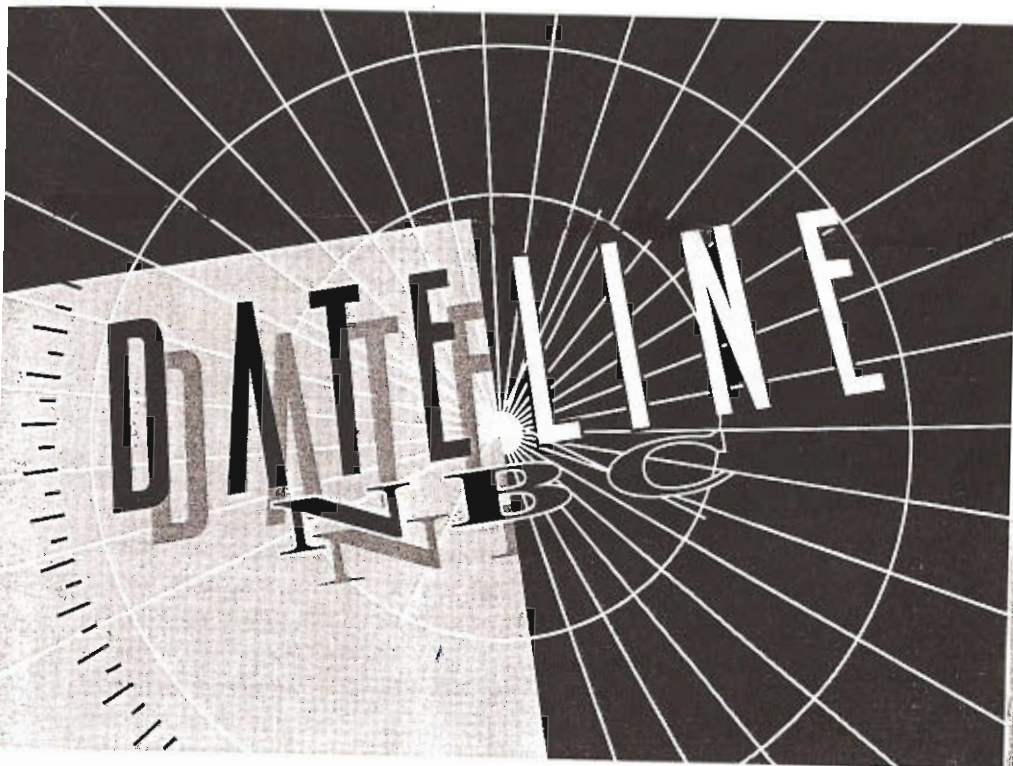


December 8, 1997



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Transcript produced by *BURRELLE'S INFORMATION SERVICES*
Box 7 • Livingston, New Jersey 07039

Announcer: This is DATELINE Monday, December 8, 1997.

Tonight:

JANE PAULEY: *(Voiceover)* It was an abduction with a terrifying twist.

(Car entering garage)

Ms. JANETTE FENNEL: The only words they would say to us is 'Get in the trunk.'

PAULEY: *(Voiceover)* Locked in, driven away, was there any chance of escape? What she discovered and others have developed could save your life: their devices for getting out of a trunk, fast.

(Shutting trunk; car on city street; car on dark road; inside of trunk; device; car in water)

Unidentified Man #1: Just to press it and you're able to get out.

PAULEY: *(Voiceover)* So what's the response from automakers? McKeown on looking for a quick getaway.

(McKeown shutting trunk)

STONE PHILLIPS: *(Voiceover)* At 190 pounds super-model Emme is by all measures a smashing success.

(Emme modeling; photo of Emme wet)

Unidentified Man #2: *(Voiceover)* Beautiful!

(Camera flashes on Emme)

PHILLIPS: *(Voiceover)* But her smiles can't hide the scars of a life-long trauma.

(Emme posing)

Ms. EMME: I tried like hell to stay at 165 pounds and there was no way that I could stay there.

PHILLIPS: *(Voiceover)* She suffered years of anguish.

(Emme running)

ANN CURRY reporting: You prayed to God that you would lose weight.

Ms. EMME: Just 10 pounds, dear God.

Man #2: *(Voiceover)* Beautiful!

