

# Crooked cop jailed for 12 years

BY KATHLEEN GRIFFIN  
Staff Writer

Already having disgraced the uniform he "adored", a Niagara Regional Police officer was sentenced Tuesday to a 12-year prison term for his role in two terrifying bank robberies.

Const. Richard Owens, 37, a nine-year veteran, believed he would never be caught, but arrogance led to his downfall, said Justice Ted Minden, while an unemotional Owens stared straight ahead.

"Mr. Owens assumed it would be virtually impossible, even for experienced investigators, to pin anything on him," Minden said. "I am convinced Mr. Owens felt his participation in the conspiracy would not be discovered and that belief fuelled his greed, the lure of easy money."

Owens and Stuart Joseph Bailey, 36, of Richmond Hill, were convicted May 4 of two counts of robbery, four counts of attempted robbery and one count of conspiracy after a 45-day trial.

Bailey, who was handed the same 12-year term, was the mastermind behind two well-planned and well-executed robberies in 1994 and 1996 in Richmond Hill, which netted close to \$300,000.

The money has never been recovered.

Wayne Anthony Lumsden, 36, of Brampton and Mark John Hands, 42, of King City, who acted as look-out, received four-year and five-year terms respectively for their parts in four other attempted robberies in the Richmond Hill and Scarborough areas.

Minden said Owens disgraced the uniform when he used his position as an officer to gather personal information from the Canadian Police Information Centre database — which included workers' names, addresses, dates of birth and details about their children — to frighten and intimidate bank employees during the robberies so they would co-operate.

"Mr. Owens has destroyed the very uniform he claimed to adore. He will never wear it again and that's a life-long penalty he has to pay," Minden said. "This is a man shrouded in shame and disgrace."

Minden said while he realizes a penitentiary term will be difficult for Owens considering his background as a police officer, he should be held to a higher standard because he was in a position of public trust.

Owens was known as a spit and polish, by the book, cop. Fellow officers tell a story that he once pulled over a cyclist and wrote him a ticket because the bike was not equipped with a bell.

But in 1993, he received a firm warning about his personal use of the CPIC system in connection with a robbery in Durham Region — a warning he chose to ignore, Minden pointed out.

"Mr. Owens used his position as a police officer in order to assist and commission very serious crimes. That is a very serious breach of trust."

Owens has been suspended with pay since his 1997 arrest, collecting close to \$168,000 while awaiting trial.

Niagara Staff Sgt. Lorne Lillico said the force had to wait until sentence was pronounced in order to suspend Owens without pay.



