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## 'I would have shot more,' says cop

### Father of teen shot dead by police screams 'murderers' after officer's testimony

By **BRIAN GRAY, TORONTO SUN**

The family of Jeffrey Reodica lashed out yesterday after a Toronto Police officer testified he fired three times and would have continued shooting until the teen was no longer standing.

Det.-Const. Dan Belanger testified at the coroner's inquest into the death Reodica on May 21, 2004, that he believed both his life and the life of his partner were in jeopardy because the 17-year-old was wielding a knife.

Belanger said he shot three times because that's how many times it took to knock Reodica off his feet.

"After the third shot he went down," Belanger told the five-person jury. "That's why I stopped. If he was still up, I would have shot more."

Outside the coroner's building on Grosvenor St. the Reodica family were angered at the testimony that didn't fit with their image of their son and conflicted with other eyewitness testimony. Willie Reodica yelled several times that the officer murdered his son.

"You're murderers," he said.

Through tears, Flora Reodica, Jeffrey's mom said: "He didn't have to kill my son."

Referring to Belanger's testimony, Jeffrey's brother, Joel, said to the officer's partner, Det.-Const. Allan Love: "Tell your fat friend he's doing a great job."

Belanger and Love were struggling with Reodica on the lawn of a Scarborough home on a residential street when Belanger got hit in the leg, then saw the teen swinging a knife towards Love.

"As I was backing up (Reodica) made contact with my right inner thigh with his left hand -- the one with the knife in it," Belanger said during testimony in which he had to pause several times to regain composure. "I drew my firearm. As he continued swinging around towards my partner, I shot three times."



**Mom weeps as cop tells inquest he fired on teen 3 times. (Dave Thomas, Sun)**

The veteran officer -- who had more than 14 years on the job at the time of the shooting -- said he shot because he thought that was the only way to eliminate the threat to Love's life.

"I believed Jeffrey was going to inflict serious or bodily harm on myself or my partner," he said. "So to stop that I discharged my firearm until the threat was stopped."

Asked by coroner's counsel Satinder Besrai if he could have used another way to stop Jeffrey, Belanger said: "There was no other alternative."

Belanger kept pepper spray and a baton in a knapsack in the backseat of the unmarked police car he and Love used to get to the scene.

Pepper spray wasn't an alternative because it wasn't guaranteed to stop Reodica from swinging his knife and preventing harm to Love, Belanger testified.

And in the time it would have taken to get the collapsible baton, extend it and use it on Reodica, the teen would have had plenty of time to stab his partner, he said.

Belanger said he didn't bring his knapsack with him when he got out of the car because he didn't believe he was going to need to use force because he had only planned to talk to Reodica and other teens on the street.

Instead, Belanger said, Reodica refused to talk to the officer after obeying a command to drop a large rock he was holding.

A struggle ensued after Belanger said he notified Reodica he was being arrested for having dangerous weapons.

The struggle ended with Reodica dead in hospital, shot three times in the back.

The inquest continues next week.