

YEAR IN REVIEW: Police tackled home invasions, car jackings and murder

Brutal crime continued through '98

BY RICK VANDERLINDE
STAFF WRITER

The year began with a horrifying discovery for a Newmarket family when they returned home from a trip to see firefighters and police at their Cardinal Crescent home on Jan. 3.

The discovery became even more traumatic for the Hulan family when they learned a friend of the family, 34-year-old Michael Robinson, had died in the fire.

CARJACKER ARRESTED

Carjackings, a relatively new phenomenon in York Region, continued in 1998 with the first gunpoint car theft on Jan. 10.

But York Regional Police made a quick arrest in the Richmond Hill carjacking, charging a 23-year-old Toronto man within days of the crime.

SNOWMOBILERS KILLED

Two Bradford neighbours were killed Jan. 24 when their snowmobiles collided head-on in Holland Landing. David Hibbitt, 43, and Jimmy Purnell, 20, crashed while speeding along the river at Soldier's Bay.

ATTEMPTED MURDER

Two panhandlers were charged with attempted murder Feb. 20 after a 39-year-old Richmond Hill man was found lying in a pool of blood behind a Newmarket plaza.

The panhandlers met in Newmarket by chance.

They had only known Frederick Colburne for a few days when the three panhandled outside the Eagle Street liquor store the day he was stabbed.

DOUBLE FATAL ARREST

A 34-year-old Aurora man was charged with two counts of criminal negligence causing death Feb. 27, in connection with a head-on collision that killed two York Region women.

Suzanne McGregor, 36, of Richmond Hill and Ursula Mara, 33, of Woodbridge, who was five months pregnant, were killed when their vehicles collided on Dufferin Street, south of Rutherford Road.

MURDERED LIBRARIAN FOUND

The body of 50-year-old Eileen Coffey, a Beeton librarian, was found in the Keele Valley dump March 6, following an eight-week search by OPP officers.

Martin Edelenbos, a 34-year-old maintenance worker at dump, was charged with her murder.

THORNHILL MAN MURDERED

The body of a 38-year-old Thornhill man was found on April 8 in a Richmond Hill woodlot.

James Martin, who had been carrying \$120,000 in cash, was shot in the back of the head.

York Regional Police later charged Stephen Allan Rogers with the murder of his childhood friend.

HOME INVASION

Police blanketed a Milliken Mills neighbourhood while searching for at least five robbery and assault suspects on June 2.

Police were responding to a brutal home invasion where armed bandits forced their way into a home and beat an elderly man.

CARJACKING THWARTED

Police believe they thwarted a carjacking July 7 when they pulled over a van in Richmond Hill containing butcher knives, a hatchet and disguises.

Police arrested an 18-year-old Markham man and four youths who can't be identified under the Young Offenders Act.

TORONTO MAN MURDERED

A Toronto man was stabbed to death outside a Thornhill plaza Sept. 5. Mikhail Kopysov, 33, died in hospital after he was stabbed at 100 Steeles Ave. West. Police have yet to make an arrest in the homicide.

STRIP CLUB RAIDED

On Sept. 10, about 200 police officers raided several properties connect-

ed to a Richmond Hill strip club owner. Officers from York Region, Toronto, Durham, the RCMP, Immigration Canada, the Alcohol and Gaming Commission and regional health inspectors swooped down on 16 properties, two vehicles and a boat, all connected to Riccardo DiGiuseppe of Richmond Hill.

The infamous Fantasia strip club on Yonge Street in Richmond Hill was one of the businesses police raided.

COP'S GUN USED

Police began searching for a police-officer's automatic handgun Oct. 23

after a 14-year-old Markham boy used his dad's gun to threaten another teen.

The boy's father, a Toronto police officer, was charged with careless storage of a firearm.

SEX ASSAULT IN PARKING GARAGE

A 54-year-old woman was attacked in an underground parking garage Nov. 12 in what police called a nasty sexual assault.

The woman was jumped from behind, as she walked through the garage, and dragged into a green van.

