

TEEN : I WARNED FRIEND OF SHOOTING - EXAM BEGINS FOR 3 IN DEATH NEAR FORD HIGH

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She tried to warn her **friend** Christopher Walker that trouble was ahead at the corner **of** Trojan and Evergreen, where a crowd that included reputed members **of** the BCB gang had gathered near Ford High School on Detroit's west side.

The girl, a 16-year-old student at Ford High School, testified Thursday before Judge Ronald Giles in 36th District Court in Detroit about the last moments before Christopher, 16, was fatally shot on Oct. 16 by one or more gunmen who pulled up in a black SUV owned by the family **of** a Detroit homicide investigator.

The girl said she had heard that Christopher had gotten into a fight earlier in the day at school with 15-year-old William Morton, also known as Nutty.

"We were telling him that they were down there for him" and they had guns, said the girl, whom the Free Press is not identifying because **of** her age.

Christopher, whom the girl said was a member **of** a rival gang, replied: " I don't care. My people got guns, too."

The girl's account came on the first day **of** testimony in the preliminary examination for Morton **of** Detroit, Devon Bell, 18, **of** Oak Park and Derryck Brantley, 18, **of** Detroit. They are each charged with one count **of** first-degree murder premeditated, three counts **of** assault with intent to murder and one count **of** using a firearm in the commission **of** a felony.

Christopher died **of** gunshot wounds to the head and chest. Two other boys, ages 15 and 16, and a 15-year-old girl were wounded.

During her questioning by Donna Pendergast, the prosecutor from the Michigan Attorney General's Office, the girl, who described herself as Brantley's girlfriend **of** four years, said that Morton had two guns on him, a handgun and a long gun, before the **shooting** began. She also said she did not see the **shooting** but Brantley told her that Morton and Bell were **shooting** .

The case has drawn considerable media attention and has highlighted the problem **of** violence in the Detroit Public Schools.

On Thursday, dozens **of** people were turned away as seats in the courtroom quickly filled.

Bell and Morton appeared in court in jail clothing, but Brantley, the son of Detroit police homicide investigator Derryck Thomas, wore a suit coat and dress shirt with no tie as each of them sat behind their respective lawyers.

David Cripps represented Bell; Otis Culpepper was Brantley's lawyer, and Ronnie Cromer was Morton's lawyer.

During the proceeding, Giles told the news media from the bench not to identify or photograph Morton because he is a minor and may be sentenced as a juvenile. However, the Free Press has previously identified Morton and continues to do so because he is charged as an adult. He also has been widely identified and pictured by other news media.

The exam is to resume today, but will be preceded with a hearing on whether to lift a gag order that Judge Paula Humphries imposed on the prosecutor and the defense attorneys at Cromer's request to prevent them from talking about the case outside the courtroom.

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