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The Tribune *Stouffville*



Vol. 108 No. 18 A Metroland Community Newspaper Wednesday, May 1, 1996 50¢ (\$7¢ plus 3¢ GST)

Nightmare on Woodbine

Local jeweler and assistant handcuffed, robbed at gunpoint

By JOAN RANSBERRY
 Staff Reporter

A 36-year-old Stouffville businessman thought Friday was his last day on earth.

Joe Dehold, owner of Jewellery Season, told *The Tribune* that after being robbed at gunpoint, handcuffed, thrown to the floor and verbally threatened, he considers himself "lucky" to be alive.

"I thought I was going to die," said Dehold.

"They took 10 years of my business away. But, I'm here and my watchman's alive."

While York Regional Police carry out an armed robbery investigation which includes seeking two male suspects, Dehold is making a special public appeal in the hopes that someone will come forward to help solve this crime.

Police reported that thieves loaded \$200,000 worth of jewelry into a satchel and fled the store, located at Woodbine Avenue and Stouffville Road.

The day marks the first time Dehold was robbed. He relates the experience. At 2:29 p.m., it was business-as-usual at Jewellery Season.

At 3 p.m., Dehold said a "clean cut, well spoken" Asian male of about 28 years entered the store, approached the counter and asked about getting a watch battery exchanged.

"This guy spoke perfect English."

"He was well dressed in a black leather jacket," said Dehold.

Dehold handed the cus-

tommer over to his 69-year-old watchman.

A few minutes later, "another fellow" entered the store and asked Dehold if he could look at engage-

ment rings.

"I bent my head down and looked at the rings. When I looked up, a gun was pointed directly at my chest. I was stunned."

"I thought, 'this isn't really happening. It was such shock,'" said Dehold.

This suspect, described as white, about six-foot and in his late 20s, grabbed Dehold, "twirled" him around, slapping the hand cuffs on one wrist, threw him to the floor, clamped the cuffs on the other hand, pointed the snubbed nose revolver at his head and

ordered him to co-operate or else.

"I told him to take anything they wanted," said Dehold.

"I didn't care. I told him I've got a family. I've got four kids. I told him to let us live."

The gunmen did not wear masks.

"They didn't have their faces covered so I figured, they'd shoot me."

"We know some of these people kill for \$50. I just figured I'd die before they left the store," said Dehold.

While Dehold was being handcuffed, the customer with the battery problem was showing his true character.

The watch specialist was handcuffed and, he, too, was being pinned to the floor with a snub-nosed revolver pointed at him.

"The robber said, 'If you move I'll shoot you.'"

While the armed gunmen kept their weapons pointed at the victims, they loaded the satchel with goods.

"They knew what they were after," said Dehold.

"They took expensive things. They took all my diamonds and gold necklaces."

