

# Cops say Rand cried when asked about girl

By PHILIP RUSSO  
ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

On the night he was arrested, Andre Rand broke down and cried for more than an hour when detectives asked him what he had done with Jennifer Schweiger, a police detective said yesterday.

Detective Robert Jensen of the Staten Island Crimes Against Property Squad, which investigates kidnappings, testified about the details of Rand's arrest in a pre-trial hearing in state Supreme Court, St. George.

Rand, a 43-year-old drifter, is charged with the murder and kidnapping of Jennifer Schweiger, a 12-year-old Westerleigh resident with Down's syndrome. Her body was found Aug. 12, 1987, in a shallow grave on the grounds of the Staten Island Developmental Center (SIDC).

Rand was taken into custody about 2:30 p.m. Aug. 4, 1987, by Property Squad detectives who had been questioning him for several days in connection with the disappearance of Jennifer Schweiger, Jensen said.

Detectives spent most of the day with Rand, retracing the route he said he traveled between Staten Island and Bayonne on July 9, the day the victim disappeared, he said.

They then took Rand to a room in the Holiday Inn in Bulls Head, where he was asked to view a video tape of an old television documentary about the scandalous conditions at SIDC, known at the time as Willowbrook State School, Jensen said.

On the tape, a former employee was heard to say that at the time of the scandals, the employees of Willowbrook were as much victims as the patients.

Jensen said Rand, who worked as a physical therapy aide at Willowbrook State School between 1966 and 1968, according to SIDC authorities, then told him, "You have to understand that the people they put in Willowbrook, nobody cared for them."

The detective said he told Rand that Jennifer Schweiger had a family who cared about her, adding, "Would you please tell me what you did with her?"

Assistant District Attorney John Loughrey asked what Rand replied.

"At that point he went down on his knees and began to cry," Jensen said.

Detectives spent between an hour and 90 minutes trying to get Rand to compose himself, before he was taken to the 120th Precinct, St. George, for booking, Jensen said.

Attempting to show that any statements from Rand may have been coerced by police, defense attorney Jerome V. Giovinazzo asked Jensen if any of the detectives attempted to get a doctor for Rand when he broke down in the hotel room.

Jensen said the detectives repeatedly asked if Rand wanted a doctor, or to see a friend he was staying with, but he declined. They weren't concerned about his condition because, "I'd seen him do that before and then he'd snap out of it," Jensen said.

The detective also testified how on the day of Rand's arrest, he and his partner, Detective Ralph Aquino, accompanied the suspect as they checked his alibi about being in Bayonne when Jennifer Schweiger disappeared.

The three men stopped at two supermarkets, a diner and a McDonald's, each of which Rand said he had stopped in while in Bayonne and showed a picture of the suspect to employees at each location, none of whom remembered Rand having been there, Jensen said.

Following Jensen's testimony, Justice Norman J. Felig ruled police had not coerced Rand and any statements he made are admissible.

Felig set Wednesday for the next pre-trial hearing in the case, when testimony will be heard from three witnesses who told police they saw Rand and Jennifer Schweiger entering the developmental grounds on the day of her disappearance.