

POLICE: Sexual assaults prompt women to adopt a buddy system

Women warned to take care

BY CHRISTOPHER DOURIS
STAFF WRITER

Dana Schrage doesn't need a warning from police to safeguard herself from sexual predators.

Not that it isn't welcome, but the Thornhill resident has learned to use the buddy system whenever she is out at night.

And in the wake of three recent assaults by a sexual predator stalking the Steeles Avenue corridor between Bathurst Street and Bayview Avenue, Schrage and other women are taking further steps to protect themselves.

As her job requires her to work at night, Schrage said the back doors at her business are locked early in the evening and front doors are locked immediately at closing time.

"Not just in reference to the women, all our staff," Schrage said. "We're always conscious of this; no one walks to their car alone."

Schrage isn't the only woman in Thornhill who habitually safeguards herself. "I make sure all the house doors are locked all the time," said Ann Moffatt, who lives and works in Thornhill. "If I go for a walk, I take my two big dogs with me."

Moffatt said she tells people of her destinations and travel times when she goes out, and is careful not to take any chances.

Molly Anisman said she feels trapped because of all the precautions she has to take.

"It's a terrible way to be. You become prisoners because of this."

York Regional Police Sgt. John Sheldon continues to caution women in the area, encouraging them to be familiar with their surroundings and,

whenever possible, use the buddy system.

Police said the suspect may not live in the area now, but his familiarity with the region suggests he has either worked or lived here.

The first attack occurred Oct. 21, when a 31-year-old woman was abducted from the underground garage of a Steeles Avenue apartment building in North York, taken to Newtonbrook Secondary School and sexually assaulted.

In the second attack, three weeks later, a 54-year-old woman was abducted from the underground garage at an apartment building at Dudley Avenue and Elgin Street, taken to an industrial complex on Doncaster Avenue and sexually assaulted.

The most recent attack occurred last week, early Tuesday morning, when a 21-year-old North York woman was abducted from her doorstep in the Steeles and Bayview avenues area, taken to Brebeuf College and sexually assaulted.

In all three incidents, the suspect was driving a stolen Chrysler van, which was later abandoned.

Police think all three attacks are the work of one suspect, described as a male, black, with a medium complexion, 20 to 25 years old, five-foot seven-inches tall, approximately 120 pounds with a thin build. He has a long face, is clean shaven, has big, dark eyes and speaks without an accent.

In one of the attacks, a victim spotted a unique medallion in the shape of a gold ring underneath the head of an eagle with outstretched wings.

Anyone with information on any of the attacks is asked to call CrimeStoppers at (416) 222-TIPS or the sexual assault task force at 1-888-846-2291.

NOBODY CAN BEAT TOROMARK FURNITURE



We have been in the Furniture & Reupholstery business for 49 years, with lots of happy customers



Reader's Choice Award Winner For Best Furniture Store

- 1/2 Price Sale On Any Fabric
- 5 Monthly Payments, No Extra Charge
- Free Decorating Advice By Stephen, Curt & Connie
- No Taxes And No Delivery Charge

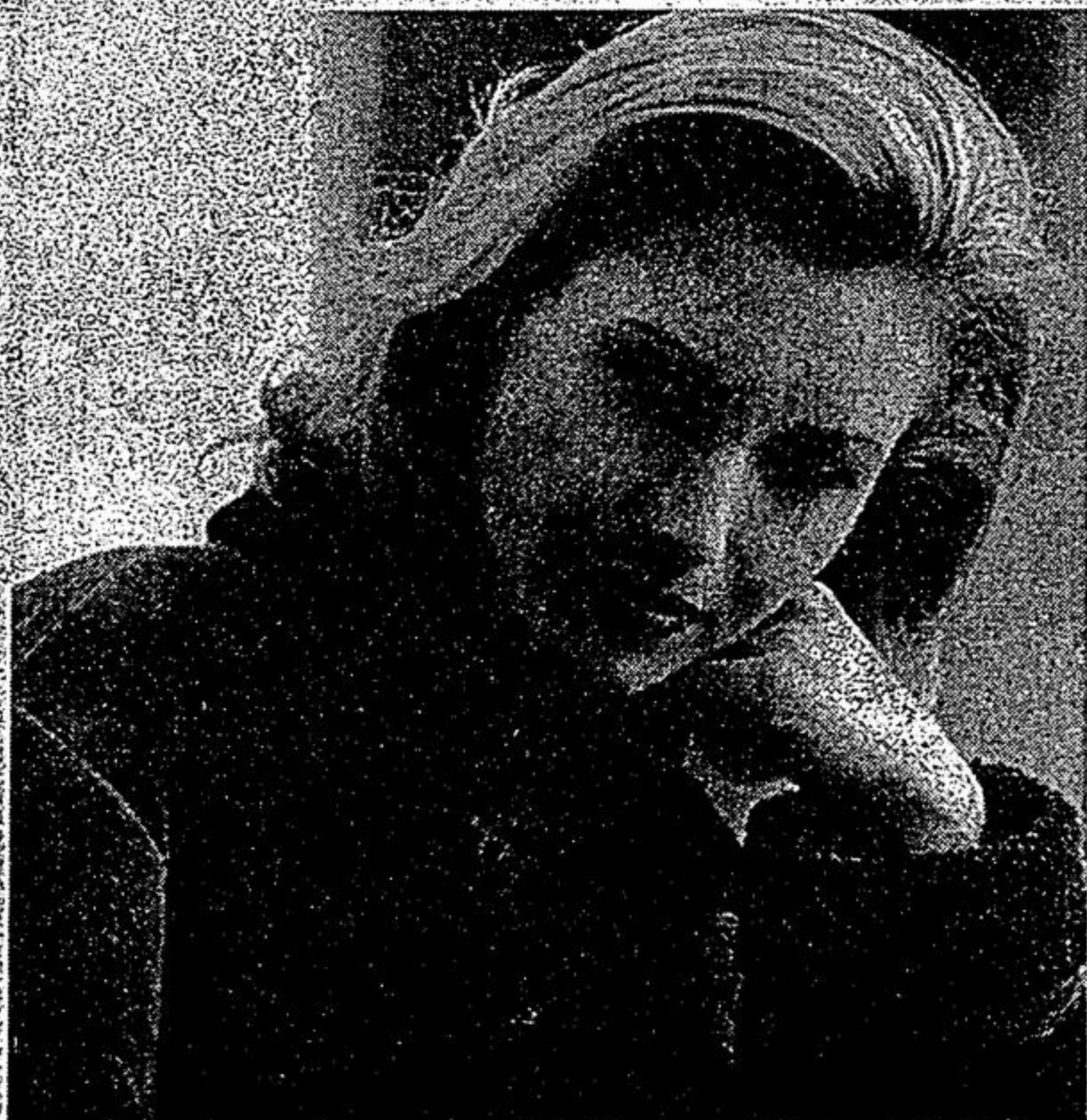
Toromark - We Do The Best For Less!

