

Bloodhound tracked Jennifer to SIDC

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A bloodhound named Sasha followed Jennifer Schweiger's scent for 28 blocks from her home in Westerleigh before collapsing of heat exhaustion before a dirt path leading into the grounds of the former Staten Island Developmental Center, Willowbrook, the dog's handler-trainer testified yesterday.

State trooper Jerry O'Hearn was one of six witnesses to testify at the third day of the Supreme Court trial of Andre Rand, a 44-year-old drifter charged with the kidnap-murder of the 12-year-old girl who displayed many of the

symptoms associated with Down's syndrome, including a friendly, trusting nature.

O'Hearn said he brought the dog from Poughkeepsie in response to a request from Staten Island authorities and had Sasha taking part in the investigation 18 hours after Jennifer vanished from in front of her home in Westerleigh shortly before 2 p.m. on July 9, 1987, a hot summer day.

O'Hearn said Sasha returned on July 11 to the spot where she had been forced to halt the day before, but this time she followed Jennifer's scent onto the center's grounds to Building 17 and to an

area near an abandoned swimming pool where the dog's actions, called a "pool scent," led O'Hearn to conclude that Jennifer had lingered for "a matter of minutes" on the day she disappeared.

Two center employees in Building 17 told police they saw Rand walking with the girl on the afternoon of July 9, Assistant District Attorney John Loughrey said yesterday in arguing successfully for permission to allow O'Hearn to testify.

The dog then pressed on for another 25 yards and entered a wooded area where Sasha again displayed a "pool scent," and the trail ended. O'Hearn said he was confident that Sasha would have picked up Jennifer's scent, if she had been alive. Earlier the trooper had explained that scent-trained bloodhounds instinctively stop their searches upon the death of the person whose scent they are following.

Sasha died of unknown causes a month after she had taken part in the search for Jennifer, the most extensive search for a missing person in Staten Island's history, involving on one day alone more than 700 civilians, police and others.

Jennifer's decomposed body was found Aug. 12 in a shallow grave about 100 yards from a campsite that Rand maintained near Building 23 in the center.

Chief Inspector Samuel C. Marino, commanding officer of Island police, a witness yesterday, said the body was unclothed and none of her clothes was found during the extensive search.

Rand's lawyer, Jerome V. Giovinazzo, objected strenuously to Loughrey's questioning of Marino about one massive search on July 17 involving 300 police officers, 400 civilians and others. Giovinazzo charged that the assis-

tant district attorney's question was "only done to arouse the sympathies of the jury." Justice Norman J. Felig overruled the objection.

At another time, Giovinazzo sought to extract from Marino, who was in overall charge of the search and investigation, that investigators had failed to uncover any physical evidence to link his client to the crimes. But Marino succeeded in dodging the question, saying he would have to question the detectives involved in the case.

Loughrey also called a second witness who testified to seeing Jennifer walking with a balding, middle-aged man on the afternoon of July 9.

An earlier witness, David Sheehy, 15, who knew Jennifer as a neighbor, testified that he saw her walking on Markham Place behind a man he believed might have been her grandfather at 2 or 2:30 p.m. The location was one block from Jennifer's home. Sheehy, however, was unable to identify Rand as the man he saw with Jennifer, despite seeing him in two police lineups.

Another witness yesterday, Susan Nicosia Kovach, also viewed Rand in the same lineups. She was unable to make an identification at the first, on July 10 of this year, but picked him out in the second lineup on Sept. 4 after being allowed to view his face in profile, which she had not been able to do at the first lineup.

The witness testified that it was Rand's profile she saw on July 9 as she was driving with her mother to a bank and was forced to stop her car on Bradley Avenue at Victory Boulevard, Meiers Corners, as Rand held the left wrist of a "Down's syndrome girl" as they crossed Bradley Avenue in front of her car and continued walking in the direction of a nearby

Amoco service station.

She testified she had left her place of employment in Sunnyside at 2 p.m. to go to the bank.

Terrence McGuire, the developmental center's chief security officer, said he was aware of a campsite in a heavily wooded area between buildings 22 and 23, both of which are vacant, some 11 months before Jennifer vanished.

