

Grand jury starts hearing Rand case

ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

Prosecutors began presenting evidence to a Staten Island grand jury yesterday in the case against accused kidnapper Andre Rand, according to sources close to the case.

District Attorney William Murphy declined to confirm or deny the reports, but several well-placed sources said a grand jury in St. George had begun to hear evidence relating to the disappearance of 12-year-old Jennifer Schweiger of Westerleigh, who was found murdered two weeks ago.

The evidence is to be presented to the grand jury over a period of at least several weeks, according to one source, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Rand, a 43-year-old transient who is undergoing psychiatric

evaluation in Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn, was arrested Aug. 4 and charged with Jennifer's kidnapping. Authorities have not yet charged anyone with the girl's murder.

Rand is to return to Stapleton Criminal Court Sept. 4 for his first appearance on the kidnapping charge.

Jennifer's body was found buried near Rand's campsite on the grounds of Staten Island Developmental Center in Willowbrook. Her death was ruled a homicide by the city medical examiner.

Early this week, a band of searchers from the Friends of Jennifer searched another Rand campsite at the former Farm Colony in Sea View, looking for traces of his clothing or other possessions.