

another. By 2 a.m. both men were in their Camaro headed for a campground in North Rustico. The weather was cloudy, but no rain had fallen and the pavement was dry.

Drinking and driving is a lethal mixture — but these travellers had added a dash of unfamiliarity with local roads, plus a heaping spoonful of excessive speed — a sure recipe for death.

The car sped along Route 6 to Oyster Bed Bridge, climbing to speeds estimated at 160 km/h. At Oyster Bed Bridge, the road veers sharply to the left, and is intersected by a secondary road which leads to the Retarded Children's Camp. The Camaro failed to negotiate this acute turn in the highway and exited the road, striking a sign post, entering a ditch and rolling several times. The momentum coupled with the geography of the land sent the automobile catapulting through the air, bouncing twice on the ground before smashing with tremendous force into the second storey of an older home. The house stood 260 feet from the point where the car left the highway and began its death spiral.

The Camaro featured a T-roof, terrific for ventilation in warm weather but deadly when slammed roof first into an immovable object. Upon impact with the house, the two occupants were hurled through the open T-roof. The Camaro then crashed resoundingly to the ground, a crumpled heap of broken metal.

The passenger, it appears, was projected over the roof of the house, then plummeted to earth, where he lay until discovered several hours later. The 21-year-old driver was propelled through the huge cavity created by the vehicle and flung through a closet wall. His body, travelling at a tremendous speed, then smashed into an adjacent wall, stopping at the top of the stairs, head dangling downward.

The owner of the house, an 88-year-old woman, was awakened by the horrendous noise. At first she imagined that a freak tornado had struck. Her fear of the unknown soon became a horror of the reality when she saw the mangled corpse of the driver lying on the stair landing directly at the foot of her bed.

The elderly woman could not navigate the stairway with its gruesome barricade of blood and human debris. Help was as near as her phone — but her phone was now miles away downstairs. She began to call loudly for someone to end her waking nightmare.

The survivor recalled little of the tragedy — merely that he and his friend had left the lounge and driven along a road. The next memory was of pain as he regained consciousness on the lawn.

The autopsy established that the driver's blood-alcohol level was 32 mmol/L — almost twice the legal limit.

Statements, photographs, measurements, diagrams and reams of reports, the painstaking routine every highway patrol member must endure, were completed and the case was concluded.

The old lady's house, which had thus far withstood the severe winds and snows of countless P.E.I. winters, had been shifted a full four inches on the foundation from the force of the collision.

After a lengthy stay in hospital the passenger in the accident recovered from his injuries. The aged home owner is again living in her house which required extensive renovations. And Cst. Hutchinson? He's back on the road, patrolling our highways, protecting the public, responding to calls — and dreading another summer. ■