

No Refuge for Willowbrook Runaway

By JACK COWLEY

A badly bruised, retarded youth ran away from the Willowbrook State School after allegedly being beaten by

an attendant, and wound up in a South Bronx police station, where two officers cared for him most of the evening.

The policemen tried to place

18-year-old Anthony Marino in another hospital because "we just couldn't send him back to Willowbrook," said Detective Robert Gardner.

But he was refused admittance at Bronx State and Bellevue Hospitals because his residence is still, technically, on Staten Island, the officer said. And at Jacobi, he said, "the only way they would take him was if he would sit in a waiting room with a police officer all night. Then they said they would try to send him back to Willowbrook in the morning."

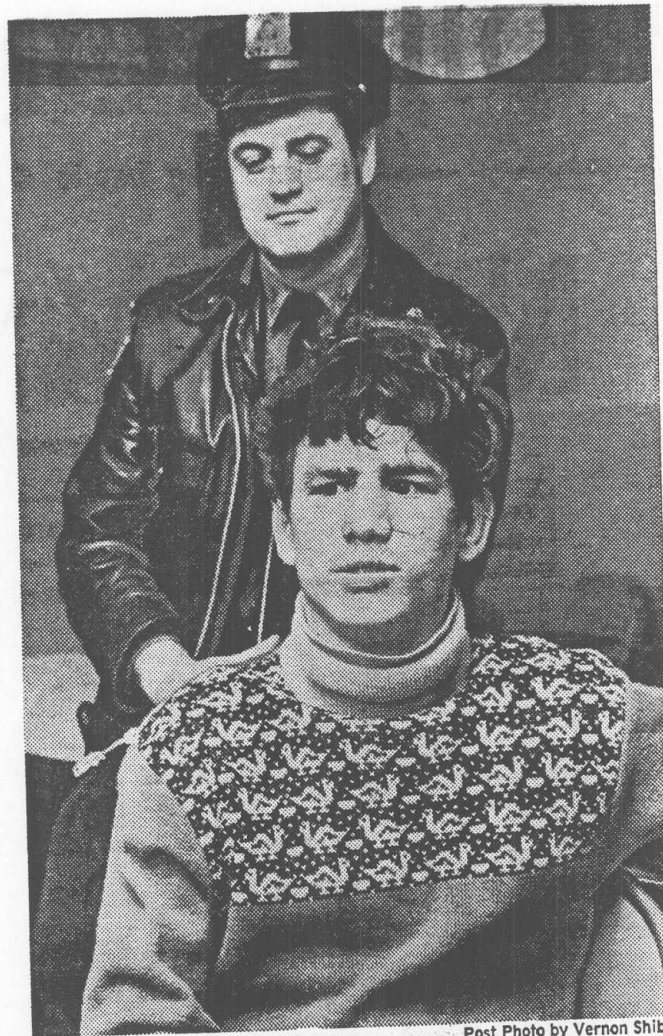
Since Age 7

Marino, who has been a Willowbrook patient since he was 7, ran away last night and took the subway to his mother's home at 670 Barretto St. in the Bronx. His mother is on welfare and was unable to take care of him, police said, and brought her son to the Simpson St. station.

Resting in a precinct room, Marino told Gardner and his partner, officer Victor Larini, that he had gotten into an argument Wednesday with another Willowbrook patient, who clubbed him in the back with a lead pipe.

The school attendant in Building No. 5 pulled Marino away, then hit him in the face, stomach and legs with a baseball bat, said Marino, who displayed a large red welt on his right side, and a swollen nose.

He said he reported the incident to school officials and yesterday, as a punishment, was not allowed to eat. The food the officers bought him last night was his first meal in more than 24 hours, he said.



Post Photo by Vernon Shible

Flees Willowbrook

Anthony Marino, 18, rests in the 41st Precinct stationhouse in the South Bronx, where he spent the night after fleeing Willowbrook State School on Staten Island. He said he was beaten by a fellow patient and a staff member there. Cops tals, and he was returned to Willowbrook. Story, Page 67.

Marino was returned to Willowbrook in a patrol car at about 2 a.m. after police said someone in the precinct called the school and was told they "had no way to come and get him." According to Willowbrook officials, after 5 p.m. the school's transportation services are available only for "medical emergencies."

Police said Marino had received first aid treatment at Jacobi Hospital.

Reached for comment, Willowbrook director Dr. Miodrag Ristic said that he did not yet have full details of the incident but expected a full report sometime.

He said the attendant has denied hitting Marino — "There were no witnesses apparently; it seems to be a case of one word against another. It's certainly an unfortunate incident."

The Lead Pipe

Asked about the presence of a lead pipe in the patients' quarters, Ristic said: "This is an open institution; we have no gates here. They bring in all kind of things, even switchblades. We have to watch them very closely."

Officers Gardner and Larini said they knew of Willowbrook "by reputation" and when they saw Marino's bruises they began calling other hospitals.

"We took him to Jacobi and they kept telling us, 'This is not a dropping ground; we won't take him,'" said Gardner. "It was very frustrating. A doctor told me, 'We are releasing him in your custody. How can he be in my custody? I'm not a doctor.'"