Slain priest was 'target' of robbery

By Janet Cotton

death.

JOURNAL REPORTER

The Gatineau teenager who witnessed the murder of parish priest Roger Rinfret yesterday said the popular clergyman was the victim of a premeditated robbery.

The teenager said he and the accused killer had planned the robbery before they left Hull for Ottawa and Major's Hill Park where they met the priest.

The 17-year-old, who is the key witness in the murder case said he and accused murderer Alain McMurtie, were "out to rob someone, maybe beat someone and make some money" the night that Rinfret was stabbed to

Not interested in orgy

The juvenile said that he agreed to accompany the priest to the Ritz Motel in Gatineau for \$20 in sexual favors and all the time intended to "just steal and get some money out of it."

"I wasn't interested in an orgy . . . it wasn't a question of doing that," the juvenile said at the second day of the preliminary hearing into the charge against McMurtie, 20, of Hull.

"I just wanted to make some money and that's why I got in the man's car. I knew what I was doing," said the youth, who testified that he understood Rinfret believed the pair were

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Tight security screen in place at hearing

Continued from Page One going with him "to a party for three."

The juvenile testified that he and McMurtie met Rinfret at Major's Hill Park on March 30, and rode to a

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Gatineau motel room with him on the understanding that it would end in a homosexual party.

"But I wasn't the least bit interested in that. When he asked me for a kiss (in the motel room) I told him I didn't like that kind of thing, " the youth said.

The young man said the pair didn't attack Rinfret on the road to the Gatineau motel "because we didn't want to risk an accident... making someone when they're driving is not too safe."

Escape bid feared

A tight web of security surrounded yesterday's hearings amid rumors leaked to police that someone might try to help McMurtie escape from the

try to neip memuse source courtroom.

The two Gatineau police investigators heading the case, Robert Burns and John Janusz said they "received some information" last night that McMurrie would try to escape or that "someone was going to try and spring him."

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Both investigators denied rumors that there had been any attempt to free McMurtle on Tuesday.

During yesterday's hearing the juvenile repeated for a third time his testimony of how he watched McMurtle jump the priest from behind in the motel room and stab him until he was dead.

dead.

The youth has yet to be charged in the Rinfret case.

He said he could not remember if the lake robbery happened before or after the Rinfret murder.

"I just don't remember. It could have before or maybe after," he said.

Rinfret, a respected West Ouebec.

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Rinfret, a respected West Quebec priest who headed the small parish of Ange-Gardien in Angers, Quebec at the time of his death was found stabbed 13 times in the Ritz Motel in Gatineau on Marrh 31. His wallet had been emptied and the youth testified that he and McMurtie had split the money, about \$100.

In one major contradiction of his earlier testimony, the youth said he "just couldn't remember" who was carrying the murder weapon — a 12-inch knife — when the pair left the motel ryom.

Case closed

At last month's coroner's inquest, the youth said McMurtie was the one who always handled the knife.
Crown attorney Francis Hanfield closed his case yesterday after hearing from three witnesses. Aside from the juvenile, the court heard from the policeman who found Rinfret's body and a close friend who identified the slain priest.