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Final evidence in prosecution case presented to jury at McIlveen trial

Tuesday, 20 January 2009

After 62 days of evidence heard since last November from over 140 witnesses, the prosecution case in the trial of seven young Ballymena men facing charges arising from the murder of teenager Michael McIlveen came to an end yesterday.

The 15-year-old Catholic schoolboy died in hospital on May 8 2006 from head injuries the day after he was bludgeoned with a baseball bat and kicked in an alleyway after being chased by a group of Protestant youths.

Since the start of the Antrim Crown Court trial one accused, 20-year-old Meryvn Wilson Moon, from Douglas Terrace, pleaded guilty to the murder, while another, a 17-year-old who can't be named for legal reasons, was acquitted of murder by direction of the court.

Defence lawyers will present their case on Thursday.

Yesterday, a detective who agreed that the interviews of one of the accused were oppressive and sections of them can no longer be relied upon, maintained any wrongdoing on his part was a mistake.

The detective was being re-examined by defence QC Paul Ramsey about notes, thought to have been shredded.



Mr Ramsey put it to the detective that the notes represented "the smoking gun" as to how his client 18-year-old Christopher Andrew McLeister of Knock Crescent, Ballymena, was being interviewed and the case police were trying to make against him.

The detective — who had already denied that at no time had he "set out to trick Christopher McLeister it was an innocent honest mistake on my part" — added: "I did not wrongly interview Christopher McLeister. If I did do it, it was inadvertent."

Yesterday the court also heard of the 11 interviews of the last accused, 18-year-old Paul Edward David Henson of Condiere Avenue, Ballymena who only faces charges of affray and criminal damage.

In the interviews Henson admitted being in the alleyway with others and of attacking a garden gate and of taking away the baton used on Michael.

Those facing the murder charge are Christopher Andrew McLeister (18), of Knock Crescent; Jeff Colin Lewis (19) of Rossdale; Christopher Francis Kerr (22), Carnduff Drive; and Aaron Cavana Wallace (20), Moat Road, all Ballymena.

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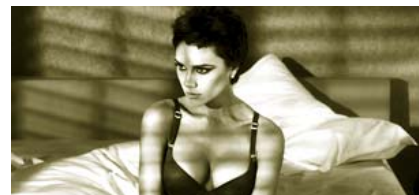


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