

# Murder still unsolved after nearly five years

Police post largest reward allowed by a Canadian force for information in Sandler murder

BY PATRICK CASEY  
STAFF WRITER

Stephen and Linda Sandler will never enjoy a normal life again.

Nor will their two sons, Ilan and Hugh.

Their lives changed forever in July 1994 when 21-year-old Simone Sandler went missing while working as a recruiter, looking for extras for work in films and commercials.

On July 30, Simone's partially nude body was found floating in the Keating Channel, where the Don River enters Lake Ontario seven days after her parents reported her missing.

Sandler had been strangled and homicide detectives in Toronto have yet to make an arrest.

However, the York Region couple are praying someone will come forward with new information after the Toronto Police Services Board posted a \$100,000 reward last month for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for her murder.

The reward represents the maximum amount of money a Canadian police department is allowed to offer.

"This has been a horrendous ordeal for the past four-and-a-half years," explained Stephen in an interview last week. "The entire situation has been unbelievable and very painful."

"You can not even begin to imagine the pain we go through every day. It is very difficult for all of us to cope and everybody suffers continuously. There's really not much we can do but talk about the case and the reward in hopes somebody will come forward with some information."

"We just hope the reward is going to get somebody to talk. I believe her

friends from four-and-a-half years ago might know something," he said. "For \$100,000, maybe they will be willing to talk."

Simone had taken the summer job before planning a return to college in September to concentrate on a career in hotel management.

On Saturday, July 23, she left her Thornhill home at noon and was last seen alive during the day, working in the Yonge Street and Gerrard Street area.

Simone had befriended a number of homeless teenagers who spent their days and nights in the area and at a local shelter and Stephen hopes the reward will jog somebody's memory from that fateful summer day.

"There was nothing she had expressed to us about any problems. We just don't know what happened," added Sandler, who moved his family to Thornhill in 1979 from South Africa.

"She had met a lot of strange people because that was the nature of the job. The police feel she was not kidnapped off Yonge Street, but was lured away. It could have been one of the people she recruited, but it's difficult to get access to everybody who was on her list."

Although there has been no new leads on the case since the reward money was announced two weeks ago, Sandler said Toronto police are planning an aggressive poster campaign throughout the city.

Posters will also be displayed inside police departments and several border stations heading to the United States, while the Sandlers will concentrate their efforts throughout York Region.

"Sometimes it takes people time to digest information before they are able or willing to talk," Sandler said. "We just want to keep this in the public eye for

as long as possible.

"There is no real reason why this happened, but closure in the form of an arrest and conviction is now the best we can hope for. Our experience with the justice system in Canada has not been very encouraging, but we need to

prevent the person who did this to our daughter from doing it to somebody else."

"We cannot allow this to continue." Police are asking anyone with information to call CrimeStoppers at (416) 222-TIPPS (8477).



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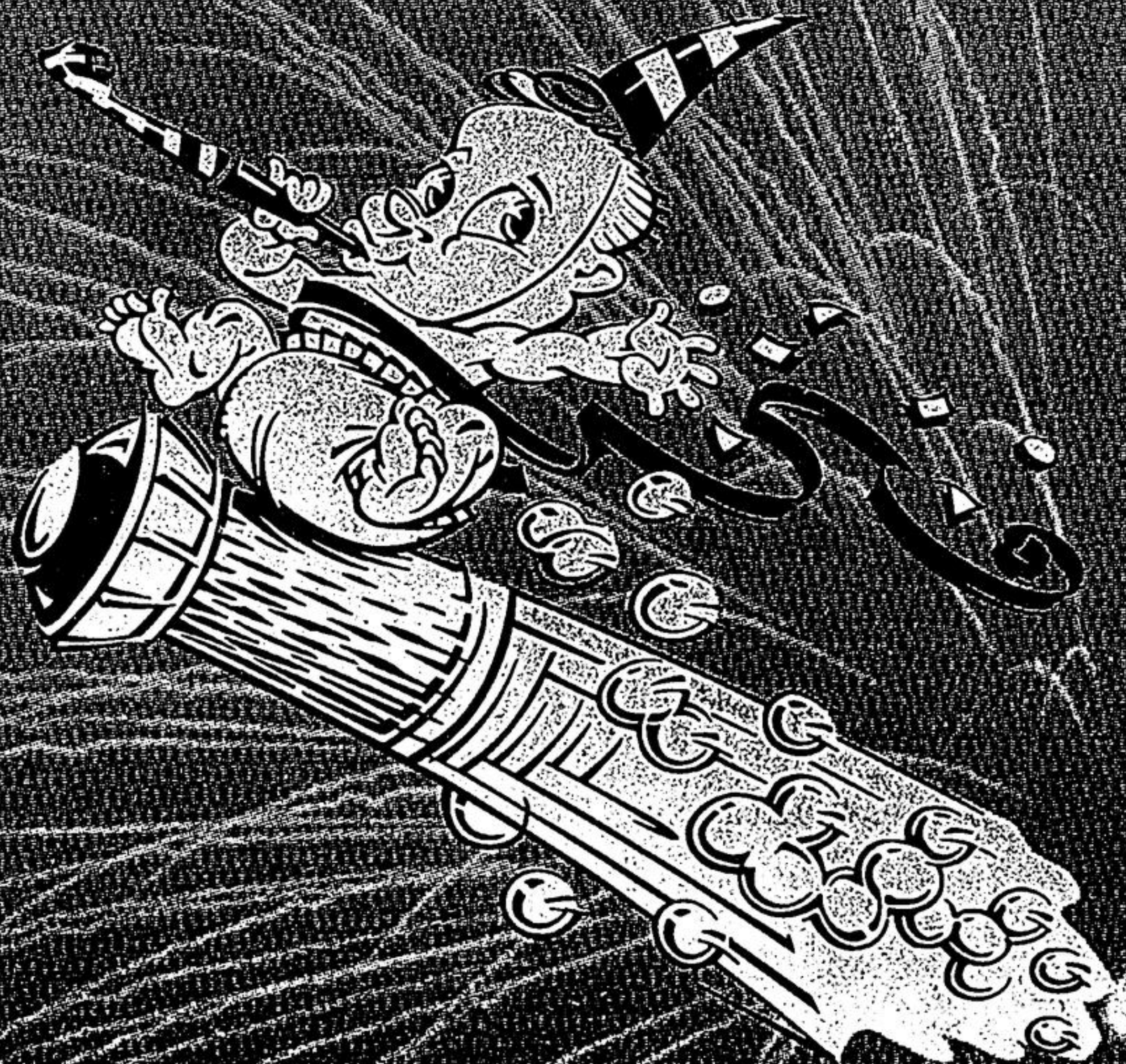
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