

## **Witnesses, coroner are wrong, officer tells inquest**

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Const. Michael Adams appears outside the coroner's inquest into the death of Junior Manon, whom he was arresting when the teen died in May 2010.

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An officer attempting to arrest Junior Manon when he died in May 2010 told a coroner's inquest Monday that he disputed the provincial pathologist's ruling on the cause of death and says eyewitness accounts are wrong.

"I don't feel that Mr. Manon died as a result of my restraint," said Const. Michael Adams on cross-examination by Julian Falconer, the Manon family's lawyer.

Adams also said the accounts of two witnesses, who testified they saw him strike Manon with a police radio, or the several who said Adams and his partner, Sgt. Stuart Blower, restrained Manon on the ground using their body weight, were incorrect.

“I have to say that they’re mistaken,” said Adams. “If those witnesses are right, then I’m a black man,” he said. Last week, Todd Zubyck, a former OPP officer and now a security official at York University, told the inquest that Adams was using his chest weight to restrain Manon, who was face down. He also thought one of the officers was black. Both Adams and Blower are white.

The SIU cleared Adams and Blower last January. A news release issued at the time said a post-mortem examination by Dr. Michael Pollanen, the province’s chief forensic pathologist, concluded Manon died of “positional asphyxia.” It also said “pressure was placed on (Manon’s) chest in a manner that could have caused it to compress and interfere with his breathing.”

Adams testified that neither he nor Blower were ever on top of Manon. He also said his police training included warnings about “positional asphyxia.”

On Friday, Adams testified that he recognized Manon when he walked up to the car and Manon rolled down the window and smiled at him. Adams, who pulled the car over because of an expired temporary licence permit, said he couldn’t see in because the rear windows were heavily tinted.

Adams had been called to the family home a year earlier in 2009, and a few months later, watched as Manon was arrested for spitting on another officer. “I knew he was anti-police,” said Adams, who was 26 at the time of the incident. “I was aware that he had run away from other officers.”

Adams said Manon stepped out of the car at his request, but pushed him and tried to run when Adams told the teen he was being arrested for driving, which breached his bail conditions.

During the chase, Adams said, Manon stopped three times and squared off in a “fighter’s stance” with his clenched hands raised to his chest. “He was ready to fight. There was no doubt in my mind,” said Adams.

Near the end of the chase, Manon knocked Adams’ arm away and tried to run again before he was tackled to the ground by the two officers.

There, Adams said, Manon continued to struggle uncontrollably. The officer restrained him with one arm and reached out with the other for his radio, which was on the ground 3 or 4 feet away, to call for help. Another officer arrived and Manon was cuffed around 6:38 p.m.

According to records introduced Monday, an ambulance was called three minutes later.