

# Accused kidnapper back under heavy police guard

BY ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

Andre Rand, accused in the kidnapping of Jennifer Schweiger — the little girl later found dead on the grounds of the Staten Island Developmental Center — arrived in Criminal Court this morning under intense police security.

More than 20 police officers — six of them with machine guns and all with bullet-proof vests — were outside the court building on Targee Street at 9 a.m. as a police caravan arrived with Rand in one of the vans.

Five police cars proceeded the van Rand was in and several unmarked cars were behind it.

All gates leading to the court were locked and only the caravan was allowed in. The gates were immediately closed, and helicopters flew overhead as Rand was moved inside.

Streets around the courthouse were blocked by police and only reporters were allowed in the area.

Even residents of nearby homes were ordered inside as they stepped out to see what was going on.

"The president doesn't get as much security as this guy did," said Advance photographer Frank Johns, who was on the scene to record the arrival.

Rand, who has been in Kings County Hospital since Aug. 5 to determine his fitness to stand trial, was in court this morning where the findings were to be revealed. It had been reported last week that the suspect was fit to stand trial, but neither Kings County nor Staten Island District Attorney William Muryrophy would confirm that.

Rand, a 43-year-old drifter, is accused of kidnapping 12-year-old Jennifer. Rand and the Down's Syndrome child were last seen walking hand-in-hand near her Westerleigh home July 9, the date she disappeared.

Her disappearance touched off an intense manhunt that ended Aug. 12 when her body was found buried in a shallow grave on the grounds of the Staten Island Developmental Center.

Jennifer's mother and father were in the district's attorney's St. George office this morning while Rand was in the Criminal Court building in Stapleton.

It was thought that Rand would later be taken to the district attorney's office also. After he was inside the courthouse a SWAT team arrived.

People from all over Staten Island joined in the search for Jennifer. Hundreds of residents joined police looking through Willowbrook buildings, scouring the grounds, searching Island cemeteries and walking the Island shoreline.

The little girl was finally found by one of the searchers — a retired firefighter named George Kramer.