

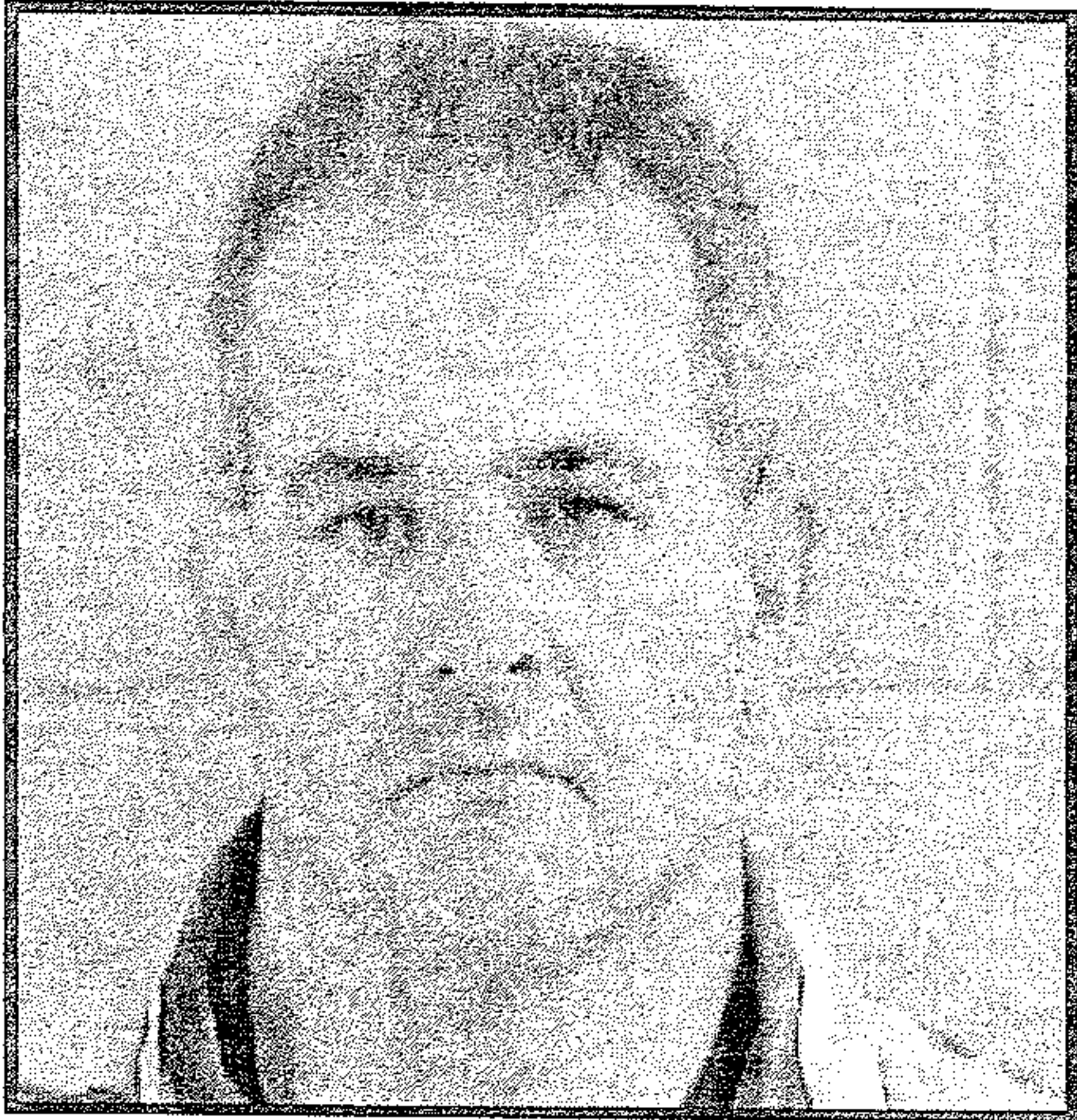
# The Daily Edition

50¢

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Thursday, February 18, 2016

## Update: 2 charged at Nuisance House with running meth lab



Christopher Hicks



(see update pg. 2) Christopher Bertram

## Videosurveillancealongwith evidence gets man charged



Seth Curtis

(see DV pg. 5)

## Man has water thrown on him and gets charged after assault



(see assault pg. 7) Shawn Moore

## Community Leaders Forum addresses modern day realities reflected in A Lesson Before Dying as part of The Big Read

The public is invited to join the discussion at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, February 23 at the Community Law Office, 1101 Liberty Street.

Community leaders are coming together at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, February 23 at Knox County Public Defender's Community Law Office, 1101 Liberty Street, to discuss modern day realities reflected in A Lesson Before Dying by Ernest J. Gaines. The public is invited to join the conversation, which is part of The Big Read, a community-wide book discussion program presented by Knox County Pub-

(see forum pg. 4)

## Egg Donation and Surrogacy Scam

California Woman Robbed Would-Be Parents of Money and Hope

Allison Layton, who owned a California company called Miracles Egg Donation (Miracles), claimed she was in the business of helping infertile couples have children. But her business turned out to be a fraud, and she ended up stealing her victims' hopes and dreams as well as their money.

