



Snooze time

Getting in a nap when you can is one of the best things you can do for your well-being.

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Going out in style

Cal Ripken Jr., who is retiring at the end of the season, hits a home run in his final All-Star Game appearance for the victorious American League squad.

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Leaf family unhappy with board's findings

Clearing of officer in shooting not shocking to man's relatives

BY KEN de la BASTIDE
Senior Reporter

Anderson resident Larry Leaf said he wasn't surprised by the decision of a Marion County police review board to clear a sheriff's deputy who shot and killed his son.

The five-member Fire Arms Review Board cleared Marion County Deputy Ron Shelnett when it decided his actions were proper the night John Leaf, 35, was shot and killed in his Indianapolis apartment in May.

A grand jury last month refused to indict Shelnett, who shot Leaf, when Leaf lunged at officers with an 8-inch knife in his apartment. Officers had entered the apartment because neighbors mistook the stockbroker for a bur-



John Leaf

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Leaf

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glar.

The review board heard from Shelnett and training officers from the state police academy and other departments about whether they believed the officer acted correctly.

"It's not a surprise," said Leaf. "We expected that. There was no testimony on John's behalf.

"It's a disappointment from the perspective that Deputy Shelnett said on television that in the same circumstances he would do the same thing again," said Leaf. "It's positively scary."

Leaf said there has to be a better way to protect an innocent person in his own home.

The Leaf family has joined with a group of Indianapolis residents calling for a civilian review board and better training for Marion County Sheriff's Department deputies.

"It shows the points in our platform are valid and applicable almost daily in Marion County," said Leaf. "The police are supposed to de-escalate a situation and not come in and escalate it."

Indianapolis attorney Stephen Wagner, representing the Leaf family in a tort claim notice filed with the Marion County Sheriff's Department, said the outcome of the Fire Arms Review Board was anticipated.

"The Sheriff's Department is reviewing themselves," he said. "It's like the fox guarding the henhouse. Sheriff Jack Cottey already voiced support of the officer's actions. The police are reviewing their own actions."

Wagner said a private investigator continues to investigate the incidents of the night that John Leaf died.

"We know that none of the neighbors heard police identify themselves," he said. "The neighbors heard glass breaking and could hear John's television, but not the officers identifying themselves."

Wagner said the Marion County Sheriff's Department has 90 days to respond to the notice of tort claim.

Leaf's family has filed an intent to file a wrongful death lawsuit against the sheriff's department, claiming Leaf's death resulted from negligence by Shelnett and inadequate department training.

Wagner said the intent is to file a federal civil rights violation claim against the department.

"The Fire Arms Review Board conducted the meeting different than normally," he said. "They called in outside law enforcement experts to testify.

"I found it strange that off-duty police conducted a prayer vigil outside where the review board was meeting for the families, but never contacted the Leaf family."