



Officer tells his story at Manon inquest

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Toronto Police Const. Michael Adams talks to his lawyer, Gary Clewley, after testifying Friday at a coroner's inquest into the 2010 fatal arrest of 18-year-old Junior Manon. (CHRIS DOUCETTE/Toronto Sun)

After a week of listening to witnesses recount their memories of the final minutes of Junior Manon's life, one of the cops at the heart of the coroner's inquest into the 18-year-old's fatal arrest finally related his version of events Friday.

Const. Michael Adams described in great detail how a vehicle stop ended with Manon dead on the grass near York University and him "segregated" in an office at 31 Division waiting to give a statement to the province's Special Investigations Unit.

"Stressed, scared and lonely," the young officer said of his feelings in the aftermath.

Adams, who had only been on the job about 15 months, was later cleared of any wrongdoing.

At the inquest, he essentially reiterated to the jury of four women and one man what he had already told the SIU investigators.

Adams explained how he and Sgt. Stuart Blower were on Steeles Ave. W. at Keele St. around 6:30 p.m. on May 5, 2010, when they spotted a brown Chevy Malibu with a temporary tag.

After running the plate in their cruiser and seeing the temporary permit was expired, they pulled the car over.

Adams said he and Manon, the driver, recognized each other from two previous encounters.

A year earlier Adams had charged Manon with trespassing after responding to a dispute between him and his mom at their family home.

A few months later, Adams said he happened by a vehicle stop by another cop who was allegedly spat on and ended up charging Manon for assault.

Adams said he was also aware Manon had prior “drug and weapons charges.”

That accusation prompted an angry objection from the Manon family’s lawyer, Julian Falconer.

He said it’s “ironic” the jury heard all about Manon’s past but he can’t introduce a report from a police watchdog that recommends Adams be charged with excessive use of force for the arrest of G20 protestor Adam Nobody.

Adams said he and Blower decided to arrest Manon because he was in breach of a court order prohibiting him from driving or sitting in the front seat of a car.

He claims the teen was upset and bolted. He and Blower gave chase south on Founders Rd. toward the university, leaving passenger Kevin Fauder, 17, unattended.

Adams claimed Manon stopped at times, adopted a “fighting stance” and gritted his teeth. Once the allegedly threw two “practice punches.”

Adams finally grabbed Manon’s jeans from behind and he and the two officers went down in a heap.

Several witnesses have described Manon as overweight and appearing to be winded long before the take down.

But Adams claimed he and Blower struggled with Manon for several minutes and were unable to get him handcuffed.

While blocking Manon’s punches, Adams said he delivered numerous “distraction” blows to the teen’s shoulder and face.

But he denied the claim of one witness who said he repeatedly smashed Manon in the face with his police radio.

Manon died of “positional asphyxia.” It’s believed there heavy weight was put on his back as he was face down.

But Adams said neither he nor Blower were ever completely on top of Manon.

Another officer ultimately arrived and slapped cuffs on Manon, Adams said.

“I was completely exhausted and spent,” the fit-looking officer said.

Adams said he looked back “briefly” and saw officers trying to find Manon’s pulse.

“I walked away to catch my breath...,” Adams said.

And by then Manon had already drawn his last breath.

The inquest continues Monday.