Would-be parents paid Miracles tens of thousands of dollars—sometimes their life savings—for egg donation and surrogacy services that Layton promised to coordinate. Instead, during a three-year period beginning in 2008, she defrauded couples, egg donors, and surrogate mothers while living a lavish lifestyle off the

(see scam pg. 3)

### Verse of the Day

"I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel, ... "So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith." — Malachi 2:16

### Obituaries

see inside

### Wazzup

A Big Shout Out Shawn and the gang down at One Stop and Shawns Stop in Philly!

### Weather

Today: Partly cloudy skies. High 54F.  
Tonight: Clear skies. Low

near 35F.

Friday Generally sunny despite a few afternoon clouds. High 62F.

Friday Night Partly cloudy skies in the evening, then becoming cloudy overnight. Slight chance of a rain shower. Low 47F.

### Horoscopes

Aquarius 1/20-2/19

You need to pay careful attention to every move you make today because you might act recklessly before you even consider the consequences. Unfortunately, clearing up even

(Continued on page 6)



update

Christopher Bertram, 28, New Midway Road Kingston, was charged with Man/Sell/Possession of a Controlled Substance.

Christopher Hicks, 45, Mountain View Road Lenoir City, was charged with Maintaining a Dwelling Drugs Sold, and Man/Sell/Del/ Re-sale Sch. II.

On 02/11/2016 Agents from the 9th Drug Task Force, Loudon County Sheriff's Office and representatives from the 9th District Attorney General's Office served a nuisance petition on Mountain View Road in Lenoir City. While serving this petition agents and officers cleared the residence to ensure that there was no one inside prior

to boarding up the house per the Judge's order. Agents and officers found two individuals in the residence whom were escorted out Christopher Bertram, and Courtney Rinehart. While escorting these individuals out of the resi-

dence and ensuring there was no one else in the residence agents observed a active "one pot" shake lab in one of the bedrooms of the residence. Agents also observed a substantial amount of a white (see update ctd. pg. 7)

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scam

proceeds.

"This was not a typical white-collar case," said Special Agent Dana Eads, who led the investigation from the FBI's Los Angeles Division. "Many of the victims were in a vulner-

able place in their lives—working against their biological clocks and trying to afford this expensive and time-consuming procedure. Some told the judge that because of Layton's actions, they had effectively missed the opportunity to have children."

The fees paid to Miracles by would-be parents—known in the surrogacy world as intended parents—were supposed to go into escrow accounts to be withdrawn for expenses related to surrogacy or egg donation. But Layton took the money and spent it on her own \$60,000 wedding, a new vehicle for her husband, and high-end shopping sprees she flaunted on social media.

As a result, egg donors, surrogates, attorneys, and others often were not paid for the services they provided, and many

intended parents—including some who lived overseas—failed to get the services they paid for.

"It became like a Ponzi scheme," Eads explained. "Early on, some people got the services they paid for. But then Layton began shuffling funds to cover some clients' services and not others. And when it all finally collapsed, nobody was getting anything."

When confronted by clients,

Layton lied about why payments had not been made and refunds not issued. She led victims to believe they might soon be paid, when, in fact, many were not. Eventually, several victims contacted the FBI while others filed reports with the local police department in Glendora, California. Court records indicate that more than 40 victims lost in excess of \$270,000.

Layton maintained she

(see scam ctd. pg. 5)

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forum

lic Library, Clarence Brown Theatre, Knox County Public Defender's Community Law Office, and Friends of the Library.

Set in 1948 in a small plantation community in Southern Louisiana, the story centers on an uneducated young black man named Jefferson who is accused of murdering a white storekeeper, and Grant Wiggins, a college-educated native son of Louisiana, who teaches at a plantation school. These two men teach each other the lessons they need to face their very different futures with dignity and strength.

The panel of community leaders, moderated

by Jackie Clay, Program Manager of the City of Knoxville's Save our Sons initiative, will explore the book's themes of social justice, racial inequality, human dignity and personal redemption as they relate to East Tennessee's present-day community.

Panel experts include:

•Nate Allen, Deputy Chief of Police, Knoxville Police Department

•Daryl Arnold, Pastor, Overcoming Believers Church

•Andre Canty, Development & Communications Team, Highlander Center

•Ralph Hutchinson, Commissioner, MLK Commemorative Comm.

•Reggie Jenkins,

Executive Director, UUNIK Academy

•Kwabena Miller, Former gang member, Community Activist and Outreach Minister

•Avice Reid, Senior

Director of Community Relations, City of Knoxville

•Mark Stephens, Public Defender, KCPD Community Law Office

The Big Read is a

program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest. It aims to encourage reading for pleasure and enrichment by providing citizens with the opportunity to read and discuss a single book within their community. In Knox County, more than 2 dozen programs and events are planned including book discussions, screenings, concerts, and lectures. Clarence Brown Theatre is performing the stage adaptation by Romulus Linney at the Carousel Theatre from February 24-March 13.