(Emme modeling with camera flashes on her)

PHILLIPS: *(Voiceover)* Ann Curry on how Emme fought off the American obsession and became one of Glamour magazine's Women Of The Year.

(Emme modeling; photo of Emme)

OPEN & SHUT CASE?

PAULEY: *(Voiceover)* There had never been a ship like her.
(Drawings of Titanic; video of Titanic; animation of Titanic running into iceberg and sinking)

Mr. PAUL MATHIAS: *(Voiceover)* She was the biggest. She was the best.

(Titanic sinking; muddy seafloor)

PAULEY: *(Voiceover)* She was unsinkable. But her maiden voyage with the world's rich and famous aboard would prove otherwise.

(Muddy seafloor; crusty Titanic remains)

Mr. MATHIAS: We are finally touched down and I can see a sandy, muddy bottom here.

PAULEY: *(Voiceover)* Now generations after the Titanic sank in the icy North Atlantic voyage to the bottom of the sea to answer the question why.

(Crusty Titanic remains)

Mr. MATHIAS: We had solved a myth that's—that's been alive for 85 years.

PAULEY: *(Voiceover)* Len Canon with a DATELINE/Discovery Channel exclusive.

(Canon; dark waters)

PHILLIPS: *(Voiceover)* You've seen the signs all over.

(Sales signs)

Ms. KATIE JACOBS: I thought it was a going out of business sale, thought we'd get a really good deal.

PHILLIPS: *(Voiceover)* But that's not always the case.

(Carpet business)

Mr. DAVID WEISS: They were simply running a going out of business business.

PHILLIPS: *(Voiceover)* What do you really get at some of these sales? DATELINE took its hidden camera and went shopping.

(Rug store)

Unidentified Man #3: You are saving definitely a lot more than regular retail, obviously.

PHILLIPS: *(Voiceover)* Did we get a deal and can you? Chris Hansen will show you in a DATELINE hidden camera investigation.

(Sales tags on carpets; Hansen; tags)

Announcer: Plus, find out who is in tonight's DATELINE Spotlight. DATELINE with Jane Pauley and Stone Phillips, plus Tom Brokaw, Katie Couric, and Maria Shriver. DATELINE will continue after this brief message.

(Announcements)

Announcer: From Studio 3B in New York, here is Jane Pauley.

JANE PAULEY: Good evening. It's one of those stories that cuts right to your peace of mind. Someone on an errand or the way to dinner is grabbed in a parking lot. It's hard not to think it could have been any one of us. Your assailant has a gun. He's got you. What are the odds you'll survive? Tonight, one woman whose harrowing ordeal may inspire you to make some changes in the car you drive. Here's Bob McKeown.

Ms. JANETTE FENNEL: We basically said, 'What do you want? Take what you want. This doesn't make any sense.' But the only words they would say to us was, 'Get in the trunk. Get in the trunk.'

BOB McKEOWN: *(Voiceover)* One night, two years ago, Janette Fennell and her husband pulled into this garage at their San Francisco home to find two masked gunmen waiting for them.

(Car going into dark garage)

Ms. FENNEL: And then he asked my husband for the keys and said, 'Get in the trunk.'

McKEOWN: *(Voiceover)* Trapped in the darkness, frightened almost out of their wits in the coffin-like trunk, they tried desperately to find a way out as the car sped through the city.

(Closing trunk; inside of trunk; car driving through city)

Ms. FENNEL: I was ripping at wires, everything. I mean, with all my strength. I was trying to send a signal, trying to say, something's wrong with this car.

McKEOWN: *(Voiceover)* But nothing worked. Soon, they felt the car rolling down a rough road and then stop.

(Car on dark road)

Ms. FENNEL: And I'm like, that's it. I mean, I said to my husband, they're going to rape me. They're going to cut us up. I mean, it's over.

McKEOWN: *(Voiceover)* The kidnappers opened the trunk just long enough to take their jewelry, money, and bank cards, then slammed it shut again and left threatening to come back and kill them.

(Inside of trunk; dark car on dark road)

Ms. FENNEL: You feel very helpless. All of your freedom has been completely stripped from you. You are in the trunk of a car.

McKEOWN: *(Voiceover)* But then a glimmer of hope.

