

It all began when a special girl was reported missing

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It all began July 9 when Jennifer Schweiger, 12, of Westerleigh, was reported missing and last seen walking with a slim man with a bald spot on the back of his head.

Police believe the man was Andre Rand, who has been charged with kidnaping Jennifer. Last night, a retired fireman acting on a hunch found a body in a shallow grave on the grounds of the Staten Island Developmental Center (SIDC). The corpse may be Jennifer's.

Here is a chronological look at the case involving a special girl with Down's syndrome and congenital heart disease.

July 9: Jennifer, of Wardwell Avenue, Westerleigh, is reported missing by her parents. She disappears from the street near her home at about 2 p.m. Witnesses report seeing her walking with a white man almost 6 feet tall.

July 10: A police helicopter and a hound dog search Staten Island for Jennifer.

July 11: Police canvass Westerleigh homes, as the search continues.

July 12: Jennifer's father, Kenneth Schweiger, thanks neighbors and friends for supporting him, his wife and their 17-year-old son.

July 13: Police search the 328-acre Staten Island Developmental Center (SIDC) in Willowbrook, including vacant and occupied buildings.

July 14: More than 60 police officers and 40 civilians continue the search for Jennifer as they look through the SIDC and parts of the Fresh Kills landfill. Fliers with the girl's picture asking "Have you seen Jennifer?" are taped on the doors of neighborhood commercial establishments.

July 15: The search for Jennifer intensifies as four Emergency Services Unit police officers and two Sanitation Department employees sift through trash dumpsters collected from the area. New dogs are brought in for the search.

July 16: The group of volunteers searching for Jennifer includes off-duty National Guard volunteers at the Sea View Hospital and Home and members of the New York Telephone Co. in Manhattan. Jennifer's father is an assistant manager in the company's accounting department. The Radio Emergency Associated Citizens Team (R.E.A.C.T.) searches Clove Lanes Park, Silver Lake Park, and Baron Hirsch Cemetery. Psychics also are called in.

July 17: Hundreds of police officers and auxiliary police comb the SIDC again in search of Jennifer. Jennifer's mother, Karen Schweiger says: "We are optimistic, scared but hopeful. She could be anywhere. We are praying and staying together."

July 20: The Advance reports police are probing the possibility that a man whom witnesses said was with Jennifer shortly before she disappeared could be connected

with the disappearances of 7-year-old Holly Ann Hughes on July 15, 1981, and 10-year-old Tiahease Jackson on Aug. 14, 1983.

July 21: Police Inspector Richard McBride, commander of the Island's uniformed police force, announces police will start a more systematic and specialized search. The police effort now will be concentrated in the special boroughwide units working out of the 122nd precinct. Family members and friends offer a \$5,000 reward for information leading to Jennifer's return.

July 23: Off-duty firefighters and police officers join other volunteers and a team of detectives in the search for Jennifer. About 35 volunteers working as part of a group called The Friends of Jennifer search yards and storage areas along Port Richmond Avenue.

July 24: Dogs from the Transit Police Department and Canine Patrol are used to try to sniff out traces of the missing girl.

July 27: Volunteers ignore lightning and heavy rains to continue the search. About 30 members of The Friends of Jennifer group, which uses the Holy Family R.C. Church, in Westerleigh as a rendezvous point, brave the weather.

Aug. 1: Hundreds of brightly colored balloons, each carrying a poster of Jennifer, are released into the sky above Westerleigh, as a huge team of volunteers sets out to hunt for the girl. With tears in his eyes, the Rev. Henry Gentile points to the entrance of Holy Family Church and says, "We want to see her on that doorstep again with a smile."

Aug. 3: Several members of the Guardian Angels join the nearly 40 volunteers and police in the hunt for Jennifer. The New York Yankees also circulate pictures of the missing girl at stadium concession stands and flash her picture on the scoreboard several times.

Aug. 4: Andre Rand, 43, a homeless man with a history of crimes against children, is arrested and charged with kidnaping and unlawfully imprisoning Jennifer. Police say Rand was walking with the girl the day she disappeared from the street near her home. Volunteers and police using trained dogs and specialized equipment once again comb the SIDC.

Rand was convicted four years ago of loading 11 West Brighton children into a van and taking them to New Jersey without informing their parents. The escape lasted five hours and Rand was arrested on charges of unlawful imprisonment. None of the children was reported injured.

Rand, living in West Brighton at the time, was convicted of the charge in March and sentenced to 10 months in prison, according to Advance records. The assistant district attorney prosecuting the case said Rand was convicted in the Bronx several years earlier on charges he sexually abused a minor.

Rand was described by a social worker as "a shrewd, enterprising loner who avoided talking about his past and despised animals."

Aug. 5: In Stapleton Criminal Court, Andre Rand is held without bail and ordered to undergo psychiatric testing to determine if he is fit to stand trial on charges he kidnaped and unlawfully imprisoned Jennifer. Criminal Court Judge Alan Meyer orders Rand taken to Kings County Hospital for psychiatric evaluation and sets Sept. 4 as the next court date.

Aug. 6: The Rev. Charles G. Muskett says that Andre Rand lived in his West Brighton home for almost a month. Muskett says he rented a spare room in his home at 1062 Castleton Ave. to Rand shortly after the July 9 disappearance of Jennifer. Mr. Muskett, a part-time Pentecostal minister and storefront preacher, says two of his six children are mentally retarded. He says he let detectives place an electronic listening device in his kitchen table

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ADVANCE PHOTO/TONY CARANNANTE

Police Captain Michael Julian meets with the press outside the SIDC.

in an effort to get Rand to implicate himself.

Aug. 7: The Advance publishes a letter written by Rand to a Port Richmond widow whom he met at a bus stop. The woman, Edith Kennedy, describes Rand as a homeless man who ate baby food, bought his clothes through a catalog, hated cigarette smoke and animals. His letter says he and Mrs. Kennedy can "very well wind up surviving as a financial team." Rand is invited to Mrs. Kennedy's house by her son, Richard, on one occasion.

In the letter, Rand says, "However, should you decide to move into something more private and better area, supposing your son Richard decides to leave for whatever reasons he may leave — then, of course, it would be customary manner for true friends to want to make living conditions bearable for each other."

Aug. 8: Cardinal John O'Connor, Archbishop of New York, is in Westerleigh visiting Jennifer's parents. "A child like Jennifer has a very special place in my heart," he says.

Also helping with the search is a contingent of jungle-seasoned Vietnam veterans.

Aug. 9: Volunteers searching for Jennifer find a badly decomposed body of an elderly woman in a swampy section of the Mariners Harbor shoreline. The body is believed to be that of Julia Kapolka, 73, a resident of Sts. Cosmas and Damian Adult Home missing since July 23. Police still await an autopsy report to determine the identity of the body.

Aug. 12: Retired firefighter George Kramer starts digging at a suspicious looking area of woods on the grounds of the SIDC and finds a body in a grave.

Kramer calls a friend, off-duty police Sgt. Ronald Jacobs. The latter, who also was one of the men who found the woman's body in Mariners Harbor, and Kramer expose a hand and a foot, then stop and call authorities.

Medical Examiner Elliot Gross arrives at the scene at 10:20 p.m. to examine the body.