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McIlveen accused 'admitted kicking victim in the head'

By Staff Reporter

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A drunken and angry kick left schoolboy Michael McIlveen defenceless before he was battered in the head with a baseball bat, a court heard yesterday.



The claims were made to police by one of six young Ballymena Protestants facing charges arising out of the murder of the 15-year-old Catholic.

He died in hospital from head injuries on May 8 2006, the day after being beaten in an alleyway in the Co Antrim town.

Antrim Crown Court heard that in his alleged confessions, a crying Jeff Colin Lewis (19), from Rosssdale in Ballymena, told how he had been "very drunk, and angry" but was now "sorry... I didn't mean it to happen to him".

Ten interviews were read out but, in the first, Lewis – a one-time friend of the victim from "years ago" – initially refused to talk to

BEATEN: Michael McIlveen, who died aged 15 on May 8 2006, the day after being

police, repeating, "no comment" to many of their questions. He was initially arrested but later released for an attack on a garden gate of a house in Granville Drive which backs on to the alleyway in which Michael was attacked.

By his third interview, by which time Michael's life-support machine had been turned off, Mr Lewis had named 20-year-old Mervyn Wilson Moon, of Douglas Terrace.

Moon has already pleaded guilty to murder, admitting he was the one who hit the schoolboy "once in the head" with the baseball bat.

Mr Lewis – a one-time apprentice joiner who was born in Glasgow – told detectives that Michael and two friends had run off suddenly from the town's leisure centre after being accused of turning up "to start for trouble".

He said a chase had ensued during which he was the first to catch up with them in an alleyway, where he asked Michael: "why did you run?"

He said Michael "came at me and hit me with something" and they fought before "Mervyn hit him with a bat".

Mr Lewis then took the bat from Moon and used it to attack the gate, he said.

According to police interviewers, Mr Lewis was showing "remorse... taking it bad... crying".

He claimed it was during a second "scuffle" with the schoolboy that he punched Michael on "the cheek".

Mr Lewis ~~many~~ admitted he had kicked him in the side... once just .

By this time Michael was “on the floor... on his back” and Moon came up and “hit him on the head” with the baseball bat.

Mr Lewis, who claimed he may have “cursed”, denied calling the victim and his friends “Fenians or anything”.

Pressed by detectives about his alleged attack, Mr Lewis admitted: “Maybe I hit him more. Maybe I hit him more than once.”

At this stage Mr Lewis was still denying that he had kicked Michael in the head although he did agree that “this was a fight that went wrong between youngsters”.

Police then suggested that it was “time for you to take another one of those deep breaths and spit it out”.

“I can’t remember,” he said before adding: “I thought I kicked him in the side.”

Eventually when asked whether he had knocked out Michael, Mr Lewis allegedly replied: “I don’t know. I don’t know... I did kick him in the head. I think it was once.”

“Did it knock him out?” detectives asked.

“I think so,” Mr Lewis said.

“I think he was trying to talk to me when I kicked him in the head.”

Mr Lewis also allegedly admitted hiding his clothing afterwards “to destroy evidence”.

He repeatedly maintained he was “sorry for what happened... I didn’t mean nothing like this to happen”.

He also agreed with detectives that the attack with the baseball bat “was over the top”.

Mr Lewis also identified three of his co-accused – Christopher Francis Kerr (22) of Carnduff Drive, Aaron Cavana Wallace (20) of Moat Road and Christopher Andrew McLeister (18) of Knockeen Crescent, all Ballymena – from closed-circuit TV images taken from around the town that night.

A 17-year-old – who cannot be named for legal reasons – is also on trial for the murder.

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

The trial continues.

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