

Alleged "Killer" Taxi Driver Granted Bail

Written by Rudi Prinsloo

Tuesday, 03 March 2009 09:45 -



The Pretoria minibus taxi driver who allegedly drove over and killed 16-year-old Bernadine Kruger was granted R1000 bail in the Pretoria District Court on Monday.

Thirty-one year-old Percyval Matji's application was not opposed by the State on condition that he remained at his address in Nellmapius street in Mamelodi and appear in court in April.

In his application Matji -- who wore a green tracksuit and initially tried to hide his face by pulling the zipper up to his nose -- told the court he had a previous conviction of driving without a licence. He was released on a fine of R250.

Matji assured the court he was not a threat to the community or to any of the witnesses and that he was not in possession of a passport or any travel documents.

He also told the court that if he was forced to remain in custody he would suffer.

Matji said he planned to plead not guilty to the charge of culpable homicide relating to Kruger's death, based on his claim that the State's case lacked substance.

The matter was postponed to April 6 to allow for further police investigation.

Matji allegedly killed Kruger last Monday when he drove over her as she was riding her scooter to Garsfontein Hoerskool.

The court heard that Matji had remained on the scene and had given a statement to the police.

"At all times I provided information and at all times I co-operated. I did not run away from the accident and I was not arrested at the scene," his affidavit read.

He was arrested at the Garsfontein police station the day after Kruger was killed.

Matji's family, seated in one of the front rows of the court gallery, looked visibly pleased that bail had been granted. He is married with one child.

Chief executive of civil rights group AfriForum Kallie Kriel -- who observed court proceedings, said he was disappointed that bail had been granted.

"I feel frustrated that he's now been let loose on South African roads. Nothing prohibits him from driving [as a taxi driver].

"We believe he should be kept off the roads until there's a ruling," said Kriel.

Source : Sapa /dw/th

Date : 02 Mar 2009 13:35