

Phone call leads police to patient abducted from Willowbrook bed

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An anonymous telephone call early today ended a 20-hour search for a 28-year-old profoundly retarded woman who officials say was mysteriously carried off at dawn yesterday from her bed in a ward of the Willowbrook Developmental Center.

The woman, Juanita Diaz, a 4-foot 11-inch tall quadraplegic weighing 70 pounds, was found lying in the grass about 2:15 a.m. between Building 1 and 27. Sgt. F. Duda of Willowbrook security found Miss Diaz, who is described as a "total spastic" with no ability to communicate, after he received a call from an unidentified man who said he had seen "something" on the lawn between the two buildings.

The area had been searched thoroughly by police yesterday. "Someone had to put her back out there, for whatever reason, nobody knows," remarked Sgt. Robert Maloney of the Emergency Service Division who went to Willowbrook after the woman was discovered. Police and Willowbrook security officers checked the area for additional details, but they reportedly found nothing.

An examination by Dr. Chalotorn Loch, a Willowbrook physician, revealed that the woman was unharmed except for a few scratches on her hands and elbows.

Lt. Thomas Garland, who supervised the police investigation of the discovery of the woman, said that it was still believed that an unidentified intruder had taken the woman. "This woman can't move," he added. Willowbrook officials said Miss Diaz had been living at the developmental center for 24 years and was last visited in 1972.

Police said the abductor entered Miss Diaz' ward in Building 25 between 5:15 and 6 a.m. after prying off a screen and pushing up a window directly in front of her bed. "She was forcibly removed," a detective said. "The screen was unscrewed from the outside."

The two attendants on duty in the 24-bed ward at the time said Miss Diaz was asleep in the building when they made their hourly rounds at 5:10 a.m. They found her missing 50 minutes later when



Juanita Diaz, a 28-year-old profoundly retarded quadraplegic who mysteriously disappeared from Willowbrook Developmental Center, is lifted by aides onto a special wheelchair after she was found on the center's grounds. S.I. Advance Photo by Tony Carannante

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