

Witnesses point finger at Rand

By RAYMOND A. WITTEK
ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

An employee of the former Staten Island Developmental Center, Willowbrook, suggested yesterday that Andre Rand may have taken a roundabout way to reach the center's administration building, if that was his aim, when the witness saw him walking with Jennifer Schweiger on the afternoon of July 9, 1987.

The witness, Judy Newsome, was one of four

center employees who testified yesterday that they observed Rand walking side-by-side with the 12-year-old girl on the center's grounds at about 3 p.m. on that date, the last day she was seen alive. Four more persons also said they saw the two together that afternoon.

The eight witnesses raised to 10 the number of prosecution witnesses who have testified at Rand's Supreme Court trial that they saw Jennifer walking

with an older man, beginning at 2 p.m. about a block from her home in Westerleigh and continuing along a route of some 28 blocks where they were observed entering the center's grounds. One witness said he last saw the two walking in the direction of a campsite that Rand maintained in a wooded area in the middle of the institution's 380-acre site.

Justice Norman J. Felig on charges that he kidnapped and murdered the girl, who had Down's syndrome. Her decomposed body was found Aug. 12 in a grave about 100 yards south of Rand's campsite.

Ms. Newsome's observation was made in response to a question put to her under cross-examination by Rand's lawyer, Jerome V. Giovinazzo, and went to the defense's contention that Rand believed Jennifer may have been a resident of the center and wandered off, and he decided to escort her back. Giovinazzo maintained that his client intended to take Jennifer to the administration building, but the two became separated before they reached it and did not see each other again.

Ms. Newsome, together with two fellow employees, Linda Russ and Beverly Jackson, said they were seated at a window in the cafeteria of Building 17 having lunch at 3 p.m. when Rand walked slowly past the window with Jennifer, pushing his olive-green, girl-style bicycle. The bicycle was admitted into evidence by the judge.

The center employees all said they knew Rand from having seen him about the center and in the company of a resident, Barry Simmons. They said the girl wore her hair in pigtails and carried a yellow shoulder bag.

The witnesses said Rand walked in the direction of Building 26, a vacant building nearby. The testimony of the witnesses, as well as earlier witnesses, indicated Rand was familiar with the grounds.

"If you wanted to go to the administration building, how would you do it?" Giovinazzo asked Ms. Newsome.

A. "You would have to go all the way around and then you go down the block."

The judge: "Building 26?"

Q. "And that would be quite a distance would it be not?"



Andre Rand is led out of court after a number of witnesses pointed him out as the man they saw walking with Jennifer Schweiger on July 9, 1987.

ADVANCE PHOTOS/FRANK J. JOHNS



Floyd Muse



Rhonda Romano



Jeffrey Mulligan

A. "Yes, it would."

The fourth center employee, Gary McBryer, an auto mechanic, testified he was road-testing a car at 3 p.m. when he spotted Rand and the girl near Building 15 and the swimming pool area. McBryer said Rand was "prodding" Jennifer along with his hand, perhaps out of concern for her safety with the approach of the car. They were walking in the roadway.

McBryer said that when he left the two they were crossing the intersection at Second Avenue and B Street, walking in the direction of Rand's campsite, a short distance away.

If Rand had continued walking along B Street it would have taken him in the direction of the administration building, still some distance away, according to aerial photographs that are in evidence.

A fifth witness, Jeffrey A. Mulligan, a firefighter, said he was seated in a car parked on Willowbrook Road when he saw Rand and Jennifer walking toward him on Forest Hill Road, which together with Willowbrook Road forms the eastern boundary of the former developmental center grounds.

Mulligan described Rand as "unshaven, scruffy" as he walked with Jennifer, holding her hand with one hand and pushing his bicycle with the other.

The firefighter said he saw the two enter a dirt path that led into the center's grounds from Forest Hill Road.

On Tuesday, a state trooper testified that a bloodhound trailed Jennifer's scent from outside her home to the path where Mulligan said he saw the two enter the center. The dog collapsed of heat exhaustion at that time, but returned the next day to continue the search.

The trooper testified the dog picked up Jennifer's scent at the path and trailed it to the area where McBryer said he observed the two. The dog lost the scent after going another 25 yards. The trooper indicated that he believed that Jennifer may have been dead at this point. Bloodhounds trained to follow human scents instinctively stop their search when a person dies, the trooper said.

Earlier, Floyd Muse, an attendant at an Amoco service station at Victory Boulevard and Bradley Avenue, Meiers Corners, said he saw Rand and Jennifer leave Watchogue Road, cross Bradley Avenue in back of Schaffer's Tavern and walk past the station to Victory Boulevard in the direction of Woolley Avenue and the developmental center. The service station was about two or three blocks from Jennifer's home.

Muse said he had seen Rand in the neighborhood on prior occasions.

"It appeared to me this guy was taking this girl for a walk on a nice day," he said under questioning by Assistant District Attorney John Loughrey.

Thomas McCarthy, an elevator construction worker, said he was driving home between 2:30 and 3 p.m. when he spotted Rand and Jennifer emerge from Martin Avenue onto North Gannon Avenue, Willowbrook, and walk west toward Woolley Avenue, the next block.

Rhonda Romano said she observed the two walking together at about 2:45 p.m. at North Gannon and Woolley avenues, about 11 blocks from the service station and about three quarters of a mile from the center's main entrance on Victory Boulevard. Mrs.



Beverly Jackson



Thomas McCarthy



Judy Newsome

Romano said Jennifer at this time appeared to be "dragging" one leg and limping.

The day's first witness, Donna Catugno of Westleigh, testified about the massive search that took place following Jennifer's disappearance. Mrs. Catugno, a leader in organizing hundreds of civilians into search parties and distributing flyers, said searches were carried out in areas other than the developmental center. Search parties were sent out twice a day, at noon and 7 p.m., beginning July 21, she said. Off-duty police officers were among the volunteers.

During the first four days of the trial, Loughrey has called 27 witnesses, or more than one half of the 45 witnesses he plans to eventually call.

The trial will continue today.

Page 242