

# Rand lawyer confident of acquittal

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Ever since John Adams defended British soldiers involved in the Boston Massacre more than 200 years ago, the American legal profession has traditionally prided itself on its obligation to take on unpopular causes.

Jerome V. Giovinnazzo, a veteran criminal defense lawyer, probably would be the last person to paint himself as a knight on a white charger. He feels his court-appointed to represent Andre Rand is a responsibility from which he should not shrink as a lawyer.

Indeed, he sees Rand's defense as a stimulating challenge. And he has sufficient confidence in his professional abilities to believe, that given a new forum away from what he regards as a hostile Staten Island, he probably can win an acquittal for the 43-year-old drifter.

In what is undoubtedly one of the most publicized criminal cases in Staten Island's history, Rand is charged with the kidnapping-murder last summer of Jennifer Schweiger, a 12-year-old with Down's syndrome whose disappearance jolted a community to action.

In the view of District Attorney William L. Murphy, it was community involvement that led to the building of a case of circumstantial evidence against Rand.

It is what judges may perceive to be the community's attitude toward Rand and, in the larger view, whether Staten Island residents can ultimately provide Rand with a fair and impartial hearing on the murder charge, that will shortly occupy the attention of the courts in the case's preliminary stages.

Giovinnazzo conceded that when he agreed to represent Rand he

was aware that the case was "explosive" and community feeling went beyond normal interest to displays of fierce emotion, even to threats on his own life.

Giovinnazzo says he is experienced enough to take the threats in stride as part of his job, just as he is does the outpouring of publicity.

Murphy and Giovinnazzo have publicly expressed professional respect for the other, and one magazine article has even discussed the professional approach of the two in the face of the extensive publicity.

Murphy said he first became

aware of Giovinnazzo's ability as a defense lawyer in the late 1970s when Giovinnazzo represented a defendant named Eric Loize in a murder case. As the case proceeded toward jury selection, Murphy said he was impressed by Giovinnazzo's trial preparation work.

Giovinnazzo had just run off a remarkable string of four murder trials in which he had either won acquittals or dismissals of the indictment.

Murphy observed that there is a facet to criminal defense

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Jerome V. Giovinnazzo