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March 12 hearing set in Edmonds murder case

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STARKVILLE - An Oktibbeha County judge will decide whether expert witnesses will be allowed to testify as to whether 14-year-old Tyler Edmonds' murder confession was false.

On Monday, Circuit Court Judge Jim Kitchens set a March 12 hearing to hear arguments on motions in the case against Edmonds, the West Point youth charged with capital murder in the shooting death of his half-sister's ex-husband, Joseph Fulgham.

In his order, Kitchens set the hearing "to determine admissibility of certain testimony offered by the defendant."

Edmonds' attorney, Jim Waide, had objected to the state's being allowed to call an expert witness. In court documents, Waide called the state's request "untimely," and said it would cost taxpayer dollars.

In his motions, Waide claims the state failed to show that it reasonably expects to find an expert to contradict those who have already testified. Waide goes on to say the state's request will hamper his client's right to a speedy trial.

The state had falsely claimed, Waide alleges in court documents, that it "did not know of Edmonds' intent to introduce evidence that his confession was false until the defendant filed the expert reports of Drs. Lott and Redlich in December 2003."

Waide also said the state's request for more time proves its evidence against Edmonds is "not overwhelming" and that his client should be granted bail. On three occasions courts have denied Edmonds' requests for bail. He has been jailed since his arrest in May 2003.

Kitchens sided with the state, appointing Dr. Michael Welner as an expert witness "to perform such necessary evaluations as the issues may give rise."

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