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Sammy Baker case: Defeat for Amsterdam police chief

The parents of Wetzlar influencer Sammy Baker-who was shot-have won a victory before the National Police Complaints Board in The Hague.

By Tanja Freudenmann 22.06.2022 - 14:15



In Wetzlar, Germany, a graffiti on an outside wall of the Wetzlar outdoor pool commemorates Sammy Baker, who was shot by two police officers in Amsterdam in August 2020. Archive photo: Pascal Reeber

WETZLAR/AMSTERDAM/DEN HAAG - Defeat for Amsterdam's police chief Frank Paauw: The Independent Complaints Committee of the National Police considers the complaint of the parents of Sammy Baker, an influencer from Wetzlar who was shot dead by Dutch police officers in Amsterdam on August 13, 2020, to be well-founded.

According to the committee, the police chief "did not act with due diligence" with his statements on the case. In a first reaction Sammy's parents show relief and gratitude.

The parents of the 23-year-old Wetzlar resident had already filed a complaint against Paauw at the beginning of May last year. They want a statement to be corrected by

Paauw, published shortly after the incident in the Dutch daily newspaper "Het Parool". In the article, the police chief was quoted saying that one of his officers had been "stabbed in his vest with a knife by the suspect." He later cited the two officers who allegedly fired the shots as the source before the complaints board. Sammy Baker's parents are appalled by this statement, saying Paauw influenced the investigation.

The National Police Complaints Board has now ruled in favor of the parents, saying Paauw "used overly strong language" in the interview. By stating alleged facts "instead of, for example, quoting the sources he cited," the committee says he "failed to act with due diligence in this extremely sensitive matter."

The committee could understand that the police chief "felt the need to come forward to defuse the storm that had arisen in the (social) media." As police chief of the Amsterdam unit, he had to be aware of the effect "that such factual statements by him could have in the media."

In front of the complaints committee, Paauw had admitted that the forensic medical examination had shown that the vest had not been damaged by knife wounds. But that does not mean the vest was not hit, Paauw said. In addition, damage was found, he said. "It is likely that this damage is due to wear and tear. However, it cannot be ruled out that they were caused by the knife," Paauw said. The committee considered the statements "too strong."

"We are grateful and relieved that the Appeals Committee ruled in our favor," said parents Justine Seewald-Krieger and Kai Baker. Paauw had claimed in "Het Parool" on Aug. 15, 2020, based on the statements of both shooters, that his men had to shoot because Sammy had stabbed a police officer in the vest. However, the policeman in question was not questioned until August 19.

Forensics prove vests not damaged by knife

"The vest has been examined twice by forensics and shows no damage attributable to a knife. The contrast between the officer's testimony and the results of the forensic examination speaks volumes," Baker said. That Paauw continues to hold that the vest could have been touched by the knife is not believed even by the complaint committee, Seewald-Krieger says. "It's ridiculous, but they constructed this story to justify the shooting." She said her son had not attacked anyone, was in an exceptional mental situation and needed help.

"We are now hoping not only that something will change within the police, but that our case will take a new turn and the civil case will turn into a criminal case after all. We are not giving up," Seewald-Krieger said. The committee also considers the second part of the complaint to be justified, according to which its processing took longer than prescribed.