

Here's how to ward off most thieves

By PAUL PIVATO
Staff Reporter

Most house break-ins can be easily prevented by simple security measures, says Sergeant Rod Sine of the York Regional Police force.

"We've all heard people say that there is no sense in trying to crimeproof our homes because a determined thief will find a way to break in no matter what we do," he says.

But he insists, only professional thieves are adept at breaking into a well secured home — and even they will not try a break-in if it appears that someone is home.

Most break-ins are the work of "amateur opportunists," he says. He adds that careless attitudes and poor security measures have made house break-ins "the fastest growing crime in North America." According to police statistics, a home is now broken into every 90 seconds.

In Markham, the majority of house break-ins happen in broad daylight, between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

In many cases, both home owners are working and the burglar knows that the house is empty, says Sgt. Sine.

But often people are just careless — leaving doors and windows open to beat the summer heat or leaving for long vacations without having someone keep an eye on the house.

Here's some tips on how to beef up your home security:

- Avoid spring-latch locks which can be forced open from the outside with any fairly strong tool. Instead, use a dead bolt lock wherever possible — they're almost impossible to pry open.



SGT. ROD SINE
break-ins are avoidable.

- Double cylinder locks, which require a key both inside and outside, should be installed in doors having small panes of glass near the locks. "The best door locks in the world are useless if a thief can get in through a window," notes Sgt. Sine.

- Install and use quality window locks.

- Leave lights on when you're out and install automatic timing devices that turn on radios and TVs in order to give your home the "lived-in look."

- Always stop deliveries when you go on vacation, leave a key with a trusted friend, and arrange for someone to cut your grass.

"Even a skilled thief," says Sgt. Sine, "can be discouraged by adhering to some common sense security measures."

