

# THE WINDSOR STAR

## **Police watchdog's advice called 'unethical' Investigator urged deal, trial told**

Trevor Wilhelm, The Windsor Star  
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An investigator with a provincial watchdog agency told Windsor police they should have tried to broker a deal with an alleged victim of police brutality sooner in order to nip the case in the bud.

That was the allegation that came out of a Police Act hearing Monday against Staff Sgt. Paul Bridgeman and Staff Sgt. Pat Keane. They are charged with discreditable conduct in relation to an altercation between Det. David Van Buskirk and Dr. Tyceer Abouhassan.

Van Buskirk is charged with assault for the alleged beating of Abouhassan. Bridgeman and Keane are accused of trying to broker a deal with the doctor to make that charge go away.

Bernie Mueller from Hamilton, with the Office of the Independent Police Review Director, was an investigator on the Keane and Bridgeman case.

Windsor police Insp. John McQuire said Monday that Mueller interviewed him about the case. McQuire said that after the interview was done, and the tape recorder was off, Mueller told him that in Hamilton they would have "marched" the complainant into the chief's office and "taken care of it right there."

"To me it meant we should have went upstairs with the complainant and brokered some kind of deal," McQuire said under questioning from a defence lawyer. "That's unethical and that's not what we do here."

Abouhassan, who is visually impaired, suffered a broken nose, head injuries and a detached retina during a run-in with Van Buskirk April 22, 2010, outside the Jackson Park Medical Centre.

Abouhassan was initially charged with assaulting a police officer, but that charge has been stayed. Van Buskirk now faces criminal charges.

Police have remained tight lipped about what sparked the confrontation between the doctor and the detective. But a \$12.4-million lawsuit launched by Abouhassan alleges Van Buskirk approached him after the detective's daughter was harassed by a man at the park.

When Abouhassan said he didn't harass anyone, Van Buskirk grabbed him and beat him unconscious, then continued beating him when he was on the ground, according to the lawsuit.

Keane and Bridgeman allegedly told Abouhassan that if he dropped the complaint against Van Buskirk, the assault charge against him would go away.

Defence lawyers also called Windsor police Insp. Rick Facciolo to the stand Monday. Facciolo said Mueller came to visit him in March after interviewing Keane.

Mueller also told him that in Hamilton they would have "got in front of it" if something like this happened, Facciolo testified. The inspector said Mueller told him they would have brought Abouhassan to the chief and "apologies would be made."

"What Staff Sgt. Bridgeman and Staff Sgt. Keane were being accused of, I was being asked to do the same thing," said Facciolo. "I was put off."

Const. Ed Parent, administrator with the Windsor Police Association, said Mueller told him "I can't believe you did not nip this in the bud."

Earlier Monday, Abouhassan's criminal lawyer Anthony Barile said under cross examination from lawyers for Bridgeman and Keane that he believes both officers acted above board. He said he and his client filed complaints against Van Buskirk to the Special Investigations Unit, which is the province's police watchdog, and the Windsor police professional standards branch. But Barile said he didn't make a complaint against Bridgeman or Keane.

Barile said he believed Keane was "interested in protecting Det. Van Buskirk's interests," but added the officer never suggested covering anything up. Barile even called Keane a "dear friend," and agreed that he was honest, ethical and fair.

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