

D. A. Checks 'Stand-In' Theory In Willowbrook Fingerprinting

Beating Probe Centers On Use of Alias by Former Convict

By ROBERT J. POPP and JACK REYCRAFT

District Attorney Sidney O. Simonson, "appalled" that an ex-convict could hide behind an alias to get a job at Willowbrook State School, said today there's a possibility the man, accused of beating two boy patients, used a "stand-in" for the fingerprints on his employment application.

Yesterday Simonson personally launched a two-pronged investigation into the situation.

The probe is aimed to determine how a man with a criminal record, who once had been adjudged insane, was hired, and to investigate a felonious assault charge which alleges that the man beat two boy patients with a broom handle.

Central figure in the investigation is Ralph J. Tuccillo, 47, of 298 Bay street, Tompkinsville, now in City Prison, Richmond, awaiting a hearing Monday in Magistrate's Court on the assault charge.

To Ask Mental Test

Simonson said that he had spoken with Tuccillo for more than an hour and added:

"I am satisfied that he is mentally unfit to have charge of children at the school.

"In my opinion, he never should have been discharged from the Matteawan State Hospital. He should not be at large and is in need of mental treatment. When he has his hearing Monday I intend to ask to have him committed to Bellevue Hospital for observation."

D. A. Probing Print Record In Assault Case

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necessary to tighten up the system of hiring to prevent such an occurrence again. I also am investigating to find out how, with the fingerprint checkup they have, he got by, or whether he got by through negligence or the use of a 'stand-in'.

"I am sending to Albany for the fingerprint record to determine, if possible, whether a 'stand-in' was used.

"My visit not only was to investigate the employment of Tuccillo, but also to investigate the background of the assault charge against him."

"As a result of interviewing the chief of the employment office and the staff," Simonson added, "I feel they do everything possible to guarantee the employment of qualified persons. Only the fact that Tuccillo got by the screening adds strength to a belief that perhaps a 'stand-in' had been used. If I find, as a result of my investigation, a serious defect in the process of employment, it is my intention to advise the governor of the weaknesses and to request a strengthening of the procedures."

Tuccillo served time in Elmira Reformatory on a burglary charge and in Sing Sing for robbing a man of \$7 in Tompkinsville. He also had been sent to Matteawan as the result of another arrest.

In the seven months he worked at the state institution, officials there had no knowledge of his criminal record. They hired him and knew him as John J. Martini.

Because fingerprints are taken of all new employers and checked with authorities in Albany, Simonson is investigating the possibility of a "stand-in" being used when Tuccillo's prints were taken.

Simonson, accompanied by Detectives William Romer and George Ackerman, started his investigation yesterday at the hospital.

He learned that Tuccillo had applied for employment at the hospital early in the year and that his fingerprints were taken there. They then were sent to the Criminal Investigation Bureau of the State Civil Service Commission in Albany for checking.

Statements Checked

On his application blank, Tuccillo also is said to have stated that he never was indicted or convicted of a crime and never was a patient in a state hospital.

In connection with these statements, Simonson is studying what additional action, if any, can be taken.

Tuccillo also is said to have stated that he had been employed in hospitals in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts; statements now believed to be false.

When hospital authorities checked with the hospitals listed, the answers revealed that they didn't know "Martini." Tuccillo was called in and insisted that he had worked at the institutions. Letters again were sent but no answers had been received before the arrest Wednesday.

After his visit yesterday, Simonson said:

"I am appalled to find out that a man with such a record could be working in an institution of this type. I made this visit in person for this reason.

Purpose Explained

"The purpose of my investigation now is to determine whether it is

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