



Police and neighbors gather in the rear yard of a New Brighton house where a Willowbrook Developmental Center patient was bludgeoned to death. Mrs. Grover Dale, in the rear with white bathrobe, discovered the body. *Times Advance Photo by Tony Coranante*

garage in the debris-littered yard; Nearby, police said they found a blue T-shirt which was ripped in the back and the victim's jacket.

The snow immediately surrounding the victim was spotted with blood, which police said indicated there had been a violent struggle. About four hours later, police said they discovered the murder weapon, a three-foot auto jack, buried under the snow.

Meanwhile, police said an extensive search by about 25 members of the Willowbrook staff and members of the Police Department was called off when they discovered the victim's identity through a bank book he was carrying.

Dr. Stanley Slawinski, acting director of Willowbrook, said the staff members had searched the sprawling Willowbrook area, where on

Christmas Eve the frozen body of another resident was found, as well as the New Brighton area where Cordero was known to visit friends.

From information accumulated from the search parties, police said Slawinski was able to provide them with "valuable information" helping with the investigation.

Allen's arrest followed an investigation by Detectives George Siersema, Alfred Siragusa, George Capuano and Raymond Taylor.

Under the supervision of Lt. William Juliano, they questioned dozens residents in the New Brighton area and persons at the center. They arrested Allen at the center without a struggle during his lunch break, according to detectives. He was taken to the New Dorp stationhouse, where he was booked on charges of homicide and possession of a

weapon, after questioning by Assistant District Attorney William Murphy.

According to Slawinski, Cordero was "mildly to moderately retarded" and a "high functioning" individual.

A resident of Willowbrook for 11 years, Cordero started work about three weeks ago as a kitchen aide as part of a "normalization" process leading to his eventual release.

Alexander Dale, an employe at a New Brighton delicatessen, described Cordero as being a quiet person.

"He didn't say too much. He would come into the store with two girls and a guy and buy groceries and beer," Dale said. "Who would want to kill him? He didn't hurt anybody."

Detectives said they ruled out robbery as a motive, although Cordero was found with only \$1.26 in his pocket out of nearly \$75 cash he had from a paycheck received earlier in the day. Police said he had deposited \$150 of the \$228 check in the bank before going to the suspect's house.