(Inside of trunk)

Ms. FENNEL: And there was a little light, and I believe that light is from our guardian angel, and it was right on the trunk latch.

McKEOWN: *(Voiceover)* Janette Fennell was lucky she owned a Lexus, one of the few cars currently on the market that has an exposed latch in the trunk.

(Car on city street; inside of trunk)

Ms. FENNELL: It was very plain, and I said, 'Honey, I think I found the trunk release.' And he was able to follow the cable and up popped the trunk.

McKEOWN: *(Voiceover)* The kidnapers weren't caught, but that doesn't bother Fennell as much as something else does.

(Fennells walking down street)

Ms. FENNELL: I remember the officer saying, 'You're very lucky. It never ends like this.' Well, if it never ends like this, what happens to people who are locked in the trunk of a car?

McKEOWN: *(Voiceover)* The answer to that is things like this. Earlier this year, in Austin, Texas, two young men were kidnapped and locked in the trunk of a car. When the car was driven into a lake, they drowned. In 1992, Mississippi attorney Christy Massie was kidnapped and locked in the trunk of her car. She struggled to get out for days before finally dying of heat stroke, and in Philadelphia, four years ago, kidnapers stuffed artist Kristin Huggins into her trunk, took her to a remote field, then shot her to death.

(Car partially submerged in murky waters; crime scene detective; photos of two men; car being pulled out of lake; sign of Massie; photo of Massie; headline; photo of Huggins; muddy car)

McKEOWN: No doubt in your mind that some of those people would be alive today?

Ms. FENNELL: Absolutely.

McKEOWN: Janette Fennell has become a crusader. She believes many lives could be saved if only automakers would build something into the trunks of their vehicles to allow people to escape if necessary. Fennell has compiled a list of more than 600 cases of trunk entrapment over the last ten years, an average of about one a week and roughly a quarter of those ended with fatalities. She thinks the real number may be greater than that because the police don't collect statistics on trunk entrapment.

(Voiceover) Over the month that we investigated this story, we ran across four more incidents.

(Inside of trunk)

Mr. JOE FERRO: There is a solution. There is a way out of a locked trunk.

Ms. LISA FERRO: We're not saying that this is the absolute deterrent to all crime. You'll never be a victim again if you have this in your

trunk. But if it's there and this does happen to you, there's a way to get out.

McKEOWN: *(Voiceover)* One way out is this \$2 device, invented by Philadelphia area locksmiths Lisa and Joe Ferro. It was the death of Kristin Huggins that got them thinking.

(Latch device on trunk; Ferros around a trunk)

Mr. FERRO: It's just a simple cord attached to a ring, a key ring, if you will.

McKEOWN: *(Voiceover)* After a few days' work, they had their prototype and were on their way to Washington to file the patent and then to begin selling it. Or so they thought.

(McKeown shutting trunk with Ferro inside, trunk opening again)

Ms. FERRO: We thought it was going to be very easy. We thought we going to go to a car company, for them to put it on their manufacturing line, it was going to be a breeze. It's not going to cost them a lot. It's a great marketing angle for them.

McKEOWN: *(Voiceover)* A life-saving invention for minimal cost—it sounded like a sure winner.

(Ferros in interview)

Ms. FERRO: We never imagined that we would get the kind of rejection that we got.

McKEOWN: *(Voiceover)* In fact, the Ferros got exactly the same response as Janette Fennell did when she asked carmakers to add emergency trunk releases. Forget about it.

(Fennell with office files)

McKEOWN: Ford?

Ms. FENNELL: No answer.

McKEOWN: Chrysler?

Ms. FENNELL: No answer.

McKEOWN: General Motors?

Ms. FENNELL: No answer.

McKEOWN: *(Voiceover)* And General Motors had frightening firsthand knowledge. The son of Robert Stemple, who later became GM's chairman, was kidnapped and held in a car trunk for two days back in 1975, until the ransom was paid and the kidnapers released him.

(Cars on dark road; Stemple; GM building; photo of woman and boy)

Ms. FENNELL: This is a 13-year-old boy, held ransom, and you know, part of the GM family. They still haven't put in trunk releases.

McKEOWN: *(Voiceover)* Although no car trunks currently contain an internal release lever, some models, like the Fennells' Lexus and most Hondas, have exposed cables or rods. One yank on them and you're

free. That is, if you know where to look. But most other trunks are virtually impossible to open from the inside.

