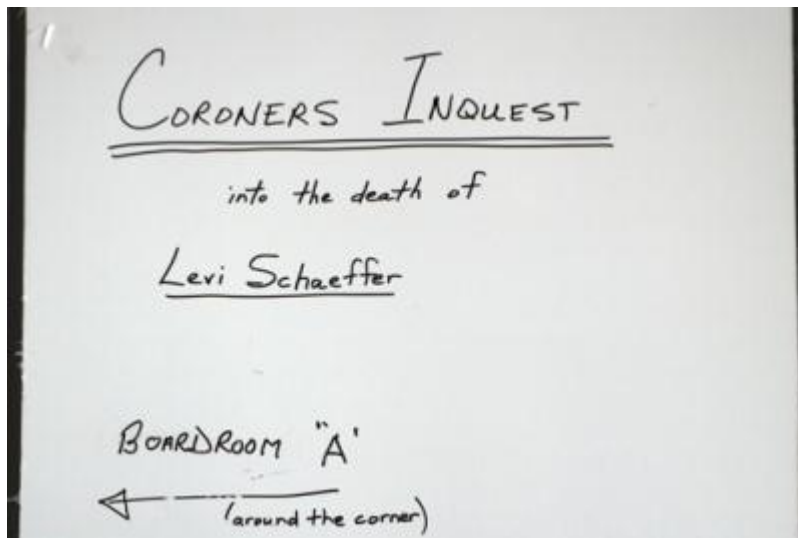




Inquest begins

By Jamie Smith, tbnewswatch.com
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Family and friends of Levi Schaeffer wiped away tears, had hands on their hearts and heads in their hands as a video of the scene where Schaeffer died was played Monday morning.

The video was played in a conference room in the provincial building on Red River Road in Thunder Bay to begin the first day of the inquest into the 30-year-old's death. Schaeffer was shot through the heart and killed on June 24, 2009 by police near Osnaburgh Lake after two OPP officers suspected him of stealing a boat.

The five-member jury heard from Det.-Const. Al MacDonald Monday, the first of 12 witnesses in the inquest that is expected to last up to 10 days.

MacDonald walked the jury through more than 200 photographs of the scene and played a 20 minute video that included footage of Schaeffer.

While the provincial Special Investigations Unit cleared the two officers of any wrongdoing, discrepancies in the officers' notebooks prevented the SIU from determining what "probably happened," said SIU director Ian Scott.

The inquest is mandatory under the Coroners Act.