All Big Read events are listed on [knoxlib.org/bigread](http://knoxlib.org/bigread).

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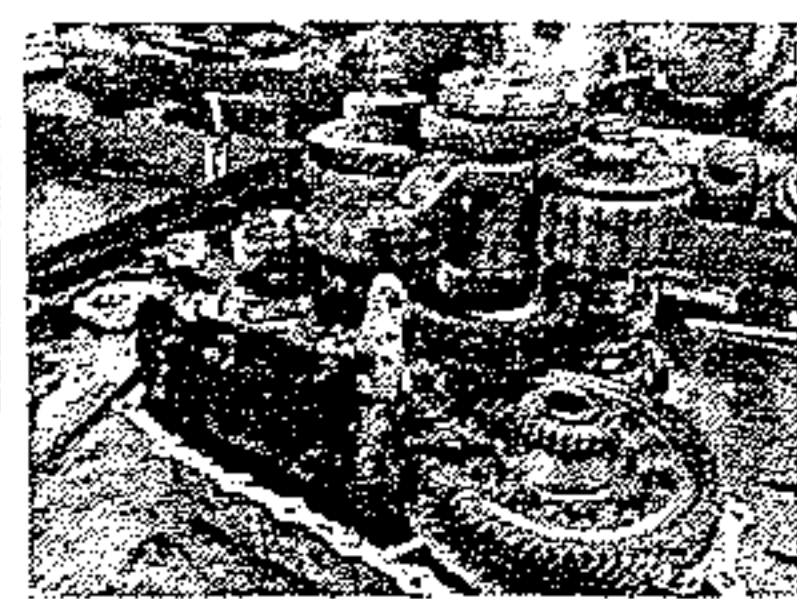
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DV

Seth Curtis, 20, East 1st Ave Lenoir City, was charged with Domestic Assault.

Officer Jason Arden LCPD, responded to the area of east 1st Avenue to investigate a complaint for domestic disturbance. The complainant advised that her nephew, Seth Jordan Curtis had been in a loud verbal altercation with her and he

was hitting and kicking the door of the residence. Victim advised dispatch that Mr. Curtis was leaving the property in a white Hyundai elantra, and during Officer response he observed that vehicle traveling north on hwy 321 away from the residence. Upon making contact with the vehicle and identifying Mr. Curtis as the passenger, he stated that he had been at the residence

to get some clothing when the victim, came outside cursing him and his girlfriend before running back into the residence. Mr. Curtis stated that he approached the front door where victim was still verbally engaging them. Mr. Curtis stated that he kicked the door twice out of anger and began knocking loudly to awaken his grandfather. Victim stated that as the result of the ar-

gument and Mr. Curtis kicking and hitting the door, she began to fear for her safety. There is video surveillance active around the home and after reviewing the footage, Mr. Curtis is seen approaching the door, kicking it twice, then pounding on it with his fists while verbally engaging the victim.

The door observed on video does display evidence of damage and

appeared to be jammed as the result. Mr. Curtis was placed under arrest for Domestic Assault and transported to the Loudon County Jail without further incident. This did occur in Lenoir City, Loudon County, Tennessee. Officer Jason Arden LCPD, made the arrest.

scam ctd. from pg. 3

had simply made poor business decisions, but through interviews, bank records, and e-mail correspondence, Eads soon uncovered the fraud.

"The scam was apparent, especially when we examined her bank records," Eads said. "Layton regularly told clients their checks—which she never wrote—must have been lost in the mail. She told that to so many people. That story, told the same way again and again, was a clear indication of her attempt to hide the truth."

In 2014, Layton was charged with wire fraud. In a pre-indictment plea agreement with federal prosecutors, she admitted defrauding the victims, and in September 2015, a judge sentenced the 38-year-old to 18 months in prison.

Considering the damage that she caused—both financial and emotional—some of Layton's victims believe she got off too easy. Eads understands how they feel. "But as a result of this case," she said, "Layton is now a convicted felon, and part of the plea she accepted is that she can never work in this industry again."

