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FRIDAY
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Verdict imminent in the Robert McCartney murder trial

Judgement reserved

The Judge presiding over the Robert McCartney murder trial said he will reveal the outcome of his conclusion *"in the not too distant future."*

Mr Justice Gillen made the comment on Friday afternoon as the month-long trial, which has been held at Belfast Crown Court, came to an end.

After hearing closing arguments made by the Crown and the defence, the Judge said: *"I will have to spend some time reflecting on it before I reach my final conclusion. I will do that as soon as possible and that will be in the not too distance future."*

51-year-old Terence Davison has been charged with murdering the 33-year-old father of two who was beaten and stabbed on January 30, 2005 following a brawl in Magennis` s bar.

Davison has also been charged with affray, as have co-accused 39-year-old James McCormick and 47-year-old Joseph Fitzpatrick.

Fitzpatrick has also been charged with assaulting Mr McCartney` s friend Ed Gowdy.

All three defendants deny the charges against them.

After the Crown raised no objections to the men being released on continuing bail, Mr Justice Gillen told the court: *"Should my verdict be, at the end of the this, that these men are guilty of any of the charges, I regard these charges so serious I will not be granting bail on a guilty verdict being given."*

"The defendants should be aware of this."

Speaking on the final day of the trial, Mr McCartney` s sister Paula Arnold said listening to the evidence of her brother` s murder has been *"horrendous."*


Mrs Arnold said: *"It has been very very difficult for us, especially listening to the brutality that Robert suffered. It` s been very draining and very distressing as anyone who has lost a loved one in this way will know."*

"It was horrendous. When they were talking about the injuries he sustained it was hard to listen to. What we want now is justice for Robert."

During the final day of the trial, Crown prosecutor Ciaran Murphy QC told Mr Justice Gillen: *"The evidence before the court is sufficient to prove the charges...beyond reasonable doubt."*

The prosecutor also said the case before the court was one were *"inferences could properly be drawn"* by the refusal of all three defendants to give evidence at the hearing.

Defence barrister Orlando Pownall said the *"extraordinarily diverse"* evidence of the three main Crown witnesses - Brendan Devine, Ed Gowdy

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and Witness C "exposed the shortcomings in the Crown`s case."

He told Mr Justice Gillen there was "no dispute" about Davison`s presence in Magennis`s but said the issue was whether or not his client had been in Market Street and Cromac Square.

Saying the case has been "fraught with difficulties," Mr Pownall urged the judge to acquit his client on both the charges of murder and affray.

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DIRECTOR: Chris Waitt.

STARRING: Chris Waitt.

DETAILS: UK / 90mins

PREVIEW

Finally, someone took on what Nick Hornby touched on in High Fidelity and turned it into something a lot more; in Chris Waitt's humorous documentary, the filmmaker interviews all his ex-girlfriends to find out why they dumped him and explores the possibility that they are the reason life is such a mess. Mmm. Promises to be decent laugh, this one.)

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