

Rented truck couldn't hold 500 cases of alcohol: trial

By **LISA CARTWRIGHT**
The Champion

Five hundred cases of contraband alcohol wouldn't fit in the U-Haul vehicle Stephen Andreopoulos had rented for that purpose, a jury heard Thursday during an ongoing first-degree murder trial in Superior Court in Milton.

"The front tires (of the vehicle) would be laying almost straight out," said Guy Phinney, who had been in the contraband alcohol trade for 15 years before he was charged and convicted. "It (the truck) would be low to the ground. It's just too much weight."

The 53-year-old Kewswick man told the jury he supplied Mr. Andreopoulos, 36, and his two partners Dominco Sacco and Jim Pearson, all of Barrie, with alcohol three or four times a week for six to eight months prior to Mr. Andreopoulos' disappearance.

Mr. Andreopoulos was last seen leaving a gas station in Maple, Ont. with former Milton resident David Fiorino, 27, on July 2, 1996. His body was discovered 18 months later buried on a property on Derry Road. Mr. Fiorino is charged with first-degree murder.

The jury has heard that Mr. Fiorino told the partners he could get them 500 cases of alcohol for \$100 a case from a place near Cornwall.

Mr. Phinney told Crown Brian O'Marra the going rate for alcohol in 1996 was about \$118 dollars a case.

But you could get alcohol for cheaper, defense lawyer Robert Nuttall told the Crown's witness.

The lawyer read from transcripts between Mr. Phinney and the police that said people could get cases of alcohol from \$80 to \$100 if they crossed the border into the United States.

Money exchanged

Mr. Phinney agreed he made those statements to police, but added "everyone who touches it (the alcohol) wants a piece."

That meant if he went to the United States and picked up the alcohol himself, there would be an addition \$110 to \$115 in extra charges, he told Mr. O'Marra during re-examination.

Mr. Nuttall also asked the witness how money was exchanged.

Mr. Phinney told the jury he would pick up the alcohol from a safehouse, then would go to another location to hand over the money. He would then deliver the alcohol to the client, again being paid at a

different location.

That way if the police caught them, they would either get the money or the alcohol, but not both, he told the jury.

The jury has heard that Mr. Andreopoulos gave the accused the money before getting the alcohol.

John Britton also testified on Thursday.

In July 1996, he sold a 1990 fully loaded, red Chevy 4x4 to Mr. Fiorino and his father Carmine, he told the court.

The pair went to Mr. Britton's Stouffville, Ont. home to look at a vehicle he advertised in the Triad newspaper. The truck was listed for \$14,900 or best offer. They agreed on \$12,200 cash.

Carmine took a reddish leather suitcase from his vehicle and they went inside the home.

"The older guy (Carmine) opened the briefcase and took out the money. He counted out 122 \$100 dollar bills. The younger guy (David) recounted it out to me."

Mr. Britton said he also saw more money in the briefcase.

Mr. Nuttall asked the man whether the money was bundled in tinfoil.

He looked at the lawyer strangely and told him it wasn't.

The trial continued at press time yesterday.

