

Photo radar easily beat: ex-cop

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think it will have any impact on safety whatsoever.

Photo radar cameras take a snapshot of a vehicle's license plate when it is caught speeding.

The owner of the vehicle is then stuck with a fine, whether that person is driving or not.

Mr. Matheson, a five-year veteran of York Regional Police, said the system is "hideously unconstitutional, legally embarrassing, and next to impossible to prosecute in court.

Weighing down the prosecutor with any number of disclosure requests regarding who loaded the camera, who took the film out, where it was processed are sure to lead to a dismissal once the Crown sees it will cost more to convict a driver than the value of the fine, he said.

"It's just not worth it for the Crown to proceed," Mr. Matheson explained. "They're looking at it as a profit centre and banking on the fact that most people will just pay rather

than dispute the ticket. And more people will, even though it's virtually impossible to lose in court."

Questions of whether tickets should start with drivers caught speeding one km/h over the limit or 10 km/h also remain, he said.

"I don't care how many of them there are, cops can't be everywhere. I think if people are aware there could be photo radar on the road, the same way they do if they see a cop with a radar device, they will slow down."

"Where is that threshold? I'm sure they won't be issuing tickets to everyone that does one over or even five over, because it's not cost effective,"

Mr. Matheson said. "It's for those reasons I have no respect for the complete lack of integrity of those who say it's not a cash grab. It is."

Mr. Barrow admits municipalities receive revenue from traffic fines, but he says the goal of a photo radar campaign is not to increase the bottom line.

"Besides, the revenue will not be significant. There are costs involved too," he said. "The devices are expensive and we need to train people to use them."

Mr. Barrow has no idea when, or if, the province will give the go-ahead to photo radar, but he says he is looking forward to it.

"I don't care how many of them there are, cops can't be everywhere. I think if people are aware there could be photo radar on the road, the same way they do if they see a cop with a radar device, they will slow down and that's improved safety," he said. "If someone drives 50 km/h down a residential street it's safer than if their driving 80 km/h and that's just common sense."

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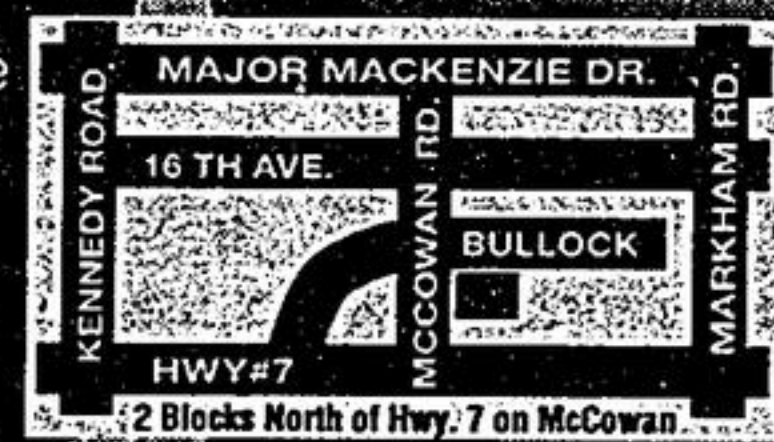
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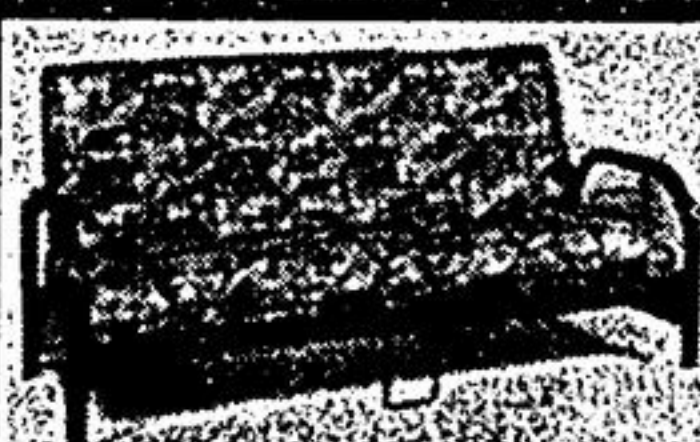
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