

# Former Fla. sheriff's deputy denied bond in killing of Black airman

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REUTERS

A Florida judge denied bond on Tuesday for a former sheriff's deputy charged in the May shooting death of a Black man serving in the U.S. Air Force, who answered a knock on his apartment door while holding a gun pointed down, according to jail records and media reports.

Eddie Duran, a former Okaloosa County sheriff's deputy who was fired by the agency after the shooting, was arrested on Monday in the death of Roger Fortson, 23, in Fort Walton Beach, jail records show. The records identified Duran as white.

Prosecutors charged Duran, 38, with one count of manslaughter with a firearm on Friday. The charge carries a maximum sentence of 30 years.

In asking the judge to set bail for Duran on Tuesday, his lawyer Rod Smith told the court his client was not a flight risk, ABC News reported. Smith was not immediately available for further comment.

State prosecutors argued that the judge should deny Duran pretrial release because of a Florida statute that requires defendants charged with a first-degree felony to remain in custody, media reports said.

On the night of Fortson's killing, May 3, someone from his apartment complex called a non-emergency sheriff's department phone line to report that they heard a couple fighting in the air-



**Chantemekki Fortson, center, mother of U.S. airman Roger Fortson, listens as attorney Ben Crump, left, speaks in Atlanta on June 3 following the firing of Okaloosa County Sheriff's Deputy Eddie Duran.** ALYSSA POINTER/REUTERS FILE

man's apartment, according to a report by the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office.

The Fortson family's attorney, Ben Crump, told reporters that the airman was on a video call with his girlfriend when he heard a knock on his door. He asked, "Who is it?" but did not get a response, Crump said, citing the girlfriend's account.

Fortson then retrieved a gun he owned legally and walked toward the door, Crump said.

Police body-camera footage shows Fortson opened the door while holding his gun pointed down in his right hand and left hand up toward the deputy, according to media accounts. Fortson was then fatally shot. Police said no one else was in his home at the time.