

# Biker bust cuts gang in half

BY KATHLEEN GRIFFIN  
Staff Writer

A massive bust Thursday night, which netted \$1.5 million in drugs and more than a dozen illegal weapons, has slashed the Richmond Hill chapter of the Loners Outlaw motorcycle gang in half.

Twenty-one suspects face more than 250 charges, including drug trafficking, firearms trafficking, involvement in a criminal organization and conspiracy. Warrants have been issued for two other men, which will bring the total number of arrests to 23.

York Regional Police displayed dozens of bags of cocaine, marijuana,

hashish and magic mushrooms as well as at least one AK-47, revolvers, knives, swords and machetes Friday.

"When you look at the types of weaponry, the type of drugs they're trafficking, it's safe to say this type of gang poses a threat to society," said OPP Det. Insp. Ross Bingley.

Bingley called the Loners a one-per-cent gang — a phrase coined in California, meaning they are the few motorcycle gang members who cause grief for police and the public.

Twenty full-time officers from the OPP Toronto police, South Simcoe police, the Ontario Criminal Intelligence Service and the provincial weapons

enforcement unit worked undercover with York Regional Police for more than six months leading up to Thursday's take-down.

Search warrants were executed simultaneously in York, Toronto, South Simcoe and Caradoc Township, near London, at about 8 p.m. — including a raid by York's tactical team at the Loners clubhouse at 12001 Yonge St.

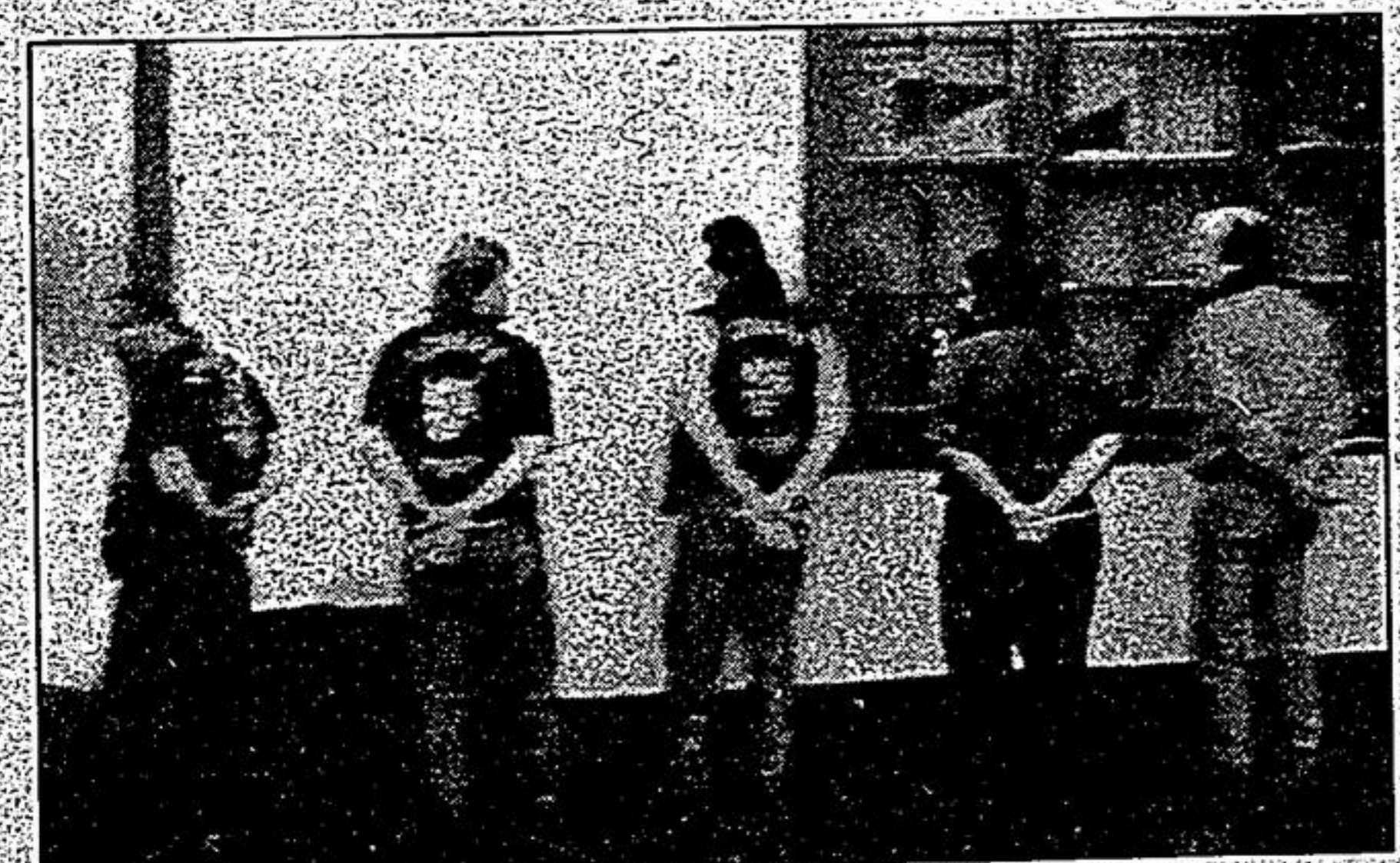
"Half of the Richmond Hill chapter has been indicted as a result of Project Hilltop," Bingley said.

The Loners Richmond Hill chapter president, Wayne Connors, 51, of Markham, was one of the many taken down Thursday night.



STAFF PHOTO/ROB ALARY

York Regional Police officers Andre Crawford and Richard Arnaud display drugs, weapons and 'colours' seized during a raid Thursday. (Below) Five suspects were handcuffed during a raid at a biker clubhouse in Richmond Hill.




PHOTO/MARY BETH KELLY

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