

Rand indicted on charges of murder and kidnapping

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Andre Rand, a man alternately depicted as a cunning, lonely drifter and as a Pied Piper whom children were drawn to, was indicted today on charges of murder and kidnapping in the death of Jennifer Schweiger.

The 12-year-old Down's syndrome victim disappeared July 9, sparking a massive, month-long search. The girl's body was found by volunteer searchers Aug. 12 in a shallow grave on the grounds of the Staten Island Developmental Center, Willowbrook.

about 150 yards from a campsite that police said had been used by Rand. The body was so decomposed that the medical examiner's office, up to the present, have been unable to determine the cause of death, although tedious and lengthy chemical tests are still going on in the hope of finding the answer, authorities say. In the meantime, the medical examiner has simply listed the death as a homicide.

District Attorney William L. Murphy announced the return of the two-count indictment this morning, ending weeks of legal maneuvering and a

pall of uncertainty as to the sufficiency of the mostly circumstantial evidence which police admittedly had assembled against the 43-year-old defendant.

A Supreme Court judge will now be called upon to review the evidence, and a jury eventually will be asked to decide whether it is sufficient proof of Rand's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The grand jury that returned the indictment was only required to conclude that there was sufficient evi-

dence, in the absence of a defense,

dence, in the absence of a defense, that Rand could have committed the crimes he is charged with.

One count charged Rand with so-called "felony murder," accusing him of causing her death during the commission of the alleged kidnapping.

The second count, Murphy said, charged Rand with first-degree kidnapping, saying he abducted her between July 9, the date she was last seen alive, and Aug. 4, when Rand was arrested. The count further stated that the girl had perished during this period.

Each count carries upon conviction

the same punishment — 15 years to life in prison.

Rand is expected to be arraigned on the indictment Wednesday in state Supreme Court.

Over a three-day period, the grand jury heard more than 10 witnesses, including a Daily News reporter who appeared yesterday after the newspaper was unsuccessful earlier in the day before the Appellate Division in staying an island judge's order requiring her to testify and produce

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Andre Rand