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Local & National

McCartney followed by men with sticks, says best friend

Thursday, May 29, 2008

Robert McCartney's best friend has revealed he saw a group of around ten men armed with sticks and bottles following Mr McCartney and another man down a side street on the night of his murder.

Edward Gowdy (40) was giving evidence at the trial of Terence Davison (51) who is accused of stabbing Mr McCartney to death on January 30, 2005 in Belfast. Davison denies the murder and a further charge of causing an affray.

Giving evidence yesterday from behind a screen to conceal his identity, Mr Gowdy said he was amongst a group of men socialising with Mr McCartney (33) in Magennis' bar in the hours prior to the murder.

Mr Gowdy recalled a "noise and commotion" inside the bar at around 10.30pm. He told Belfast Crown Court: "I can remember a lot of shouting, blood everywhere and people effing and blinding at each other."

It quickly emerged that Mr McCartney's friend Brendan Devine had been injured in the fight and was bleeding from a wound to his neck.

The witness said: "I started ushering him up Market Street to get him away."

He said that as Mr McCartney and Mr Devine were "half way up Market Street" he saw "a crowd of people" walking after them.

Mr Gowdy claimed there were 10 to 12 men -- one of whom he identified as Mr Davison.

He said that when he approached the men he was "cracked across the face" with a stick wielded by 39-year-old Joseph Fitzpatrick, who is facing a charge of assaulting Mr Gowdy and of causing an affray on the same date. Mr Fitzpatrick, who Mr Gowdy knew as a doorman at Magennis', denies both charges.

The trial continues.

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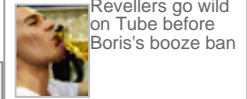
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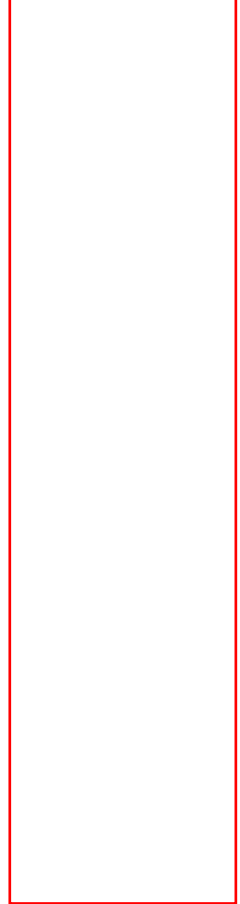
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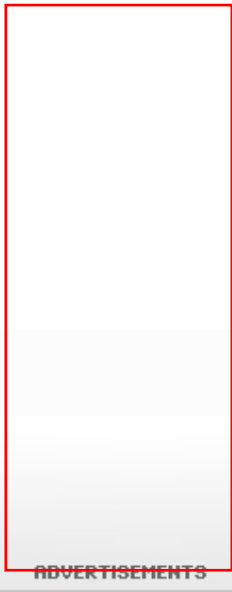


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