

CAPE COD TIMES

Jordan Mendes murder case in peril



Jordan Mendes Barnstable High School yearbook Jordan Mendes Barnstable High School yearbookx

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BARNSTABLE — Prosecutors were dealt a blow yesterday in their case against the alleged murderers of 16-year-old Jordan Mendes when a juvenile court judge threw out statements that one of the suspects gave police.

Mendes, a Barnstable High School sophomore and alleged drug dealer, was found shot and stabbed on Dec. 16, his body on fire inside a pit in the woods near Jennifer Lane in Hyannis. It was one of the most gruesome murder scenes in Cape history.

Robert Vacher, 20, and Mykel Mendes and Kevin Ribeiro, both 13 at the time of the crime, have been charged with killing the teenager. Mykel Mendes is Jordan's half brother.

Ribeiro allegedly spoke to investigators without a lawyer days after the brutal slaying. Yesterday, Judge James Torney ruled that those statements cannot be used as evidence at trial, according to a source with knowledge of the closed proceedings.

Prosecutors then asked to halt the case against the young teenager while they review avenues of appeal.

"Assuming that the ruling survives, it holds a lot of promise for this child's vindication," Ribeiro's attorney, William Gens, said when asked about Torney's decision.

The Cape and Islands District Attorney's Office declined to comment on the ruling because it's a juvenile case.

Investigators believe Vacher shot Jordan Mendes at a home on Arrowhead Drive. He then stabbed him repeatedly in the neck, according to police and court documents.

Vacher and the two juveniles then allegedly rolled the body in a rug and took it to the pit off Jennifer Lane.

The next morning, Vacher bought a BMW with the \$10,000 in cash police believe he took from Mendes, and the trio of defendants returned to the pit with a can of gasoline to burn the body, investigators say.

Vacher's lawyer, Joseph Krowski, has previously said that police are basing their case on statements made by one of the juveniles, allegedly the only witnesses to the murder. Krowski did not return a call for comment yesterday.

A hearing for a motion to suppress in Vacher's case is scheduled for Sept. 22.

Days after the killing, several people who identified themselves as Ribeiro's family members were spotted at the Barnstable police station, and they were visibly upset. They were heard complaining that police weren't following protocol by questioning Ribeiro alone.

Mykel Mendes' attorney, John Cunha, would not comment on the progress of the case against his client.

Though the proceedings against Ribeiro have been stayed, he remains in custody.

Staff writer Jake Berry contributed to this report.