

# York guard suspected of fraud

by Peter Stathis

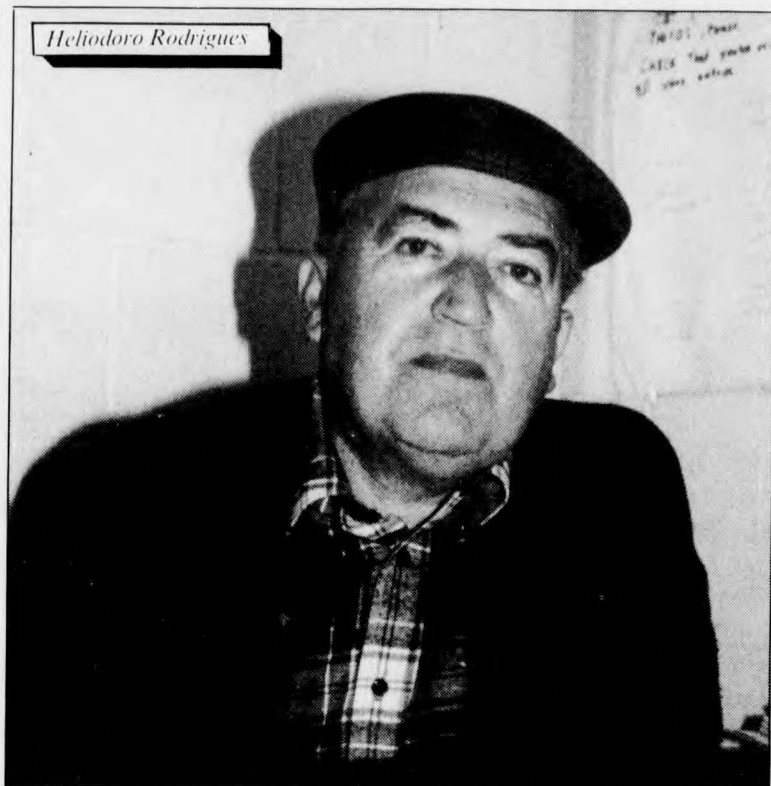
There is a quiet controversy going on at York involving a staff member and the administration. The case has now superceded campus authorities and gone into independent arbitration.

Heliodoro Rodrigues, a Parking Control Officer (PCO) and 21-year York employee, was fired on March 30th following an allegation that he sold an out-of-date parking stub to a York student.

The student claimed she bought the invalid ticket from a man who fit Rodrigues' description. Security was later able to trace Rodrigues as the person working at that specified booth at that specified time.

Rodrigues adamantly denies any fraudulent act on his part. He told *Excalibur* that Security would not even produce his accuser for a direct identification. He asserted there was no substantial proof of any wrong-doing, only circumstantial evidence that has made him look bad. "I am guilty before even having a chance to prove my innocence," said Rodrigues.

Security had originally suspended Rodrigues without pay pending an investigation into the student's accusation. Their investigation revealed "irregularities" which led them to believe he was involved in other fraudulent acts. Based on this, Security felt they had just grounds to terminate him.



Heliodoro Rodrigues

Peter Stathis

Security's official report documents that the ticket which Rodrigues had sold on March 15th had been sold previously by him on January 8th. When asked by Eric Pond, Assistant Director of Security, if he had any more old parking stubs in his possession, Rodrigues claimed he did not, but after being asked to empty out his pockets, he produced 10 parking stubs, four of which had been

stamped. The other six, however, were blank, and of these two sets were consecutively numbered.

During the investigation, Rodrigues explained that "occasionally a driver would ask him if he would dispose of a number of stubs the driver had retained in his car over the course of time."

When asked specifically about the blank stubs, Rodrigues con-

fessed that although it is "irregular," he often takes some extra tickets to sell at other booths. But he insisted that he always pays for them and puts the money in the daily cashbox. What had happened he said was that the stamped and unstamped tickets were all mixed together in his pocket and he had just forgotten to throw them away.

Rodrigues told *Excalibur* that he was intimidated by Pond into emptying out his pockets and allowing him to search his lunch bag, locker and vehicle. He claims Pond told him to cooperate or else he would call in the police to conduct the search.

In his official statement, Rodrigues states that Pond "seriously violated [his] constitutional rights" by searching his person and private automobile. In the report to Security, however, Pond contended that Rodrigues' refusal to allow a search would have been construed as casting doubt on his statements.

