

Rand

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lice were secretly taping Rand when he told the preacher that authorities "were looking in the wrong places. Who says she has to be buried?"

Police yesterday declined to comment on the existence of an electronic bug in the Muskett home. Assistant District Attorney John Loughery, who is handling the case, did not return calls to his office.

Mr. Muskett, 44, said his only regret about exposing his family to Rand is "we haven't found Jennifer."

According to witnesses, on the day Jennifer disappeared, she was last seen walking with Rand on the grounds of the Developmental Center in Willowbrook.

Mr. Muskett, a part-time Pentacostal minister who works full-time for the Postal Service and has his ministry in the building in which he lives, also said two of his sons, David, 14, and Donald, 11, were seen with Rand on his late-night jaunts to the Pathmark Supermarket at 1351 Forest Ave., Port Richmond, in the weeks following Jennifer's disappearance.

David said last night that while in the vicinity of the supermarket, Rand would point to houses and say they reminded him of houses he lived in "on Long Island."

Mr. Muskett said detectives from the Staten Island Crimes Against Property Squad, which investigates missing persons, wanted the two boys to stay with Rand while investigators kept the man under 24-hour surveillance.

"They (Detectives Robert Jensen and Ralph Aquino of the Property Squad) assured me that they would take all safety precautions and (his sons) would be all right."

Mr. Muskett said he told David what was happening but did not tell Donald because he was too young and might accidentally reveal the plan to Rand. David readily agreed to help, his father said.

Mr. Muskett also said: "(Rand) hung around with and liked mentally retarded people. That's why he liked my son Chippy. He could lead people who were not as intelligent as he was."

Charles Muskett Jr., 17, nicknamed Chippy by his family,

was in danger. I have a 10-month-old baby," Mr. Muskett recalled yesterday, pointing to his daughter Susan.

His concerns increased when police told him that in 1969 Rand had been accused of raping a 9-year-old girl in the South Bronx, "but told me not to tell my wife." Mr. Muskett said he did not tell his wife of the alleged rape.

Rand later pleaded guilty to a sexual abuse charge and served a year and four months in jail for the crime, according to police.

However, "a lot of prayer and God" convinced the Musketts to go along with the detectives' plan, and several days after the girl's disappearance Rand moved into their home.

Mr. Muskett said he first met Rand about three months ago in the Pathmark parking lot as the drifter was leaving a Salvation Army soup kitchen. They became friendly and often talked about the Bible.

"He was very friendly, very intelligent," Mr. Muskett said. "I believe he has a high IQ."

"He seemed religious of a sort. He most liked to hear about (the book of) Revelations, about God's vengeance upon man for being evil."

Rand "seemed familiar with Revelations," but not the rest of the Bible, the clergyman said. "When I tried to steer him into other parts of the Bible, he only wanted to talk about Revelations."

Eventually, Mr. Muskett learned from Rand that he was "living in the woods," and the preacher offered to rent him a room in his home because "you felt sorry for him living out in the woods."

However, Mr. Muskett changed his mind about renting to Rand because the homeless man didn't get along with his youngest son Donald. "They fought all the time, like kids."

After that decision, Mr. Muskett continued to occasionally run into Rand around North Shore neighborhoods where Rand was often seen riding a bicycle.

The day after Jennifer's disappearance, police contacted Muskett at work and asked "if I knew about Matt Fae," he said.

there trying to talk to him, trying to get the location of where he lived," Muskett said.

Shortly after that, police released Rand and asked Mr. Muskett to reconsider his decision to rent to the suspect.

Despite his trepidations, Mr. Muskett cooperated with police, even missing a day at work to let them into his home so they could place the electronic listening device, he said. He was docked a day's pay for missing work, despite police explanations to the Postal Service, he said, adding that he is still trying to recover the money.

Mr. Muskett said that in trying to get Rand to talk about the Jennifer disappearance, the suspect told bizarre stories in which he claimed he had seen a lot of brutal action as a Green Beret in Vietnam.

"He said he killed women and little children," Muskett said.

However, Lt. Louis Fiore of the Crimes Against Property Squad said that although police knew Rand was in the military, he had not been in the Green Berets and had never been in Vietnam.

Rand knew police were following him, especially the last few days before his arrest Tuesday night, Mr. Muskett said.

"This guy was paranoid," he said. "Whenever I went to the phone, to the bathroom, he was right behind me."

Asked what he thought of Rand after living with him for nearly a month, Mr. Muskett said:

"The weight that came off us after it was over, you couldn't believe. He always tried to run things."