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RUSSELL KILLER BIDS FOR FREEDOM

Josie's anxious wait as Michael Stone back in court



COURT HEARING: Schoolgirl Josie Russell (main picture) was attacked by Michael Stone (above)

KENT'S most notorious killer, Michael Stone, could be free this time next weekend.

Stone was jailed for life for the savage hammer murders of Lin Russell, 42, and her daughter Megan, who was six, as they walked home from school in Chillenden in 1996.

This week survivor Josie, now aged 17, and her father Dr Shaun Russell will be forced to re-live that October day as the nation awaits the verdict of a new judge.

On Wednesday Stone will be taken by prison van to London's

By GARY WRIGHT

Court of Appeal where he hopes his conviction will be quashed, proving he is the victim of a miscarriage of justice.

Confessed drug addict and violent robber, Stone, 42, from Gillingham, always denied the murders which left Josie – then aged nine – with horrific head injuries.

She was unable to speak and underwent a series of operations to rebuild her fractured skull.

And when she was well enough

her father took her back to north Wales where they try and live quietly and away from the media spotlight.

The appeal will be uncomfortable for those Kent Police officers involved in the original hunt for the Chillenden murderer.

It was a year before they arrested Stone and they know there was never any forensic or witness evidence linking Stone to the murder.

Top QC Edward Fitzgerald will present Stone's attempt to overturn the three life sentences at the appeal hearing.

He will explain how Stone's con-

viction stands or falls on the alleged confession he made to a fellow prisoner, Damien Daley, while on remand.

Daley, a small time crook and drug dealer, claimed Stone told him exactly what happened as they shared adjoining cells.

It was a vital breakthrough for detectives who feared there was insufficient evidence to convict the man they believed carried out the attacks which left a country stunned and people in East Kent frightened to walk near

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