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Dispute over expert opinion in Sammy Baker's case

Since July, a graffiti by artist Willie Snyder on an exterior wall of Wetzlar's outdoor pool commemorates Sammy Baker, who was shot by two police officers in Amsterdam in August 2020.

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Since July, a graffiti by artist Willie Snyder reminds of Sammy Baker, who was shot by two policemen in Amsterdam in August 2020, on an outside wall of the outdoor swimming pool in Wetzlar. Image: Pascal Reeber

WETZLAR/AMSTERDAM - What expert witnesses and what questions will be allowed for the expert testimony in the civil trial of Wetzlar fitness influencer Sammy Baker, who was shot and killed in Amsterdam on Aug. 13, 2020? These questions were the subject of a hearing at the Rechtbank in Amsterdam, where Sammy's parents Justine Seewald-Krieger and Kai Baker and lawyer Richard Korver were also present.

Two experts were appointed

After the Dutch public prosecutor's office announced in May that it would not press charges against the two police officers who allegedly killed the 23-year-old fitness influencer with three shots, the family of the man killed wants to go to civil court. Two experts are to be commissioned with expert opinions to shed light on the case once again from all perspectives.

Two expert witnesses - a police expert and a psychiatrist - agreed to the trial. However, the founder of the psychoambulance favored by Sammy Baker's family - who was on the spot on August 13, 2020, but was not allowed to see Sammy - was not admitted, reports Justine Seewald-Krieger.

At the hearing in the Rechtbank - which is considered the court of first instance in the Netherlands in the area of civil law - there had not yet been any agreement on the questions on which the experts are to base their expert opinions. Among other things, it will be discussed how, when and by whom an ambulance was requested and how the dog handler was deployed. For the second expert opinion, questions regarding the use of the ambulance and the psychoambulance will be the focus. Thus, it is to be clarified which information these were called with to the scene, why the ambulance and the coworkers were not used and how the co-operation between police and psychoambulance is judged. The decision on which questions will be admitted is to be made on October 21.

What is the next step in the Sammy Baker case? First, the testimony of an employee of the psychoambulance is still pending, then the experts can start working on the expert reports. Sammy's mother expects the civil trial to possibly begin in the spring of 2022.

The decision on the questions will be made at the end of October

The family's Dutch lawyer, Richard Korver, had criticized the prosecution's action earlier. He said the only question the prosecution had allowed to be investigated was whether the police officers were allowed to shoot, against the background that Sammy was carrying a knife. According to his mother, it was a carving knife she had given him when he was 12 years old. However, the investigation should have been much more comprehensive, the lawyer said. The circumstances of the incident had not been taken into account, he said.