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LOCAL NEWS



Robert McCartney

Tuesday 03 June 2008 17:55

Witness in McCartney case admits to meeting IRA

One of the key prosecution witnesses in the Robert McCartney murder trial has revealed that he met the IRA on four separate occasions after his friend was killed.

Brendan Devine told Belfast Crown Court that the IRA instructed him to tell the truth about what had happened.

Brendan Devine who was a close friend of Robert McCartney was himself stabbed and had his throat cut three times after a row broke out in Mageniss's bar in Belfast in January 2005.

Yesterday Brendan Devine detailed how the pair were chased up market street by a gang of men and he saw Terence Davison gouge at his friend's eyes.

The 51 year old denies the murder.

On his second day in the witness box and during cross-examination by the defence QC Eilish McDermott, Brendan Devine told Belfast Crown Court that he met with the IRA on four occasions, two to three months after Robert McCartney, a father of two was beaten and stabbed death.

He said he first met the IRA at the Sinn Fein Centre on the Antrim Road.

On the second occasion he was taken to Ardoyne where he met senior IRA members Bik McFarlane and Harry Maguire.

There he said he was questioned about the night of Robert McCartney's murder. He told the court, *"they told me to tell the truth and that I had nothing to fear at the present time."*

He said he met the two men on a third occasion, in cafe at the Kenndey Centre and on a fourth occasion he met two IRA men he didn't know in Holy Cross Church in North Belfast.

Earlier the defence QC Orlando Pownall asked him why when being questioned by the police in February he couldn't remember the exact features of the man who attacked Robert McCartney. He replied, *"I was confused at the time, I was still traumatised by what I saw, watching Robert die."*

"Accusations were going around and I was trying to get over my own injuries," he continued.

Early in June Brendan Devine picked Terence Davison out of a police line-up.

He told the court, *"I was 100 per cent sure when I saw him, as soon as I saw his face I was crystal clear. He was the one who started an argument in the bar and he was the one who gouged at Robert's face in an evil, evil way. I am 100 per cent right, no question."*

The trial continues

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