

FOR EX-CONVICT—JENNIFER IS STILL MISSING

Charge 'Pied Piper' in girl's kidnap

By DAVID J. KRAJICEK
Police Bureau Chief

Portrayed by police as a shrewd Pied Piper who only feigns mental illness, a convicted sex offender stood mute and drooling yesterday in a crowded courtroom as he formally was charged with abducting a 12-year-old Staten Island girl.

Stopped, toothless and balding, Andre Rand, 43, bowed his head as his attorney entered a plea of innocent to charges that he kidnaped Jennifer Schweiger, a Down's syndrome victim who vanished mysteriously while walking near her home July 9.

Despite almost daily searches by police with dogs and helicopters and the assistance of scores of volunteers, Jennifer has not been found.

Her parents, Kenneth and Karen Schweiger, sat three rows back in the packed Staten Island Criminal Court, looking for the first time at the man accused of walking off with their daughter. Tears welled in their eyes as the Schweigers embraced.

'Serial killer'?

Rand, convicted of a sexual assault on a 9-year-old Bronx girl in 1969, also has been linked to the disappearances of three other little girls on Staten Island. In addition, one high-ranking police source confided, "We believe he is a serial killer."

Sources said that Rand was identified by five witnesses as the man seen walking hand-in-hand with Jennifer on July 9. Police Capt. Michael Julian said the witnesses "have positively identified him as the person with Jennifer."

When police previously hauled him in for questioning, Rand maintained that he had been in New Jersey on the day Jennifer disappeared. Police sources said that story didn't hold up. But authorities released him on July 11, hoping he would lead them to Jennifer. After he didn't, he was taken into custody early Tuesday morning and charged about 11 p.m. Tuesday.

Police concede they have no physical evidence against Rand. But they cited what they

The stories on the arrest of Andre Rand were reported by Daily News Staff Writers Larry Celona, Mary Engels, Bill Farrell, Mary Ann Giordano and David J. Krajicek.

called his false alibi, witness identifications and the fact that police dogs detected Jennifer's scent near a makeshift campsite, where Rand had been living, on the grounds of the abandoned Willowbrook mental hospital.

Rand's court-appointed attorney, Howard Rintel, said Rand refused to speak to anyone or respond to the reading of his rights.

Rand was led from the courtroom after Judge Alan Meyer ordered him to undergo 30 days of psychiatric testing at Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn. A hearing was set for Sept. 4.

Rand was the prime suspect in the disappearance of Holly Ann Hughes, 7, on July 15, 1981, police sources said. A beat-up green Volkswagen that Rand once owned was seen in her Port Richmond neighborhood on the evening before the girl vanished, police said.

Bus trip

Rand, a drifter and sign painter, also is a suspect in the disappearances of Tiahease Jackson, 10, on Aug. 13, 1983, and Alice Pereira, 5, on July 10, 1972.

Alice vanished seven months after Rand was released in the Bronx sex case, and Tiahease disappeared the day after Rand was released on an unlawful imprisonment conviction for luring 11 youngsters on an unauthorized bus trip to Newark Airport. The bus incident sealed Rand's reputation as a Pied Piper, cops said.

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MAY THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN: Kenneth and Karen Schweiger (center) join hands in prayer with family and friends outside court yesterday.

TONY PESCATORE DAILY NEWS

Court ordeal

Seeking light in darkness

By **MARY ANN GIORDANO**

Daily News Staff Writer

The family and friends of Jennifer Schweiger gathered on the lawn in front of the Staten Island Criminal Courthouse before 10 a.m. yesterday, joined hands and bowed their heads. Then, each recited the Hail Mary in turn.

Kenneth and Karen Schweiger, about to face the man who allegedly abducted their daughter, prayed to the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus, for help in the search for the 12-year-old Down's syndrome girl.

"We had gone through the psychics," the Rev. Henry Gentile, the family's parish priest, said later. "The family decided that they needed God, a prayer, a little peace."

The peace was short-lived. A few hours later, Jennifer's parents watched in emotional turmoil as Andre Rand was led into a courtroom.

Link to a 2d missing girl?

Across the aisle, another couple waited for a look at Rand. Sven and Helen Cederholm also were hoping he would provide a clue to the whereabouts of a child, their granddaughter, Holly Ann Hughes, who has been missing since 1981.

Rand's name had come up repeatedly in the Hughes investigation. The Cederholms had heard of his arrest; they said they wanted to see what he looked like.

The Schweigers had been up all night, waiting for the same moment.

When it came, at 12:50 p.m., they clenched their hands and stared with eyes red and glassy.

"Take a deep breath," Kenneth murmured to his wife just before Rand was led in.

Wearing a plaid shirt, blue pants and black work boots, he stood before the judge and appeared not to listen as the charges were recited, decisions made and orders given.

