

August 22, 1952

Ex-Convict, a Psycho, Arrested at State School

L. I. Boys, Mental Defectives, Beaten

An ex-convict, once confined to a hospital for the criminal insane, is under arrest today, accused of beating a 14-year-old Jamaica boy with a broom handle in the Willowbrook State School for mentally defective children.

An investigation was started today by police and state authorities to find out how a man with such a record could be hired to care for mentally defective children.

Officials at the school on Staten Island said the man got the job under the name of John J. Martini.

BUT POLICE said that is an alias and the man really is Ralph J. Tuccillo, 47, of Staten Island.

Authorities are seeking to find out why the alias was not uncovered when fingerprints were taken before the man was hired.

Tuccillo was arrested after a doctor at the school noticed the 14-year-old Jamaica boy limping. When the boy was examined, four welts were discovered on his body.

Dr. Harold H. Berman, director of the school, was notified and an immediate investigation was ordered.

All 182 boys in building 7, where the injured boy lived, were examined and questioned. Bruises were discovered on a 15-year-old Roosevelt boy.

THE BOY BEARING the welts was unable to tell how he had been injured. However, according to authorities, three older boys who assigned to help care for the younger children said that Tuccillo beat the 14-year-old youngster while he was bathing Tuesday night.

Tuccillo, a former boxer, has a criminal record going back to 1923. In that year he was sentenced to Elmira Reformatory as the result of a burglary conviction in Manhattan.

In 1929 he received a 15-year Sing Sing sentence for robbing a man of \$7 in Staten Island.

Seventeen years later Tuccillo was trapped on a sleeping porch of a Staten Island home and accused of burglary. Tuccillo was sent to Kings County Hospital before trial for mental examination.

He escaped from the institution and in May, 1950, was picked up in Tampa, Florida, for being drunk. Sentence in this case was deferred.

In November, 1950, Tuccillo again was on Staten Island and once again ran afoul of the law. At that time, he was recognized by Patrolman Gerald Lino, who had arrested him four years earlier.

WHEN FIRST picked up, Tuccillo

maintained he was Ralph Martino and produced a driver's license and registration bearing a Tampa address, to prove his contention.

Again he was sent to Kings County Hospital. What happened then is not known. Apparently Tuccillo was released from the hospital because in April, 1951, authorities in City Prison, Richmond, complained that he had attacked other inmates. This time Tuccillo was sent to Bellevue Hospital for observation. Doctors there adjudged him insane.

In May, 1951, he was committed to Matteawan State Hospital for the Criminal Insane. After six months treatment, he was declared sane and discharged.

Once again he was arraigned on the 1946 burglary charge but by this time the complainant was in England with the Coast Guard and the charge was dropped.

Tuccillo, whose name also has been carried on court records as Tuscillo, is being held on a statement by Detective Charles C. Casazza.

He was arraigned yesterday in Magistrates Court. There he asked for time to get a lawyer and, because of his previous record, was held without bail for a hearing Mon-