

Gun-Maker To Pay \$600K In Gun-Death Lawsuit

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BOSTON (AP) — A Massachusetts gun-maker has agreed to pay nearly \$600,000 to the families of one man who was killed and another man who was wounded in a shooting involving a gun allegedly stolen from the company, a national gun-control group announced Tuesday.

Danny Guzman, 26, was slain outside a Worcester nightclub in 1999. Armando Maisonet was wounded in the same shooting.

In a 2002 wrongful death suit against Kahr Arms, of Worcester, Guzman's family alleged that the gun was stolen and later sold by a Kahr employee with a criminal record.

The Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence announced the settlement in Washington, D.C., calling it the largest damages payment ever made by a gun manufacturer accused of negligence leading to the criminal use of a gun.

Guzman's relatives said in their lawsuit that Kahr should have done employee background checks and used metal detectors to prevent guns from being smuggled out of its Worcester factory.

The lawsuit alleged that Kahr employee Mark Cronin — who had a drug problem and a criminal record — stole the gun before it had a serial number stamped on it and sold it to Robert Jachimczyk for a gram of cocaine. The man charged in the shooting, Edwin Novas, then bought the gun from Jachimczyk for some heroin, according to the lawsuit. Cronin pleaded guilty to the gun theft and was sentenced to two years in prison. Novas was never caught; he is still listed on the Worcester Police Department's website as being wanted in the unresolved killing.

The settlement covers separate lawsuits filed by Guzman's family and Maisonet, who was wounded in the shoulder in the shooting. Under the agreement, the Guzman family will receive 70 percent of the settlement, while Maisonet will receive 30 percent.

"This settlement sends a strong signal to gun manufacturers nationwide that they will pay the consequences for their misconduct if they operate without regard for public safety," said Daniel Vice, senior attorney of the Brady Center's Legal Action Project.

Representatives of Kahr Arms could not immediately be reached for comment Tuesday. Messages were left at the company's Worcester factory.

Guzman was shot and killed in front of a Worcester nightclub on Dec. 24, 1999. Six days later, police discovered a 9mm Kahr Arms handgun behind an apartment

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building near where Guzman was shot. The loaded gun had been found by a 4-year-old child who lived in the building.

Lawyers for Guzman's family said he was not the intended target of the shooting.

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