

Missing girls:

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Andre Rand is undergoing psychiatric examination after his arrest on charges of kidnapping Jennifer Schweiger, while police are hard at work attempting to link him to multiple kidnappings and murders.

Detectives are studying more than 30 cases — including those of four missing Staten Island girls.

Investigators have singled out the girls' cases due to intriguing similarities surrounding each disappearance, including Rand's "somehow being placed in the area" from which each girl disappeared. Many of the connections may be coincidental or circumstantial, but police have vowed to follow up every possible clue.

Missing:

Alice Pereira

Alice Pereira was 5 years old when she vanished from a park near her New Dorp home in 1972. Rand worked as a painter in the

Tysens Park Apartments, the girl's residence at the time of her disappearance.

Fifteen years after Alice mysteriously disappeared, her grandmother, Frances Dendariarena, still clings to the hope that one day her granddaughter will walk through the front door.

Since Alice knew her own address and phone number, Mrs. Dendariarena has refused to move from the Tysens Park apartment where the girl once lived.

Even the phone number remains the same. "I expect one day, she will call and tell me about it. If she came back I would tell her. Let's forget everything and start a new life."

Now, investigators have targeted the 43-year-old Rand, a transient, who spent years eating from Island soup kitchens and living in hidden campsites, as a suspect in Alice's disappearance.

On Jan. 21, 1972, Rand was conditionally released from prison after serving approximately 17 months on a sex abuse charge. He had been convicted of sexually attacking a 9-year-old girl in the Bronx in May of 1969.

Alice disappeared July 7, 1972. Sources told the Advance that following

Detectives studying 30 cases to find connecting evidence

Alice's disappearance, police summoned the Tysens Park maintenance crew for questioning.

Rand was the only one who failed to show. He turned up days later, was questioned, and subsequently sent on his way.

Alice's aunt said she vividly recalls Rand working at the apartments.

"He had teeth then and more hair. I remember seeing him by the back door entrance (of the building)," she said.

"I hope there is no connection, but you have to think about it," she said.

At the time, investigators found neither a trace of the girl nor a witness who might help them determine her fate.

"It was if the ground had opened up and swallowed her," a veteran detective said during the investigation.

Mrs. Dendariarena thinks it is possible Alice could have been lured off by a stranger.

"She was very friendly, very friendly," Mrs. Dendariarena said. "I think if someone called her (to go somewhere), she'd go."

One of Alice's aunts described her niece as a "very bright little girl."

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Andre Rand, center. Was he involved?

ADVANCE PHOTO/STEVE ZAFFARANO

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Girls

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"She knew her phone number, address. She would remember those things. We still hope she will turn up," the woman said. "We felt she was elsewhere and would come back when she got older."

But she never has.

The afternoon she disappeared, 5-year-old Alice was playing with friends in front of her home at 675 Tysons Lane, New Dorp.

Minutes later, the dark-haired youngster in pig-tails vanished.

Alice's brother, Angelo, now 20, lives with Mrs. Dendarriena. He was with his sister just before she disappeared. Angelo was thirsty and went up to the apartment for a drink of water. When he returned outside, Alice was gone.

"I was playing with the kids downstairs," he said. "She was sitting down on a bench in front of the building at 285 Tysons — and that was the last I saw of her."

Police spoke to Alice's friends, but the children gave contradictory accounts of which direction Alice had gone.

The disappearance touched off an intensive police investigation in which the FBI and other law enforcement agencies also took part.

The search stretched to Puerto Rico and Santa Domingo in the Caribbean. The Pereiras have relatives in Puerto Rico where authorities, at one time, believed Alice may have been living with a family.

But police found nothing.

Now, Manhattan detectives from the police Missing Persons Unit are checking into the possibility Rand targeted girls with physical, emotional, or psychological weaknesses. Some of the missing girls are from broken homes.

Inez Pereira, Alice's mother, has had multiple sclerosis for a number of years. The child's father, Angel, lives in Manhattan. The couple is divorced. The family has not forgotten and still has hope.

They have called police periodically for the past 15 years, hoping for something new in the disappearance of their little Alice.

Missing:

Holly Ann Hughes

Nine years after Alice Pereira vanished, at 9:30 on the evening of July 15, 1981, Holly Ann Hughes disappeared while on her way to a delicatessen near her home at 90 Park Ave. in Port Richmond.

