

Fatals involving alcohol down

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will also be checking for seatbelt use."

Last year, officers stopped 17,219 vehicles, issued 40 12-hour suspensions, and charged 16 drivers with drinking and driving offences.

In District One — which includes Halton Hills and Milton — 5,809 vehicles were stopped, eight 12-hour suspensions were issued and five drivers were charged for drinking and driving.

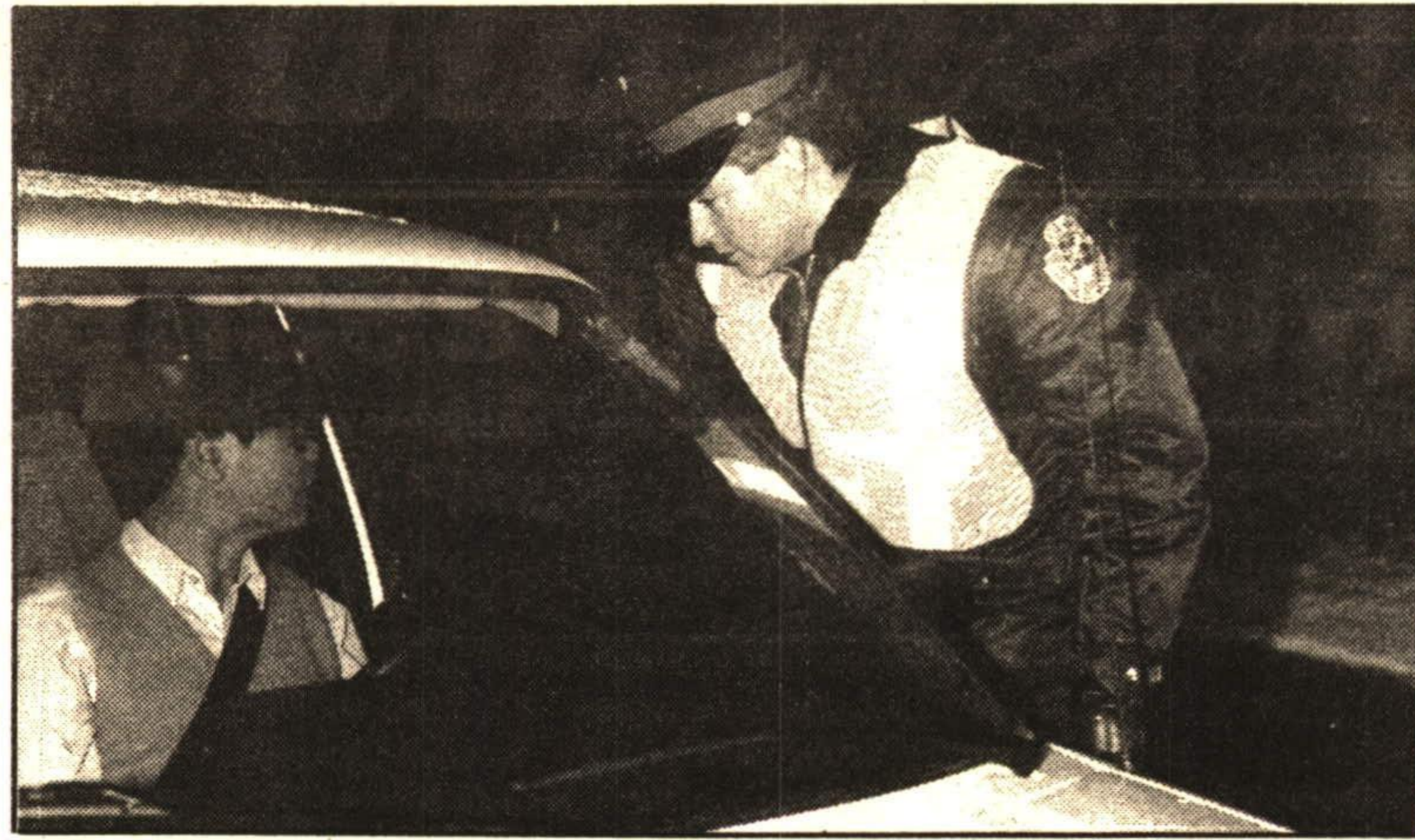
"Overall the number of fatal motor vehicle accidents in the Region is down and the number of fatal accidents involving alcohol is down," Mason said. "We want to maintain that trend."

