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## Longmont homicide: Defense attorney says Raymond Palomino didn't mean to kill

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Raymond Palomino didn't intend to kill anyone when he intervened in a fight between his girlfriend and 19-year-old Logan Sisson in a Longmont park on April 20, according to Palomino's defense attorney.

Palomino, 26, had just received a call from his panicked girlfriend, Mariena Harris, who said Sisson was attacking her and Lakesha Crutcher with a bottle, defense attorney Mark Johnson said in opening statements at Palomino's murder trial Tuesday.

When Palomino arrived at Lanyon Park to defend Harris, 19, and Crutcher, 20, he yelled at Sisson and told him to leave his girlfriend alone, Johnson said. Palomino brought a knife in case the fight was out of control, Johnson said, but he meant only to punch Sisson.

Witnesses said Palomino, while holding a knife, made a punching motion at Sisson, Johnson said. Palomino, Harris and Crutcher left the park, and Palomino said in the car, "I think I stabbed him," according to Johnson.

His friends said, "No, it was a punch," Johnson said, but Palomino said again, "I think I caught him with a blade."

Still, Johnson said, Palomino and the others thought Sisson was fine and were shocked to learn the following day that Sisson had died.

"Palomino was beside himself," Johnson said. "He was in shock and deeply depressed because he had no intention of hurting him -- not like this."

Prosecutors said in their opening statement that the fight had ended before Palomino showed up and stabbed Sisson twice in the chest.

Palomino is charged with second-degree murder. Both Harris and Crutcher pleaded guilty to accessory charges last week and were sentenced to probation and a year in the jail's work-release program in exchange for agreeing to testify against Palomino.

Robert Wittmer, 36, is scheduled to be tried Feb. 22 on accessory charges. Police said he drove the other suspects from the park after the stabbing.

On the night of the homicide, Sisson had been drinking at a house where numerous people had gathered, including Harris and Crutcher, according to prosecutor Ryan Brackley.

Sisson offended some people, and angry words were exchanged, Brackley said. The name-calling brought back difficult memories for Crutcher, who had dated Sisson in the past and fought with him previously, Brackley said.

Sisson was asked to leave, and he eventually did, Brackley said.

Because Crutcher was "still furious with anger," she and Harris went outside, ignoring warnings not to start any "drama," Brackley said.

A "mutual fight" ensued in the park, he said.



Raymond Palomino

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