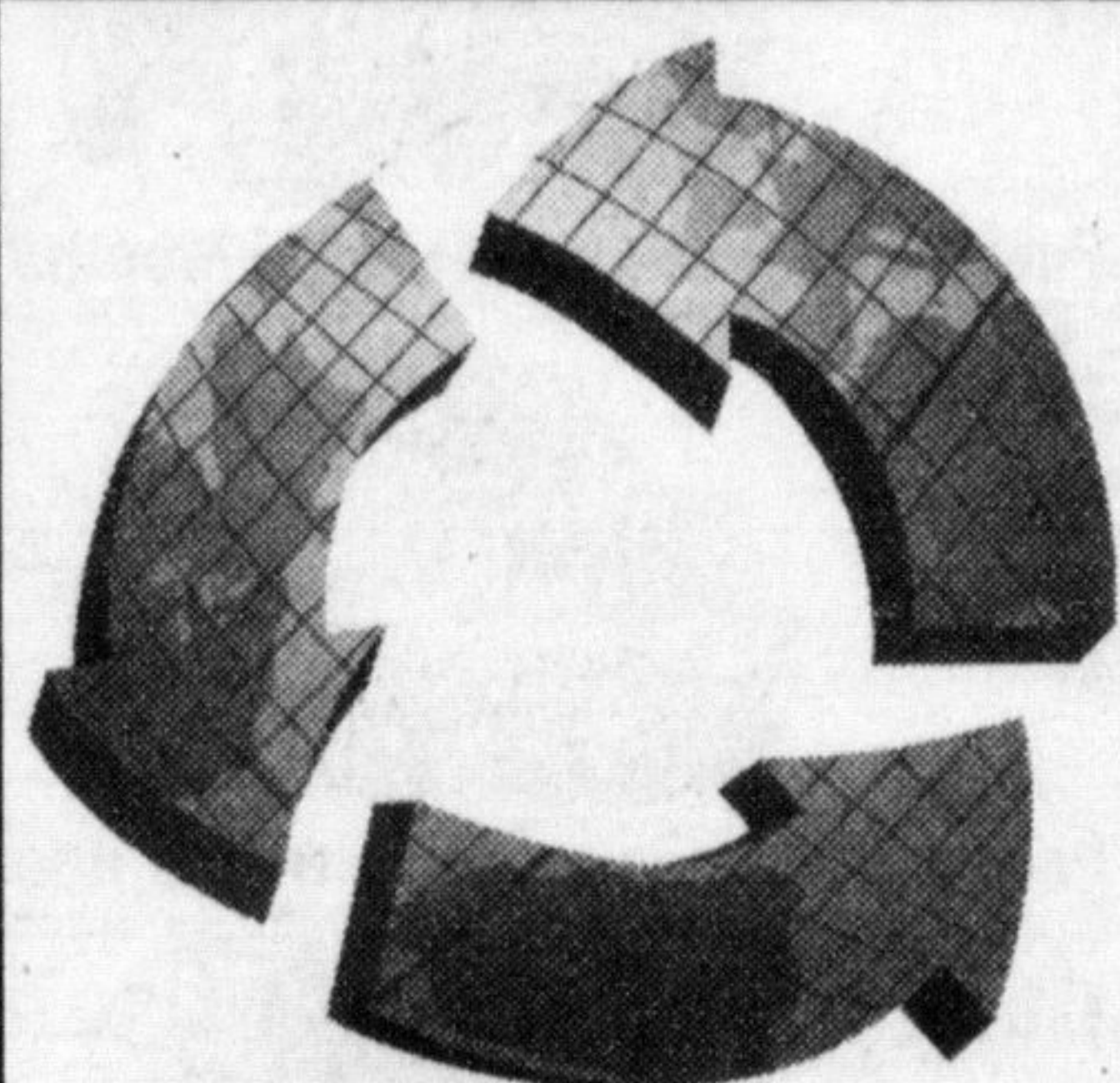
There are a lot of opinions

among my colleagues about the interior trim, particularly the doors. In keeping with Jeepness, it is chunky. They argue that more form-fitted door trim could have freed up more useable passenger space. I understand that, but I also realize that rugged look inside, as well as out, is what people expect in a Jeep.

