"I understand the car had a phenomenal amount of chemicals inside. Whoever got there first would have taken one look inside and got back at great speed. It would seem he's made sure he didn't survive it." Dr Friedman had three children, Aidan, Douglas and Iona. The family were last night unavailable for comment.

Dr Friedberg's colleagues yesterday paid tribute to him as an eminent scientist who made an "exceptional contribution" in his field, and as a "warm and kind" colleague. The respected researcher spearheaded breakthroughs on how proteins cause, and hinder, the treatment of breast and lung cancer.

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