

Police chief will get \$88,000 for new Crime Stopper show

By GORD KOLLE
The Halton Regional Police may take to the television airwaves to help solve crimes and catch crooks. Last week Police Chief James Harding asked the police commission for \$88,000 to produce a series of 90-second "Crime Stoppers" for a Hamilton television station. Chief Harding believes the television tipster programs are a "necessary tool" in combatting crime. The \$88,000 budget would pay for a Crime Stoppers sergeant, constable, car and phone line. Rewards would range between \$50 and \$2,000 and would be financed through donation from businesses and local citizens. If the police commission backs the chief's request, the Halton police force would share "Crime of the Week" time slots on Hamilton's CHCH TV with the Hamilton-Wentworth Police.

According to Sgt. Richard Kivell, the Halton program is still in the planning stage because nothing definite has been decided. "There's no sense in supplying time and effort towards this until regional council and the police commission give us a decision," he said. "That won't happen until early 1984." In the Crime Stoppers program, the police pick a crime they're especially eager to solve and write a 90-second script which details the offense. The police also supply the actors. The script is subject to approval by CHCH and if it's cleared, the event is filmed. Though Crime Stoppers is new to Canada (only Calgary, Edmonton and Hamilton have it), the results are already impressive, according to the CHCH TV news director John Best.

In the five months the Hamilton Crime Stoppers has been active, 43 arrests have been made. For \$3,100 in reward money, informants have helped recover almost \$43,000 in drugs and property, according to Hamilton-Wentworth Police. Some critics of the program believe the media will become an organ of the police if the Crime Stoppers is pushed through but Chief Harding discounts this opinion. "I don't see the press as being a mouthpiece," he said. "It gives the media a chance to get off the rocking horse and help the public, to put their words where their mouths are." Mr. Best shares that view. Mr. Best sees it as a community service and says from the outset, CHCH knew it would be hearing from other police forces in the surrounding regions.

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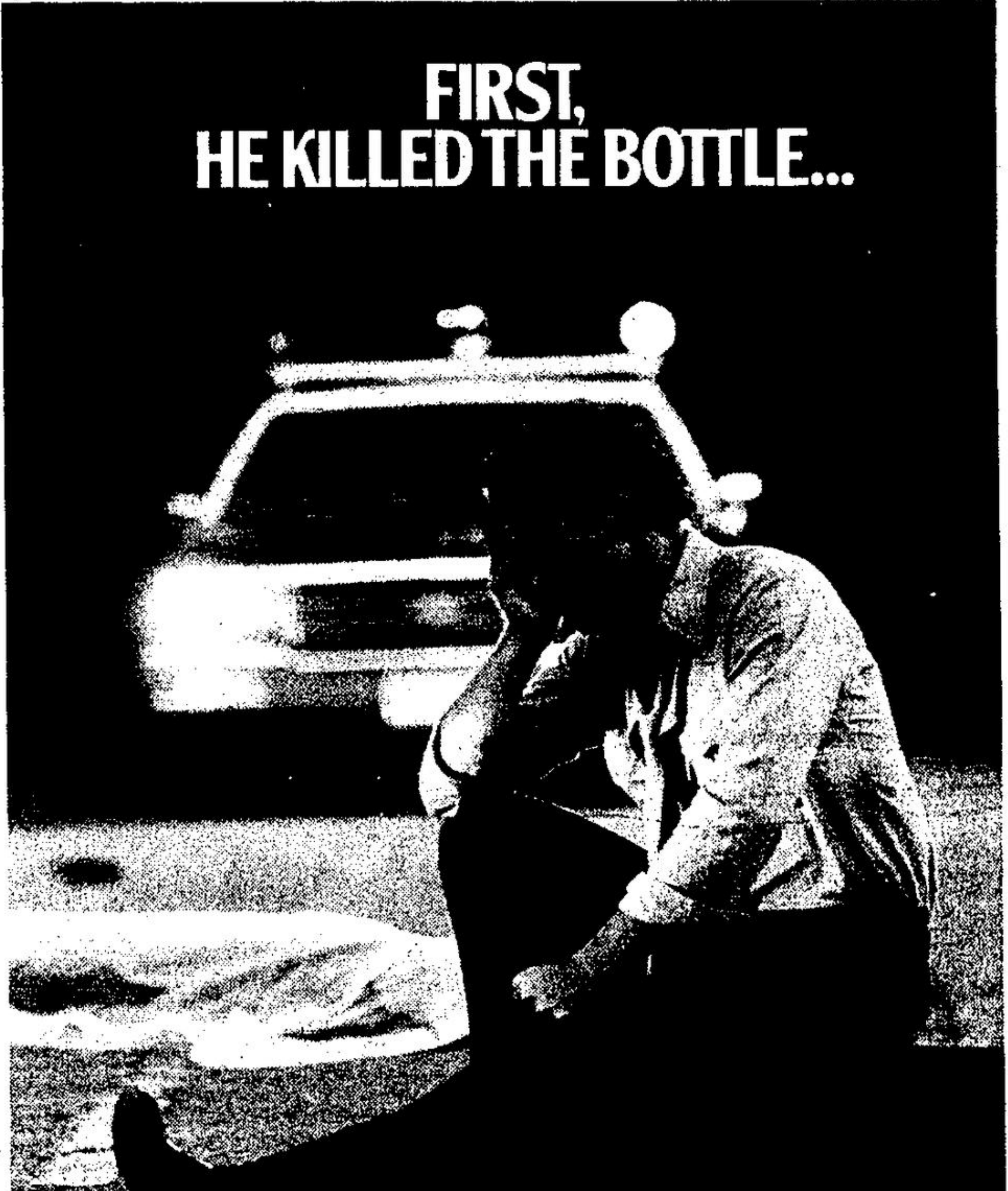
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