

Sammy Baker: Shot by police - 2 years later, fight for justice continues

Elena Behnke – August 11, 2022



Today, on August 11, Sammy Baker would have turned 25. To celebrate his birthday two years ago, he traveled to Amsterdam with friends. On August 13, he was shot dead there by the police. - A comment by Elena Behnke.

Sammy Baker was a fitness coach and influencer. His family describes him as polite and respectful. Being an athlete to whom his health was extremely important, which is why he did not use drugs himself. Sammy grew up in Wetzlar and had African-American roots, which gives the crime an additional racist background.

The family of the Influencer is still fighting for justice today - two years after his death - because his killer, a police officer, was never punished. Sammy's mother contacted Perspective Online to bring attention to the case.

Two years ago, he traveled to Amsterdam with his friends to celebrate his 23rd birthday. They spent the evening before in a coffee shop, where Sammy had his first contact with cannabis in his life. It seems obvious that Sammy did not tolerate the substance and developed a cannabis-induced psychosis as a result of the consumption.

He exhibited paranoid behavior, distanced himself from his friends the following day, and eventually became unreachable, so his family reported him missing to the Amsterdam police. Sammy's mother also immediately traveled after him to search for her son herself.

Together with his friends, they succeeded in doing so. Sammy seemed desperate, restless and suspicious. He refused to come home with them. When police officers happened to be nearby, they were called in in the hope that they would support the mother and friends in this desperate situation.

When „your friend and supporter” commits murder

But what happened next is part of a continuous cycle of deadly police violence that so often happens to those most in need of medical attention and unprotected by the armed authorities. Because it was obvious that Sammy was confused, disoriented, and panicked at the appearance of the police.

Instead of de-escalating, he was surrounded by a massive police force. At this point, there was no danger to anyone else - contrary to the police's argumentation, which was the well-tried self-defense lie. On the contrary, Sammy posed a danger exclusively to himself by turning a knife on himself.

Several times he asked for help and asked for a doctor. This was refused by the police officers. Several times it was made clear by the officer in charge that Sammy should be treated like a patient, but the psycho-ambulance team, which is specially trained for this purpose, was sent away again by the police.

Several times it was the mother, as well as one of the friends, who offered help to the police, in order to have a calming effect on Sammy, because the police were obviously unable and unwilling to do so. Instead, the aggressive mood was raised higher and higher, until they finally overpowered Sammy from behind and fixed him on the ground.

That Sammy defended himself is the natural reaction of someone who is violently restrained. None of the officers were injured, and yet shots were fired. Three times. Not to the extremities, but fatal shots to the chest and abdomen.

After these descriptions, for which there are several witnesses, you would think that the obviously wrong actions of the authorities and the fatal shots would be thoroughly processed and the perpetrators punished. But as it happens when police officers commit murder, this did not happen.

There were no witness interviews with the residents who had observed the crime, and the bodycam that could have been evaluated was, appropriately enough, "malfunctioning". The public prosecutor, Anne-Marie Ruijs-Verweij, did not bring charges and closed the case, accepting the police's argument that they had acted in self-defense. The shooter remains unpunished to this day. And Sammy is not an isolated case.

The recent events in Dortmund, where 16-year-old Mohammed D. was shot dead by the police, shows depressing parallels. Like Mohammed D., Sammy was also in a state of psychological emergency. In both cases, the police were called for help. For both of them, it meant death.

Sammy's mother writes to Perspektive Online: "Police - your friend and supporter? To me, they are not, at least since 08/13/2020, when my son [Sammy] was shot and killed. (...) Under the cover of the rule of law, murder is going on blithely!"

On August 13 - the second anniversary of Sammy's death - a memorial vigil will be held in his memory at the Brockhausbrunnen in front of Karstadt on the Zeil in Frankfurt am Main from 11 am to 5 pm.

So the fight for justice is not over. And even if, in case of doubt, justice is always on the side of the state authorities and not on our side, it must not end here. We cannot trust in the state and therefore must take it into our own hands to call all these acts what they are: state murder.