



Two Teens Cleared in McClatchy High Plot

Written for the web by Mark Hedlund, Reporter



Saying the case was not what it first appeared to be, Sacramento County juvenile prosecutors have dropped conspiracy charges against two of four teens first accused of a plot to shoot rival students at McClatchy High School.

"At no time did any of the three males admit to a conspiracy," said prosecutor Natalia Luna during a court hearing Wednesday morning. When prosecutors reviewed tapes of police interrogation, Luna said, "It cast substantial doubt on any conspiracy."

"The only conspiracy I see is between Sacramento police and officers at McClatchy High School," said defense attorney Richard Chan, representing a 14-year-old girl who had earlier been beaten-up by two other girls at the school. "My client denied any involvement in any crime, denied any involvement in any conspiracy. They (police) came to the conclusion there was something going on and they interrogated my client until she admitted what they wanted to hear."

The alleged plot unraveled on April 26, when two students were stopped at a light rail station near the school. One, a 15-year-old boy, had a loaded .22 caliber handgun, the other had pictures of four girls. Authorities at the time believed the pictures were to identify a target or targets for a "revenge" shooting. The school resource officer believed two of the girls had earlier assaulted another female student.

Police later brought in that 14-year-old girl, Chan's client, and a 13-year-old boy believed to have provided the gun.

Chan said detectives interrogated the girl for eight hours, being very aggressive, sometimes using profanity and accusing her of lying when she denied any plot. Chan said after several hours, she finally lied and agreed with detectives there was a plot of revenge.

"She said officers did not believe her when she told them there was no plan, so she lied," read Luna from a statement in court. "We believe no conspiracy can be proved."

The boy with the pictures said he had the photo of a girl he liked. That girl apparently first denied knowing him, bolstering detectives' theory of a revenge plot. She later recanted and admitted she knew the boy and had "made out" with him at one time, according to the boy's attorney, Wraymond Plummer. "The only person who changed her story was the initial victim," said Plummer.

Plummer also questioned the interrogation of his client, the 14-year-old boy with the pictures. "He was in a room with two grown adults, two detectives from the police department who were very confrontational, very aggressive in their interrogation. They were slamming their hands on the table at points, using profanity," said Plummer. "A lot of our letter words used."

The district attorney's office said a review fo those videotaped interrogations was part of the evaluation that "no conspiracy can be proved."

Judge Jane Ure dismissed all charges against the 14-year-old girl and the 14-year-old boy who had the pictures. Conspiracy charges are expected to be dropped against the other two defendants, a 15-year-old McClatchy male student and a 13-year-old John Still Middle School male student as well. However, they will still face weapons charges. They admitted to detectives they are gang members and claimed the gun was for protection, according to Luna.

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