

TEEN CHARGED WITH KILLING FRIEND MAGISTRATE DENIES SUSPECT BOND

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Friday, March 28, 1997

Author: SUZANNE SIEGEL Free Press Staff Writer

The 17-year-old who allegedly killed his best friend because he asked him to was arraigned in Detroit on first-degree murder charges Thursday.

Brian Black 's lawyer requested that his client be released on bond because the case was so unusual, but 36th District Magistrate Irma Chenevert-Bragg refused.

In a bizarre case, police say Black on Sunday night shot his friend, 18-year-old Lorenzo Shelton III, at Shelton's behest. Shelton apparently wanted to die because he killed his 14-year-old girlfriend and her two teenage friends on Sunday morning.

Black's attorney, Daniel Blank, said, "the circumstances in this case are so unusual" that Black should be released on bond. Black was instead remanded to the Wayne County Sheriff's Department.

At the arraignment, a sullen, puffy-eyed Black, dressed in a blue Detroit Lions sweatshirt, stood silent. His sister Daria Black gave him a few encouraging smiles.

After the arraignment Blank said the premeditated murder charge is too harsh. Manslaughter, he said, would be more appropriate. "That Brian's best friend asked him to kill him would certainly affect his state of mind. There's less of a degree of culpability," Blank said.

Robert Donaldson, the prosecutor in the case, said he called for first-degree murder charges because the evidence showed "that this was a planned and premeditated act.

"Consent is not a defense for murder," Donaldson said.

Wayne State University Law School professor Robert Sedler said it makes no difference whether Shelton asked Black to kill him. "Homicide is the intentional killing of a human being," Sedler said Thursday. "A person cannot consent to what is a crime. You cannot consent to having yourself killed."

Some police officials speculated that Black may be perceived as a vigilante version of Dr. Jack Kevorkian and could receive a jury's compassion because he had no motive other than Shelton's request. But Sedler said that will not help Black.

"I don't think the jury will have any sympathy," said Sedler. "This is out and out murder. . . . It's not like an elderly man who helps his sick wife to die."

Caption: Photo

Brian Black ***

Memo: ZONE

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

Page: 4B

Index Terms: BRIAN BLACK; COURT ; TRIAL ; JUVENILE ; HOMICIDE

Record Number: 9701090482

Copyright (c) 1997 Detroit Free Press