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Hundreds demonstrate in Amsterdam for Sammy Baker

A year after the fatal shooting of the influencer from Wetzlar, a demonstration took place in the Netherlands. This has generated a lot of attention, reports Sammy's mother.

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Demonstrators demand justice for Sammy Baker in Amsterdam on Friday. Among them also the mother of Sammy Baker. Photo: Christopher Verdugo

WETZLAR/AMSTERDAM - "Justice for Sammy," hundreds of people have demanded at a demonstration on Friday in Amsterdam. In the Dutch city, fitness influencer Sammy Baker from Wetzlar was fatally shot by police exactly one year ago. An alliance of Young Amsterdam residents had called for the demonstration on August 13, the anniversary of Sammy's death.

Among the demonstrators were also Sammy Baker's parents Justine Seewald and Kai Baker, as well as other family members and friends of the young man. As Justine Seewald reported [mittelhessen.de](https://www.mittelhessen.de) on Saturday, the demonstration march, which led over about six kilometers through the city center, "attracted a lot of attention." That was good, because there are still many unanswered questions: "It is important that the people in Amsterdam know something has definitely gone out of hand here."

The demonstration had started at the "Dam," a central square in the medieval city center. After a stop in front of the police headquarters, it continued to the place where the Influencer was shot, a backyard in the "Honselersdijkstraat". As Justine Seewald further reported, 250 to 300 people participated in the action, many of them citizens of Amsterdam. Activists, for example from the group "Fridays for Future", were also present. At Dam Square, various people had initially spoken to the demonstrators, including Sammy's mother and a member of the Amsterdam City Parliament belonging to the left-wing Dutch party "bij1". Apart from that, no one from the city's officials was present, she said.

The procession, Seewald said, then started moving with drums and chants of "Justice for Sammy" from the participants.

Sammy Baker, who was from Wetzlar, had traveled to Amsterdam last year with friends to celebrate his 23rd birthday on Aug. 11. According to reports from his friends, the young men had consumed joints together on the evening of Aug. 10. As the parents say, their son had never taken drugs before. A statement that is also confirmed by a sports doctor. On the following noon (August 11) Sammy had then distanced himself from his friends and was hardly reachable by phone. On August 12, the family reported him missing to the Amsterdam police. His behavior had been "atypical for him", he seemed disoriented and confused. Sammy's mother immediately drove to the Dutch city herself.

What finally happened in the Amsterdam backyard on August 13, 2020, is recorded on a cell phone video: The confused-looking Sammy Baker apparently holds a knife to his neck. Several police officers pull out their firearms as the 23-year-old slowly walks towards and past them. Baker is heard asking for a doctor several times in the video. The police officers refuse, as well as the request of a friend who offers at the fence in front of the yard that he or mother Justine could talk to Sammy. When the seizure with a police dog fails, the dog handler knocks the Citizen from Wetzlar down from behind. A fight on the ground develops. This remains largely hidden in the video. Four shots are fired, three shots are heard, killing Sammy at a very close range.

Family seeks civil trial

For a year now, the young man's family has been fighting for the case to be fully investigated and for possible responsible parties to be held accountable. In May, the Dutch public prosecutor's office had announced that no charges would be brought against the two police officers who have killed the 23-year-old fitness influencer with three shots.

Now the family wants to move to a Dutch district court in early September, as announced by lawyer Richard Korver. The goal is to have two experts who are supposed to examine the case again, he explained recently in an interview with this newspaper. His conclusion, he said, is that the Rijksrecherche - an investigative department of the prosecutor's office - did not investigate everything in the Sammy case. The only question that was investigated, he said, was whether the police officers were allowed to shoot, in the context that Sammy was carrying a knife. But it should have been investigated much more expansively, the lawyer said. The circumstances surrounding the incident were not taken into consideration: "Why wasn't Sammy's mother, who was standing 200 meters away, called? Why wasn't the psychoambulance involved?"

There are many unanswered questions that need to be investigated by the external experts."

In the Netherlands, not only in Amsterdam, there is currently a broad public discussion about people with mental problems who get into trouble with the police, he said. "Many of these cases end fatally," Korver said. A circumstance that also concerns Sammy's mother, Justine Seewald: "My son has not harmed anyone. Something has to change or it will continue, and it could happen to anyone."