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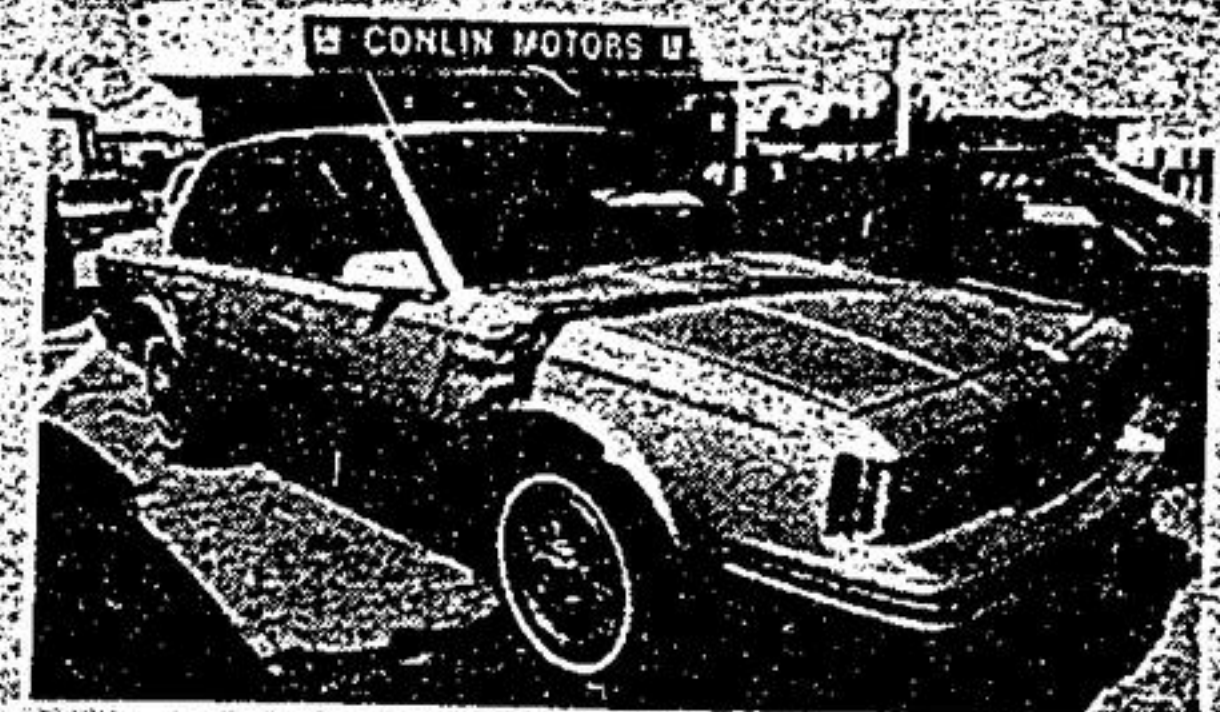
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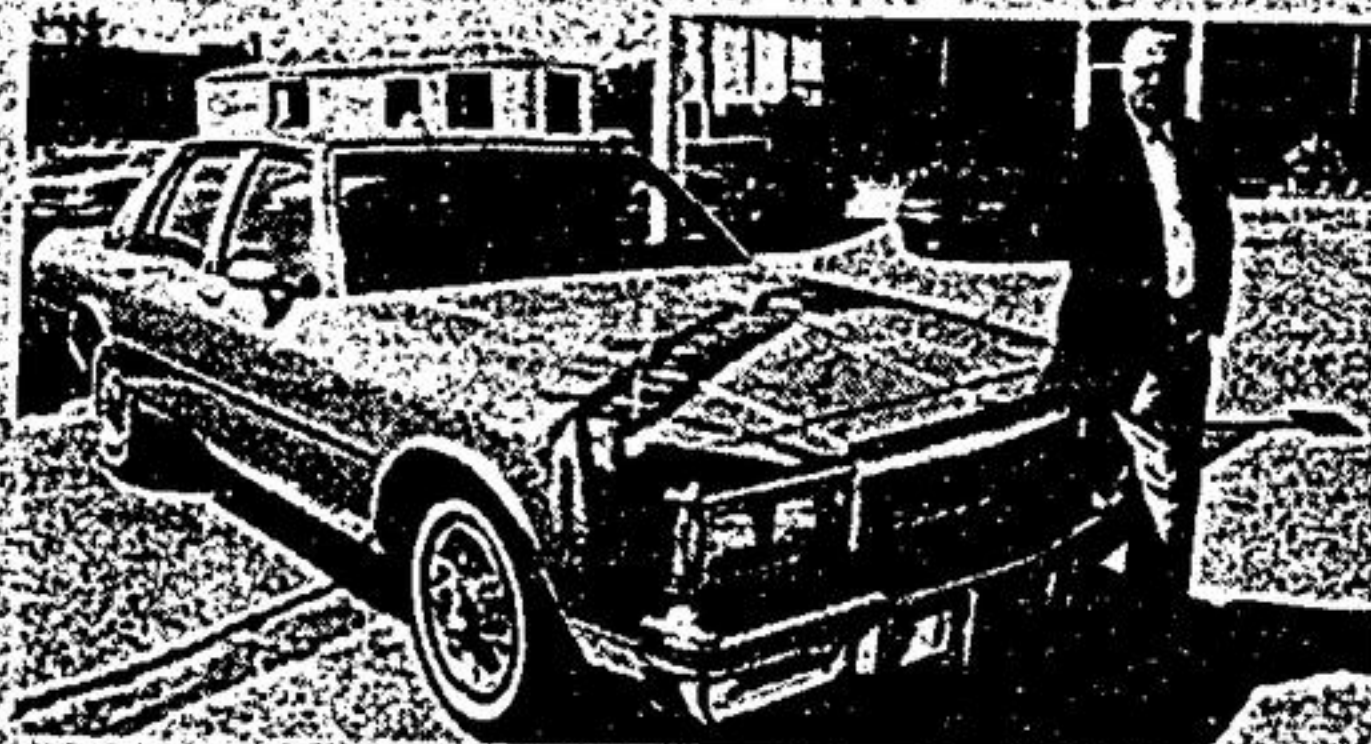
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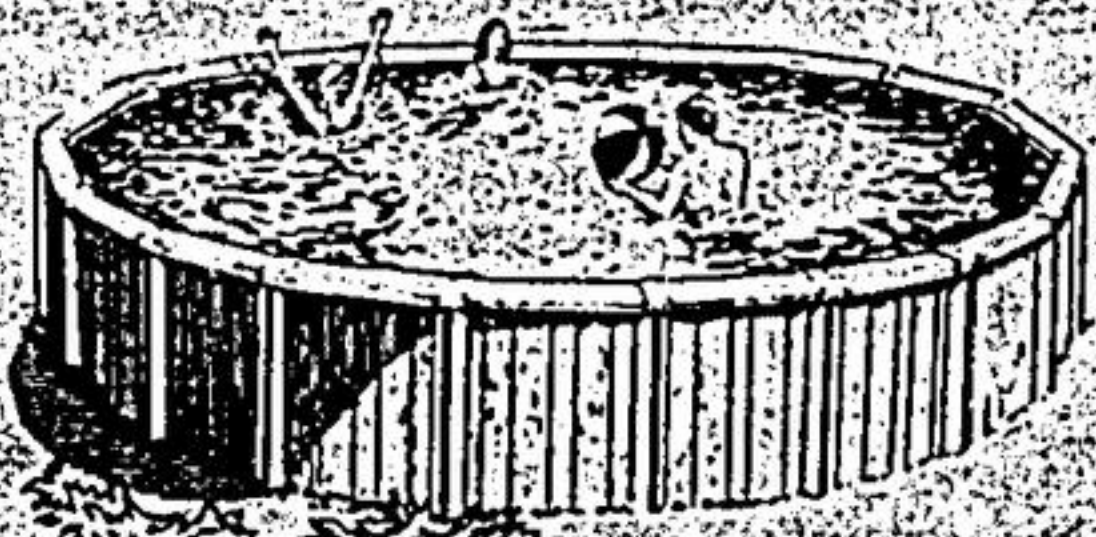
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