Security has asked Rodrigues to sign his letter of termination, but he has refused, considering it a "dirty paper" meant to exact a confession of guilt from him. "I am sure that students wouldn't like it if they knew that we [York staff] were treated so disrespectfully," said Rodrigues.

Instead, Rodrigues has filed a wrongful dismissal grievance with his union against the university

The union demands that he be immediately reinstated with all lost wages, benefits and seniority to be restored.

Rodrigues points to his spotless record and good reputation among his co-workers and fears that these will be ruined because of the university's unfair decision. In trying to find another job, he says employers are suspicious of anyone who leaves a long-standing job, especially when they discover he has been charged with fraud, whether or not he is convicted.

Tom Seager, a retired PCO from the Security department, is aiding Rodrigues in his legal battle against the university. He contends that the entire case against Rodrigues is based on very shaky ground.

Seager believes Rodrigues should have had the opportunity to confront his accuser face to face for a positive identification. Even so, according to Seager, the accusation simply comes down to Rodrigues' word against that of the student. "It's not as if he were caught red-handed," he said. As for the parking stubs they provide only circumstantial evidence which may look incriminating, but which does not prove Rodrigues' guilt.

Pam MacDonald, Director of Security and Parking Services, would not offer any further comments to *Excalibur* pending the results of the arbitration.

## Centre offers counselling for sexually-abused women

# Overcoming childhood trauma

by Michele Greene

The Counselling and Development Centre (CDC) offers counselling for women sexually abused as children. It offered a ten week group session in January and is planning two more for the next fall/winter term, said Dr. Karen Solomon, co-leader for the group.

One group would support women who have never talked about their experiences and have yet to come to terms with it. The second group would serve women who have come much further in their healing process. Starting dates will depend on when their funding arrives.

problem-solving together. They discuss how to overcome their childhood experience and the resulting long range effects.

The group discussion is open for all members. No one is forced to contribute if they feel uncomfortable. The group aims to provide an environment where adults are in control of what happens to them, which is something they did not have when they were children, explained Solomon.

Solomon and Weinberg decided to form a group for women because girls are sexually abused more often than boys, although recent findings show more boys abused than originally thought. Including men in the

popular. Many clinics have extensive waiting lists, explained Solomon. For example, the Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic for Women Who Were Victims of Violence, in Toronto, has closed its waiting list, which is a year long. Schlifer was a young Toronto woman who was sexually assaulted and brutally murdered

limits the number of clients that can be counselled. Solomon said the CDC's group also experiences these problems, but the CDC is ready to help anyone who calls and is capable of referring women to other clinics.

Solomon said, as adults, female victims of childhood sexual abuse have difficulty in trusting others.

tion of authority, according to Solomon. The sexual abuse can range from inappropriate hugging and fondling to penetration. Usually, the "shameful secret," she says, is concealed from others. Often, even if children report the incident to adults, the adults do not believe them or tell them to forget about it.

One of the most effective ways to reduce the incidence of childhood sexual abuse, according to Solomon, is through parenting training. Often, parents who were abused as children abuse their own children, so this method tries to break the cycle of violence before it is passed on from generation to generation.

Anyone interested in the counselling programme or a referral is welcome to call Dr. Solomon at x55297.

## "female victims of sexual abuse have difficulty in trusting others"

Solomon and Joyce Weinberg, a York psychology student finishing her Ph.D. and Director of the Childhood Sexual Abuse Programme at the York-Finch Hospital for the past 15 years, saw a "need to add a group therapy" to individual counselling, said Solomon.

The objective of the group is to provide a safe environment where women can share their experiences with others who have been sexually abused as children themselves. Through this programme, they learn to cope with the effects as adults, said Solomon. Members support each other and do

group might intimidate women since men were their abusers. The women's reluctance to share their feelings could hamper the healing process.

The group attracted 12 calls in January; nine of the women who called participated. The CDC received another 15 to 20 calls from interested women after the session began. Since the group was full, the CDC referred the women to other clinics that provide similar services within the city, said Solomon.

One problem with clinics that provide counselling for victims of child sexual abuse is they are very



Karen Solomon

Peter Stathis

on the night of her graduation from law school.

According to Solomon, there are clinics in the city which operate on a fee for service basis, but many of the interested women do not have the money. Also, although there are very good male therapists, many women prefer female therapists. This effectively

comfortably expressing their feelings, and forming close, intimate relationships with men. Some suffer from depression and lack self-esteem and confidence. Many experience medical problems as a result of the abuse such as migraine headaches and gastro-intestinal difficulties.

Most children are abused by an adult they know who is in a posi-

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