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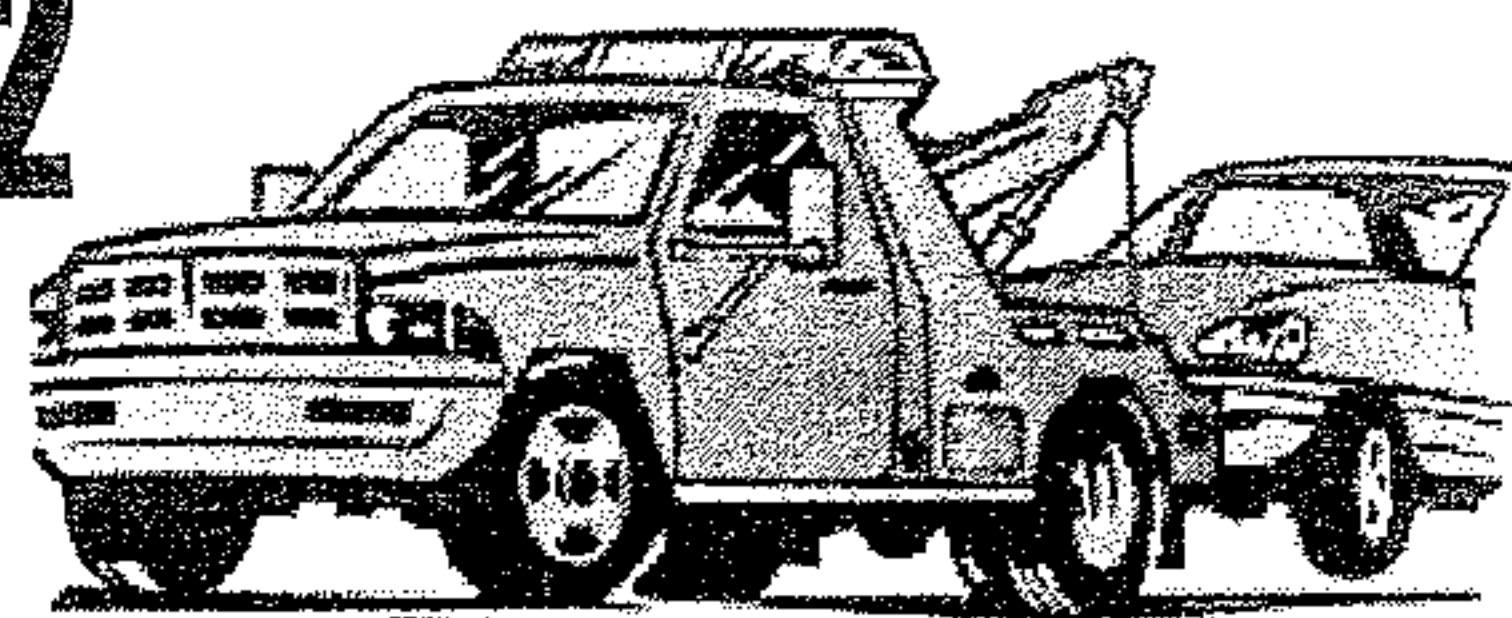
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### Aggravated

Shawn Moore, 26, Pine Ridge Lenoir City, was charged with Domestic Assault, and Driving on Revoked License.

Officers responded to a domestic violence situation at Industrial Park Apt E4.

Upon arrival Deputy spoke with the complainant / victim. The victim stated she was assaulted by her boy friend Shawn Moore.

According to the report, the incident all started in the morning when victim was trying to wake up Mr. Moore. Mr. Moore did not want to get up so victim poured some water onto Mr. Moore. Mr. Moore then be-

came mad and threw a liquid substance onto victim. After that Mr. Moore threatened to pee on the baby's clothing causing victim to push Mr. Moore away from the clothing. Mr. Moore then pushed victim back. Victim then told Mr. Moore to leave the residence. Mr. Moore refused and a money argument then started. During this argument Mr. Moore threw an unknown item at victim. Victim then tried to throw water at Mr. Moore and as a result Mr. Moore Punched victim and grabbed her by the neck. Mr. Moore then left the residence when victim threatened to call police. Mr. Moore was

not at the residence upon our arrival and was not located. Victim did not have any marks or visible injury. This incident did occur in front of three minor children.

Cpl. Pete McGinley LCSO, arrested Shawn and transported to Loudon CO. Jail.

Update ctd. from pg. 2

powder substance on the desk in the master bedroom with a hypodermic needle next to the white powder. The agents that observed these items are trained in the identification, remediation and disposal of Meth labs and their components. Agents and officers

exited the residence and Agent applied for a search warrant which was granted by the court. Agents executed a search warrant on this residence and found a substance that tested positive for methamphetamine, components used to manufacture methamphetamine and a "one pot" shake bottle. This lab was active and remediated.

Christopher Hicks, the main person that resides at this resi-

dence left just prior to law enforcement arrival. Hicks is currently out on bond for an investigation that led to a search warrant just over a month ago. At that time Hicks stated that he had manufactured methamphetamine approximately 25 times at Mountain View Rd. Lenoir City and this activity has continued to date.

This occurred in Loudon County. Agent Brendon DeBoer DTF, made the arrest.

