

Citizen complaints against York police rose last year

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Staff Reporter

Citizen complaints against police rose by 27 per cent last year.

In a recently released report from York Regional Police Acting Chief Peter Scott, statistics show 90 complaints were received by the public, compared to 71 in 1996 but down from 99 in 1995.

Of those 90 complaints, which involved 139 officers, 30 were withdrawn by the complainant; 26 were deemed frivolous or vexatious, and 20 were investigated, but no formal action against the officer was taken.

Only two officers were "admonished" by superiors last year, constituting "formal action" after investigation revealed they had been inconsiderate or rude to citizens, said Professional Standards Bureau

Insp. Karl Shaw. Fifty complaints had to do with police procedure - lax disclosure for court cases, not wearing proper uniform, things like that, Shaw said.

Seventeen alleged a physical assault, 15 alleged verbal assaults and eight claimed misuse of authority.

And 16 complainants have requested an official review of the investigation with five outstanding by year's end.

Any citizen can register a complaint against police within six months of a particular incident, Shaw said.

A report is taken about the incident and an investigation is launched, seeking witnesses and further details about the allegation. The results of the investigation are provided to both the citizen and the officer with recommendations on whether or not action should be taken against the officer.

POLICE

If the citizen does not agree with the adjudication, the chief has the option to decide upon further action at that point, Shaw said.

He said even an admonishment, while certainly the mildest penalty available, still remains in the officer's file for two years.

Shaw said it's not clear why citizen complaints rose last year, but Insp. Dan Robson said the figures must be viewed in context.

"When you consider York Regional Police officers had 142,268 contacts with citizens last year, that's one complaint for every 1,023 contacts," Robson said.

"There are far more men and women who are extremely dedicated individuals."