When he inspected the site, he said he believed it had been abandoned. He said the area was "immaculate" and contained a lean-to-type shed and a cot frame.

McGuire said he had his staff carry out a search of the grounds on learning July 9 of a missing girl. Under questioning by the as-

sistant district attorney, McGuire explained some of the problems that searchers experienced, in addition to the heavy vegetation in parts of the 380-acre institution. Among other matters only about one third of the center's 60 buildings were occupied, and all of the buildings are connected by an intricate system of tunnels to provide for steam heat and for the movement of people.

Under cross-examination, McGuire said the area containing Jennifer's grave had been searched "quite a few times," perhaps as many as a dozen occasions before it was discovered by a civilian searcher, a retired firefighter.

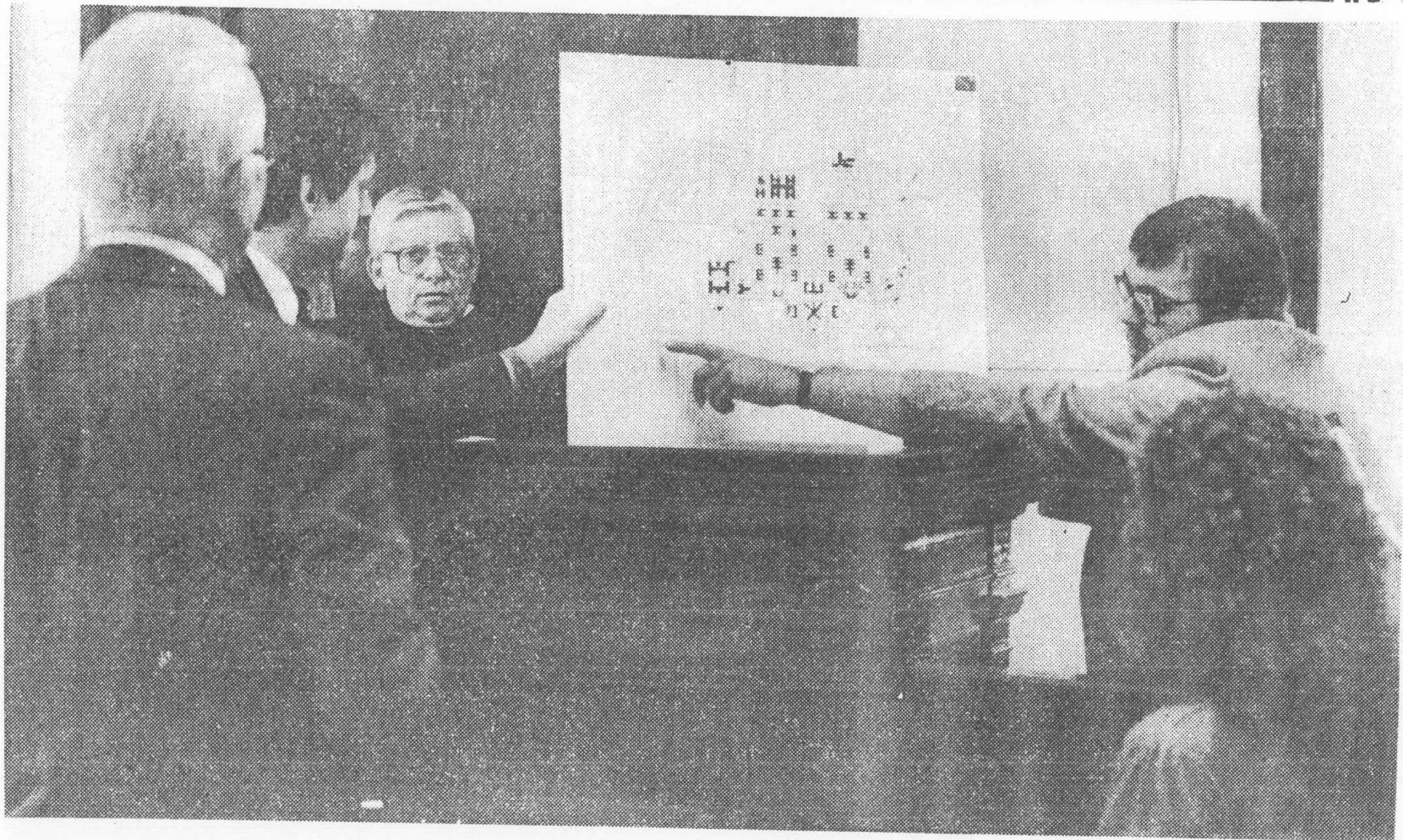
Giovinazzo conceded in his opening statement that Rand had been with Jennifer on the afternoon of July 9, but he said his client believed that Jennifer had been a resident at the developmental center and had wandered off. Giovinazzo said Rand merely sought to return her to the institution.

