

anyone from digging there.

First a pair of small feet, one crossed over the other, were uncovered. The dirt was cleared away from the legs. Eventually a child's hand, pressed against the upper thigh, was revealed.

The Rev. Henry Gentile of Holy Family Church, who had accompanied searchers into the woods for the first time in the 35-day-old search, said a blessing over the body as the officers dug.

"We were too afraid to dig anymore," Mrs. Cutugno said somberly while waiting on the SIDC grounds for some word of the child's identity last night.

"What got me was the silence of it," Skorney said as he recalled the hushed apprehension of the searchers during the digging.

Chief of Department Robert J. Johnston and a host of police captains, investigators, officers, and commanders soon flooded the scene and the grounds were sealed off.

The band of volunteers was ushered off to a temporary headquarters in Building 1. Devine and the

other volunteers, all filled with grief and anger, paced the hallway outside the security office in the building.

"We worked hard to find her, now we're going to work just as hard to make sure this guy doesn't get away with it," said a grim-faced Devine, the knees of his pants soiled with dirt from the gravesite. "We're not going to stop until we find all of the missing girls!"

Most of the searchers were then piled into a van and taken to the 120th Precinct stationhouse in St. George where they were interviewed by detectives.

"We just had this feeling tonight was going to be the night," Father Gentile said while waiting with the other volunteers.

Heavy-duty special operations trucks were brought in, and search lights were set up as officers used chain-saws to clear a path through the trees and open up the gravesite to the lights. At about 10:30 p.m., while officers were digging the child up, a bright shooting star arched overhead.

The Cutagnos and Skorney were waiting on the grounds of the facility when Jennifer Schweiger's father, Kenneth Schweiger, made his way past security guards bent on keeping him out. According to police Capt. Michael Julian, police wanted to save the father from the trauma of seeing the gravesite.

Schweiger, a large flashlight slung over his shoulder, had evidently been out searching himself when he received word of the discovery. The father sat in Building 1 with several close family friends and puzzled at how the spot could have been overlooked. The father, visibly shaken by the news, wondered aloud if his daughter might be dead.

A short time later, Schweiger went home to join his wife and detectives to await word of the identity of the child.

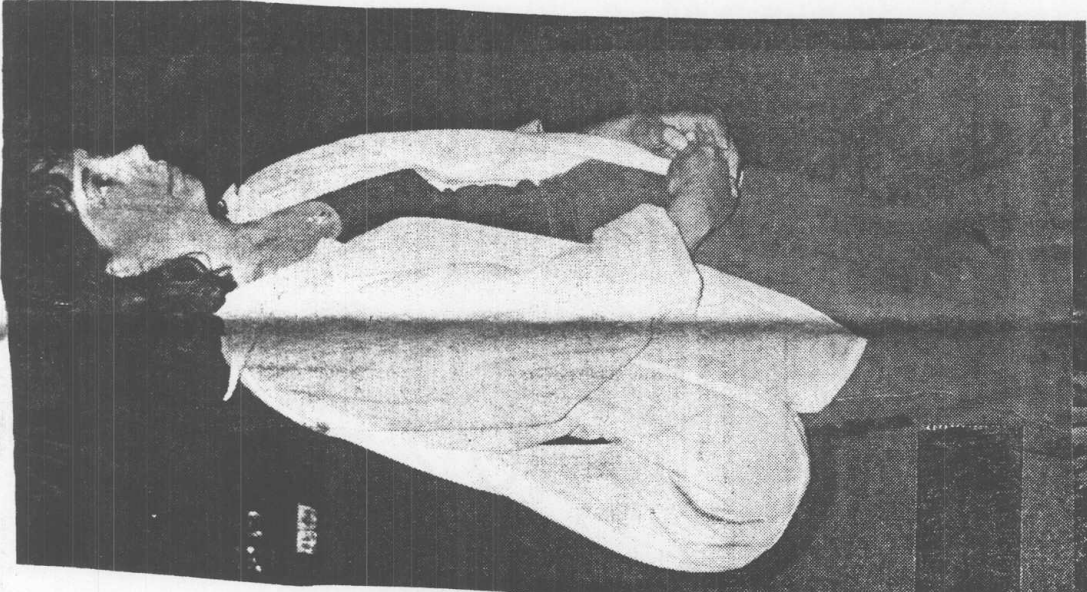
The missing girl's mother, Karen Schweiger, was joined there by family members and close friends as she continued into the early morning to hope that the body was not that of her daughter. Police officials returned to the

gravesite this morning to expand the search for evidence in the case, and to begin further digging operations.

"This place is going to be grass in about two to three days," said Thomas Tierny, Deputy Director of SIDC, referring to the currently overgrown area.

Searchers, specialized police teams and determined volunteers, first conducted a massive search of the SIDC grounds July 13, after Rand was questioned for two-days by detectives. The grounds of the facility have been gone over repeatedly by police, National Guardsmen, teams of trained dogs, and volunteers.

Rand, the man charged with kidnapping Jennifer, reportedly lived in a campsite in the woods at SIDC for years. Island police have targeted Rand as a suspect in the disappearance of 7-year-old Holly Ann Hughes in 1981; 10-year-old Tiahease Jackson in 1983; Alice Pereira, who was 5 years old when she disappeared in July 1972, and the disappearance of a hispanic woman who worked at SIDC.



Donna Cutugno watches police at the digging site. ADVANCE PHOTO/GLENN CHAF