

Canada

Police officer not guilty in high-speed crash

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A judge has ruled that a police officer in Edmonton did not make a criminal error when he crashed his unmarked car into a civilian vehicle, killing a young boy and leaving another disabled.

Justice Scott Brooker said Const. Ken Brander did make an error in judgment for not having his lights and sirens on as he chased two cars racing each other toward an intersection.

Brander's car was travelling 120 km/h when it stuck a car turning left in front of him, cutting it in two.

Giovanni Aleman, 7, was severely burned in the crash and died four days later. His younger brother Jonathan was also badly burned and had to have part of his left arm and the fingers on his right hand amputated.

No criminal negligence

The judge acquitted Brander of criminal negligence causing death and three counts of criminal negligence causing bodily harm.

Brooker said Brander was not negligent enough to be criminally responsible for the death and injuries.

Brander's lawyer Alex Pringle said his client may still be held responsible in a civil suit the family of the victims has filed.

The family is suing the Edmonton Police Service and Brander for more than \$6 million.

Peter Ratcliff, president of the Edmonton Police Service, said the judge was wrong to suggest that Brander was negligent at all.

"Our members do this thing a hundred times a day... and nothing tragic occurs. To say that it was negligent was a bit of a stretch," said Ratcliff.

The police service said it would review the judge's decision and determine if any new rules or policies should be adopted.

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