The attacker hit her on the head, sexually assaulted her and drove off.

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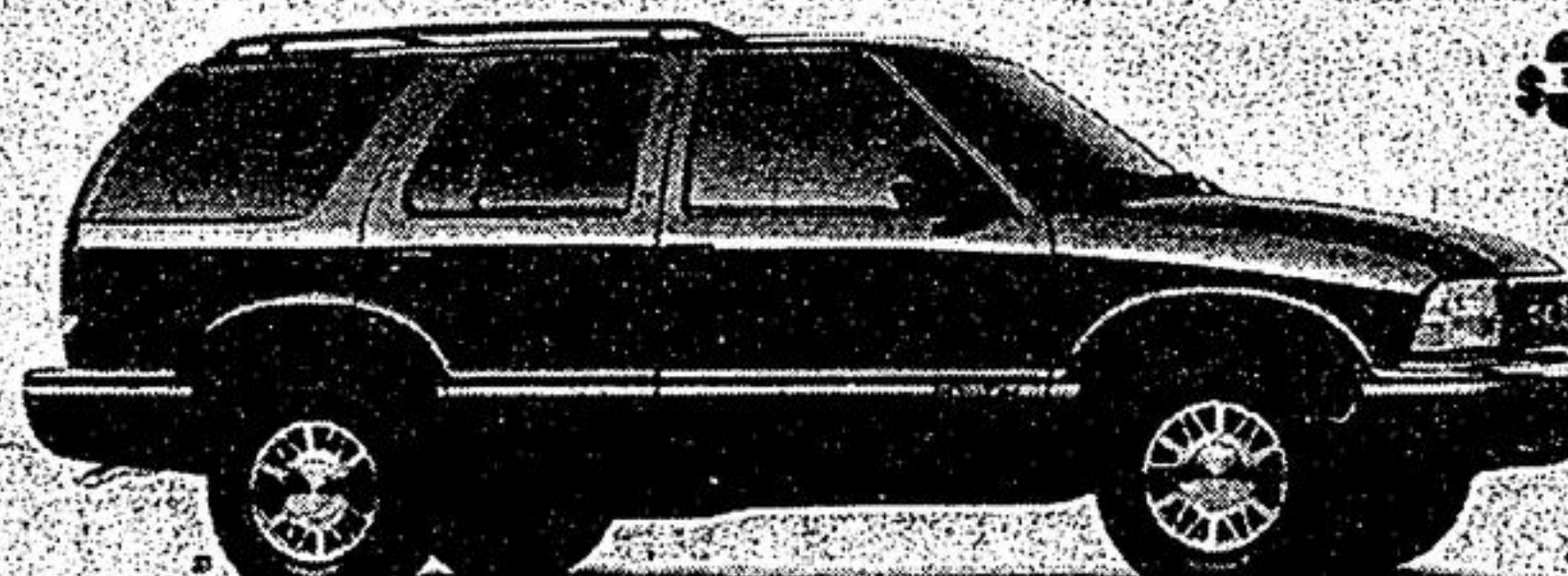
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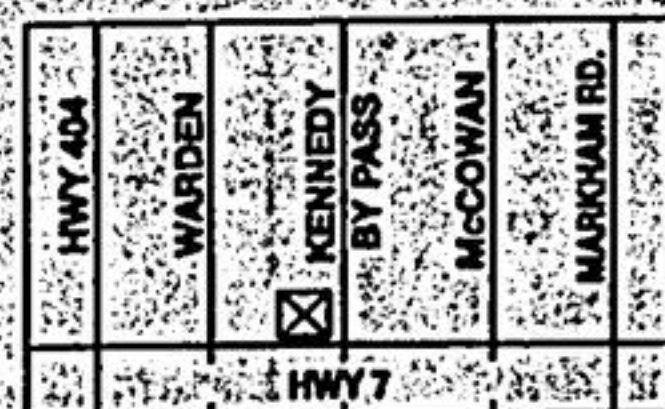
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