

Judge admits teen's statements in murder trial

6-year-old charged in beating death

BY JESSICA BROWN
UTLER COUNTY BUREAU

HAMILTON — A Springfield township teenager's statements about his involvement in a fatal fist fight will be admissible at his upcoming murder trial.

Adrian Reynolds, 16, of Merdith Drive, is charged with murder in connection with the beating death of 17-year-old Brandon Mitchell of Fairfield during an Aug. 13 fight behind the Fairfield Point apartment complex at 129 Danube Drive.

Reynolds said he acted in self defense and that the fight was racially motivated, according to his attorney, Clyde Bennett.

Reynolds' trial is scheduled for March 7 in Butler County Common Pleas Court. The Journal-News is naming him because he is being tried as an adult.

On Tuesday, Bennett, sought to suppress statements Reynolds gave to police.

Fairfield Police Officer Becky Ervin testified that when Reynolds was arrested at a nearby apartment after the fight, he told her two white males — referring to Mitchell and his friend — cursed at Reynolds' group of friends and tried to start a fight. Reynolds said he punched one of the white males two to three times in the face before being struck with a bottle on the side of



**Clyde
Bennett**

his face, Ervin said.

Detective Sandy Sears testified Reynolds gave a written statement later that evening in which he said Mitchell's group of friends started cursing and making racial slurs toward Reynolds and his friends.

"I said 'What did you say?' and he called me a (expletive) and got in my face and ... he put up his guard and tried to hit me," Reynolds wrote in the statement, Sears said. "I moved and closed my eyes and swung three times. I opened my eyes and he was on the ground and the other guy he was with came and hit me in the head with a glass bottle," he wrote.

Reynolds said he didn't know whether he had kicked Mitchell, according to the statement. Reynolds also wrote he did not mean to hurt Mitchell, Sears testified.

"I didn't really want to fight him, it's just he tried to hit me and I'm very sorry for hitting him and I want him to know that I'm sorry," Reynolds wrote.

Reynolds had been read his Miranda rights twice that evening, police said.

Judge H. J. Bressler ruled the statements were admissible.

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Tuesday's hearing was attended by about a dozen supporters of Mitchell. Several, including Mitchell's mother, wore T-shirts screen-printed

with Mitchell's picture. On others' T-shirts were the words "You are not forgotten Brandon Mitchell."

Friends and relatives of Reynolds also were in attendance.

Mitchell died at University Hospital of a skull fracture, according to the Hamilton County Coroner's Office. He also had sustained blunt trauma to the head and neck, the coroner's office said.

Also on Tuesday, Bennett

withdrew a motion challenging Butler County's jury selection process. He had filed the motion because he believed there were too few potential black jurors in Butler County.

However, he said that after researching the matter, he found Butler County was in compliance with Ohio law on jury selections.

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