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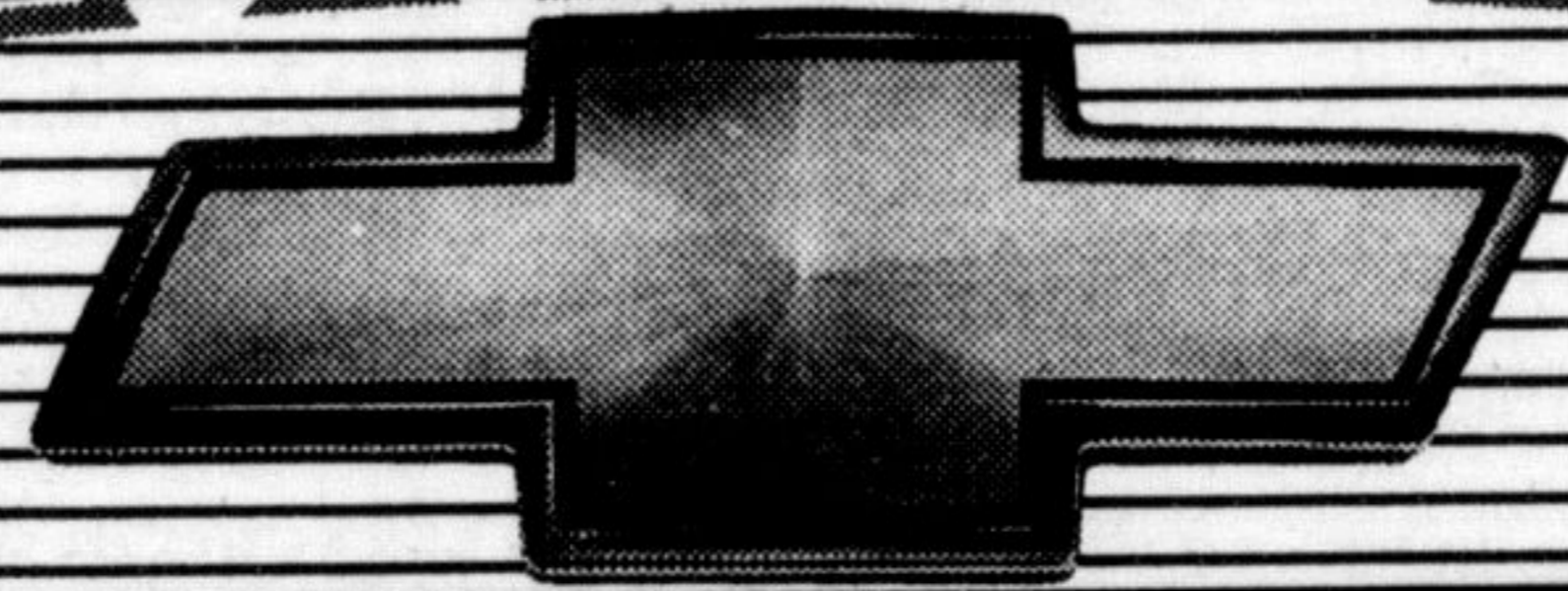
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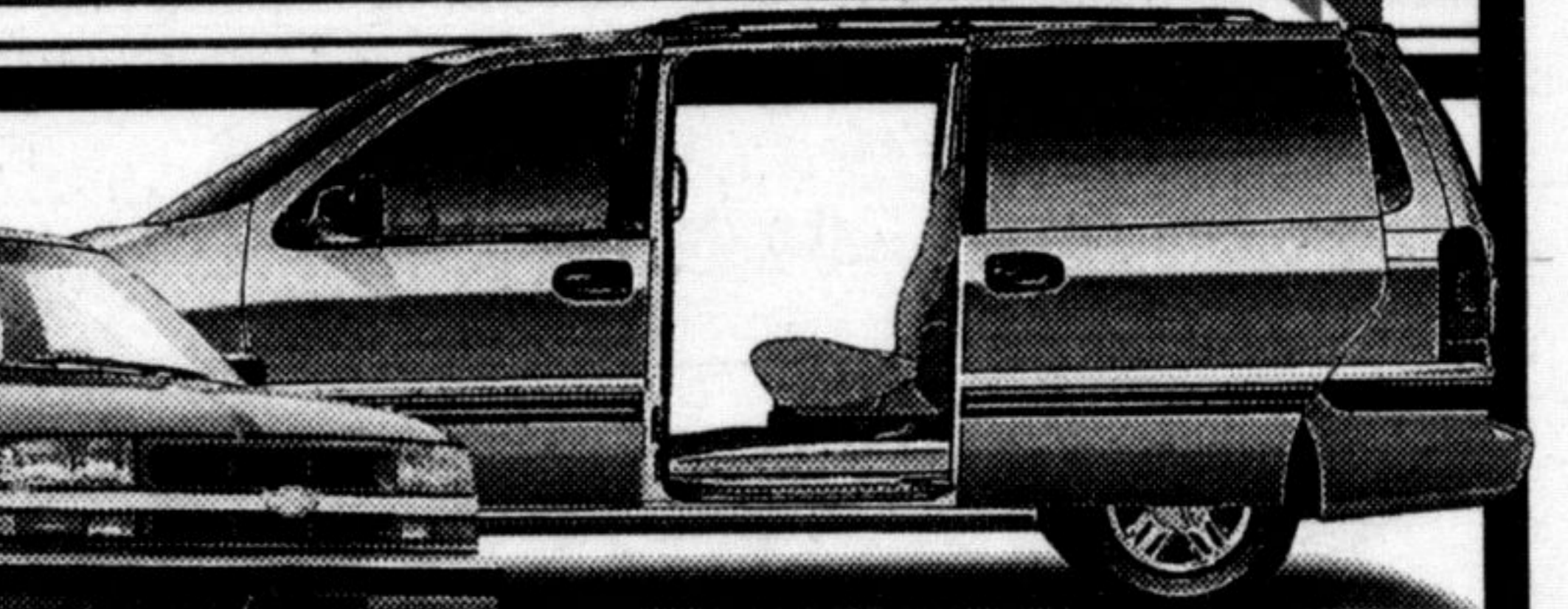