Mason said the best way to avoid being charged with a drinking and driving offence is by not drinking and driving.

"The host (of a Christmas get together) should be extra careful about letting people drive after drinking," Mason said.

He said there are "court precedents" where the host has been found civilly liable after having a party and an impaired guest has killed or injured someone while driving home.

"A person who is legally impaired may not show any outward obvious signs of impairment," he said.



Cst. Rick Ferguson talks to a driver at a spot check location in Georgetown Wednesday night. Halton Regional Police got their annual Christmas RIDE program into full swing last week.

A legally impaired driver has a blood-alcohol concentration of more than 80 milligrams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood.

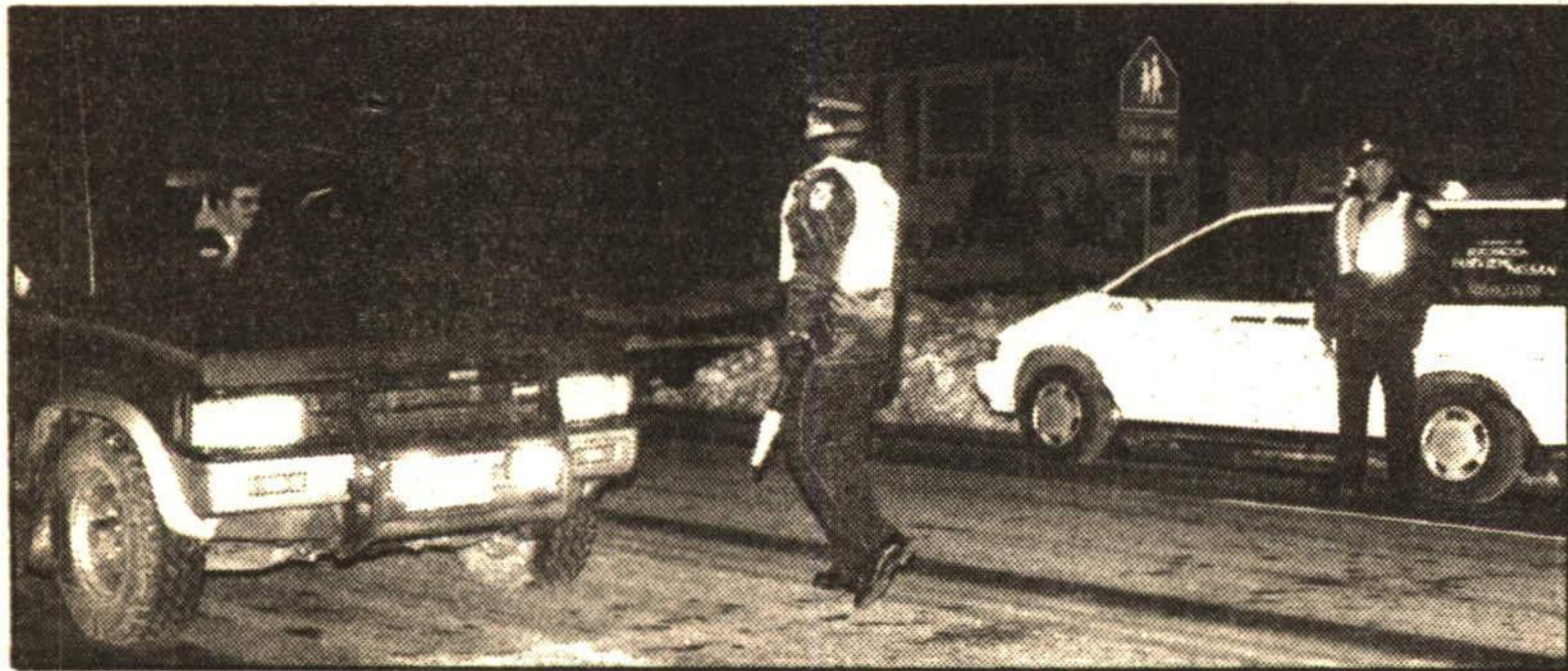
At the spot check location drivers who police suspect have been drinking are given an roadside (ALERT) breathalyzer test.

