

HE'S CHARGED WITH KIDNAPING JENNY

Drifter ruled fit for trial

In a courtroom ringed with security, Andre Rand was judged competent yesterday to stand trial in the kidnaping of 12-year-old Jennifer Schweiger.

A crowd of 75 stood in the street outside screaming "Kill the bastard!"

Rand, 43, who is charged with kidnaping the Down's syndrome victim and who is a suspect in her murder, was taken to the office of Staten Island District Attorney William Murphy to stand in a lineup.

He was viewed by 10 witnesses who reported seeing Rand, a convicted sex offender, walking on a street holding Jennifer's hand July 9, the day she vanished from her Westerleigh home.

Police helicopters swirled over the Criminal Court building on Targee St. Two blocks around the area were shut to pedestrians and cars.

Every person entering the courthouse was searched for weapons. A dozen cops with shotguns and bulletproof vests moved the manacled drifter into a holding pen for the hearing.

"Child murderer!" yelled some prisoners while others hurled obscenities, according to a court officer.

Judge Michael Brennan said reports of psychiatrists who had observed Rand in Kings County Hospital since Aug. 5 had declared him able to understand charges

This story was reported by Bill Farrell and Mary Engels. It was written by Joseph McNamara.

against him and thus fit for trial.

Brennan scheduled a hearing for Friday, by which time a grand jury is expected to hand up an indictment.

He says nothing

During the hearing Rand stared straight at the judge and said nothing. He stood ramrod-straight, in stark contrast to when he was committed for tests last month. Then, he was stooped over, disheveled and drooling.

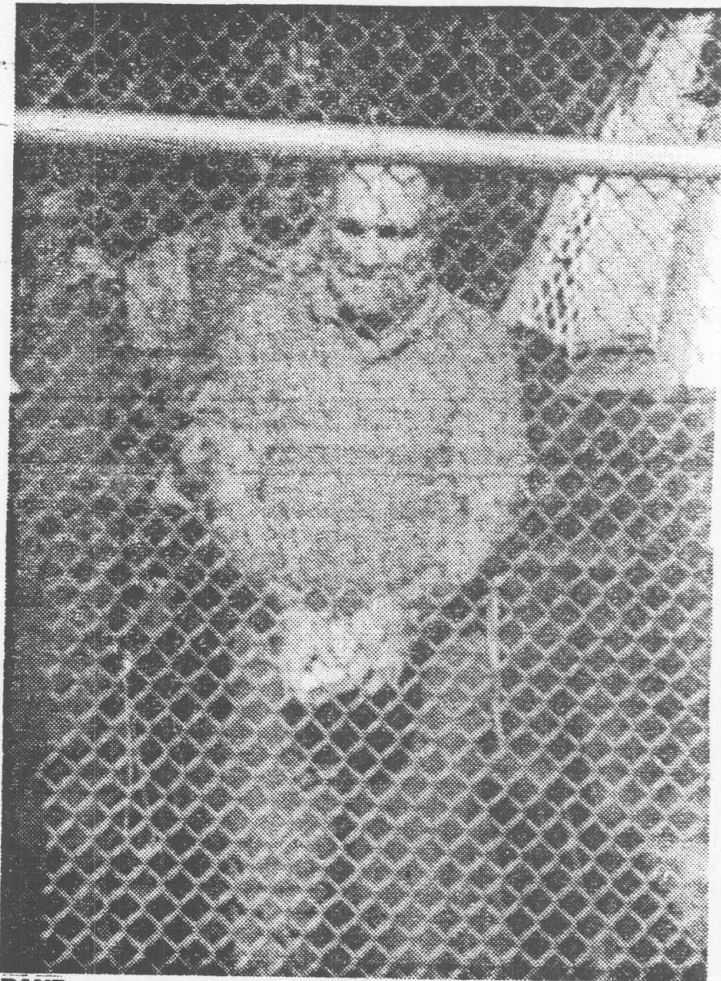
Yesterday, he was neatly dressed in a red polo shirt and blue work pants.

His hair had grown out from a tight crop and a beard jutted from his rough-hewn, previously shaven chin—an attempt, prosecutors said, to hoodwink witnesses viewing the lineup.

Brennan ordered that Rand be shaved before joining the lineup.

The judge also ordered that the suspect be segregated from other prisoners and be put under suicide guard.

Defense lawyer Jerome Giovinazzo said before the hearing that he had evidence that Rand was "absolutely not with Jennifer Schweiger on the day of her disappearance."



RAND enters Staten Island courthouse.

CLARENCE DAVIS DAILY NEWS

Jennifer's body was found Aug. 12 in a shallow grave on grounds of the former Willowbrook mental facility, where Rand lived in a rough campsite.