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Man in court accused of murdering Thomas Devlin

Wednesday, 25 March 2009

A man has appeared in court charged with the murder of north Belfast schoolboy Thomas Devlin.

Gary Taylor (22) has also been accused of attempting to murder a friend of the 15 year-old victim in the knife attack nearly four years ago.

Taylor, of Ross House, Mount Vernon, Belfast, was arrested yesterday morning after giving himself up to police, the judge was told.

Thomas was stabbed to death close to his home in the Fort William area as he and two friends returned from buying sweets in August 2005.

His parents were in Belfast Magistrates Court to hear a detective sergeant say he could connect the accused with the killing and the attack on another of the group, Jonathan McKee.

During cross-examination the officer accepted that the murder investigation had been complex and lengthy.

Defence counsel Mark Farrell asked if he was aware that a previous decision was made not to prosecute Taylor for the offences he is now charged with.

The court was told the accused and his solicitor were informed of this in a letter last July.

It was claimed that the decision not to bring charges at that stage was based on available evidence.

Mr Farrell told the court that a "lengthy and complex" application for bail would be made at a later stage.

Taylor was remanded in custody to appear again by video-link on Friday, when a date for that hearing is expected to be set.

The allegations against him came after a court was told that another man is to be charged with the murder. Nigel Brown (25), previously of Whitewell Road, Newtownabbey, was to be sentenced last Friday for an offence connected with the killing.

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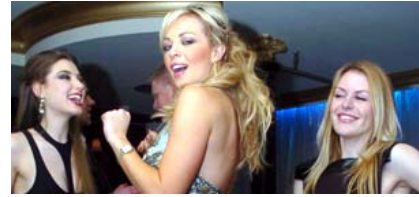
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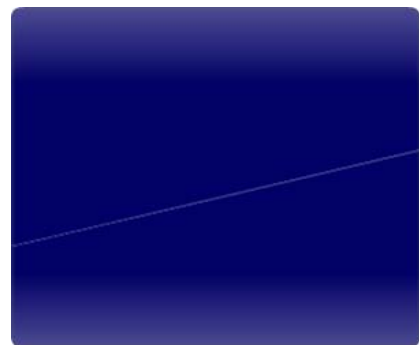
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