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Catholic teenager died from 'blunt blow' to skull trial told

By Staff reporter

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THE skull of murdered Ballymena schoolboy Mich-ael McIlveen was fractured on both sides which formed a blood clot and multiple bruising of the brain, a court has heard.

Northern Ireland's deputy state pathologist Dr Alistair Bentley also told Antrim Crown Court that "the nature of the fractures shows at least one blow to both sides from a blunt weapon."

However, he added that he would "find it very surprising" if the 15-year-old schoolboy had been kicked more than 60 times as claimed by at least one witness to the brutal attack in a back alleyway in Ballymena.

Dr Bentley told the trial of six young Ballymena youths facing charges arising out of the killing of Michael, who died in hospital on May 8, 2006, the day after the attack, that his postmortem examination found "no marks consistent with that number of kicks."

The pathologist said he had also found a small number of bruises, abrasions and grazes on the victim's head, but that the main injuries were two separate fractures to the skull, one on each side.

This had caused a blood clot to form on the left side of the brain, while on the right the skull bone was "slightly pushed inwards", and that there was "multiple bruising to the brain on both sides".

He also noted that apart from a "penetrating injury" on the schoolboy's left hand and a bruise on his back, he found no other bruises or cuts, save for others associated with old injuries or from medical treatment.

Dr Bentley also revealed that while the teenager had a blood-alcohol reading 10mls above the drink-driving limit, this was "unlikely to produce anything other than a mild degree of intoxication".

Later under cross-examination by defence lawyer Richard Weir, the deputy state pathologist agreed that the fractures were "consistently similar" and could have been caused by the same object.

However, while he agreed that it was "a strong possibility" that the "perfect explanation" for the fractures "is a baseball bat", Dr Bentley added that "kicking and stamping cannot be completely excluded".

The pathologist also revealed that an injury to the top of Michael's skull, which left "three ill defined lines", was, he believed, "unlikely to have been sustained by a baseball bat".

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 Rossdale, Christopher Francis Kerr (22), Carnduff Drive, Aaron Cavana Wallace (20) of Moat Road and Christopher Andrew McLeister (18) of Knock Crescent, all Ballymena.


A sixth defendant, Paul Edward David Henson (18), of Condiere Avenue, Ballymena, faces charges of affray and criminal damage.

A seventh accused, 20-year-old Meryvn Wilson Moon, from Douglas Terrace in the town, whom the court heard hit the teenager on the head with a baseball bat, is awaiting sentence having pleaded guilty to the murder.

The trial continues.

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