It took all of four minutes. Yet long after Rand was led back out of the courtroom to undergo psychiatric examination, the Schweigers sat, staring straight ahead.

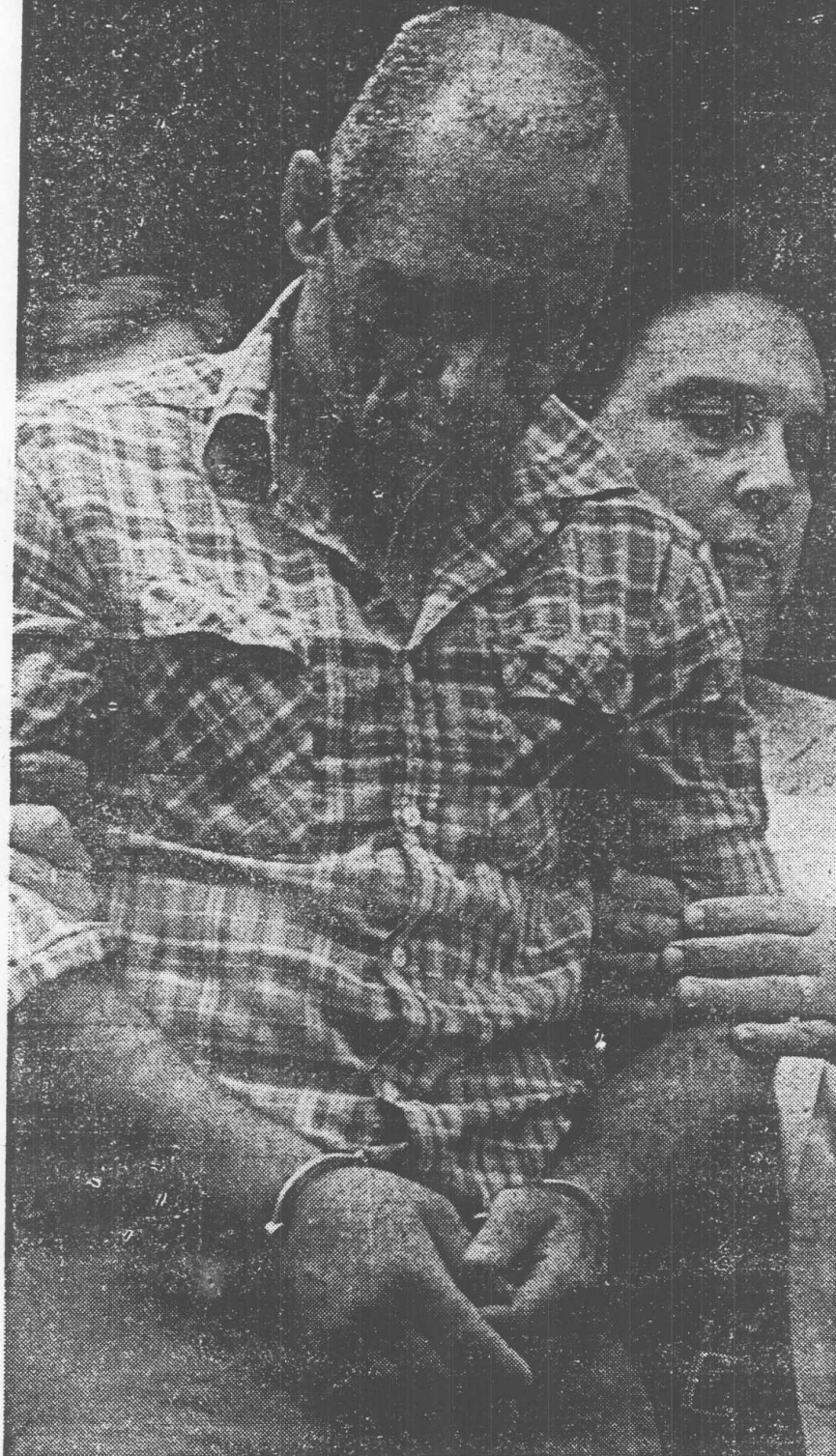
Even as the arraignment was in progress, volunteers again gathered, as they do every day, at the Church of the Holy Family to comb the Westerleigh area for Jennifer.

And 25 Emergency Service officers, six canine cops, five dogs, one lieutenant and five sergeants filled canteens, picked up walking sticks and searched the wooded acres of Latourette Park—far from the Schweiger home—for traces of the girl.

Sven Cederholm, who has lived his tragedy for six years, walked away from the courthouse, asking for prayers for both missing children.

"We had to see him," his wife said. "But it's very depressing coming here, when the realization hits you that this could be the one."

BOOKED



JIM HUGHES DAILY NEWS

KIDNAPING suspect Andre Rand, 43, in custody yesterday. A judge ordered the Staten Island drifter to undergo mental tests.

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