

No link between cult and Jennifer case

By PHILIP RUSSO
ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

Authorities yesterday said there is no evidence to support a link between satanic cults and the disappearance of Jennifer Schweiger.

The link is alleged in a letter circulating on Staten Island that claims satanic cults were responsible for the disappearance and murder of Jennifer, a 12-year-old child with Down's syndrome from Westerleigh, as well as other unspecified crime victims in the borough.

In the last several weeks, copies of the letter have appeared in and around Island schools, businesses and churches, particularly on the South Shore, police said.

"There isn't any evidence to support the allegations set forth in the letter, that we're aware of," said Capt. William Wallace, chief of Staten Island detectives. "There was no evidence of any cult activity in the young girl's disappearance. I'm not aware of our uncovering any cult activity on Staten Island."

"It is apparently being passed out near all the churches on the Island, at least on the South Shore," said Sgt. Eugene Martinez of the Staten Island Crimes Against Persons Squad. "It's being placed on windshields of cars in the church parking lots."

The typed, two-page letter, signed by "Uncle Rick" and addressed to a niece named "Debbie," has no basis in fact, Martinez said.

"We've seen a copy of it," Martinez said. "We're trying to track down the author of it, trying to see where he got his information

from. Not that we believe there is any truth to it. There is no truth, based on our investigation, that Andre Rand was connected with satanism."

Rand, a 43-year-old drifter, is charged with Jennifer's kidnapping and murder.

In the letter, the author claims, "Andre Rand did not kill Jennifer, all he did was bring her to the coven. A coven is usually a group of 13 'Satanists,' they live their lives the complete opposite of Christianity, and that includes the sacrifice of children at what is called a 'Black Mass.'"

No evidence is offered in the letter as to how the author knows of the existence of the alleged satanic cults or their connection with any crimes on Staten Island. The author claims he is in training to be a police officer and that is how he learned of the cult.

District Attorney William Murphy, whose office is prosecuting Rand, said he has seen a copy of the letter, but agreed that its allegations were baseless.

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