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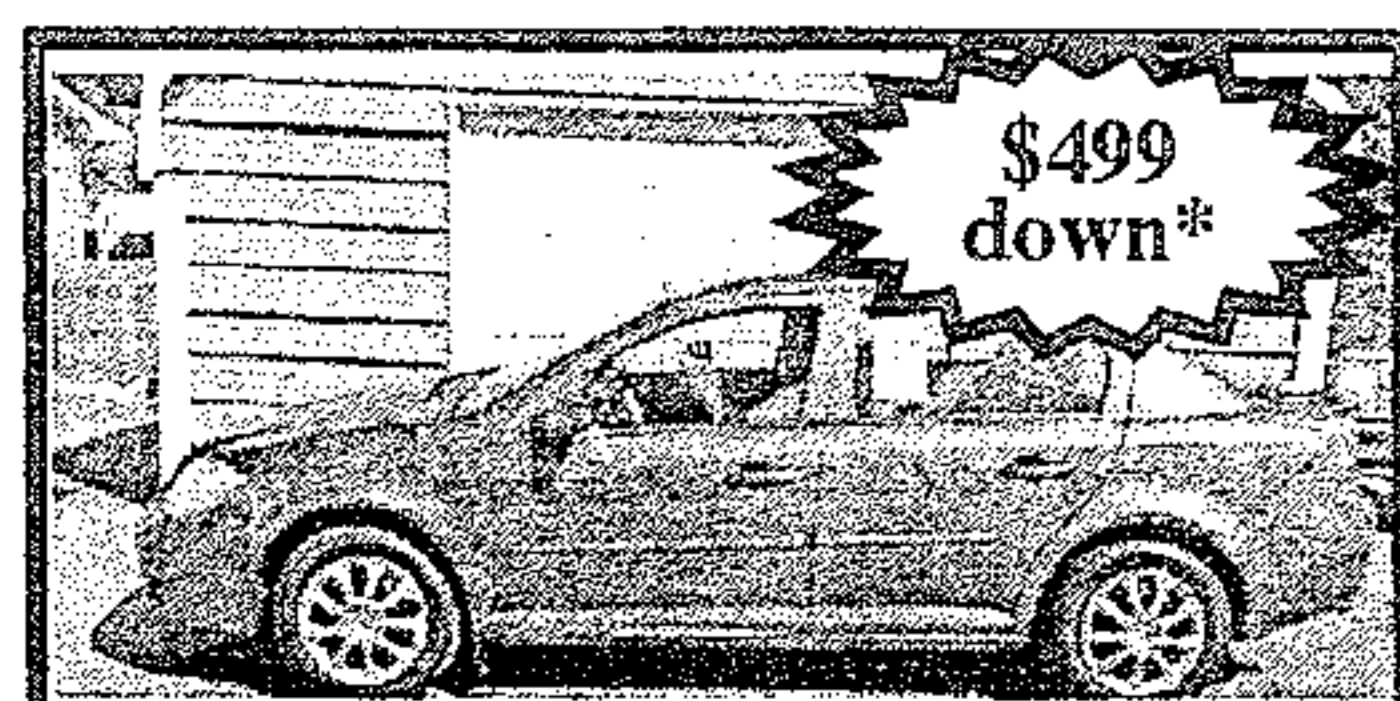
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