

**PRESS ADVISORY**  
**BEAU BAKER INQUEST VERDICT**  
**JURY RULES DEATH A SUICIDE**

**March 31, 2023**

A five-person jury in the Inquest into the death of Beau Aaron Baker has delivered a verdict of suicide. Through its verdict, the jury found that Beau's actions on the night of April 2, 2015, contributed to his death. Beau suffered multiple gunshot wounds, one of which was fatal, inflicted by an officer of the Waterloo Regional Police Service, on the steps in front of his apartment building in Kitchener, Ontario. The jury heard evidence about Beau's repeated attempts to get assistance for his mental health over the years and how he was unable to access the kind of help that could have changed the trajectory of his life.

The jury made twenty-four recommendations directed at reforms to the mental health and child welfare systems in Ontario, particularly to address the needs of young people suffering mental illness. The jury also recognized the need to revamp the police curriculum across the province in respect of training on de-escalation and interactions with those in crisis.

Jackie Baker, the mother of Beau Baker, commented: **"We are deeply concerned by the message that the jury's verdict of suicide sends to other people experiencing crisis and interacting with police. However, I believe that if Beau had access to the types of services that the jury calls for in its recommendations, they would have changed the trajectory of Beau's life. I hope the recommendations will be implemented and prevent another family from having to go through what we have gone through."**

Asha James, who acts for the Family of Beau Baker, stated, **"While we are disappointed that the jury did not find that Beau's death was a homicide, the jury's verdict is a recognition that Beau was a person suffering from mental illness who was crying out for help. Tragically, Beau never received the help he so desperately needed. It is clear from this jury's verdict and recommendations that we need to change the way we look at those suffering with mental illness in this province and recognize it as a health issue instead of a criminal issue. The jury provided a roadmap for how to improve these systems and remedy these failings. We hope that the provincial ministries involved, the children's aid societies, and the police services in Ontario will follow these recommendations to the letter. Without systemic reform, and sufficient funding, these systems will continue to fail young people like Beau Baker."**

The family will not be making any further comments on this matter. The inquest verdict can be accessed through the Falconers LLP website.

*For further information, please see our website at [www.falconers.ca](http://www.falconers.ca).*