

Homosexual party led to priest's murder: youth



By Janet Cotton
JOURNAL REPORTER

A coroner's court listened in horror yesterday as a 17-year-old youth told how he agreed to participate in a homosexual "party" with parish priest Roger Rinfret and then watched a friend stab the clergyman to death with a butcher knife in a Gatineau motel room.

Alain McMurtie, 20, of Hull, who sat silently in the courtroom as the youth described the attack on the priest, was found criminally responsible yesterday for Rinfret's death. Coroner Gas-

ton Tremblay ordered the parolee held in court custody and Crown Attorney Pierre Chevalier said he will be laying first-degree murder charges next week.

Rearrested

McMurtie was first arrested Monday but freed Tuesday after Tremblay said there was not sufficient evidence to lay charges against him. He was rearrested Thursday night after the 17-year-old, who was his alibi for the night of Rinfret's death, made a statement to police. Under Quebec law,

anyone under 18 is considered a juvenile and cannot be identified in criminal cases.

The boy testified he and McMurtie went to the Ritz Motel with Rinfret on the understanding that the priest would pay them each \$20 for sexual favors. But the boy said he refused Rinfret's advances, and then watched McMurtie "jump the man from behind and stab him over and over again."

"The man asked me for a nice kiss, but I said no," the boy said. "Then Alain pulled out his knife and jumped

him from behind and just kept stabbing him.

"The man screamed for Alain to stop, but he didn't. I didn't do anything. I just stood there and watched until the man was dead.

"When the man was dead, Alain went into the bathroom and cleaned himself off. I took a towel and started to clean the fingerprints from the light switch and the door handle."

Then, the youth said, he and McMurtie stole Rinfret's money, "and split the \$10s and \$20s between us."

The youth said they spent "maybe

five, no more than 10 minutes" in the motel room.

"Then we hailed a taxi and went to a friend's house," he said.

The knife that McMurtie used to stab Rinfret 13 times "was about one foot long . . . a big butcher knife," the youth said.

Rinfret, 49, a popular priest who worked in the Hull area for about 20 years, was parish priest in the small community of Angers, about 20 miles from here, when he was murdered. His blood-soaked body was found on

□ See Young, Page 2

A serious civil service

By Bob Reade
JOURNAL REPORTER

Jokes about public servants are no laughing matter to Public Service Alliance President Andy Stewart.

"Humor may be a necessary part of our life, but so is self-respect," he states in an editorial in the latest edition of the union's tabloid.

Stewart's ban on "bad taste jokes" would include all jibes at federal employees. "The point, of course, is that we are sometimes our own worst enemy. Passing on PS jokes only encourages our detractors."

The union's concern about sagging public service morale was rekindled recently by a devastating auditor-general's report and a union-sponsored study that found taxpayers relate the PS to animals such as snails.

Although the PSAC is striving to counter negative attitudes, it rebuts the auditor-general in a light vein. In fact, it breaks the no-joke rule when it suggests the man who said 33,000 private-sector people could do the work of 50,000 PS has become "a sort of Exalted Emperence of the Society of Encourages our detractors."

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Alain McMurtie found criminally responsible

Young witness 'a liar' accused tells inquest

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the floor of the hotel room by a cleaning woman just after noon March 31.

Yesterday, the boy, dressed in pale-blue corduroys and a grey T-shirt, stood emotionless in the witness stand. He looked at McMurtie in the prisoner's dock only once to identify him for the court.

Coroner Tremblay said he did not have power to recommend charges be laid against the 17-year-old. He said the youth could likely face theft and possibly accomplice-to-murder charges on Monday or Tuesday.

McMurtie was sentenced to a year in jail for contempt of court yesterday after he repeatedly refused to answer lawyer's questions.

McMurtie called the witness "a liar" and refused to change his testimony from Tuesday when he said he spent the night of Rinfret's death drinking and was stabbed in a run-in with would-be robbers in Ottawa that night.

"I told the truth before, and I'm not changing any part of my story. I have

nothing to say," McMurtie told the court.