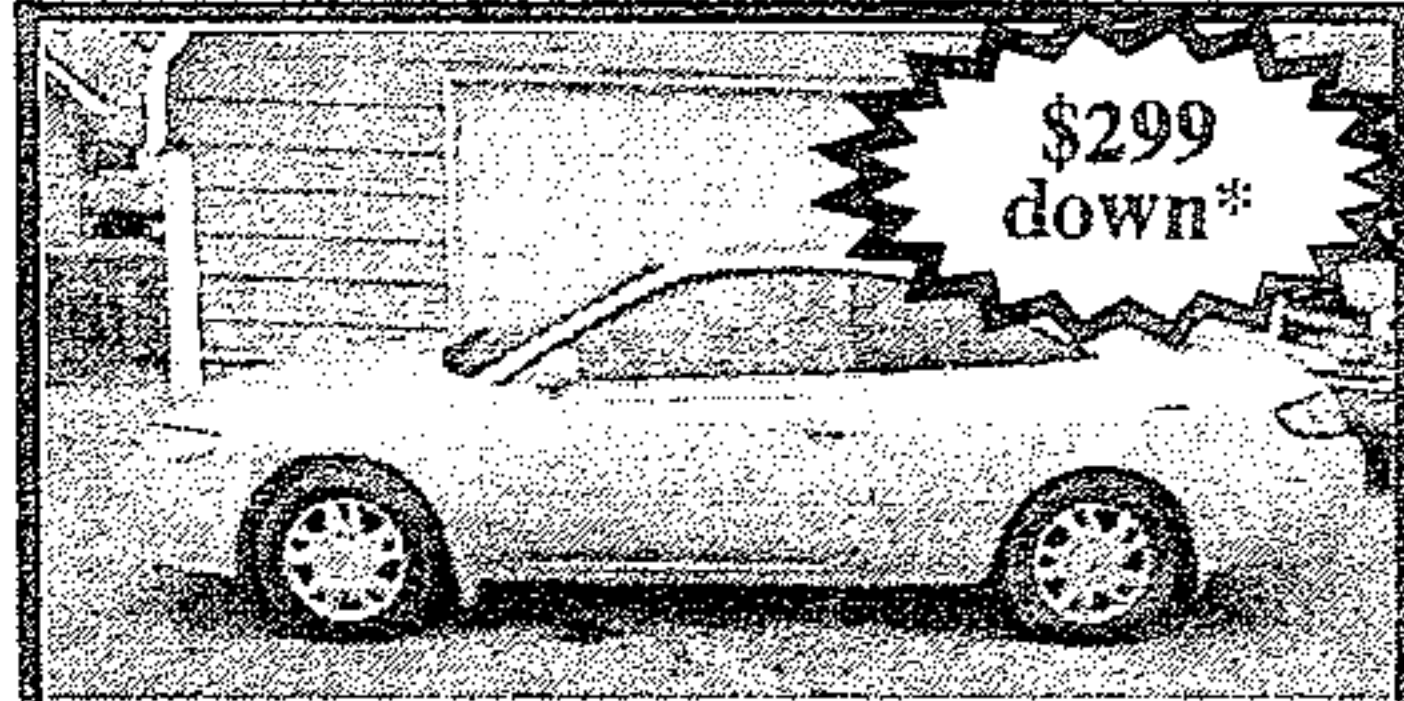
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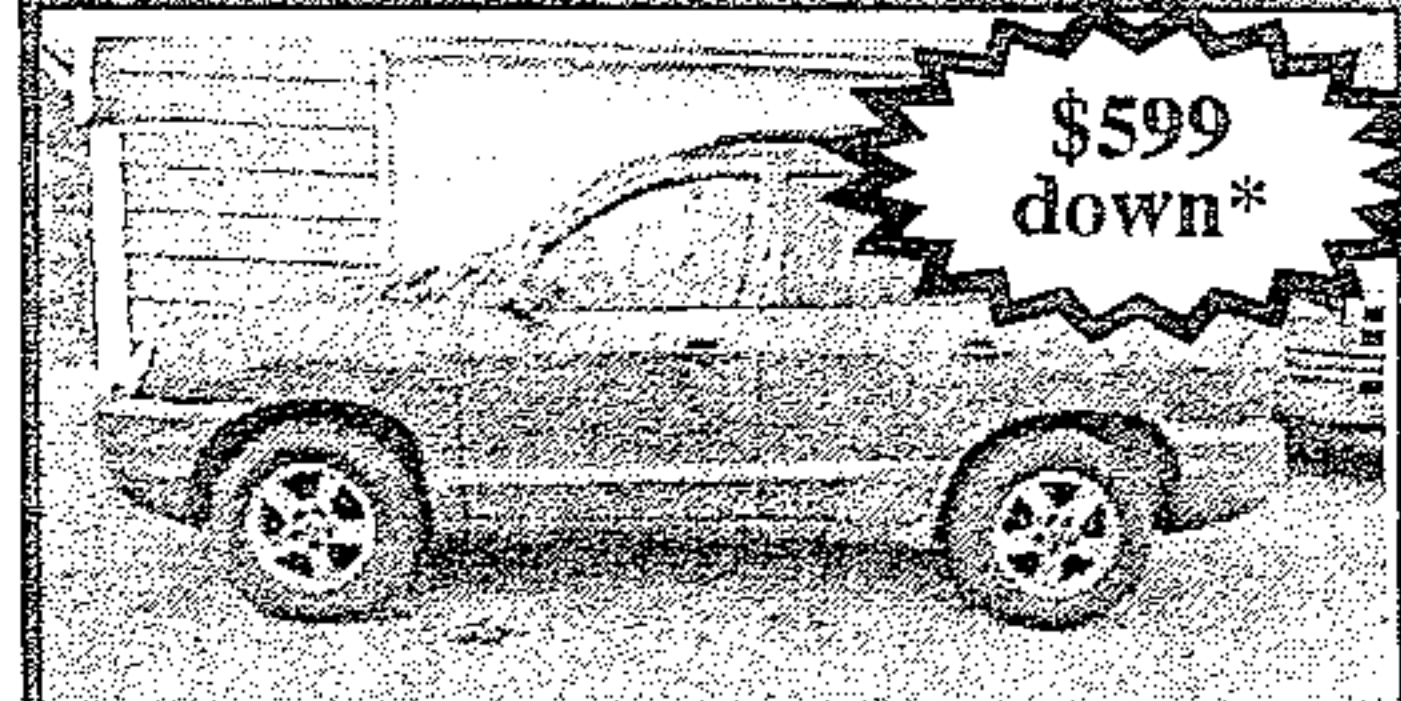
