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Four Bucks County families have settled their wrongful-death lawsuits against Cosmo DiNardo

Terms of the settlements remained confidential. DiNardo is serving four consecutive life sentences in state prison.

by Vinny Vella
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The families of four teens killed by Cosmo DiNardo in 2017 have settled their wrongful-death lawsuits against him and his parents.

Terms of the settlements, reached earlier this month in lawsuits filed in Common Pleas Court in Philadelphia, are confidential, court records show.

DiNardo, 26, remains in custody at the state correctional facility at Phoenix, serving four consecutive life sentences after pleading guilty in 2018 to killing Mark Sturgis, Thomas C. Meo, Dean A. Finocchiaro, and Jimi Patrick on a farm his parents owned in Solebury Township.

The lawsuits, filed by the victims' families, contended that DiNardo's parents, Sandra and Antonio DiNardo, should have barred him from accessing guns, ATVs and construction equipment because of his earlier erratic behavior and commitment to mental-health institutions. One of the plaintiffs' lawyers, in announcing the the filing of the lawsuits in 2018, said DiNardo's parents supplied him with a "playland for illegal acts."

In July 2017, DiNardo lured the teens to the farm under the guise of selling them marijuana. He shot and killed three of the victims, and his cousin, Sean Kratz, killed the fourth. DiNardo then tried to burn the bodies in a pig roaster, then used a backhoe to dig graves and bury the corpses on his parents' sprawling farm.

When the boys disappeared, investigators searched for them for days in a determined hunt that drew national and international media attention. State and federal investigators scoured the region and finally focused in on the remote Solebury property, where they used shovels, metal detectors, cadaver dogs, and excavators before DiNardo — in a bid to avoid the death penalty — eventually disclosed the location of the bodies.

In the lawsuits, lawyers for the victims' families said DiNardo's parents should have known of his propensity for violence and aberrant behavior. A year before the murders, DiNardo was

arrested for carrying a shotgun around his Bensalem neighborhood and had been barred from the campuses of his high school and college for his disruptive behavior, according to court filings.

The DiNardo family's attorney, Jeffrey Ogren, declined to comment Thursday, citing the confidentiality of the settlement.

Tom Kline, who represented the Finocchiaro family, said the end of the lawsuit "brings a measure of closure to the Finochiarro and all of families impacted this tragedy, which sadly and tragically resulted in so much suffering and loss."

Attorneys for the Sturgis, Meo, and Patrick families did not immediately return requests for comment.

Kratz was convicted of first-degree murder, and is serving a life sentence in state prison.

The final two victims, Sturgis and Meo, were killed days later. DiNardo fatally shot Sturgis and shot and wounded Meo before crushing him with a backhoe owned by his parents.

DiNardo then tried to burn the bodies and used the backhoe to bury the corpses on the farm.