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Thursday, 13 November 2008

The trial of murder victim Michael 'Mickey-Bo' McIlveen has heard how the Catholic schoolboy was "nailed" with a baseball bat — swung at times like a golf club — and kicked up to 60 times.

The claims were made by a friend of the 15-year-old in a video-taped police interview, who also told of his vain attempts to save him from a drunken sectarian mob.

The tape was played yesterday at the Antrim Crown Court trial of six young Ballymena youths facing charges arising out of the murder of McIlveen who died from head injuries in hospital the day after he was chased and attacked in an alleyway on May 7, 2006.

In the taped police interview his friend told how, as he fought off and held one attacker, another would take his place, and how, during the five minute brutal assault, he pleaded with the attackers to "leave Michael alone".

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The now 17-year-old, who can't be named for legal reasons, said afterwards he knew there "something seriously wrong" with the schoolboy, whom he described as acting "like a wean ... a two-year-old child — crawling about — he didn't know anything".

He said when he finally got him home he wanted to phone McIlveen an ambulance, but he had refused, slurring, "naw it's all right my ma's in here — don't worry about it".

'Jeff was putting as much effort into the kick as he could'

On trial for murder are a 17-year-old who can't be named for legal reasons, 19-year-old Jeff Colin Lewis of Rosedale, Christopher Francis Kerr (22), Carnduff Drive, Aaron Cavana Wallace (20), from Moat Road, and Christopher Andrew McLeister (18), of Knock Crescent, all Ballymena. The sixth defendant is 18-year-old Paul Edward David Henson of Condiere Avenue, Ballymena, who denies charges of affray and criminal damage.

In the interview, made the day McIlveen died, his friend said that another accused, 20-year-old Mervyn Wilson Moon from Douglas Terrace, Ballymena, who has already pleaded guilty to murder, was the one who "nailed him with a baseball bat" swinging it like a golf club.

"Mervyn Moon ran up" and pelted McIlveen with the bat "and Michael dropped", as he allegedly fought with Lewis, whom he claimed, "was still shouting you fenian this, you fenian that", as he put the boot in "the hardest".

"Jeff was putting as much effort into the kick as he could — like if you kick a football," he added, claiming that he kicked McIlveen "probably about 30 times".

Kerr, he said, "kicked him about 20, 25 times — if not more", while Wallace, "kicked him about 10 times".

McLeister (18), from Knock Crescent, also in Ballymena, was allegedly another member of the attacking group who had earlier chased McIlveen and another youth from the town.

The teenager told detectives he'd gone to town to find another friend down by the cinema with McIlveen and another youth when they met up with a group of Protestant youths, including the accused who then chased the trio and attacked McIlveen.

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