

**POST-PARTUM SYMPTOMS**

- ▶ Depression or mood swings with exaggerated highs and lows;
- ▶ Uncontrolled crying or irritability;
- ▶ Loss of interest in usually pleasurable activities;
- ▶ Fatigue, sluggishness or exhaustion
- ▶ Difficulty with memory and concentration;
- ▶ Uncontrolled crying or irritability;
- ▶ Feelings of worthlessness or guilt, especially at motherhood;
- ▶ Lack of interest in the baby or excessive anxiety over the child's health

# Talk before crisis hits: professional

BY MICHAEL POWER  
Staff Writer

It's not one factor that drives someone to kill his family, says Monika Samant, team leader for the adult crisis program at Southlake Regional Health Centre.

But she has an important message for men with the urge to harm their families: talk to someone you trust or someone who can help you.

A mother and her two children were found slain in their Aurora home Sunday. The woman's estranged husband and the children's father was arrested after a car chase on Hwy. 400.

The killings mark the second incident in two weeks in which a York Region parent has been suspected in the deaths of their children.

Southlake offers a round-the-clock program in the emergency department that deals with crisis patients, including those who fear they may harm others, Ms Samant said.

A patient would be referred within 24 hours to the "urgent clinic", which treats those who feel their lives are in crisis, she said.

That feeling can come from mental health conditions such as depression, but it can also stem from a crisis in a person's life such as divorce or job loss, Ms Samant said.

"There's something that happened to them that makes them feel like they can't cope the way they could before," she said.

"That ability has diminished and they could feel out of control or that they have lost their ability to problem-solve."

If a man feels he may harm family members unless he gets help,

Ms Samant recommended talking to someone he knows and trusts such as a friend or family doctor.

Many community agencies, such as the 310-COPE crisis line, can also help.

Some community groups can counsel those who fear they may harm their family, Ms Samant said.

But which group best suits a patient depends on that person's condition, she noted.

Linda Jeffery, the director of clinical services at the Canadian Mental Health Association of York Region, said no strong connection exists between violence and mental health.

"It's usually not a premeditated kind of thing," she said.

"I think that those are more impulsive. They may have had a history of violent behaviour."

Family Services of York Region offers anger management programs for those who feel they have trouble controlling their temper, she said.

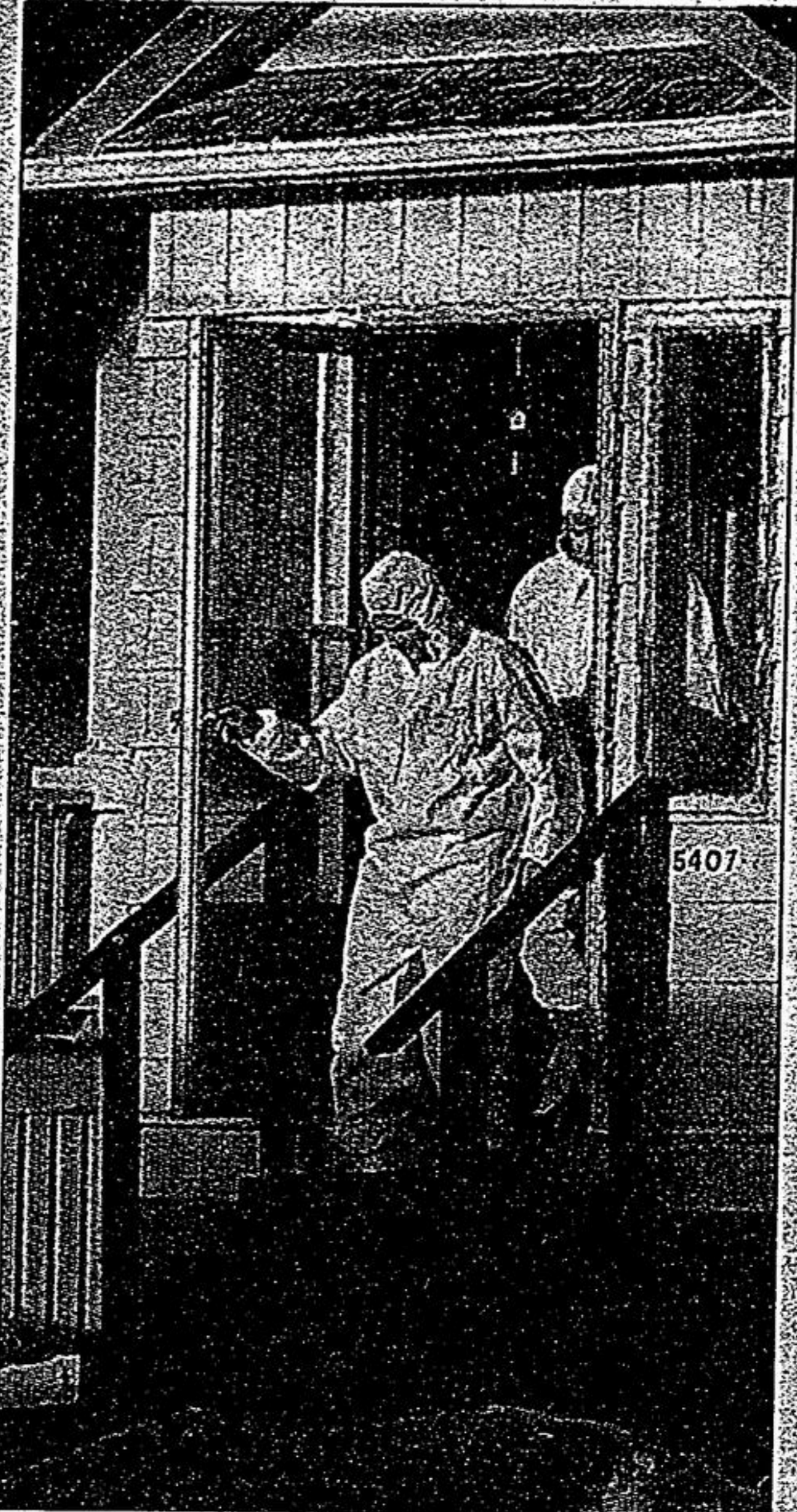
Last week, a Markham man returned home to find his two young children dead and his wife injured.

The wife remains in hospital and has been charged with first-degree murder in connection to the deaths.

Up to 70 per cent of new mothers suffer from "the baby blues," said Dr. Dave Rouselle, chief of obstetrics at Southlake. Some new moms even suffer from post-partum depression.

"They can even have occasional negative feelings toward their babies, which horrifies a lot of new moms, but it's quite common," he said.

But the incidents of that depression becoming severe, or leading to a mother actually harming her child, are less than 1 per cent, he said.



STAFF PHOTO/BILL ROBERTS

Investigators leave an Aurora home where a woman and two children were beaten to death Sunday.

**WARNING SIGNS**

Abusers in relationships often display similar tendencies:

- ▶ May be very charming and charismatic in the beginning. He may act outraged if his partner says she has been abused previously;
- ▶ Try to isolate their partners geographically and socially. That isolation can start with the abuser trying to separate his partner from her friends, family and support group;
- ▶ May act jealous, constantly accusing his partner of having affairs;
- ▶ May try to control every aspect of his partner's life, from the clothes she wears to the people she talks to;

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