But the final word on the drivability of the Compass came from my tall son who finds most vehicles too cramped. He fit behind the wheel comfortably and announced he liked it. Things like enough room for his knees so they are not stuffed up against the dash, as in the Sebring, shows Jeep took into account the increasingly bigger next generation of drivers.

Jeep invented off-road four-wheeling and has always been a force to be reckoned with.

But with the Compass, and all it offers for the price, it has opened up the possibility of Jeep ownership for a whole new audience.

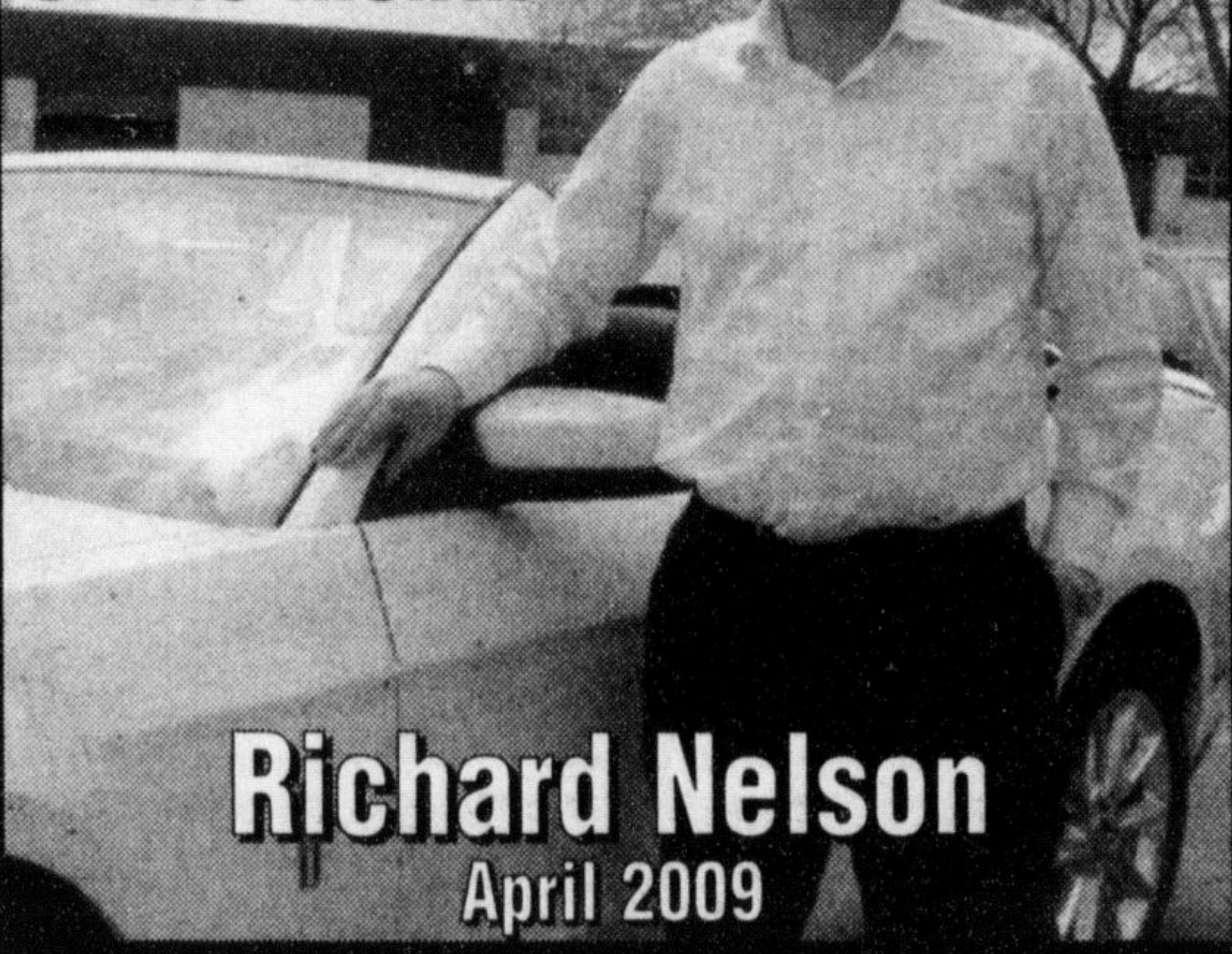


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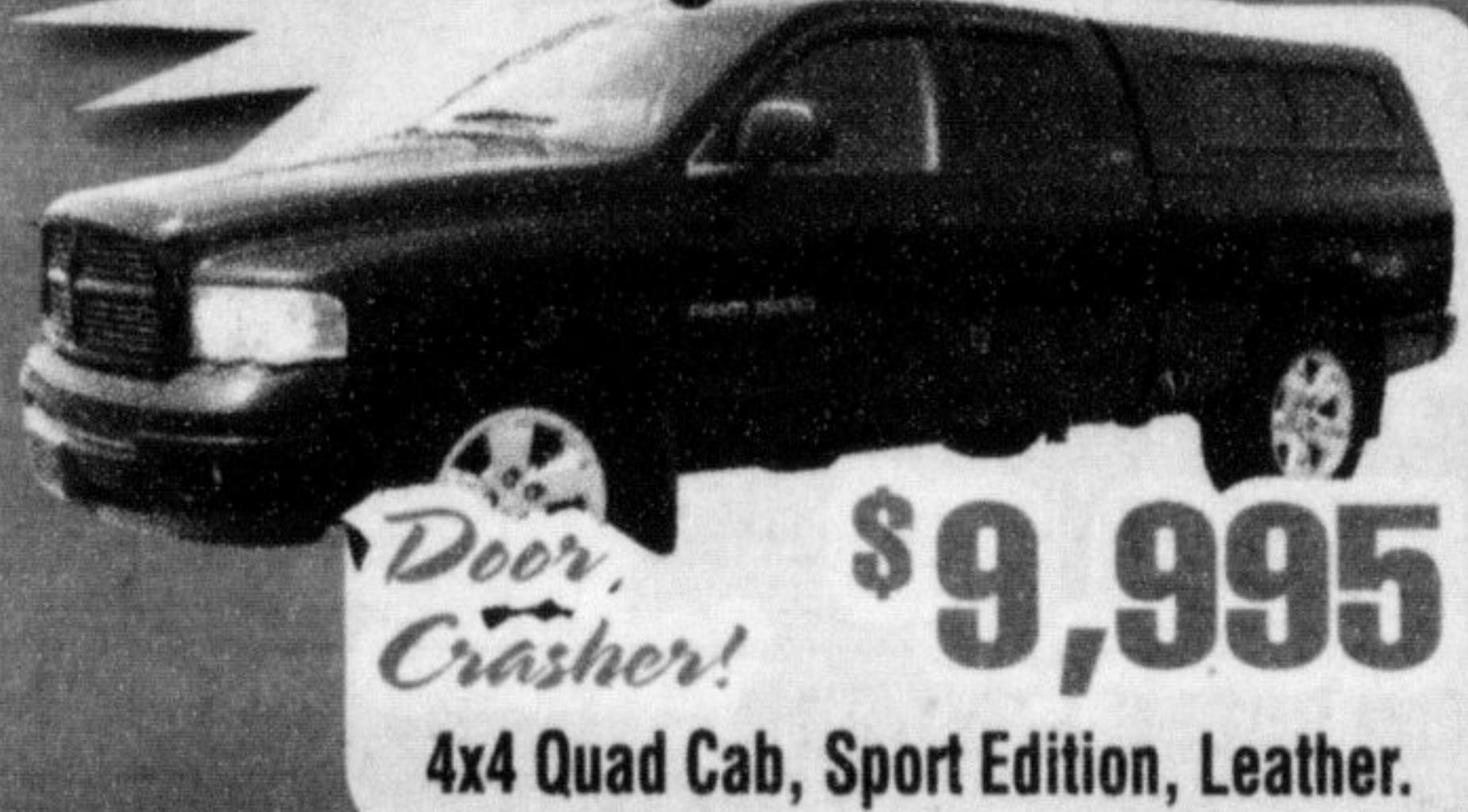
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