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Tuesday, 21 October 2008

A teenage friend of murder victim Michael McIlveen who claimed he was told he was "next" yesterday denied lying about his evidence.

Under cross examination at Antrim Crown Court, the 17-year-old who cannot be named due to his age, also denied that he "wanted a part to play" in the tragic killing of the 15-year-old schoolboy.

Previously, the teenager has claimed that one of the six accused, Aaron Wallace phoned him repeatedly in the aftermath of the attack in may 2006 and that during those calls, he was told "you're next" and "we were looking for you".

He claimed he believed the comments came from 20-year-old Wallace with another of the accused, Christopher Francis Kerr (22) "chipping in" in the background.

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He said he was told: "I didn't hit wee Michael. Michael fell on my shoe. Michael accidentally fell on our shoes" by the caller who then "started laughing and giggling... and then he said 'Meryvn isn't too bad at the swinging' ... he was trying to tell me it was Mervyn that hit him with the baseball bat."

What are these?

Mervyn Wilson Moon (20) from Douglas Terrace, Ballymena, has already pleaded guilty to the murder but those still on trial for murder are: a 17-year-old, who cannot be named for legal reasons; 19-year-old Jeff Colin Lewis of Rosssdale; Christopher Francis Kerr, Carnduff Drive; Aaron Cavana Wallace, Moat Road; and Christopher Andrew McLeister (18), Knock Crescent, all Ballymena.

A sixth defendant, 18-year-old Paul Edward David Henson of Condiere Avenue, Ballymena, denies charges of affray and criminal damage on the night of the alleged attack.

Under cross examination from Wallace's defence QC Brian McCartney, it was suggested to the 17-year-old that police had investigated mobile phone traffic that night and had found "there is no record" of Wallace calling him but the teenager was adamant that "someone must've...he definitely phoned me...he did phone me".

However the lawyer further suggested that from the records, it showed that the teenager had in fact called Wallace a total of six times in a short space of time in the aftermath of the incident.

Mr McCartney put to the 17-year-old that his evidence was "fundamentally flawed" and was based on lies.

Taking the witness through the transcript of his police video interview, the lawyer suggested that every time he gave an account of what happened to the police, "it's altered a little".

"You were determined, clearly determined to do your best for the deceased and the only way to do that was to make up vile lies against the suspects," said Mr McCartney but he was told simply "no".

The jury also heard evidence yesterday from his friend Paul Devlin who claimed he was present with the previous witness when Wallace allegedly made comments about the beating metted out to Michael, and the loud speaker was turned on.

The trial continues.

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