

## All evidence must be presented

Fri Mar 4 2011

Re: **Ashley Smith inquest won't see stark video, March 1**

Decisions made by the coroner's office to thwart efforts by Ashley Smith's family to have a barrier-free, transparent inquest have been ongoing. Last November, the decision to limit the scope of the inquest by the coroner's office was reversed because of the strenuous and passionate presentations made by the family's lawyer Julian Falconer, lawyers for the Elizabeth Fry Societies and the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth at a two-day public hearing. Without their determination to challenge the decision made by the coroner to place rigid restrictions on the scope of the inquest, this matter would not have been expanded to include the full 11.5 months before Ashley's death.

Now the coroner's office is refusing to allow a key piece of video evidence to be shown to the jury and, according to this article, requests made by the lawyers to argue the matter through a hearing open to the public have been rejected. Devious tactics used to prevent important evidence from being presented at the inquest have the appearance of controlling the outcome of an inquest. Anyone who has seen the video on CBC's *Fifth Estate* will understand the importance of showing this crucial piece of evidence to a jury.

One would reasonably expect that a coroner's jury must be presented with all significant evidence, and question why the coroner's office is determined to suppress a family's right to justice.

***Ellen Watson, Aurora***