

Patient, 17, a Suspect In Death at Willowbrook

By MARK WIESNER
and DREW FETHERSTON

A 26-year-old patient at Willowbrook State School, who died Monday night, was killed by a single punch to the neck by another patient, police said today. The victim's larynx was shattered and he died of suffocation.

Police say another patient in Ward 9C who was described as "hyper active" is the prime suspect in the killing.

Assistant District Attorney James J. Hasson said this morning that if certain facts check out, police would arrest the suspect, a 17-year-old, on a homicide charge and arraign him at the institution today. He would not reveal the name of the suspect.

Hasson, along with Detective Joseph Fisher and Walter F. Kowski, conducted an investi-

gation into the death Monday night of Walter Cochrane after the medical examiner's officer reported yesterday that death was due to a fractured larynx. The investigation extended into the early morning hours today.

* * *
THE DEATH of Cochrane, a Bronx resident who had been in the institution since 1949, came as he sat on a bench in the day room of the ward, police say. He was struck on the larynx

by another patient who he attempted to report for teasing him.

Cochrane, who police say was a big man "well over six feet," slumped back, but did not fall off the bench when he was hit.

The victim was hit just once by the fist of his attacker and no weapon was involved, police have determined.

There were only two attendants—a man and a woman—for

(Continued on Page 13)

the ward housing 80 men, police say.

Willowbrook State School is being investigated by the grand jury because of three accidental deaths that occurred there within recent months. Within the past year, there was another slaying at the institution when one patient strangled another.

Another Dies in Violence at Willowbrook

Another violent death of a patient at Willowbrook State School for Retarded Children on Staten Island—the fourth in a year—came to light yesterday.

Assistant District Attorney James J. Hasson confirmed that a 26-year-old patient, who had been in the institution since he

was 11, was injured fatally in a fight at 8 o'clock Monday night.

An autopsy showed he died of suffocation from a fractured larynx, reportedly caused by a punch thrown by another patient, a 17-year-old boy.

The victim was identified as Thomas Cochrane, formerly of

2130 E. Tremont Ave., Bronx.

The school has been under investigation by a grand jury as a result of a series in THE NEWS. Reporter Jack Mallon learned that two patients had been fatally scalded in the showers. A third had been strangled by a patient in the summer.