TOROMARK

294-2581

477-2055

Hwy. #7, just west of Hwy. #48 in the IGA Plaza



SEARS JANUARY BLOWOUT SALE

STEELES & 404

Fashion Outlet
...Off-Price Everyday!

PLUS EVERYDAY GOOD VALUES

The Following Items are on Sale
Wednesday Jan. 27 to Tuesday Feb. 2, 1999
While Quantities Last. Personal Shopping Only. No further discounts on previously purchased merchandise.

Save 30%
An Additional
off the already reduced price on all
Men, Women & Children's
WINTER OUTER ACCESSORIES

Save 50%
An Additional
off the already reduced price on
Assorted Stuffed
Barney TOYS

Save 50%
An Additional
off the already reduced price on
Women's Velvet
Jessica Sport™ JACKET, PANTS and DRESSES

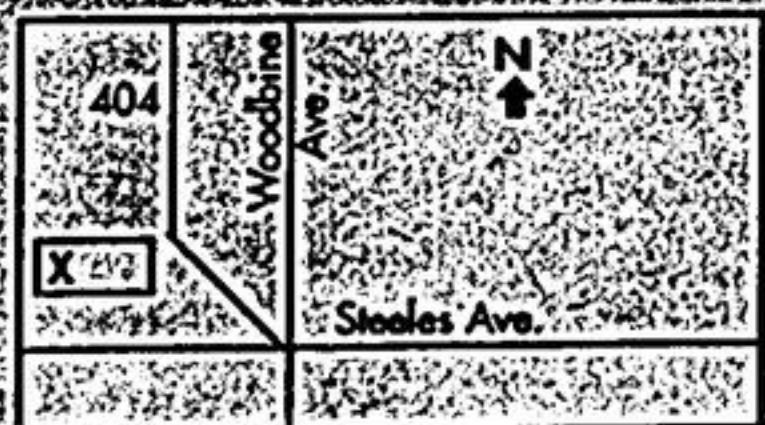
Save 30%
An Additional
off the already reduced prices on
VIPetites® & Image® WOMEN'S WEAR

Boys' Toronto Raptors®
JACKETS
Size 2-6x
Reg. 99.99
NOW 49.99 each

Girls' Assorted
SWEATERS & CARDIGANS
Size 7-16
NOW 6.99 each

Assorted
TAPESTRY PLACE MATS
.99 each

Children's Cowboy Theme
PICTURE FRAMES
Was 6.99
Then 3.99
NOW 1.99 each



STORE HOURS

Monday-Friday 10 am - 9 pm
Saturday 9:30 am - 6:00 pm
Sunday 12 noon - 5:00 pm

Reg. and Was prices shown are Sears prices.
Copyright 1999 Sears Canada Inc.

CATALOGUE SHOPPING IS AVAILABLE AT SEARS OUTLET CENTRE. TO PLACE AN ORDER (24 HRS.) CALL: 1 (800) 26-SEARS 1 (800) 267-3277



Use your Sears Card and collect Sears Club Points! They can add up to free Sears merchandise or even travel! Call 1-800-265-3675 for details.