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## 'No-knock' victim's family seeks deal

By [Eric Stirgus](#)

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The spokesman for the family of a 92-year-old woman gunned down by a rogue Atlanta police drug squad two years ago put pressure Friday on city officials to settle their lawsuit against the city.

"This family does not need to go through a long and bitter [court] process,," the Rev. Markel Hutchins said outside the northwest Atlanta home of Kathryn Johnston, pushing for a quick settlement.

The Johnston shooting and the subsequent revelations stunned many Atlantans. On Nov. 21, 2006, police used a "no-knock" warrant to gain entry into Johnston's home. Johnston, apparently surprised by the intruders, fired a gun at the officers. The officers shot her twice in the chest.

An investigation ensued, and officers admitted they cut corners, faked search warrants, planted drugs and raided homes because of pressure from supervisors to make arrests.

Three officers pleaded guilty to violating Johnston's civil rights and are awaiting sentencing. Police Chief Richard Pennington disbanded the department's narcotics unit and filled it last year with a new batch of officers. The Atlanta City Council created a civilian review board to investigate alleged police misconduct.

Johnston's family filed a lawsuit against the city last November. Hutchins said the city has not negotiated in good faith with Johnston family representatives. He delivered a letter Friday afternoon to the mayor and city council offices outlining his concerns.

City Attorney Beth Chandler said settlement discussions will occur "at an appropriate point during the litigation process."

Hutchins did not say how much money the family wants from the city, but he referred to a case several years ago of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System, which was ordered to pay \$18 million to white defendants in a reverse-discrimination lawsuit.

"The circumstances in that case were a lot less egregious than what happened to [Johnston]," Hutchins said.

Hutchins said the city must do right by Johnston, although Atlanta is facing a projected budget shortfall of at least

\$50 million.

“We understand that the city is in a difficult place, but there’s a debt that’s owed to the family of Kathryn Johnston and that debt must be paid,” he said.

Hutchins said the family also wants a formal apology and the city’s help in creating a memorial honoring Johnston.

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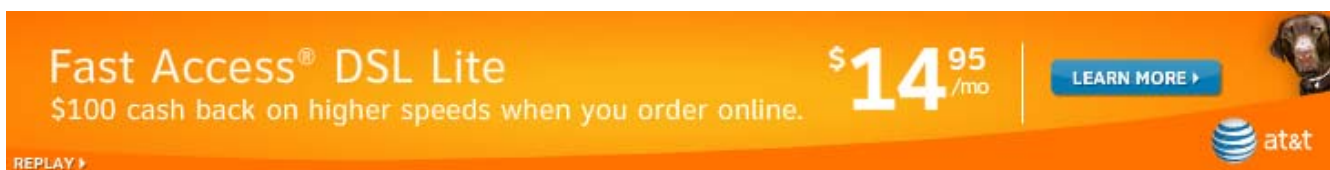
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