

Teenager's Murder Charges Dropped; 6 Others Accused In July Stabbing

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Montgomery County prosecutors dropped first-degree murder charges against a 16-year-old who was arrested with six others in connection with a July stabbing in Wheaton, lawyers in the case said Friday.

The teenager's attorney gave his name as Hirbin Guerrero-Hernandez, different from the name that was in the original police report, Hirbin Guerrero. Six others in the case remain charged with first-degree murder, according to court records.

The killing of Edwin Umana, 21, who was stabbed in his left temple, grew out of tension over women, according to authorities. Police said the seven originally charged were believed to be members of the Latin Kings gang.

The night of July 7, Umana, who lived along Bluhill Road in Wheaton, was walking near his home in the 13100 block of Matey Road and "called out to several women who were on the front porch of a residence," police said. A man came out of the residence and told Umana to leave the women alone. Then more men came out to join the dialogue, police said.

A confrontation ensued, and some of the men chased the victim toward a nearby intersection, where the assault took place, authorities said. Paramedics and police were called shortly before 9:30 p.m. and arrived to find Umana "bleeding heavily" from a wound to his head, according to charging documents.

Initial witness accounts placed Guerrero-Hernandez near the body, said his attorney, Andrew Jezic. Later, other witnesses told authorities that Guerrero-Hernandez never left the porch, Jezic said. Their statements were corroborated by co-defendants and by witnesses Jezic's firm found, Jezic said.

Guerrero-Hernandez also met with prosecutors, who questioned him and were satisfied that he did not take part in the attack, Jezic added.

The teenager was released from the Montgomery County jail Thursday night and has no pending charges against him in the case, according to court records. Victor Del Pino, a Montgomery County prosecutor who heads the gang unit at the state's attorney's office, declined to discuss the specifics of the case. He said only that charges were dropped against the 16-year-old after a review of the evidence.

Jezic said Guerrero-Hernandez feels terrible about what happened. His client had a grade-point average above 3.0 his freshman year and did well at the start of his sophomore year, but his performance fell off in the spring.

"That's kind of when he got associated with the gang," said David Krum, a law partner of Jezic's.

The victim was not believed to have any gang affiliation, police said.

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