

Judge nixes bid to reduce murder charges

By Bill Casper
staff writer

Two men charged in the May 23 beating death of a 30-year-old Farmington Hills man will face second-degree murder charges in Wayne Circuit Court.

Marvin Blake, claiming a lack of evidence of a brutal beating, was unsuccessful in seeking a reduced charge of manslaughter during a preliminary examination Friday in 17th District Court in Redford Town-

ship. Blake is defending Douglas Sayers, 32, of Redford.

Upon conviction, second-degree murder carries a maximum penalty of life in prison. The maximum penalty for manslaughter is 15 years.

Both Sayers and co-defendant Michael Brock, 25, of Redford are being held in lieu of bond in Wayne County Jail. They stood mute at arraignment earlier this month. Guilty pleas were entered for them.

District Judge Robert Brang ap-

proved the motion of assistant Wayne County Prosecutor Varskin Baydarian to bind over both suspects to circuit court on the murder charges. Both Sayers, dressed in a blue jean jacket and blue jeans, and Brock, wearing a gray, sleeveless shirt and blue jeans, sat expressionless throughout the exam.

Brang scheduled a July 15 pre-trial and arraignment in circuit court.

SAYERS and Brock, represented by attorney Gerald Conley, are

charged in connection with the death of Gregory A. Link of Farmington Hills, who died after being assaulted outside the Double O Pub, 25044 Grand River at Five Points Memorial Day weekend in Redford.

Both men were living in a Redford apartment complex on Grand River at the time of the incident. Bill G. Brooks, Oakland County medical examiner who performed the autopsy on Link, testified during Friday's exam that Link died from a head injury that resulted in a skull fracture and blood clot.

Brooks testified that Link apparently was struck by some sort of flat, blunt object, which left an imprint or bruises about the face and head.

In appealing for reduced charges against the defendants, Blake said that one might surmise that Link was struck and fell and that his fall resulted in a head injury.

Blake said Brooks' testimony discredits previous testimony by Link's companion, Karen Layden, 36, of Livonia, who witnessed the assault. Layden testified June 17 during the first half of the exam that Link was struck about the head with numerous and forceful fist blows, Blake said.

BROOKS SAID he could not deter-

mine whether Link's head injury was the result of a moving object hitting his head or his head hitting a stationary object.

"Because there is no evidence, no bruises (on Link's head or face), her (Layden's) testimony of the assault may have been an exaggeration," Blake said after the exam. "It sounds more like a classic case of manslaughter in which a man receives one blow, falls and hits his head. The elements of second-degree murder are not there."

"Second-degree murder involves 'an intention to kill or do great bodily harm, the natural consequence of which results in death,'" Blake said.

"The judge flatly denied my motion (for reduced charges) but it (the motion) may be recognized later in the trial," he said.

Link, a former Westland resident who worked as a small machine operator, was assaulted at about 2 a.m. as he and Layden, his girlfriend, were leaving the bar, Layden told police.

Aimee Hinkle, an emergency medical technician with Community Emergency Medical Services, testified that she examined Link in the bar parking lot after the assault and found him to be awake and alert.

SHE SAID Link's pulse and respiration were normal.

Kathryn Seasholtz, an osteopathic physician at Botsford General Hospital in Farmington Hills, testified that Link died of complications resulting from a head injury.

After it was determined that Link was brain dead, he was taken off life support systems Memorial Day afternoon.

Layden and the defendants were engaged in a conversation inside the bar before the assault occurred and they apparently thought Layden was alone, according to Redford police Sgt. John Bommarito.

The assault apparently resulted after the two men learned Layden was being accompanied by Link, Bommarito said.

Both Sayers and Brock fled after the incident.

Brock, described by police as a drifter, was arrested June 3 in his hometown of Pineville, Ky., by Pineville police.

Sayers, a self-employed iron worker, was arrested by Redford police June 10 when he walked into the Redford police department with his father, Al Sayers.

Link was the father of a 2-year-old son.

New shopping center planned

Ramco-Gershenson Inc. of Farmington Hills, Michigan's largest shopping center developer, broke ground June 20 for West Oaks II Shopping Center in Novi, on the west side of Novi Road between 12 Mile and 1-696.

Ramco-Gershenson will expand the existing West Oaks Shopping Center, consisting of 230,000 square feet of retail space, by an additional 340,000 square feet of retail space.

When complete, West Oaks, with its total of 570,000 square feet of retail space, will be one of the largest open shopping centers in Michigan.

West Oaks I currently is anchored by four major retailers. They include

K Mart, Service Merchandise, Perry Drugs and Krogers.

West Oaks II will be anchored by Mainstreet, Builder's Square, Marshall's, Toys R Us, and K&A R Us. The addition of 30 national and local retailers to this expansion will bring the total to 49 stores in the entire retail development.

"We are proud of our relationship with the Novi community and its acceptance of our retail development," said Michael A. Ward, co-owner of Ramco-Gershenson Inc. "Plans have been carefully selected, based on a market study and emphasis has been placed on complementing the

existing national retailers now serving the Novi trade area."

West Oaks II will have a traditional colonial face brick exterior, accented by individual canopy treatments.

Architect for the project is Wah Yee Associates, Southfield. Site contractor is Walbridge Aldinger, Livonia. Ramco-Gershenson is the sixth largest open-center developer in the United States and 23rd largest shopping center developer overall.

Other company developments in Michigan include Summit Place Mall in Waterford Township and Tel-Twelve Mall in Southfield.

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