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By Michael Donnelly
Tuesday, 9 September 2008

A jury of eight women and four men was finally picked yesterday on the third attempt, to try six young Co Antrim men and a juvenile for their alleged involvements arising out of the murder of Ballymena schoolboy Michael McIlveen.

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The 15-year-old died from brain injuries the day after he and two friends were chased and attacked by a group of Protestant youths on May 7, 2006.

What are these?

Prosecuting QC John Orr, in a short review of the case for the jury, told Antrim Crown Court, sitting in Coleraine, that the event which led to the teenager's death began at the cinema and leisure centre at Larne Link.

Mr Orr said on one side was a large group, including the accused, and on the other, Michael and two friends.

"They came from two sides of the divide — the three youths were Catholic — the larger group were Protestants."

The lawyer added that CCTV captured a conversation between the youths, before Michael and his friends were chased through nearby housing, finally ending up in the car park at the rear of Camerons' Shop in Broughshane Street.

By the car park was a 'dog-legged shaped' alleyway where Michael and one of his friends were attacked, while his other friend managed to escape into the rear of a house.

Mr Orr said that although afterwards Michael and his friend returned home, the schoolboy was later taken to Antrim Area Hospital by ambulance where he died the following day from brain injuries.

The six accused of the murder of the Ballymena schoolboy are: a 17-year-old who cannot be named for legal reasons; 19-year-olds Jeff Colin Lewis of Rossdale; Mervyn Wilson Moon, of Douglas Terrace; Christopher Francis Kerr (22), of Carnduff Drive; Aaron Cavana Wallace (20), of Moat Road; and Christopher Andrew McLeister (18), of Knock Crescent, all Ballymena.

The seventh defendant is 18-year-old Paul Edward David Henson of Condiere Avenue, Ballymena, who denies charges of affray and criminal damage.



Murdered Ballymena schoolboy Michael McIlveen.

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