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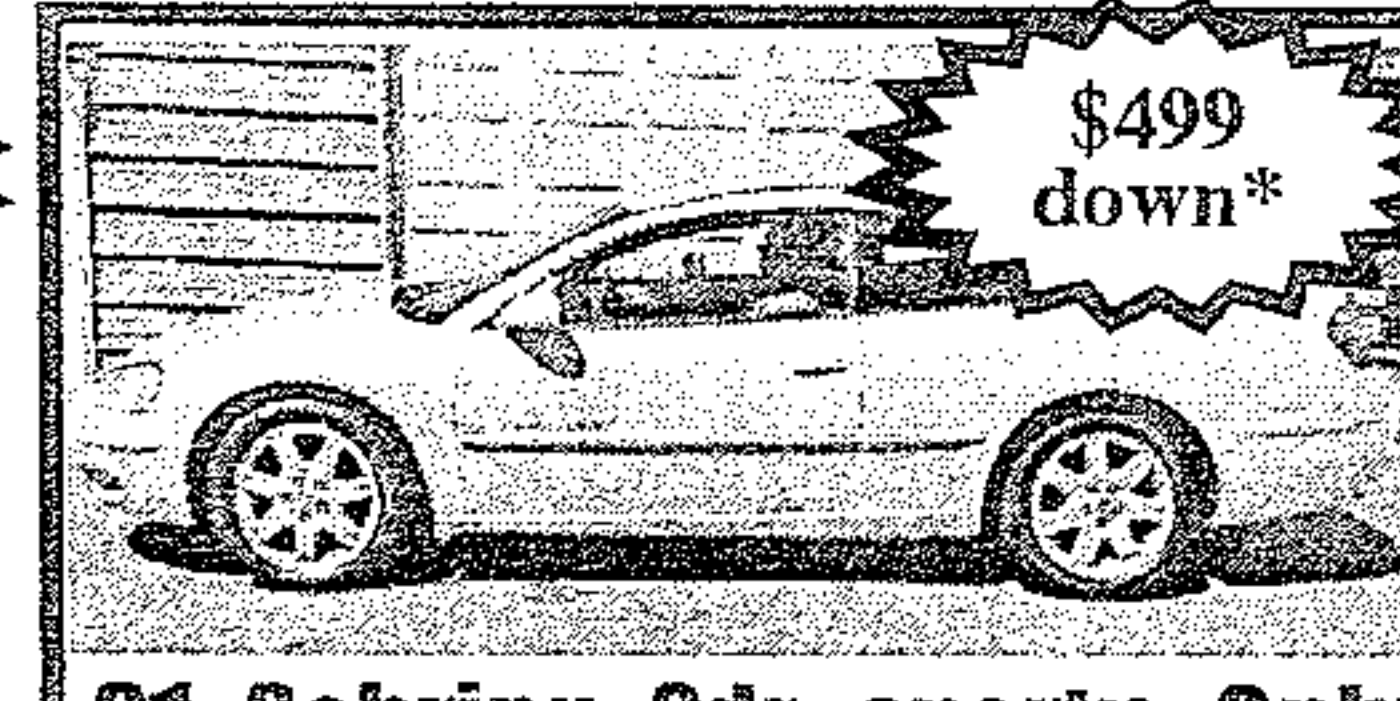
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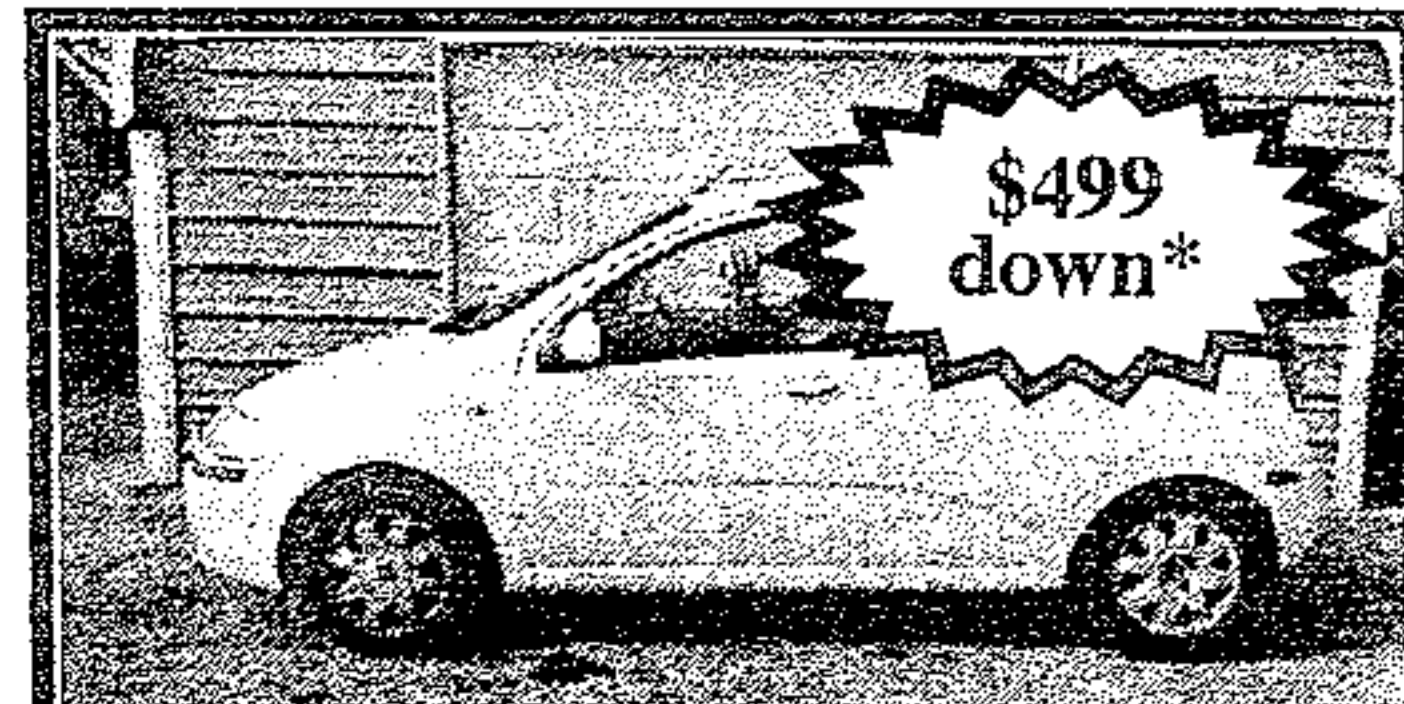
