

# Rand:

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He could enchant his teenage companions, singing and accompanying himself with a three-string guitar as they sat in the stillness of a storefront church in West Brighton. He could talk entertainingly with them.

But is he an ogre, capable of ending the life of a 12-year-old girl with Down's syndrome who captured the hearts of those with whom she came in contact with her trusting nature, friendliness and seemingly perpetual smile? Is he an "oddball," a term used by his lawyer, a man who might sleep in cemeteries or wooded areas such as the campsite he maintained on the grounds of the former Staten Island Developmental Center in Willowbrook?

And is he the same man who authorities say was a suspect in the still unsolved disappearances of at least three children on Staten Island, dating back to 1972? Is he the man who kept "popping up" in each investigation — a fact not overlooked by authorities when a man fitting his description was reported to have been with Jennifer Schweiger when she disappeared on the afternoon of July 9, 1987?

# A complex, often baffling collection of contradictions

He is the same man who authorities said served 16 months in prison after pleading guilty to a sexual abuse charge in connection with the attempted rape of a 9-year-old Bronx girl in 1989.

He also is the same man who was sentenced in 1983 to 10 months in jail on an unlawful imprisonment charge for leading 11 West Brighton children into a van and driving them to the Elizabeth-Neuwark area without telling their parents.

But does an ogre treat his young prisoners at a fast-food restaurant and spend hours watching airplanes take off and land before returning the children unharmed to Staten Island?

One source described him as a slightly retarded schizophrenic. His face appears to be formed from granite, and he is powerfully built, capable of scaling an eight-foot wall or a tree with ease. He has a flair for selecting and wearing clothing, sometimes even theatrically. He seems to take pride in selecting the best clothing available in the city penal system for court appearances. His smiles are rare, and even at these times there are those who feel he is unaware he is smiling. Could it be because of the lonely existence he has chosen for himself?

He is the same person whom people described as "needy," and unkempt.

Yet he is the same man who police say kept a tidy campsite no matter where he bedded down. No where could even an empty can or scrap of paper be found about his camps. He is the same person who a witness said would appear in a laundromat for three or four hours, putting coins in machines as he would wash the same load two or three times, usually with a disinfectant.

He is the same man who identi-



Andre Rand during his recent concluded kidnap-murder trial.

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