In questioning Robert Witkowsky, the center's director, Loughrey brought out that on July 9, 1987, the center had only 13 residents who were allowed to walk unsupervised about the center or in the community. He said none of the 13 had Down's syndrome, and the oldest of the females in the group was 38.

Detective Daniel Ingellis of the district attorney's squad also testified about aerial photographs he took of the center's grounds. The photos later were introduced as evidence at the trial.

The trial will resume today.

Page 2
1/5

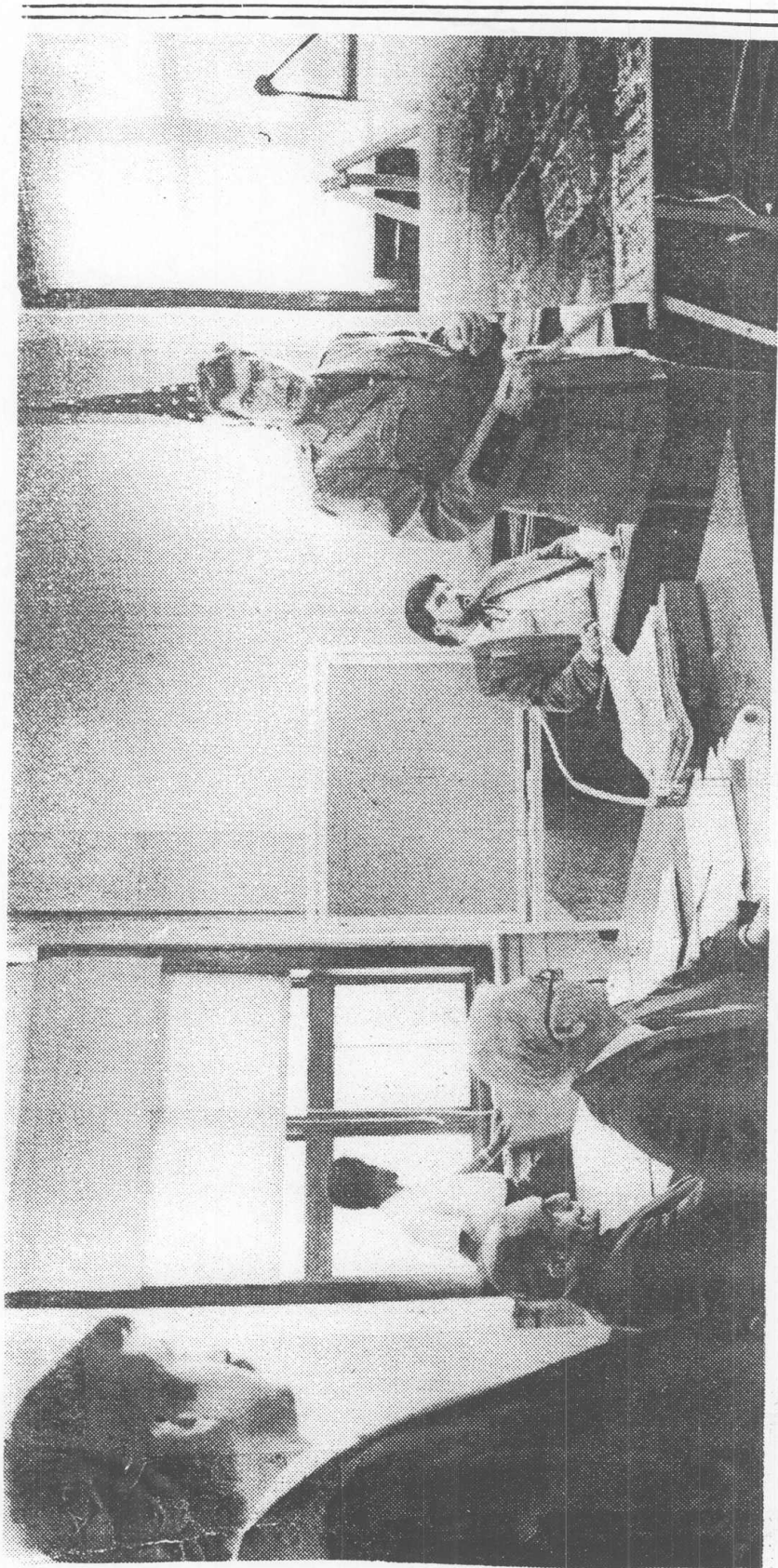


Jerome V. Giovinazzo, attorney for Andre Rand; assistant district attorney John Loughrey; and Justice Norman J. Felig, left to right, look