

Lawyer fears homicide finding in inquest into teen's death

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Fearing jurors might rule Junior Manon's death a homicide, a Toronto Police lawyer will introduce testimony at the inquest from a prominent U.S. pathologist that says the teen died of exhaustion and heart arrhythmia.

Manon died after a brief foot chase and violent scuffle with Const. Michael Adams and Sgt. Stuart Blower in May 2010.

Dr. Pollanen, Ontario's chief forensic pathologist, ruled the cause of death was "positional asphyxia," caused by pressure placed on the teen's chest after he was taken or fell to the ground during the arrest, according to an SIU news release. The officers were cleared of criminal wrongdoing.

The coroner's jury will determine the legal cause of death, but there is no fault finding.

On Monday, police lawyer Gary Clewley says U.S. pathologist Dr. Werner Spitz, who recently testified for the defence at the Casey Anthony trial, will propose an alternative theory based on summaries of eye witnesses and police testimony, as well as EMS reports. It's not clear when he'll testify.

Clewley says Dr. Pollanen's conclusions as to the cause of death were based on eyewitness reports, which he suggests could be inaccurate.

Numerous witnesses reported that the officers used their body weight to restrain Manon on the ground, but both have testified that was never the case.

Jurors could rule the death a "homicide," if there is no other cause of death put forward, said Clewley. "If there is no alternate theory advanced, it doesn't have the air of reality. It has the air of inevitability."

Manon, 18, was stopped by police while driving on Steeles Ave. W. but fled when Const. Michael Adams and Sgt. Stuart Blower tried to arrest him for driving, which was a breach of his bail conditions.



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