

Maximum sentence for convicted kidnapper

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A judge yesterday tossed the book at Andre Rand for the kidnapping-death of 12-year-old Jennifer Schweiger.

Supreme Court Justice Norman J. Felig, remarking that "no crime within my memory has so aroused the community," sentenced Rand to prison for 25 years to life, the maximum sentence allowed by law.

The sentence means that the 44-year-old drifter will be required to serve at least 25 years behind bars before he can be considered for parole. He could serve beyond 25 years, depending on the State Parole Board.

"I think that my wife's letter said it all," said Kenneth Schweiger, the father

of the dead girl, in referring to a moving letter that the Schweiger family had sent to the judge and the judge read prior to sentencing Rand. "I'm glad that it's over, and the final judgment has been given."

Rand's court-assigned lawyer, Jerome V. Giovinazzo, who had pleaded in vain for leniency for his client, termed the sentence excessive and blamed "massive publicity" surrounding the case for having an "impact" on the judge's sentence.

Giovinazzo previously fought unsuccessfully to have Rand's trial shifted from Staten Island to another county, citing alleged prejudicial publicity.

Giovinazzo said he already has filed a notice of appeal on Rand's behalf.

On Oct. 26 a jury found Rand guilty of a first-degree kidnapping charge in the disappearance and death of the Down's syndrome girl. The judge dismissed a murder charge the following day, the third day of deliberations, when the jury was unable to agree on a verdict.

The disappearance of the friendly, trusting girl at about 2 p.m. on July 9, 1987 touched off the largest search for a missing person in Staten Island's history, with hundreds of volunteers, including off-duty police officers and firefighters, taking part.

A parade of prosecution witnesses was able to chart the progress of the girl as she walked for some two miles

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Andre Rand is sentenced to a term of 25 years to life.

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