

Three teens face murder trials

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Trio accused of killing one, wounding 3 others outside Henry Ford High in alleged gang-related shootings.

By Doug GuthrieThe Detroit News

DETROIT — Three **teens** were ordered Thursday to stand **trial** for an alleged gang-related shooting in October that killed one teen and wounded three outside Henry Ford High school.

William Morton, 15, and Devon Bell, 18, were bound over to Wayne Circuit Court on first-degree **murder** charges.

But 36th District Judge Ronald Giles amended charges against Derryck Brantley, 18, to open **murder** that later could lead to lesser charges, because it was unclear to the judge whether the accused driver ever knew what the other two were planning or that they were armed with a handgun and an AK-47 assault rifle.

There were loud groans in the courtroom from relatives of the victims when Giles also set a \$50,000 bond for Brantley, the son of a Detroit Police homicide detective. Brantley can be released from jail by posting a \$5,000 guarantee, while Bell and Morton were remanded without bond back to their cells.

The case already is rife with claims that two of the youths have received special treatment because of the connections of their parents.

Brantley was allowed to go home after police questioning on the day of the Oct. 15 shooting, while the others were arrested and jailed. Brantley later turned himself in and had been jailed since.

Two alleged incidents in October involving mysterious orders to transfer Bell from jail for a visit to a Wayne County's Circuit judge's courtroom, where his mother works as a clerk, has five Wayne County Sheriff's deputies under investigation by that department's internal affairs unit for possible violation of prisoner security rules. Bell had no legitimate reason to be in the Circuit Court building at that time.

The state Attorney General took over prosecution and Michigan State police are investigating because of the local law enforcement connections.

Witnesses at the preliminary examination that started last month and was delayed until Thursday, said they saw Morton firing the assault rifle outside the school. Others said they saw Bell shooting a handgun.

Christopher Walker, 18, was killed by bullets that likely came from both guns, Assistant Attorney General Donna Pendergast told the court Thursday. No one could say they saw Brantley near the weapons, although they allegedly were stored in the trunk of his car.

Pendergast argued that Brantley knew about the plan for confrontation with members of a rival gang because shortly before the incident he text messaged his girlfriend, "We're about to bang when they come out."

The girlfriend responded with a warning to "come home" because the other gangsters inside the high school had guns.

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