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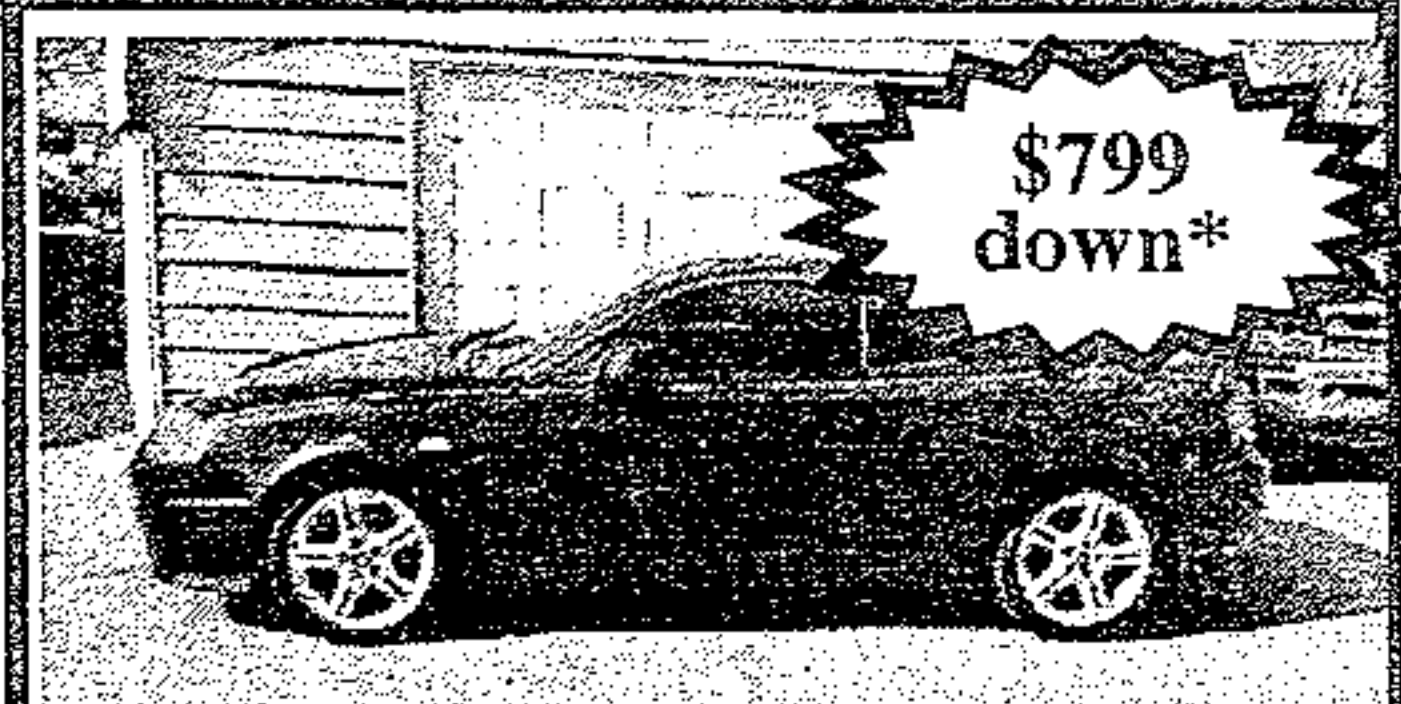
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