

# 'Recipe bandit' cooking up trouble for police squads

BY MARTIN DERBYSHIRE  
Staff Writer

Police call him the recipe bandit. And, so far, he has cooked up 26 bank robberies across Southern Ontario, including three in York Region.

The first robbery was in mid-August and the latest strike came when two banks were hit in Toronto Tuesday.

The three York robberies include an Oct. 18 heist at a CIBC branch on Davis Drive in Newmarket, the CIBC in King

Oct. 4 and a Scotiabank branch on Weston Road in Vaughan Sept. 26.

The bandit's modus operandi is fairly consistent, York Regional Police hold-up squad Det.-Sgt. Fred Moffatt said.

In almost every instance, the thief comes into the bank looking like a regular customer.

Sunglasses and a ball cap are his only disguises. He awaits his turn at the wicket and shows the teller a note printed on a recipe card.

"It indicates he has a gun and wants

money," Det.-Sgt. Moffatt said. "But there's been no gun seen."

Lately, he's become even more demanding and desperate, hammering on the counter during the most recent robberies, Det.-Sgt. Moffatt said.

"We're not sure what's fueling this," he said. "We're speculating he may have some kind of drug dependency."

Since the robberies have centred around Toronto, reaching out to Hamilton, Halton, Peel and York, police forces across jurisdictions are working together.

er. Officers believe the culprit is from out of province and may have recently moved here, since surveillance video pictures haven't turned up anybody who recognizes him, Det.-Sgt. Moffatt said.

The Canadian Bankers Association is now offering a \$10,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the recipe bandit.

There were 16 bank robberies in York Region in 2004 and 13 so far this year.

Most bank robberies aren't committed by serial bandits, but York cops did track down a man they believe is responsible for five bank jobs earlier this year. Two Whitchurch-Stouffville banks and one each in Newmarket, Vaughan and Richmond Hill were robbed before Peel police identified a suspect in a convenience store robbery as a possible suspect in the York robberies.

## Man charged in letter scam

Police arrested a man in Vaughan last month on various fraud charges and are now investigating a Nigerian letter scam.

Obafemi Ope Coker, of no fixed address, was arrested outside a Vaughan Wal-Mart in late October. Police found stolen credit card data, government cheques and other forged documents.

Fraud investigators believe the documents point to possible involvement with a Nigerian letter scam.

Victims of the scam usually receive an unsolicited e-mail or letter from someone in a different country seeking assistance to finalize a deal or bank transaction. The person in Canada is offered a piece of the action and a cheque is sent for a greater amount than what is needed for the transaction.

The victim is asked to send back the difference and once that occurs, the cheque is found to be illegitimate and the funds charged back to the victim's account.

## Your family may qualify for child care fee assistance.



Do you need help with the cost of child care?  
Do you live in York Region?  
Please call us now.  
You may be eligible for new government funding.

Call the York Region KIDS LINE to see if you qualify.