Drivers with between zero and 80 milligrams of alcohol in their blood pass the test and are on their way — usually within a few minutes.

Drivers with 80 to 99 milligrams of alcohol in their blood are handed a 12-hour licence suspension and take a taxi home.

Drivers with more than 100 milligrams of alcohol in their blood are escorted to the nearest Halton Regional Police detachment for a breathalyzer test that determines the exact amount of alcohol in their blood stream.

Driving while legally impaired leads to an automatic one-year licence suspension and a fine of between \$300 and \$3,000.



Halton Regional Police officers stop a vehicle at a RIDE spot check location in Georgetown last week. Police hope to stop 20,000 vehicles during their annual Christmas RIDE blitz. A specially equipped RIDE van donated by Burlington's Fairview Nissan acts allows officers to perform roadside breathalyzer checks in some comfort.

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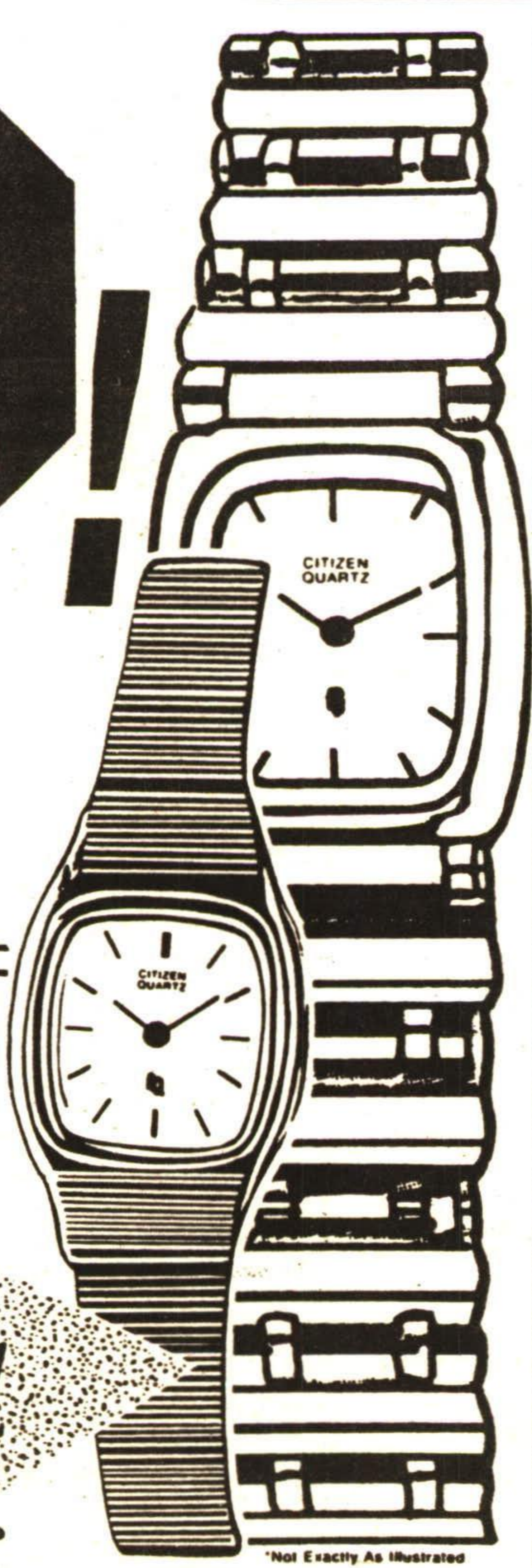
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