

## “KEEPING PACE” - #19

(Page 1)

### DISPOSABLE LIGHTER:

The photograph below shows the holes which burned routinely into the workmen's coveralls as they used a propane torch to cut scrap steel at a closed steel plant in Detroit. Molten metal from the cutting process would fly onto their coveralls, and they would quickly put out the fire. In this case, a workman had been badly burned by a gas explosion, and a product defect in the cutting torch was being blamed. However, I tested the cutting torch and its entire system, and I could find no evidence of a defect or leak.



The above photograph shows a co-worker of the injured workman. I asked this gentleman whether he carried a disposable lighter in his pocket, and then I snapped off another photograph just as he removed that type of lighter from his breast pocket. After that, he would not tell me whether the injured worker also carried a disposable lighter. (The injured workman denied it.) Because of this and the fact that I had eliminated everything else, I concluded that a metallic globule from the cutting operation had burned through the clothing and then through the plastic fuel container of the disposable lighter in the injured man's pocket, to cause the explosion and his injuries.

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(Page 2)

### AUDI 5000: (Revised):

In 1986, there was a media circus involving allegations that the Audi 5000 automobile was very prone to “unintended acceleration” accidents. At that point, P.A.C.E. had investigated over 100 unintended acceleration accidents, and had found that in only 2 cases had a defect really occurred. In the other 98 cases, the driver had accidentally placed their foot on the wrong pedal, in a type of panic response. This usually occurred just as the driver was shifting out of “PARK” into “DRIVE”, or out of “PARK” into “REVERSE.” The fact is that if the driver’s foot is really on the brake pedal, the brake pedal is stronger than the accelerator pedal, and the brake pedal will bring the car to a stop, even if the accelerator is held wide open. This was true in every vehicle we tested by depressing both the accelerator pedal and the brake pedal fully at the same time. One attorney client in Indianapolis decided to test this fact himself. At 60 mph, he depressed both the accelerator pedal and the brake pedal fully at the same time in his General Motors automobile. The car did come to a stop, but he ruined his transmission.

I was so certain that the allegations about the Audi 5000 were untrue that I purchased a 1986 Audi 5000 for my wife, because she wanted one.



### SHIFT LOCK:

To prevent these allegations in the future, the Volkswagen Corporation invented the Shift-Lock for the Audi 5000, and installed it as a recall on the ones already manufactured. The Shift-Lock is simply a solenoid which does not allow the gearshift lever to be taken out of “PARK” until the driver’s foot is on the brake pedal. As of 2012, it has been installed on most automobiles, and it has prevented most of these unintended acceleration accidents.