

Teenagers to give evidence over Corio slaying

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TWO teenagers who saw the shooting of Corio's Brock Nightingale will be star witnesses in the case.

The Geelong Magistrates' Court was told yesterday 39 witnesses would give evidence at a preliminary hearing about the October 24 shooting, which led to four people being charged with murder.

Crown prosecutor Euan Thompson objected to the two teenagers, aged 13 and 14, giving evidence because of their age and unnecessary distress it may cause.

"These two boys were playing in the street when the incident occurred, and it's submitted that it was traumatic (for them)," Mr Thompson said.

"There are half-a-dozen witnesses in the street who saw much of what they did."

Lawyer George Balot said the two teenagers were vital because there were a number of shots fired: one from a double barrel shot gun that made a "loud noise" and another firearm that made a "popping" noise.

"A very important issue at the trial will be the number of shots and the movement of the deceased," Mr Balot said. "These eye witnesses are, in my submission, one of the best witnesses with a substantial degree of recollection.

"These witnesses have seen the entire event and it's very important."

Mr Balot said the boys would testify to the number of shots they heard, event sequence and the movement of certain people.

Nightingale, a father-of-two, died after being shot in lower abdomen about 5.30pm in Cloverdale Drive.

The alleged getaway car, a Holden Monaro, was found dumped in Leopold two days after the shooting, peppered with bullet holes.

One of the accused, Newtown's David Puglia, 30, admitted himself to the Geelong Hospital 30 minutes after the shooting with bullet wounds to his lower back.

He remained under police guard and was charged when released from hospital about two weeks later.

Mr Balot said the questioning of the boys would be done with care to minimise any trauma.

"These are one the most eloquent witnesses. (They are) very eloquent, very intelligent and very mature," he said.

Mr Balot said the boys did not see Nightingale, 26, die but did see some blood on him.

Magistrate Terry Wilson allowed the boys to testify.

Police revealed in February this year they were still searching for a fourth man over the murder and likened his appearance to The Smurfs character 'Gargamel'. They charged Bell Post Hill's Mehmet Nurdag, 26, about a month later.

Highton's Matthew Grotheer, 29, and Herne Hill's Jayden Bishop, 21, have each been charged with murder.

All four accused men remain in custody.

Court documents revealed Nightingale had a long criminal history for violence and gun-related offences.

The committal hearing is listed for July 12.