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Sammy Baker case continues to pose new mysteries

When the man from Wetzlar (23) was shot by the Amsterdam police, he was apparently suffering from a psychosis. The toxicological report provides information about possible triggers.

By Tanja Freudenmann
Editor Wetzlar

WETZLAR - Wetzlar. The case of Sammy Baker continues to be mysterious. Even more than eight months after the Wetzlar fitness influencer was shot dead by Dutch police officers in an Amsterdam backyard on Aug. 13, many questions remain unanswered about the exact circumstances surrounding the tragic death of the 23-year-old Wetzlar man. The one about the trigger of an apparent psychosis Sammy Baker had been suffering from at the time is just one of them. 0.0011 mg/l THC was detected in his blood, an extremely small amount of cannabis that may nevertheless have had its devastating effect. There are no indications of other drugs, medication or alcohol. This is according to the toxicological report, which is now available to this newspaper.

"Based on the results of the toxicological examination, it cannot be concluded that alcohol, drugs, medication and/or pesticides influenced consciousness or behavior at the time of death," the expert report states. Means in the reverse conclusion, however, also that such an influence can not be excluded.

Wetzlar sports physician: "No abnormalities"

The family's Dutch lawyer, Richard Korver, had first reported in December that the young man from Wetzlar had presumably consumed cannabis in an Amsterdam coffee shop on the evening of his 23rd birthday on August 11; he is said to have shared a joint and a muffin, a so-called space cake, with friends. According to statistics, cannabis-related edibles in particular cause negative effects such as anxiety attacks or paranoia in less experienced users.

The fact that Sammy Baker had previously shown psychological abnormalities is ruled out by Dr. Alwin Sauer, a specialist in orthopedics and sports medicine from Wetzlar. With Sauer, the fitness influencer and mental coach, who was followed on Instagram by more than 170,000 fans, was in treatment on and off for more than ten years.

"Throughout the period, he presented the image of an extremely ambitious and dynamic young athlete. He was very ambitious. Psychological abnormalities or

deviations were never noticed by me. **On the contrary, the young man appeared smart, differentiated and structured," Sauer wrote in a statement.**

The fact is that the behavior of the young man from Wetzlar changed abruptly after visiting the coffee shop. Friends he was travelling with in Amsterdam over his birthday later described it as uncharacteristic and paranoid. On the morning of the following day, Sammy Baker suddenly disappeared. In great anxiety, his parents reported him missing to the Amsterdam police, alerting officers to their son's confused state. That Wednesday, no matter how hard one of his friends searched for him, he was nowhere to be found in the city.

As a result, Mother Justine set out for Amsterdam. When she arrived there on August 13, Sammy sent his location via smartphone, and the friend also rushed there. They meet in a parking lot on Rijswijkstraat, but the 23-year-old seems a complete stranger, and the attempt to give him a ride in the car fails. When the friend asks a police officer for help- who happens to be passing by- and the officer approaches the fitness influencer, he runs away. The manhunt ends in the backyard on Honselersdijkstraat, which is immediately blocked off by the police.



Report: no damage to protective vest of police officers

What happens in the courtyard is documented with a cell phone video taken by a journalist who lives there: The obviously confused Sammy Baker, dressed only in boxer shorts and a shirt, apparently holds a knife to his neck; several police officers pull out their service weapons as the 23-year-old slowly walks across the meadow toward them and then past them. He ignores the officers' shouts. **In the video, Sammy Baker can be heard repeatedly asking for a doctor. But the police**

officers refuse. Likewise, they refuse the request of the friend standing outside at the fence in front of the yard who offers that he or mother Justine could talk to Sammy. When the attack with a police dog fails, the dog handler strikes the young man from Wetzlar from behind. An unmanageable scuffle ensues on the ground, largely hidden behind bushes in the cell phone video. **Four shots are fired, three shots are heard, killing Sammy at point blank range. Sammy's lungs, liver and spleen are hit.** He succumbs to his injuries on the scene.

In the view of the Amsterdam public prosecutor's office, the police officers acted in self-defense because the victim, who was lying on the ground, was allegedly stabbing uncontrollably with the knife. The statement made immediately after the incident that the knife had hit one of the police officers in the vest was refuted by the subsequent investigations of the Rijksrecherche, an investigative department at the prosecutor's office. **According to their report, no damage could be found on any of the vests.** Nevertheless, several of the police officers involved stated in their interrogations that it had been a serious threat situation. It had already become known that, contrary to initial police reports, **the knife was not a 30-centimeter knife, but a small carving knife with a seven-centimeter blade.**

Mother raises accusations and demands resignation of police chief

The task of the Rijksrecherche was to find out whether there was any misconduct on the part of the officers during the operation and whether their intervention was proportionate. **The internal investigators were unable to rely on the images from a body camera worn by one of the officers; the device apparently stopped working at the decisive moment.** Neither image nor sound recordings exist. The public prosecutor's office speaks of a "malfunction" and sees no reason to doubt the police officers' accounts. **A questioning of residents did not take place.** Instead, the prosecution refers to the testimony of the journalist who recorded the cell phone video, as well as to the statements of the police officers. The contents together with the video would have given a clear picture. There was no reaction to a call for witnesses, the prosecution said.

For mother Justine it is certain that her son was no danger to anyone. She raises heavy accusations against the Dutch police, speaks of "execution" and police violence. The officers did not take a quarter of an hour to negotiate and de-escalate the situation, they made "short work of it".

Since Sammy is of African-American origin on his father's side - his grandfather Al Baker served for the U.S. Army in Germany - the family also sees him as **a victim of racism and police violence.**

The 49-year-old asks, "Would the same thing have happened if Sammy had been a blond Dutchman?"

It is incomprehensible "that in the case of George Floyd the murderer is convicted, in the case of Daunte Wright the police chief resigns, the policewoman quits her job, but in the case of Sammy Baker the responsible police chief of Amsterdam, Frank

Pauuw, justifies the killing in a newspaper interview on August 15, 2020, **the two death shooters continue to patrol with firearms, without consequences.**"

"It is a police scandal, it is a disregard for human rights, but where do the politics intervene? So far they are keeping a low profile, we as a family feel abandoned." Anyone can fall into psychosis, with or without substances, she said.

"We want to shake things up so that in the future no more young people who ask for help are killed. Especially in a city like Amsterdam which is known for offering drugs legally, police officers should be trained to deal in a de-escalating way with people who find themselves in a psychologically exceptional situation. In Sammy's case, a mediator was probably on the way, but they did not wait for him to arrive. Nor did they let paramedics and doctors on the scene help Sammy," says mother Justine, who is calling for the resignation of Police Chief Pauuw.

"We as a family will continue to fight for justice. Those responsible for Sammy's death should be held accountable." Will charges be brought against the police officer to whom the three fatal shootings are attributed? Sammy Baker's parents have been waiting for the decision of the Amsterdam prosecutor's office since the end of last year. There is still no feedback on this.