



Letters to the editor...

✉ THE RCMP FIGHTS BACK

The following letter was originally sent to Mr. Haroon Siddiqui, Editorial Page Editor, "The Toronto Star" in response to a front-page article that appeared on February 28, 1999.

Dear Mr. Siddiqui,

I was both surprised and disappointed with your recent front page article on the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (February 28, *RCMP: A force under fire*). Most disturbing is the fact that it presents to your readers a biased and unbalanced portrait of Canada's national police service.

To focus on a small number of high-profile cases — and suggest they represent the day-to-day work of 15,000 police officers — exposes a clear bias and borders on irresponsibility. Under a pretense of investigative reporting, the feature verges on editorial comment and bases at least one of its observations on "rumours."

The RCMP does not take issue with legitimate criticism; in fact, as Commissioner Philip Murray points out in the article, "It's important to me that when we make mistakes, the thing is to admit them, correct them and do whatever is necessary to preclude them from happening in the future."

However, we *do* take issue with the *Star's* decision to present only one perspective, to the detriment of the feature and to the disservice of your readers.

To suggest, for example, that the RCMP is "suffering from a litany of botched and bungled high-profile cases" ignores the fact that our men and women successfully complete **millions** of cases every year. It also

overlooks the many high profile cases the RCMP has successfully investigated recently, including several right in the Toronto area:

- ✓ Project Omerta — arrest of the alleged king pin of one of the world's most influential organized crime families;
- ✓ Project OFU — seven arrests and the recovery of \$2 million in counterfeit bills and thousands of fraudulent credit cards;
- ✓ cracking a major migrant smuggling ring between Canada and the U.S. and the arrests of eleven people;
- ✓ Project Overreach — 527 criminal charges and the seizure of \$20 million in assets; and,
- ✓ multi-million dollar drug seizures, including Project O-Bar, which netted \$45 million in cocaine.

As Canada's national police service, with more than 700 detachments across Canada, we are, as the Commissioner put it, "in people's faces." This is bound to lend itself to controversy and we are accountable to the public and to the courts for our actions.

However, the *Star's* decision to focus on an isolated number of cases tarnishes the work of many dedicated, community-minded police officers like those who performed tirelessly and with such compassion in the aftermath of last year's Swiss Air disaster — one of many high profile RCMP cases that was noticeably absent from your feature.

C/Supt. André Thouin
Director, Public Affairs and Information

C/Supt. Thouin's letter was simultaneously broadcast to all RCMP employees. Here are