

'Top secret deal' reached in civil case against police

BY MARTIN DERBYSHIRE
Staff Writer

A confidential settlement has been reached in a \$3.3-million wrongful death suit filed by the mother of a Markham teenager shot and killed by a York Regional Police officer in 1996.

Shaheen Kamadia would not divulge details of the settlement with York Regional Police in the shooting death of her son, Faraz Suleman, except to say both sides had reached a "top-secret deal".

A joint news release said, "the lawsuit has been dismissed on consent without any finding of liability".

Bound by an agreement not to release any details or comment about the settlement, Ms

Kamadia's lawyer, Amani Oakley, did address her clients' feelings.

"Apart from the settlement, there is no closure here. It is still a situation where a family lost a son and that hasn't gone away," she said. "For the family and friends, there is no closure."

York Regional Police Sgt. Bob Wiche shot Mr. Suleman in the neck through the driver's side window of a stolen Jeep Grand Cherokee early in the morning of June 19, 1996.

Ms Kamadia had helped police set up a sting operation to arrest her son after she found out he was wanted in a series of air-pistol carjackings.

Mr. Suleman was supposed to be arrested peacefully outside a Markham doughnut

shop where a family friend had arranged a meeting under the guise of buying the stolen Jeep.

But the plan went wrong and a chase ensued, leading to the shooting.

Sgt. Wiche claimed his gun went off after he was hit by the Jeep when he tried to stop Mr. Suleman from fleeing.

After an initial Special Investigations Unit probe into the shooting, Sgt. Wiche was charged with manslaughter, but the charges were thrown out of court following a week-long preliminary hearing.

A judge ruled there was insufficient evidence to send the case to trial.

The case made national headlines when Sgt. Wiche was attacked by a knife-wielding

youth who stabbed him in the neck outside a courtroom during the preliminary hearing.

A 15-year-old Markham boy, who knew Mr. Suleman, was later sentenced to two years in custody and one year of probation for the attack. He cannot be identified under the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

Following his exoneration, Sgt. Wiche filed a \$30-million malicious prosecution suit against the province and the SIU, which he subsequently lost.

He also sued his employer, York Regional Police, claiming it failed to provide proper court security. That case was settled when the force agreed to assist with a Workplace Safety and Insurance Board claim.

Sgt. Wiche remains a York police officer.

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