

MCDONALD'S SHOOTINGS DEFENDED

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The Oct. 11 shotgun attack in a crowded Detroit **McDonald's** restaurant -- in which 11 youths were wounded -- was really one friend trying to save another from a severe gang beating, attorneys for the two teenagers argued Thursday in Recorder's Court.

Defense attorney Gail Benson, representing Gregory Allen, told Judge Michael Sapala that her client and co-defendant Andre Beard "are as close as brothers. . . . When Mr. Allen shot he was a young man acting quickly to protect his brother."

ATTORNEY Steve Fishman in turn said Beard was set upon by a mob when he confronted and punched Clifton Bell, a youth he believed had shot at his car earlier.

Bell was poised to leap from a tabletop, "ready to do his Killer Kowalski move on (Beard's) neck," when the shots were fired, Fishman said. Beard had no active role in the **shooting**, Fishman said, "other than to just lay there and get his behind whipped" by Bell and Bell's friends.

Beard, who also was stomped, was slightly wounded by shotgun pellets.

Beard and Allen, both 17, are each charged with 10 counts of assault with intent to murder and using a firearm in the commission of a felony in connection with the **shooting** near Cody High School. If convicted by Sapala, who is hearing the case without a jury, they face maximum life sentences.

Assistant Wayne County Prosecutor Keith Wright argued the **shooting** was in revenge for the earlier incident outside the high school.

STUDENT Mark Holland testified that Beard and Allen were driving a car that tried to run down a group of youths walking in the street near the school. After an exchange of words, a shot was fired by someone in the crowd at the car as it drove off, Holland testified.

Holland said that Beard walked into the restaurant, crowded with students and other customers, asked Bell why he shot at the car and then punched him. A melee then broke out with Bell and his friends ganging up on Beard, Holland said.

An adult customer, Renzie Williams, testified "it seemed like all of them were trying to get a piece" of Beard. He said youngsters ran from the waiting lines to throw punches or climb upon tables and chairs to "stomp down on him."

It was then that Allen ran into the restaurant and opened fire with a pump-action shotgun without saying a word, testified Roderick Smith, a student who was hospitalized for two months with wounds to his hand and arm.

Some students were struck in the chest and stomach, but none of those wounded required as much treatment as Smith.

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