

Fairfax Rejects \$30,000

By Douglas C. Lyons
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The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors yesterday unanimously rejected a \$30,000 damage claim brought against the county by a husband and his wife whose home was mistakenly raided last January by county police narcotics agents.

The county, which had offered Q. Russell and Gladys Hatchl \$2,000 to pay for the damage police caused at their town house near Ft. Belvoir,

instead turned the their claim over to the county government's insurance company.

The Supervisors' refusal to settle the claim leaves the Hatchls' \$60,000 damage suit pending in Fairfax Circuit Court. The Hatchls, who live at 4516 Arendale Sq., have sued 10 police officers who allegedly took part in the raid, County board chairman Jean R. Packard and County Executive Robert W. Wilson.

"The insurance company has negotiated with us before," said Royce Lee Givens,

Jr., the attorney for the Hatchls. "They essentially gave us a handshake, offered to fix the door, and an additional \$500. They went as high as \$2,000, but that doesn't compare to the ramifications of the case."

County Attorney F. Lee Ruck said yesterday that he told the board to reject the \$30,000 settlement following several months of discussion between his office and Givens. Ruck said that he could find no justification for awarding a

Claim in Wrong-Home Raid

settlement of \$30,000 and that he knew nothing of the Hatchls' suit until he read about it in the newspapers.

According to the Hatchls' suit, county police officers knocked on and then kicked in the door to the Hatchls' three-story town house on Jan. 14 around 11 p.m. that time police admitted that the officers had raided the wrong house and that the suspected hashish and cocaine they were looking for were supposed to be a block away in a nearly identical townhouse.

"We knew we were in the wrong house when we heard a baby cry," said Lt. Jackie Watts at the time of the raid.

"Our informant hadn't said anything about a child in the house." The Hatchls have a 26-month-old son, Bryan.

The officers left the Hatchls' after apologizing profusely and offering to repair the front door, Hatchl said. Officers then went to the town house where they expected to find drugs, but

found no drugs there either.

"Things got kind of quiet when the police officer read the wrong address," Hatchl said yesterday while recalling the incident. "It's kind of funny but at the time I was really mad. If I was the type to carry a gun we might have had an a la Patty Hearst shoot out.

Police had a search warrant for the town house near the Hatchls.

The police entered the Hatch's townhouse about 40 seconds after knocking on

the door according to Hatch's suit. The suit charged that the officers were "willful and intentional in committing a trespass, which was done with such reckless disregard for ordinary care and caution."

"I can still shut my eyes and hear the sound of the front door being kicked in," said Mrs. Hatchl, recalling the break-in. "It was a frightening experience and I can't really explain it. We just hope that something like this doesn't happen again."