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Juveniles charged as adults in murder

By RYAN SMITH
News Tribune

Three Jefferson City teens allegedly involved in the July 10 robbery and murder of Christopher Deloach could face up to life in prison after being certified this week to be charged and stand trial as adults.

Gregory A. Hite Jr., 16, and two brothers — Terance McDonald, 16, and Jurmaine McDonald, 17, who was 16 when the crime occurred — had been held at the Prenger Center since being taken into custody for their alleged involvement in the incident.

But in separate hearings Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning, Cole County Circuit Judge Patricia Joyce certified both teens as adults.

Shortly after the teens' certification, the Cole County Prosecutor's Office charged them with felony murder and first-degree robbery. They are expected to be transferred to county jail.

"We have patiently sifted through the evidence to determine the proper degree of culpability that should be assigned to each party in the form of charges," Prosecutor Bill Tackett said.

Six people, three adults and three juveniles, now have been charged in connection with the incident.

Tackett said he couldn't recall six people ever being charged in Cole County for the same murder.

"It's very unusual to have case like this," he said.

Eddie Gordon IV, Mychal Sangster and Adam Turner, the adult suspects in the incident, are scheduled to appear in court Monday for preliminary hearings.

All six are accused in the killing of 24-year old Deloach, who was pronounced dead in his home at 1002 Buena Vista, shortly after 1 a.m. on July 10. Deloach was shot to death.

The night of the incident, the suspects dressed in dark clothing and masks and forced their way into Deloach's home sometime after midnight, police said.

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☆ Adults

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Investigators believe four of the suspects entered the residence and two stayed outside.

Present in the home were Deloach, four other adults and two children who were asleep in one of the back bedrooms.

The adults reportedly were held at gunpoint by Gordon with a semi-automatic, 9mm rifle, told to sit in the living room, stare at the TV and not to look at the robbers.

Gordon allegedly robbed a woman of all the cash she had in her purse, while the other two suspects ransacked the residence looking for money and valuables.

Gordon told police he shot Deloach because the victim spoke the name of Sangster, indicating that Deloach recognized at least one of the alleged robbers.

Chaos ensued following the shooting, and Sangster told police he tried to take the gun from Gordon at the same time that Hughes also attempted to grab the weapon.

During the struggle, Sangster said he unintentionally shot Victoria Hughes. A third shot was fired, but no one was injured.

The suspects and some of the robbery victims fled the residence shortly after the incident.