

Ex-Mental Patient Held for Newsboy's Murder

INDIANAPOLIS (UPI) — A man previously charged with sex crimes against young boys was arrested Tuesday in Phoenix, Ariz., on a murder charge in the Oct. 3 slaying of 10-year-old Indianapolis newspaper carrier Jerry M. Bayles.

Five Indianapolis police investigators were dispatched to Phoenix to conduct tests on a car driven by the fugitive.

ROBERT E. Schmidt, 47, was seized shortly after midnight by three Phoenix Officers who raided an apartment they said Schmidt had occupied the last five weeks.

Indianapolis police said Schmidt became a prime suspect when it was learned he disappeared from Central State Hospital, a state institution for mental patients at Indianapolis, a week after the Bayles boy was killed.

Schmidt was committed in 1969 to Norman M. Beatty Hospital at Westville after he was indicted on charges of sexually molesting many Indianapolis boys.

He was later transferred to Central Hospital spokesmen said he was restricted to the hospital grounds but could have been unaccounted for during hours between checks.

SCHMIDT was discovered missing at a routine bedcheck the night of Saturday, Oct. 10, just a week after the Bayles boy's nude body was found along a Henry County road near Knightstown.

The boy was delivering copies of The Indianapolis Star for his older brother in the early-morning darkness when he disappeared. His bicycle and a stack of undelivered papers were found on a westside street about 300 feet from the main gate of the mental hospital where Schmidt was assigned as a groundskeeper.

Indiana state police had tipped the Phoenix police that Schmidt might be in the Phoenix area. Authorities had gathered Schmidt to the crime to finger him as the chief suspect, and a murder warrant was issued by Judge Val S. Boring of Marion County Municipal Court Monday night.

The senseless killing of the young boy prompted police to devote hundreds of man-hours toward solving the crime. Thousands of dollars was contributed in reward money for solution of the slaying.

Among the law enforcement officials indignant over the crime was Robert K. Konkle, superintendent of Indiana state police.

"It's a vile day when an enterprising kid can't even start in the American tradition of free enterprise without losing his life," Konkle said.