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# Coast-to-coast tears

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Karen and Kenneth Schweiger sat in their Staten Island home yesterday and tried to pick up the pieces of a life shattered by the death of a 12-year-old girl.

Stacks of mail surrounded the couple—cards and letters sent to console them on the loss of their daughter, Jennifer. She had been missing for weeks and was found dead in a shallow grave. An ex-convict charged with her kidnaping is the prime suspect in her killing.

"I knew Jenny had to be out there," said Kenneth Schweiger. "We had to have an ending to the story. Unfortunately, it had to end this way.

The couple spoke of their bright-eyed, smiling daughter, who had Down's syndrome. "She was a little princess," Kenneth said. "It seems that Jenny touched everyone's heart," said Karen, gazing at stacks of mail "from as far away as California and Florida."

Yesterday, the father watered the lawn at the family home on Wardwell Ave. in Westerleigh. The couple lives there with their son, Kenneth Jr., 17.

### Moving soon

But soon they will move. The house is for sale.

"We had planned to move to Lakewood, N.J., right along, not just because of this," said Karen.

It was six weeks ago yesterday that Jennifer disappeared from outside her

home. Authorities said the girl was last seen walking near the former Willowbrook mental hospital with ex-convict Andre Rand, 43.

Rand was arrested Aug. 4 and sent to Kings County Hospital for psychiatric tests.

After weeks of searching by police and volunteers, Jennifer's body was found Aug. 12 in a shallow grave near Rand's campsite on the Willowbrook grounds. Her funeral was this week.

Rand denied the killing in an interview with the Daily News.

"I never really saw him except that day in court," said Kenneth. "I was in a state of shock that day, especially when I saw what he looked like."

"It's up to the law now," Karen said.

Kenneth, an assistant accounting department manager at New York Telephone, said he will return to work "a day or two at a time, starting next week."

"The toughest part will be getting back on the bus again, facing my neighbors,

reliving it," he said.

The couple expressed appreciation of the hundreds of "wonderful volunteers who never gave up" in the search for their daughter, of the people "from so many places who took Jenny to their hearts."

Karen said one poem sent by a well-wisher particularly touched her heart.

Titled "Safely Home," it read: "Mommie and Daddy, I am home in heaven dear ones. There is perfect joy and beauty in this everlasting light."

Jennifer Schweiger



FOR SALE: Ken Schweiger waters lawn of family home on Staten Island. Family is moving to New Jersey soon.