Rand's aunt lived in a building that shared an entrance with Holly Ann's, and Rand reportedly visited his aunt the day Holly Ann disappeared.

One member of the missing 7-year-old girl's family even said Rand was seen talking with the child earlier in the day, and authorities reported that Holly Ann had been spotted speaking with a man in a Volkswagen that day.

According to Holly Ann's grandparents, Helen and Sven Cederholm, detectives brought up Rand's name early in the investigation.

Police conceded that Rand was questioned extensively regarding the girl's disappearance, but that they released him for lack of conclusive evidence.

Various members of the girls' families, as well as others involved in the cases at the time, said they saw Rand driving a green Volkswagen.

The Advance has learned that a green Volkswagen was reported in the vicinity of both the Hughes' and Pereiras' homes just prior to both disappearances.

State Motor Vehicle Department records indicate that Rand purchased a GMC van in 1982. That same year, Rand applied for a grant to do volunteer work to take children to baseball games at Yankee Stadium in his bus-type van. The grant was never approved.

One other note: Holly Ann's parents were di-

vorced. Her mother now lives in Manhattan, while her father remains on Staten Island.

Missing:

Tiahease Jackson

Early in 1983, Rand was arrested and convicted for another child-related crime.

On Jan. 10, Rand took 11 children on a bus trip to Newark Airport and was arrested upon returning to Staten Island five hours later. On March 9, Rand was convicted of unlawful imprisonment. He was released from prison Aug. 1 after serving approximately five months of a 10-month sentence.

Twelve days after Rand had been released from prison, on the evening of Aug. 13, 10-year-old Tiahease Jackson disappeared while on an errand to the Crown Supermarket at 933 Richmond Ave.

Tiahease has not been seen or heard from since leaving her residence, the Conca D'Oro Hotel, 2232 Forest Ave. in Mariners Harbor.

During a recent interview with Newsday, Tiahease's mother, Gwendolyn, said she had seen a man matching Rand's description "who used to hang around the hotel and the lot across the street."

In the published interview, Mrs. Jackson said a man in a small school van used to try to accost her children in a parking lot across the street from the hotel. She added that another man in a car was always asking them to go for a ride.

According to authorities, detectives sought to question Rand at that time, and finally found him three days after the girl's disappearance. When Rand was spotted by detectives, he was reportedly walking out of the Baron Hirsch Cemetery where he had been known to have a campsite. The cemetery is located less than a half-mile away from the girl's hotel.

Because of a lack of evidence and witnesses in Tiahease's case, police were unable to file any charges against Rand.

Mrs. Jackson, who moved to Dawson, Ga., three months after Tiahease's disappearance, said she

believes the girl is still alive because police have turned up no trace of her or her clothing.

Found dead:

Jennifer Schweiger

Jennifer Schweiger vanished from a street near her Wardwell Avenue home in Westchester July 9 of this year. With the aid of witnesses and a bloodhound, police tracked the girl to the grounds of Staten Island Developmental Center in Willowbrook.

Witnesses told police they saw Jennifer walking hand-in-hand with Rand when she disappeared. Hundreds of police officers and thousands of volunteers from throughout the metropolitan area scoured the island in a massive search.

On August 12, Jennifer's body was found in a shallow grave behind Building 27 at SIDC, about 40 yards from a campsite recently used by Rand. Medical Examiner Elliott Gross determined the girl had been murdered, but a cause of death has not yet been released.

Rand had been arrested August 4 and charged with kidnapping and unlawfully imprisoning Jennifer. Police cited exhaustive investigative work by detectives and the existence of credible witnesses as key factors in the arrest.

Prior to the arrest, authorities said they had been watching Rand in the hope he would slip up and lead them to new evidence in the case. The tactic apparently failed, and investigators made the arrest after receiving information leading them to believe Rand may have been making arrangements to leave for Vermont.

Rand is currently undergoing psychiatric observation in Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn and is scheduled to return to Stapleton Criminal Court on Sept. 4.

Detectives Ralph Aquino, Vincent Albanese and Robert Jensen are currently working with District Attorney William Murphy to prepare a case for presentation to a grand jury.

Investigators hope to assemble enough evidence to bring about indictments on charges of kidnapping, unlawful imprisonment and homicide. Those indictments, however, may be only the beginning.

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Holly Ann Hughes



Tiahease Jackson



Alice Pereira



Jennifer Schweiger

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