on as Robert Witkowsky, director of the Staten Island Developmental Center in 1987, points to a map of the Willowbrook facility.

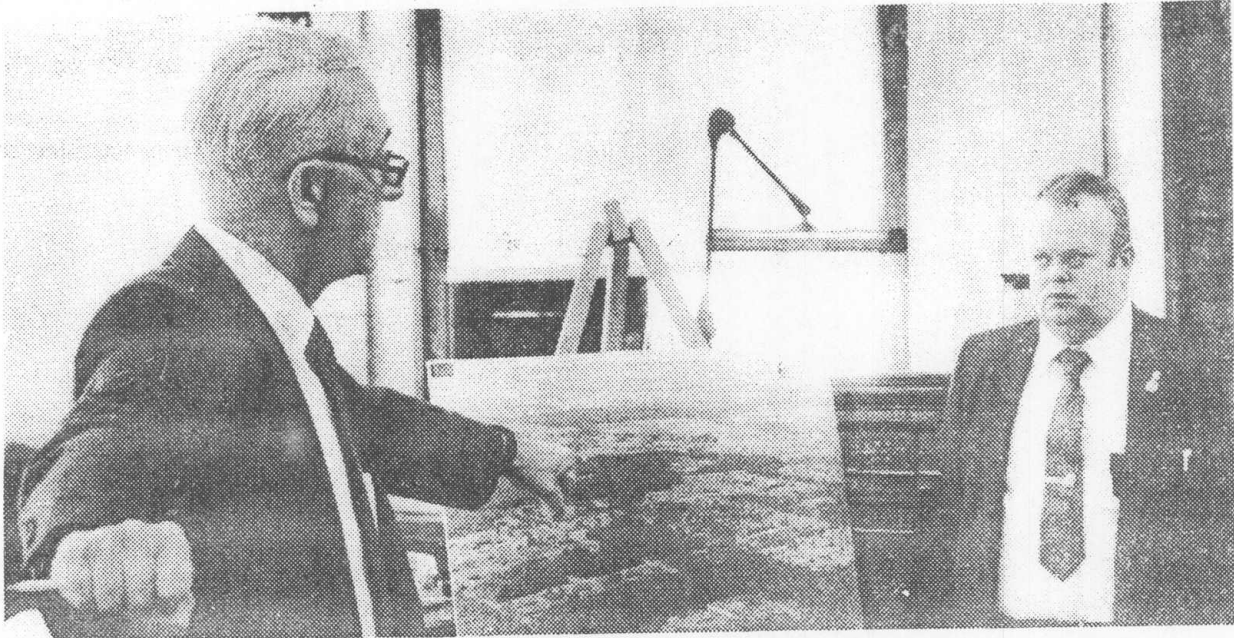
ADVANCE PHOTOS/FRANK J. JOHNS

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State trooper Jerry O'Hearn points to an aerial photograph of the former Staten Island Developmental Center grounds to show where he searched with a bloodhound. Loughrey, Andre Rand and Giovinazzo watch, left.



Giovinazzo, left, holds his arms out to emulate just how closely volunteer searchers were to each other as Terrence McGuire, head of security at the former Staten Island Developmental Center, looks on.



Witness Susan Nicosia Kovach gives her testimony.
