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Friday, 14 November 2008

A friend of murdered schoolboy Michael McIlveen yesterday admitted hating those accused of involvement in his killing in May 2006, but denied he was out for retribution.

The teenager, who cannot be named, also admitted that he partly blames himself for the death of his 15-year-old friend, but rejected suggestions he had fallen into the temptation of sharing that blame with the accused.

"They did enough for themselves," he told Antrim Crown Court where five of six Ballymena youths are on trial for the murder of the schoolboy.

Defence QC Brian McCartney suggested to the teen that his claim that Michael was kicked up to 70 times was not borne out by the medical evidence which he had linked to his "feelings of guilt and your desire of retribution for these young men in the dock".

"No sir," replied the teen who accepted... "I don't like them", when

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pressed by the defence lawyer if he hated the accused.

Eventually however, following a long pause, when asked again: "Do you hate them?" the teenager admitted: "I would say so, yes".

When another defence QC, defence QC, Laurence McCrudden claimed he could not have seen "between 60 to 70 kicks being inflicted on Michael McIlveen", the teenager replied: "You are entitled to your own opinion. I was there, I know".

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

The case continues on Monday.

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