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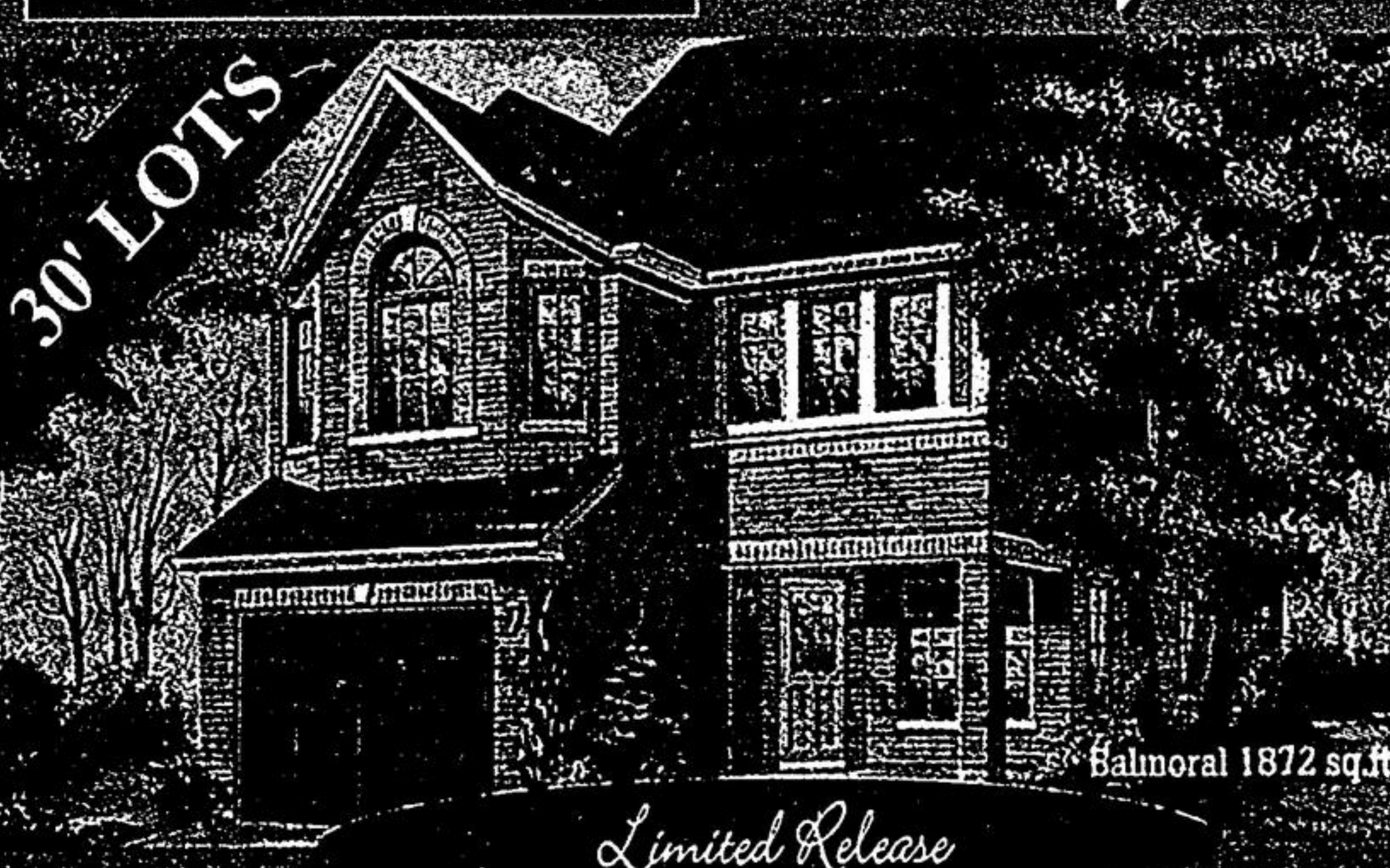
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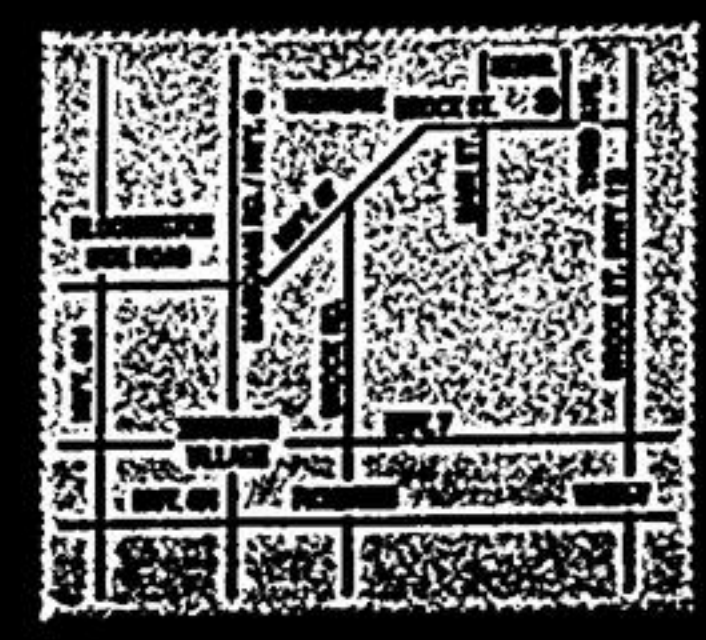
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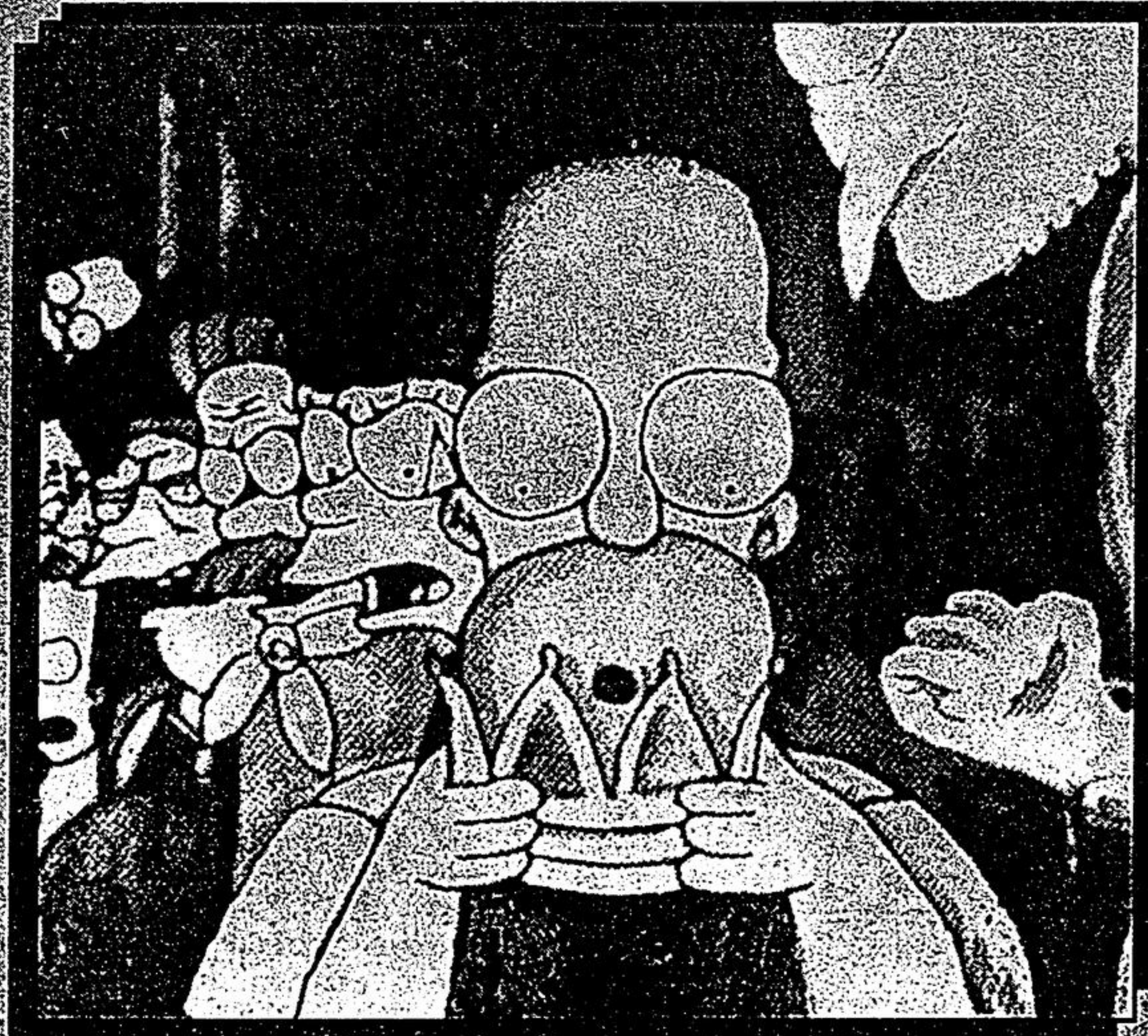
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