

## Ashley Smith inquest abruptly adjourned in cloud of secrecy

Adrian Humphreys May 26, 2011



TORONTO — The already controversial and long-delayed coroner’s inquest into the death of a troubled teenager while she was being watched by guards in prison has been abruptly adjourned under a cloud of secrecy.

“The presiding coroner is considering the motions that were heard on May 24th and 25th,” said a short release from the provincial government last night.

No date for a resumption of the inquest into the 2007 death Ashley Smith was given.

When asked how long the adjournment might be for, Julian Falconer, lawyer for the Smith family, said: “I’m not allowed to tell you.

“Motions about the closed nature and secrecy of the hearing have been argued and it has been adjourned but I can’t tell you for how long,” he said, unable to mask his frustration.

The inquest, which started last week after many delays, was scheduled to continue for most of the year.

Dr. Bonita Porter, presiding coroner, has been under fire by lawyers representing people and organizations with standing at the inquest, as well as lawyers for the media, over her orders limiting public access to exhibits.

The Correctional Service of Canada has also asked that the faces of prison guards seen in videos showing Ms. Smith's death be covered before the video is released to the public.

Earlier at the hearings, Mr. Falconer described the probe as becoming "virtually Orwellian."

*National*

*[Ahumphreys@nationalpost.com](mailto:Ahumphreys@nationalpost.com)*

*Post*