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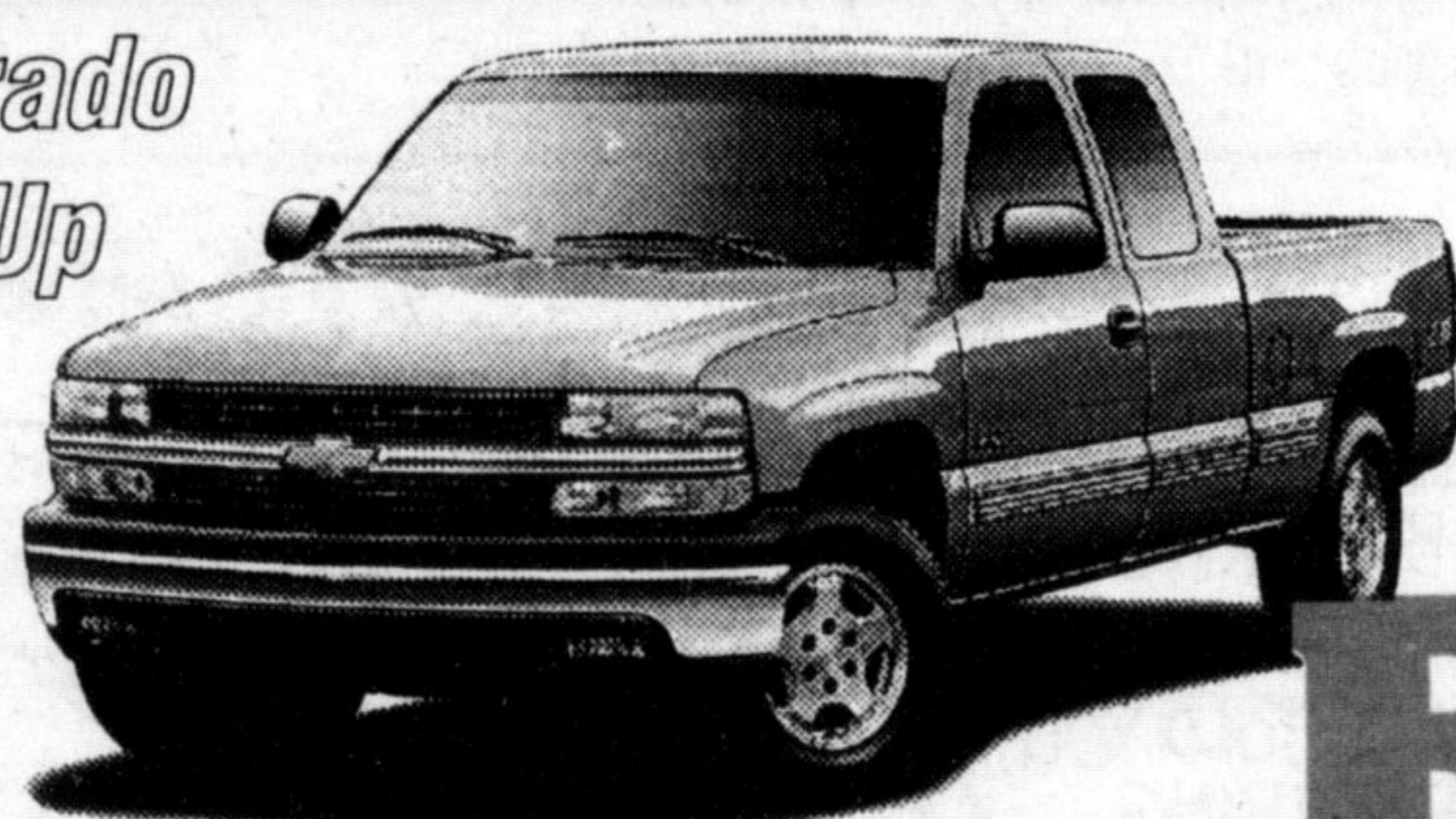


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