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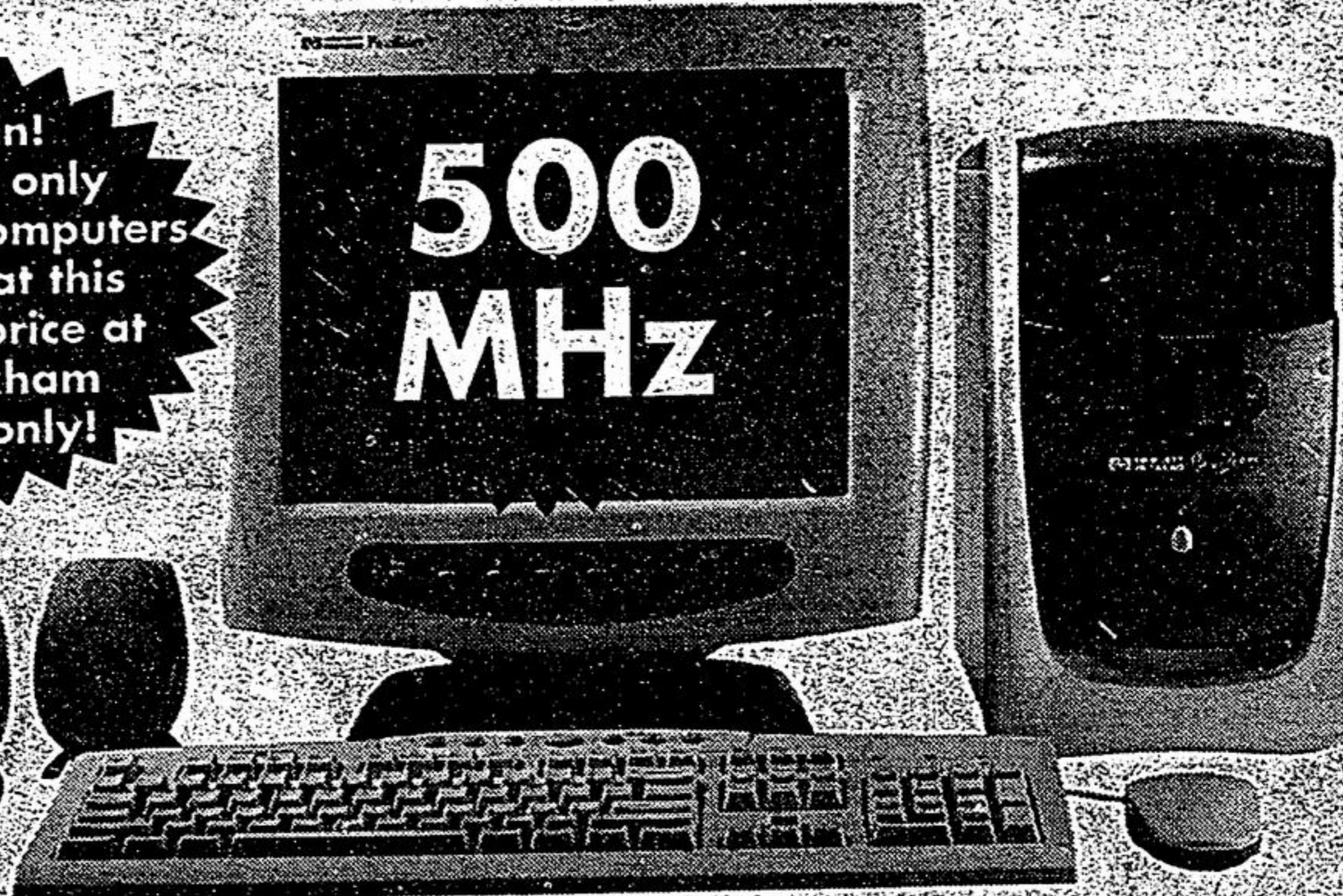
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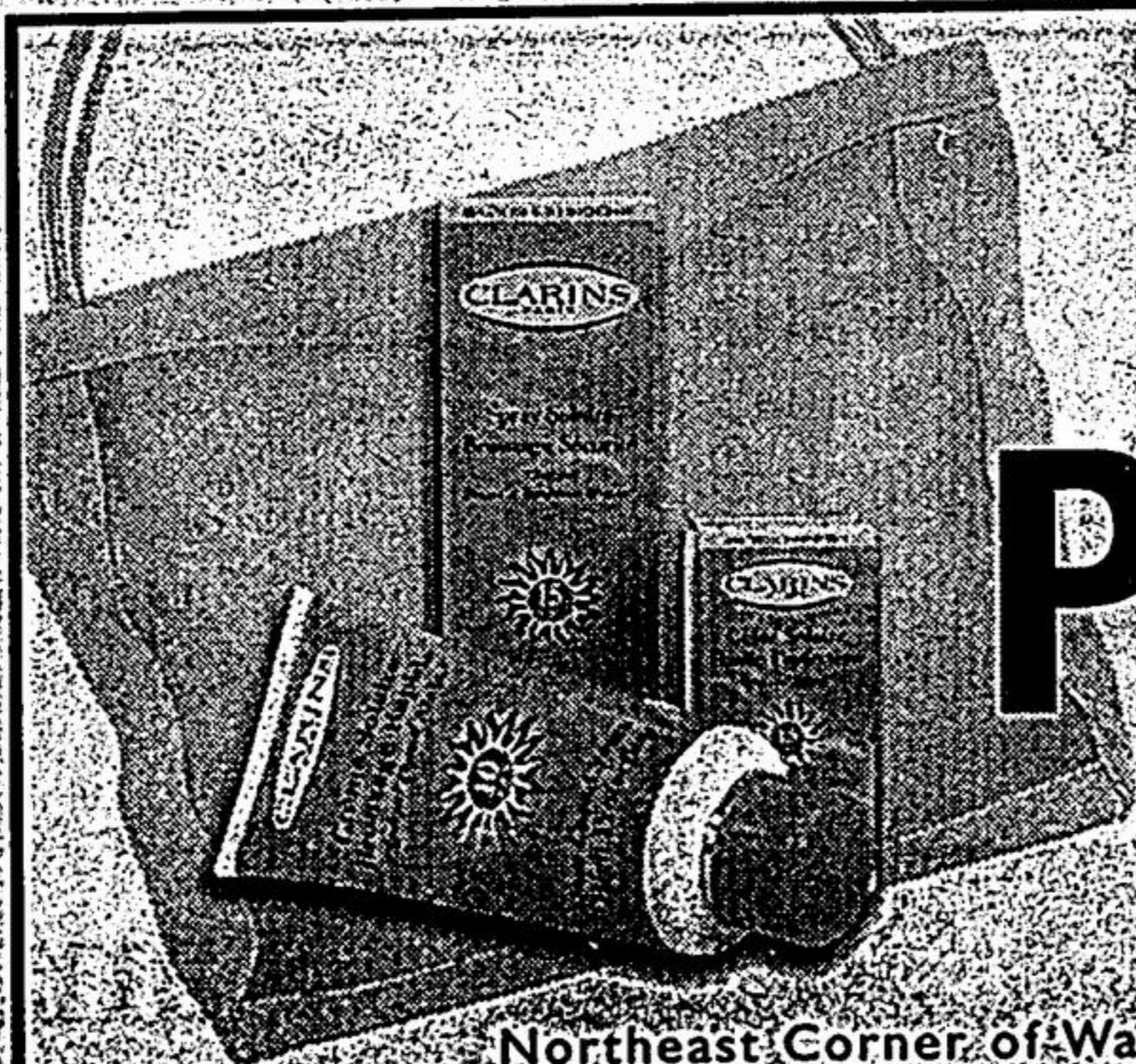


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