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Suspect charged in string of bank heists

The so-called Newspaper Bandit, nabbed by Toronto Police in the act of robbing a downtown bank, has been charged in five York Region robberies.

The suspect earned the moniker after hiding a hold-up note in a rolled-up newspaper, which he then presented to bank tellers.

York Regional Police have been after the suspect for almost a year.

The first two robberies were committed at two CIBC branches, both on Keele Street in Vaughan, in June and July last year.

The Scotiabank on Cochrane Drive in Markham was the suspect's August target, followed by a second hit on a Keele Street CIBC in September and the Cochrane Drive Scotiabank again in October.

Hold Up Det. Const. Pat Anderson said Toronto officers had the man under surveillance when a bank at Broadview Avenue and Gerrard Street was robbed March 29.

"They caught him right in the act of a bank robbery," Anderson said.

"In all but one case he would walk up to the teller, barefaced, and expose the note."

He said while the suspect occasionally changed his costume — a suit and runners one time, jeans and a T-shirt another — police believed it was the same suspect.

A 32-year-old Toronto man stands charged with five counts of robbery as well as similar charges in Toronto.

He next appears in Newmarket Provincial Court May 3.

— Kathleen Griffin

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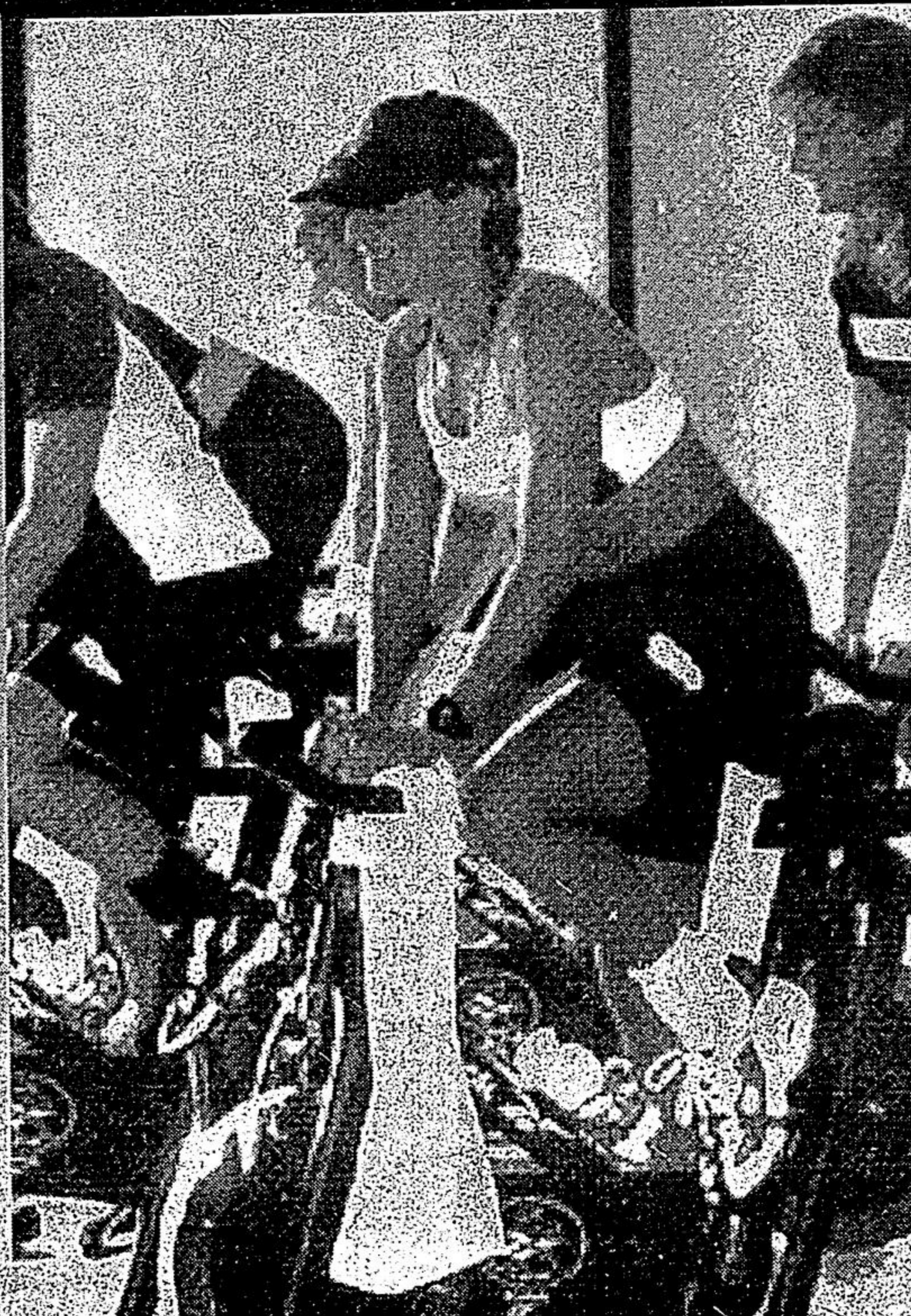
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