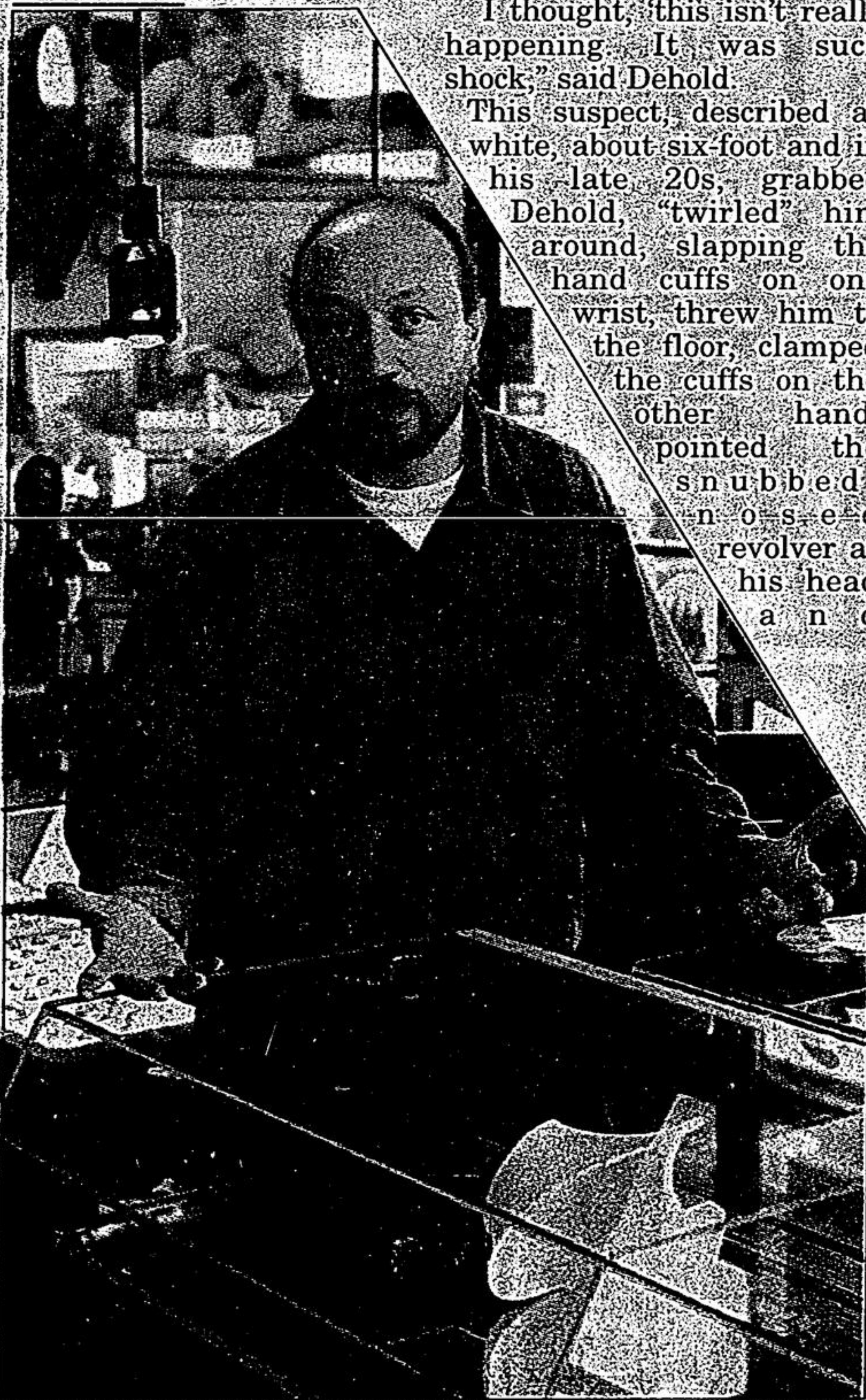
When the thieves were fleeing the store, a customer entered. "The customer found us," Dehold said.

Before the suspects sped away, the customer managed to get a licence plate number. "It turned out it was a stolen plate," said Dehold.

Although the experience left Dehold frightened, he returned to work immediately.

"You just have to go on. If I stayed home, I'd relive it over and over in my mind. I came close to dying," he said.

Anyone with information about the robbery, call 773-1221 Ext. 7873.



Harrowing experience

Joe Dehold, owner of Jewellery Season was robbed at gunpoint, along with an employee, last Friday. The thieves handcuffed the victims and threatened to shoot while they made off with diamond and gold jewelry worth \$200,000.

Photo: SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Microscope on Stouffville residents

By JOAN RANSBERRY
 Staff Reporter

Everything you ever wanted to know about Whitchurch-Stouffville is on file with Big Brother.

While the federal government, through Census Canada, prepares for its upcoming information gathering mission, set to begin May 1, we're already privy to some interesting data about this town.

According to 1991 statistics, a total of 18,360 people called Whitchurch-Stouffville home.

Of those, 9,180 are male and 9,175 are female. Meanwhile, we've got plenty of little ones. Figures show that we have 740 little boys and 720 little girls ranging in age from one day to four years.

On the other side of the age scale, representing people 75 years and older, there are 570 women and 330 men in town.

When it comes to holy matrimony, Whitchurch-Stouffville believes in it. There are 9,135 people legally married and living together in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

A total of 830 widowed and 530 divorced people live here. And, if you're looking for a mate, the single market in Whitchurch-Stouffville numbers 3,380.

When it comes to language, English is the dominant tongue. A total of 16,145 residents marked English as their mother tongue, while 170 residents identified French as the first language spoken.

Of other mother tongue languages identified, 450 cited Italian, 55 marked German, 370 checked Portuguese and 35 cited Polish.

Stats show that in 1991, there were 6,050 private

(Please see page 2)

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