A short-sleeved T-shirt revealed the still-heavily-scarred seven-inch gash on McMurtie's arm he received the night of Rinfret's death.

The youth said McMurtie didn't even notice the wound at first because "he was just stabbing so much and I guess he stabbed himself."

The boy said he "never, not once" stabbed Rinfret himself.

McMurtie was released on parole from Archambault maximum prison in Montreal about six months ago, after serving part of a two-year sentence for drug trafficking.

The boy testified he met McMurtie at the Hotel Chez Henri in Hull early the night of March 30 and agreed to "drop a few pills."

After a few beers, the pair went to the Chateau Laurier. He said he could not remember how they got there.

"Then there was a car parked nearby and Alain went up and opened the door and asked the man if he wanted a party for three," said the boy.

"Then Alain told him that it would cost \$20 for each of us, and he got in the front seat and I got in the back.

"We started driving towards Pointe-Gatineau just looking for a motel. The first one we came to was the Ritz and we pulled in there."

Then, he said, Rinfret told them to stay in the car while he checked in "because he wanted them to think he was alone."

Then Rinfret went into the room, closed the door and in a few minutes waved for the pair to come inside, the youth said.

Asked for kiss

"When all three of us were in the room, we locked the door," he said. "The man was dressed but he asked me for a kiss and I said, 'No.' That's when Alain pulled the knife."

The boy said that after the murder, the two took a taxi to the home of a female friend where they "took a few Dexadrine" and then went back to the Chez Henri.

Shortly after, the trio took a taxi to the Ottawa Civic Hospital to get McMurtie's gashed arm bandaged.

The youth said the three left immediately after the wound was checked by doctors.

"I told Alain we weren't going to tell anyone about what happened. The past is past," the boy said.

Far-fetched

In announcing his decision to find McMurtie responsible for Rinfret's death, Coroner Tremblay said he could not believe the man's "far-fetched story" about his Bank Street fight.

"Everything that the witness (the youth) has testified corroborates the findings of police investigations since the night of March 30," Tremblay said.

"I'll give you one last chance to make any changes in your testimony," the coroner told McMurtie. But the man refused to speak.

"I hold you criminally responsible for the death of Roger Rinfret and leave it to the courts to deal with you accordingly," Tremblay said.

In his testimony Tuesday, McMurtie said he had "never, never, never" met the slain priest and knew nothing about the murder.

"What I know is what I read in the newspapers," McMurtie said. "It's all a big story to me."

Cloudy, showers, with a high of 27

Ottawa

Increasing cloudiness today with showers and chance of thundershowers. High near 27. Low overnight 12. Gradual clearing tomorrow with high near 22.

Looking ahead

Monday's outlook is for sunny skies and temperatures near normal.

For the record

Yesterday's high 25.7°C, low 9.3°C.
Record high: 32.8°C, 1949
low: 6.0°C, 1979
Humidity (noon): 43%
Precipitation: none.
Today's sunset: 8:52
Tomorrow's sunrise: 5:13
Barometer at 10 p.m. 101.5 kPa. and falling.

WEATHER

Charlottetown	6	16	Copenhagen	17
Edmonton	9	24	Dallas	37
Fredericton	5	19	Dublin	14
Halifax	9	12	Geneva	25
Montreal	9	20	Honolulu	29
Peterborough	4	21	Hong Kong	32
Quebec City	10	16	Jerusalem	32
Regina	15	27	Lisbon	20
St. John's, Nfld.	5	17	London	24
Toronto	11	20	Los Angeles	21
Vancouver	10	20	Madrid	26
Victoria	11	19	Mexico City	27
Whitehorse	6	16	Miami	28
Winnipeg	11	25	Montego Bay	30
Yellowknife	6	9	Moscow	25
			Nassau	29
			New Delhi	37
			New York	22
			Oslo	19
			Paris	26
			Rome	28
			San Francisco	19
			San Juan	32
			Stockholm	20
			Sydney	16
			Tampa	33

INTERNATIONAL

Yesterday's high

Acapulco	33
Amsterdam	23
Athens	34
Barbados	30
Bermuda	27
Bonn	26
Boston	21