

## DETROIT

# Detroit settles case of 7-year-old girl shot during police raid for \$8.25 million

**[Elisha Anderson](#)** Detroit Free Press

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Days before a civil trial was scheduled to begin, an \$8.25 million settlement has been reached in a lawsuit over a 7-year-old girl who was fatally shot during a Detroit police raid.

Aiyana Stanley-Jones was killed when a round from Detroit Police Officer Joseph Weekley's gun struck her in the head as she slept on a couch during the raid in 2010.

"Aiyana's death was a tragic loss for her family and has been a heavy burden on our community," a statement from Detroit Corporation Counsel Lawrence Garcia said. "We believe (the) settlement is fair because it balances the needs of Aiyana's family and our responsibility for the city's finances. We hope this resolution will provide everyone involved a measure of closure."

Attorney Geoffrey Fieger represents Aiyana's family members and said they are pleased the case has been resolved after almost a decade.

"Nothing is going to bring Aiyana back," Fieger said Thursday. "It allows the family to have some closure."

The settlement, which still must be approved by City Council, is recognition by the city of its responsibility in the case, he said.

A civil trial was scheduled to start in Wayne County Circuit Court on Monday.

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Timeline in Weekley case

In 2011, Weekley was indicted by a one-person grand jury on charges of involuntary manslaughter, a felony, and careless discharge of a firearm causing death, a misdemeanor. A

judge later dismissed the felony charge, citing a lack of evidence.

Weekley was tried twice, and both trials ended in hung juries. Prosecutors then said he would not be tried again.

During the trials, prosecutors accused Weekley of being negligent, careless and reckless in the execution of a search warrant for a murder suspect and said Weekley should have followed his training and kept his finger off the trigger of his gun.

Weekley's attorney argued the shooting was a tragic accident and told jurors that Aiyana's grandmother, Mertilla Jones, had contact with Weekley's gun and it discharged. Jones denied that.

Weekley, who is currently an officer with the Detroit Police Department, could not immediately be reached for comment Thursday.

He was a member of the elite Special Response Team when the raid occurred on May 16, 2010.

Police entered the lower flat of a two-unit home on the city's east side looking for murder suspect Chauncey Owens while a crew working for the TV show "The First 48" filmed outside. Owens was arrested in the upper flat and later convicted of murdering 17-year-old Je'Rean Blake outside a Detroit party store.

Aiyana's father, Charles Jones, was convicted of second-degree murder. Prosecutors said he provided the gun used to kill Blake.

*Contact Elisha Anderson: eanderson@freepress.com or 313-222-5144.*