

Chicago Sun-Times

Teen describes shooting that killed Endia Martin

WRITTEN BY RUMMANA HUSSAIN POSTED: 01/26/2016, 02:19PM

Lanekia Reynolds used to be good friends with the girl who shot her.

They had been tight since grammar school. But in 2013, the two fought over a boy and the girl got into a fistfight with Reynolds' best friend, Endia Martin.

"I didn't like her. She didn't like me," Reynolds, now 18, testified in a soft, childlike voice Tuesday while fidgeting with a small plastic packet of tissues.

A year later, the girls' hatred snowballed on social media where Reynolds and her rival challenged each other to a fight at a Back of the Yards home.

When that fight was over, Reynolds was wounded and Endia, 14, was dead.

The accused shooter's uncle, Donnell Flora, is on trial for murder and attempted murder for allegedly giving his then 14-year-old niece the loaded gun used in the deadly 2014 brawl.

Flora's niece, now 16, is awaiting trial in Juvenile Court.

Flora's actions on April 28, 2014, went "way beyond being irresponsible," Assistant Cook County State's Attorney Athena Farmakis said in her opening statements Tuesday.

"His actions went way beyond not being a role model. His actions went way beyond not doing the right thing in the face of controversy."



Donnell Flora / Cook County Sheriff's Department

Defense attorney Patrycja Karlin emphasized that her 27-year-old client, who was paralyzed from the waist down in a shooting in 2010, “didn’t want anyone to get shot” on that April day.

Flora had been a father figure and “protector” of the accused shooter since his brother — the girl’s father — was killed in a shooting in 2009, Karlin said.

Flora twice denied his bullied niece’s requests for a weapon for protection that day, Karlin said. He did agree to accompany her to confront Reynolds in the 900 block of West Garfield. And even though Flora packed a gun, he gave it to his cousin, Vandetta Redwood, so she could protect their niece, Karlin said.

Redwood was the one, Karlin said, who egged on the teen, telling her, “Shoot the b—” before the girl fired three times.

Mob action and obstruction of justice files were filed against Redwood but were later dismissed.

Flora's niece, Karlin said, pulled the trigger in self-defense as Reynolds swung at her with a padlock tied to a rope.

Reynolds testified that she did run out of her friend's house with her school locker combination lock "just in case," but never hit the armed girl because an adult companion, Deonna Wright, was restraining her.

Reynolds, who used her arm to mimic her rival shooting toward her and Endia, went over the chaotic cellphone footage that captured some of the incident with prosecutors.

Reynolds said she and Endia had been sitting on the porch talking during their friends' birthday party when they saw the girl walking down the street with 25 people behind her.

"I got up and ran in the house because I was scared there was more of them than us," Reynolds said. Endia scurried inside too.

Reynolds said the girl called for her to come out and motioned to her waistband.

When an angry Reynolds ran past the gate, she said the girl tried to hit her in the head with a gun.

The girl then pointed the gun at her and vowed, "I'm going to kill you," Reynolds said.

"I noticed when she tried to shoot, it kind of jammed," Reynolds said.

Reynolds said she then zipped back into the house, grabbed the lock and came out, still wearing her khakis, pink boots and black sports bra.

Reynolds didn't see the gun again until the girl raised the weapon and started shooting.

Endia, who was close behind Reynolds on the steps, ran back inside the house when she heard the bullets. But it was too late.

Reynolds said she remembered seeing a “bunch of blood” in the kitchen where Endia was lying down before she was rushed to hospital.

During her testimony, Reynolds showed jurors, Judge Thaddeus Wilson and defense attorney the graze wound she received on her left arm from the shooting.

Reynolds admitted in the middle of cross examination that she had exchanged harsh words with the accused shooter on Facebook the day before.

When defense attorney Joel Brodsky asked Reynolds if she wrote to the girl: “I’m killing your daddy, but he gone, so you’re next,” Reynolds said she did but wasn’t actually going to kill her foe.

Miteka Ousley, a friend of the accused shooter, said she saw Flora give the girl the weapon.

After the shooting, Ousley ran with the girl and others to where Flora was waiting in his wheelchair.

“She crossed the street and gave her uncle the gun. A bus passed and then he disappeared,” Ousley said.

Earlier Tuesday, Endia’s mother, Jonie Dukes, testified about how she saw her daughter sleeping in her bed the morning she died.

“I touched her,” Dukes said quietly.