

Murder victim's parents sue police for 'ignoring threats by his killer'

By Sean O'Neill

A POLICE force is being sued in an unprecedented legal action under the Human Rights Act for failing to protect the life of a murder victim.

The parents of Giles Van Colle, 25, an optician shot dead with a silver bullet by a former employee, will seek unlimited damages in the High Court next week from Hertfordshire Constabulary.

Irwin Van Colle, a Tory councillor in Brent, North London, and his wife Corinne allege that police knew that their son's killer had made explicit threats against him but took no action to prevent the killing.

Giles Van Colle was to have appeared as a witness against Daniel Brougham, the gunman, in a fraud trial.

A month before the murder, Brougham called him and said: "I know where you live. I know where your businesses are and where your parents live. If you don't drop the charges you will be in danger."

A police officer has been disciplined for failing to investigate Brougham and arrest him. If the Van Colle family is successful, it will open the door to a new type of legal challenge against police forces that make errors in criminal cases.

Brougham, using a false name, had been employed by Giles Van Colle as a laboratory technician for three months during 1999 but was dismissed after equipment was stolen.

In February 2000 he was arrested and charged with theft from Giles Van Colle's business and other practices.

The officer leading the fraud inquiry was Detective Con-

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stable David Ridley. Brougham denied the charges and was freed on unconditional bail.

Between August and November 2000, Brougham made a series of attempts to bribe, threaten and intimidate Giles Van Colle and other witnesses.

Giles Van Colle's car was destroyed in an arson attack. Another witness's business premises were set alight, as was his wife's car. Two weeks before he was shot, Giles Van Colle answered a call in which Brougham shouted: "Get them to drop the charges you mother*****. Do you hear me? Do you hear me?"

impose conditions." The writ alleges that Giles Van Colle's death "was caused by the failure of the defendant [Hertfordshire Police] to take any or any adequate preventative operational measures to protect Giles's life".

The claim is made under Article Two of the European Convention on Human Rights, the right to life, and Article

Eight, the right to family life. Mr Ridley was investigated by the Police Complaints Authority and charged before a disciplinary panel.

The officer, who still serves with the force, was found guilty in June 2003 of failing to perform his duties diligently, failing to investigate thoroughly the intimidation of witnesses and of failing to

arrest Brougham. Neither Mr and Mrs Irwin Van Colle nor the Hertfordshire force was prepared to comment before the full hearing.

Brougham, 36, who used a variety of names but was born in Iran as Ali Amelzadeh, was convicted of Giles Van Colle's murder at the Old Bailey in March 2002. His appeal was dismissed in May 2003.



Giles Van Colle: shot dead in car after repeated threats

 SUSAN'S

 PETER'S

 VICTORIA'S