Toll free: 1-888-703-5437

PRESS  
3

In Newmarket: (905) 830-9487

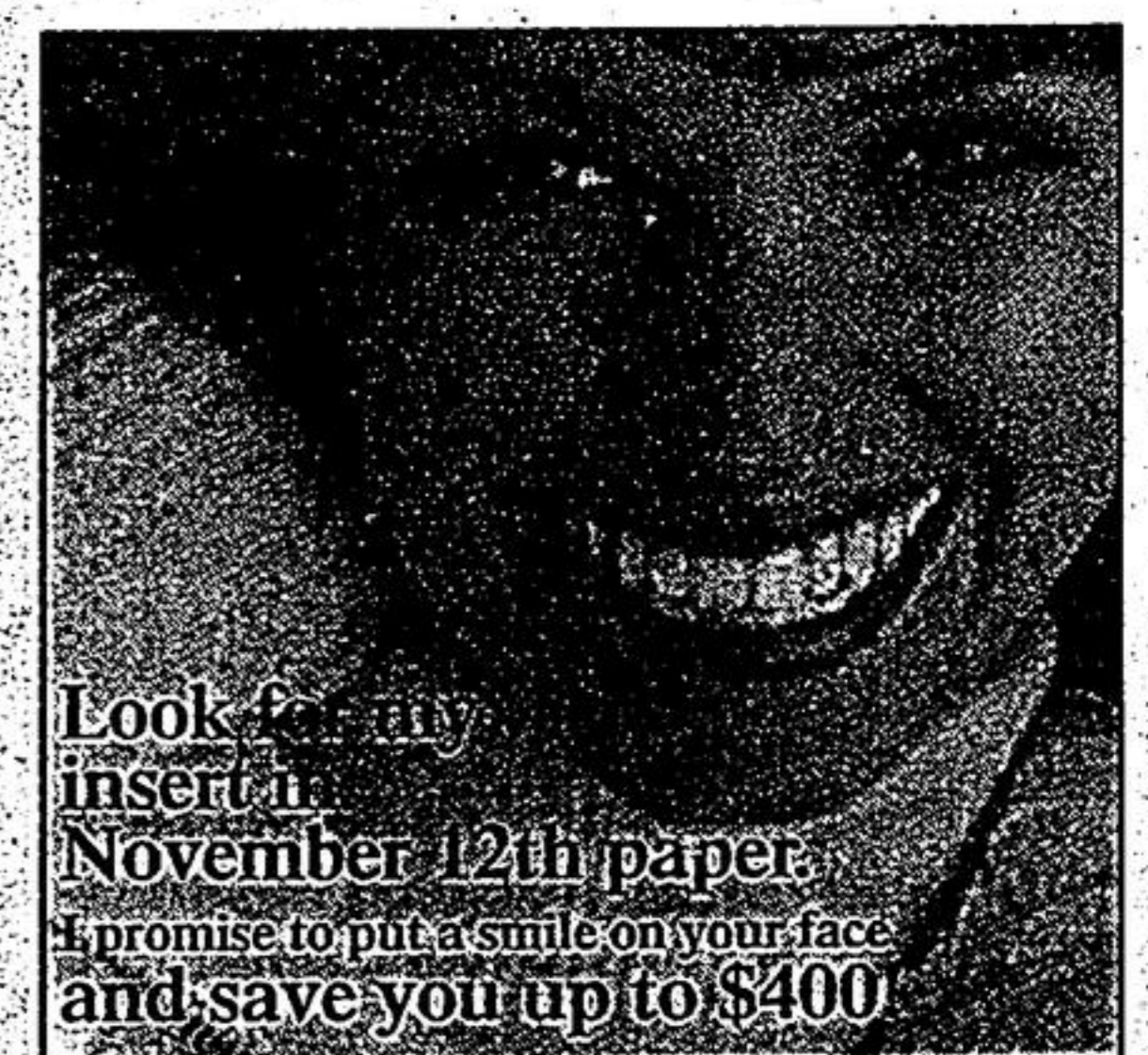
PRESS  
3

Non-English speaking families can call the Language Line at  
1-866-243-9924 for child care translation.

If you have any questions visit [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca) and look  
under Have Questions? in the What's New section.



Community Services and Housing Department • Family and Children's Services Division



**FIRST TIME IN CANADA!**

**Geraldine de Pablo**  
Internationally recognized public speaker.



**Transform Your Inner Self**

The powerful seminar that has changed thousands of lives!

Located at: Ontario Science Centre  
Sunday, November 27 - 10am to 6pm

- Eliminate the source of your fears, insecurities, attachment, and suffering.
- Clearly see how anger is produced and eliminate it.
- Stop attracting the same type of people and circumstances that make you suffer.
- Identify your intellectual, physical & emotional potential
- Paradise is not a place, it's a state of mind.

Limited Seating. Tickets \$90 plus GST.  
IF YOU don't do something for yourself nobody else will.

**Ticketmaster (416) 870-8000**  
[www.ticketmaster.ca](http://www.ticketmaster.ca)