



Thomas Devlin

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 MONDAY  
 22/10/2007  
 18:14:21

### Charges in Devlin murder case

Covert surveillance was used to charge a man with trying to attack the friend of a murdered schoolboy, a court heard today.

Police who accused Nigel Brown, 24, of attempted grievous bodily harm on the night Thomas Devlin was stabbed to death near his north Belfast home believe it was fuelled by sectarianism, a detective confirmed.

Brown, of Whitewell Road, Newtownabbey, was among seven people questioned over the weekend as part of the hunt for the gang who struck as Thomas and two friends walked home from buying sweets in August 2005.

Those detained included the senior Progressive Unionist Party representative and former Northern Ireland Assembly member, Billy Hutchinson.

While the other six were all released pending reports, Brown was charged over the attack on Jonathan McKee, a friend of Thomas who also suffered knife injuries.

Detective Inspector Neil McCabe told Belfast Magistrates` Court that another man apart from Brown was suspected of actually inflicting the wounds.

Instead, he is alleged to have been wielding a club or stick with which he tried to hit Mr McKee about the head.

The detective opposed bail because of the strong tensions which still surround the murder.

Even though police have always kept an open mind over a motive, Mr McCabe said: "The incident I`m investigating I believe is sectarian in nature."

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