

Retarded Boy, 10, Scalded To Death at Special School

By JOHN MALLON and LEEDS MOBERLEY

An all-but-helpless 10-year-old boy patient at the Willowbrook School for Retarded Children on Staten Island died at 4 A.M. yesterday of a scalding which authorities reluctantly admitted was received in the shower some time Thursday.

Every effort was made to hush up the death and the circumstances surrounding it—which came just as THE NEWS finished a two-part series on the lack of facilities and the kind of treatment given youngsters in institutions for the care of retarded children.

It was not until 1 P.M. yesterday—nine hours after the boy was pronounced dead—that the hospital informed police of the death, a police official said.

And it was more than 10 hours after that before any official explanation of the scalding was forthcoming. Shortly after 11 P.M. Richmond District Attorney John Braisted told THE NEWS that it had been established that an 18-year-old girl attendant was giving the boy a shower when he was scalded.

No Arrests Made

Braisted said that "after going over all the facts in the case, we directed that no arrests be made." He added, however, that the facts will be presented to a grand jury.

Braisted's announcement left another mystery. It was disclosed that the boy's burns—which covered 80% of his body—were discovered at 5:45 P.M. Thursday while a cut on his head was being sutured, but there was no word as to how he was killed. The dead boy was John K. Taylor, one of five children of Mr. and Mrs. John Taylor of Nyack. The father, an instructor at Nyack Missionary College, went to the Seaview Hospital morgue last night for the formality of identifying the body.

Weighed Only 40 Pounds

Little Johnny was an undersized, brown-haired youngster who weighed only 40 pounds and had been a patient at Willowbrook for nine years. He was described as a "low-functioning retardate" who could walk but could not talk or feed himself. "We know it was an accident," Taylor said. "One of the great problems in these institutions is getting the right kind of personnel."

The name of the attendant involved in the case was not revealed, but Braisted indicated that the hospital, like the police, was taking no disciplinary action against her.

"The attendant was bathing the deceased and suddenly the plumbing gave out scalding water," the DA said. "The at-

tendant apparently didn't realize it at first and then she attempted to conceal it from her superiors. It was discovered several hours later and the boy expired the following morning."

Braisted's account was based on a report from Assistant DA Ralph D'Orio, who had spent part of the afternoon and all evening in a closed-doors investigation at the hospital.

Three Join in Probe

Also participating in the inquiry, in which hospital employees were closely questioned, were Inspector Walter Brennan, commander of Staten Island detectives; Lt. Daniel Crowley, head of the New Dorp detective squad, and Dr. Jack Hammond, director of Willowbrook.

Lt. Crowley emerged briefly at about 8:30 P.M. but would say only, "At this time we can't give out any information. We're still questioning people."

"Since it happened at 4 A.M., there must be some information available by this time," a NEWS reporter insisted.

"We got into this case at 1 P.M.," Crowley countered.

"Why so late?" asked the reporter.

"That's part of the investigation," the detective replied. But

Tart Tongue Turns Trick

Preston, England, May 14 (UPI)—When Thomas Wareing's car collided with a truck, police arrested him for drunken driving.

"Rubbish," Wareing told the arresting officer. "Listen to this:

"Swim Sam, swim Sam, swim. Show them you are, some swimmer. Swim like the snow-white swan swim. Swim like the snow-like swan. Six sharp, shivering sharks are going to snap your limbs. A well-swum swim is a swim well swum. So swim, Sam, swim."

The unimpressed policeman issued a summons. Yesterday, Wareing's case came up for trial and Wareing recited the tongue-twister for the jury. It acquitted him.

he did confirm that the scalding occurred in a shower.

Dr. Gertrude Wilbur, an assistant medical examiner, reported after an autopsy at the Seaview morgue that the boy had burns—mostly third-degree, the severest classification—over 80% of his body, mostly on his torso but also on his head and face.