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Drama as jury clears 17-year-old of killing schoolboy Mickey-Bo

Monday, 12 January 2009

In a dramatic turn today, one of the remaining five young Ballymena men accused of murdering schoolboy Michael 'Mickey-Bo' McIlveen, was cleared of the 15-year-old's killing.

The 17-year-old, who can't be named because he is still a juvenile, was formally found "not guilty by direction" by the jury of eight women and three men at Antrim Crown Court.

Initially this morning defence QC Ellis McDermott asked that the teenager be re-arraigned on a charge of causing criminal damage to a gate which was also attacked on the night that Mickey-Bo was punched and kicked and hit with a baseball bat.

Following that guilty plea, prosecution QC John Orr told Mr Justice Treacy that he had been instructed to accept that plea and in the circumstances the Crown would not be aducing any further evidence in respect of the murder charge and a lesser offence of affray.

The juvenile has been released on bail to the end of the trial of the remaining five accused, four of whom still face the charge of murdering Mickey-Bo who died in hospital from head injuries on May 8 2006, the day after he was attacked in an alleyway.

Those still on trial for murder are: 19-year-old Jeff Colin Lewis of Rossdale, Christopher Francis Kerr, 22, Carnduff Drive, Aaron Cavana Wallace, 20, Moat Road, and Christopher Andrew McLeister, 18, Knock Crescent, all Ballymena.

A fifth defendant 18-year-old Paul Edward David Henson of Condiere Avenue, Ballymena faces charges of affray and criminal damage.

Another accused, 20-year-old Meryvn Wilson Moon, from Douglas Terrace in the town, whom the court heard hit the teenager on the head with a baseball bat, is awaiting sentence having previously pleaded guilty to the murder.

At hearing.

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