

Detective describes Rand's unusual behavior

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Andre Rand's bizarre behavior after he was picked up for questioning in connection with the disappearance of Jennifer Schweiger was dramatically described yesterday by a police detective testifying in a pretrial hearing in state Supreme Court, St. George.

Detective Ralph Aquino, of the Staten Island Crimes Against Property Squad, told how Rand initially agreed to come to the 120th Precinct in St. George to talk to police concerning the disappearance of Jennifer Schweiger.

However, he later became alternately catatonic and hysterical after learning police had found his campsite on the grounds of the former Staten Island Developmental Center, Willowbrook.

Rand, a 43-year-old drifter, is accused

of the murder and kidnapping of Jennifer Schweiger, a 12-year-old with Down's syndrome. Her body was found Aug. 12, 1987, in a shallow grave on the grounds of the developmental center.

Aquino described how police saw Rand near the developmental center the day after the victim's disappearance on July 9 and asked if he would go to the precinct to answer some questions. Rand agreed, saying, "I want to get this over with," said Aquino, who was assigned to the kidnapping investigation.

Rand told police that on July 9 he "wasn't even on the Island," but spent most of the day shopping in Bayonne after getting a flat on his bicycle fixed and riding it over the Bayonne Bridge to New Jersey.

"There was no mention of Willowbrook Park at all," Aquino said. Rand did not

seem scared during the questioning, he said, adding the suspect "never changed expression" and was "very soft-spoken."

Rand, who was not arrested in the disappearance until Aug. 5, also agreed to have his picture taken by police and appeared in a lineup about 1 a.m. on July 11, Aquino said. He agreed to meet police later on July 11 after being told he was free to leave, but never showed up, the detective said.

Later that day, police found Rand near Baron Hirsch Cemetery, Graniteville, where they knew he frequently slept, Aquino said. Rand again agreed to come in to talk with police but began acting strangely later in the day after the detectives said they had been brought to his campsite by a relative of the Schweiger family who had found it earlier.

Rand then stopped talking and stared

at the wall in the Property Squad office for long periods, Aquino said.

At one point, detectives looked through a one-way glass into the room where Rand had been left alone after being questioned, he said.

"He was crying and praying and rolling on the floor, so we thought he was going to break down and talk to us," Aquino said of Rand.

Although the detectives again told Rand he was not under arrest and free to leave, he alternately refused to answer and slept in the room until the next day, when he finally agreed to be taken to a friend's house, Aquino said.

Aquino was testifying in the third day of the pretrial hearing, which were expected to be completed today, according

Assistant District Attorney John Maguire.

Yesterday, Justice Norman J. Feig filed motions by Rand's attorney, Jerome V. Giovannazzo, to suppress the identification of his client by six witnesses who picked him out of a lineup and two police photo arrays of suspects.

However, he ordered that three of the witnesses appear in future pretrial hearings to confirm their identifications.

The witnesses told police they saw Rand and walking onto the developmental center's grounds with a girl matching Jennifer Schweiger's description on the afternoon of her disappearance.

The witnesses ranged from workers on the grounds to individuals driving or walking by the facility at the time.