(Cars on city street; Lexus; Accord; inside of trunk; rod being pulled in a trunk; cars on street)

Mr. FERRO: If you have a car, you're a potential victim for a trunk lock in.

McKEOWN: *(Voiceover)* The Ferros are not the only inventors to solve the problem. Yellow Cab of Orlando has installed release latches in its taxis. The company says they've saved more than a dozen drivers who were forced into their trunks in robbery attempts.

(Ferros; taxi; device in taxi trunk; taxi driver)

Unidentified Man #1: And you can reach from inside, just depress it and you're able to get out.

McKEOWN: *(Voiceover)* And there are at least half a dozen other release patents on file, devices that were never put into production.

(Schematics for trunk devices)

Ms. FENNELL: So people have recognized the problem for a long, long time.

McKEOWN: Are tragedies when they occur foreseeable to the car manufacturers?

Ms. FENNELL: Absolutely.

McKEOWN: *(Voiceover)* Thirteen years ago, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, or NHTSA, turned down a petition to require inside-the-trunk releases saying, "The likelihood of an internal hood hatch lever being utilized is remote." NHTSA says it has since lost its research justifying that decision. And as for the carmakers, when we asked to talk to them about trunk releases, they sent us to their trade group, the American Automobile Manufacturers Association, which declined to do an interview, but sent us this letter, citing that government conclusion that these trunk incidents are rare.

(Cars on street; NHTSA document; excerpts from document; cars on street in daylight; AAMA document and excerpts)

McKEOWN: Has it ever crossed your mind that you're blowing it out of all proportion?

Ms. FENNELL: If you would want to sit down with me and read incident after incident, story after story. There's over 130 some people who are dead today because they were locked in the trunk of a car.

McKEOWN: *(Voiceover)* The car manufacturers claim that making internal trunk releases standard equipment could, in fact, be counter productive. They say criminals might be tempted to seriously injure their victims before putting them in the trunk.

(Cars on road; key opening trunk; open trunk; inside of trunk)

Ms. FENNELL: But you know what? It's going to give the victims an opportunity, or at least a chance, to save their life.

McKEOWN: *(Voiceover)* And some of those lives will belong to young children. Fennell says she's found several fatal incidents involving kids, like the 1992 Texas case of 5-year-old Logan Wehmeyer. His parents noticed him missing one summer day. After a massive 24-hour search...

(Roses near Fennell, list of names; photo of Wehmeyer; search party on horses; photo of dog)

Ms. FENNELL: They found him with his kitten, and they were both dead in the trunk of the family car.

McKEOWN: *(Voiceover)* Fennell acknowledges that children would have to be taught how to use an emergency trunk release and that not every child could do it. But she remains on that crusade, devoting all her spare time and thousands of dollars out of her own pocket to try to make sure that children and adults alike can at least have a chance to survive.

(Internal latch on trunk; Fennell typing; inside of trunk)

Ms. FENNELL: This is such a simple, simple thing to fix, and inexpensive thing to fix, and it will save lives.

PAULEY: If you'd like to have an emergency trunk release in your car, a locksmith should be able to help you find one and have it properly installed and always be careful with an open trunk when children are around.

Announcer: Still ahead, 85 years after the unsinkable Titanic sank, has the mystery of why been solved?

Mr. PAUL MATHIAS: It's the smoking gun.

Announcer: A DATELINE/Discovery Channel exclusive.

(Announcements)

Announcer: Here now is Stone Phillips.

STONE PHILLIPS: They're women who made a difference, opening our eyes and hearts, making us laugh and cry, and think.

(Voiceover) Mary Skivavo reveals serious safety problems in the airline industry which eventually led to major overhauls. For that, she's one of Glamour Magazine's 1997 Women of the Year. Also on the list, Adrienne Bak Ortolano, who went public after pressing rape charges against Alex Kelly encouraging other rape victims to do the same. Julia Louis-Dreyfus made Elaine as off-the-wall and on-the-mark as the guys on "Seinfeld" and won a reported \$13 million contract. Denyce Graves so captivated New York's metropolitan opera when she sang "Carmen" that many didn't even notice President Clinton was there.