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Ashley Murder Suspect Quizzed, Set Free Earlier

By AL SPINDLER

Chyrel Jolls, 15, of 21 Leroy Ave., was in police custody 10 days ago, but was released despite complaints of two parents that she tried to take their children for a walk to get candy.

The Courier-Express learned last night that the teen-ager was questioned by Colvin Station detectives on June 24—the day after the Ashley boy disappeared and the day before his body was recovered from Delaware Park Lake.

However, she was sent home because police said at the time that she had no connection with the Andrew Ashley case.

"She just picked the wrong day to invite some children for candy," police told the complaining parents at the time.

This is the tale which unfolded last night in interviews with Mrs. Salvatore Palermo of 2315 Fillmore Ave. and Robert J. Brown of 2519 Main St.—the two parents who turned the Jolls girl over to police on June 24:

"I saw her walking away from home hand-in-hand with my little six-year-old," Mrs. Palermo told The Courier-Express.

"I ran outside and shouted, 'Elizabeth!' and my daughter stopped and the big girl ran off," the mother added.

Chases Girl Twice

Mrs. Palermo said she chased the girl, but she was quickly outdistanced. Then she went back home and telephoned police.

"While waiting for them to answer," Mrs. Palermo continued, "I saw her again walking back toward my house. I put down the phone and chased her again."

Mrs. Palermo said she was losing ground in the second chase when a car pulled up and a man got out and began talking to the fleeing girl.

The man was Robert Brown, whose 5½-year-old daughter,

Patty, had told her parents that she was asked to go for candy by an older girl.

Brown said he and Patty hopped into her father's car and began cruising the North Park neighborhood in search of the girl.

"I saw her near Hall's Bakery so I stopped the car and got out to see why she wanted to take my daughter for candy," Brown recalled.

Patrol Car Arrives

The father said he started talking when Mrs. Palermo approached and the girl darted away.

Brown ran after her. As he was catching up to the girl, she ran into a house at 1745 Amherst St.

Meanwhile, Brown's sister, Marion Brown of Ft. Erie, Ont., had called police and a Kensington patrol car came along. The policeman, Patrolman Lester Shepperley, got the girl. She was taken to the Colvin Station.

Questioned there by Dets. Charles Miller and Joseph A. Schwartz, the girl gave her name as Michele Johnson of 91 Wade St.

"She's lying," Mrs. Palermo told police. There is no such address on Wade and no family named Johnson living there, she explained.

The girl then broke down, became hysterical and told police her true identity — Chyrel Jolls of 21 Leroy Ave.

Use of 'Johnson' Name

But at the time, police apparently saw no connection between the use of the Johnson alias and the kidnaping of Richard Edgington two days earlier. Five-year-old Richard, who was abducted and later abandoned, had said his obductor told him

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to use the name, "Davey Johnson," if they were stopped.

Questioning of the Jolls girl at the Colvin Station continued for a while, but then she was released.

"They told me she was not connected with the Ashley case," Mrs. Palermo said.

Brown said he was told by police that "she just picked the wrong day to invite children for candy."

Police asked Brown to drive Chyrel home. He said he dropped her off near Hall's Bakery, where he first spotted her.

The incident on Saturday afternoon, June 24, took on new meaning for Mrs. Palermo and Brown last week when The Courier-Express published a revised description and an artist's sketch of the Ashley murderer. It was of a younger girl.

They said they thought that the description resembled the girl they chased and caught the previous week.

Both parents said they telephoned Buffalo police headquarters during the week and asked police to recheck the girl they brought to the Colvin Station for questioning.

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