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Officer in Shooting Death of Bennie Edwards Charged with Manslaughter

February 25, 2021

Romanucci & Blandin, LLC and Ben Crump Law announce that one of the officers involved in the shooting death of Bennie Joe Edwards II in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma will face a manslaughter charge. On December 11, 2020, Edwards was having a mental health episode in a parking lot and three officers on the scene were unable to provide the assistance he needed. The encounter ended with Edwards being tasered three times and shot five times, resulting in his death. An autopsy determined those multiple gunshot wounds were the cause of death, and the manner of death was homicide. The 60-year-old had a health history that includes bipolar disorder and schizophrenia.

Today, Oklahoma City District Attorney David Prater filed documents that charged Sgt. Clifford Holman will be charged with manslaughter. The other two officers will not be charged at this time.

“Oklahoma City officials need to take full responsibility for what happened to Bennie Edwards in that parking lot, and today’s manslaughter charge is an important step in that process,” said Attorney Ben Crump of Ben Crump Law. “The continued mistreatment of Black men at the hands of police officers is a national tragedy, and the decision to charge one of the officers reflects the gravity of the situation.”

“Accountability is critical if we are ever to rebuild community trust in law enforcement. Officers must be held accountable when they use excessive force and operate outside the bounds of the law and violate a citizen’s fundamental constitutional rights,” said Antonio M. Romanucci, Founding Partner of Romanucci & Blandin, LLC.”

“Our family is devastated by the tragic treatment my father received by police when what he really needed was medical assistance. But we take some comfort today in the fact that an officer will face his day in court so the truth of that horrible encounter can come out,” said Kimberle Thompson, Edwards’ daughter.

“As a Black man whose brother died during an encounter with police, it is difficult to express the hurt and damage this has done to our family. Unfortunately, there are many other Black families who have experienced the same tragedy. It has to stop,” said Greg Edwards, Edwards’ brother.

About Ben Crump Law

Nationally renowned civil rights and personal injury attorney Ben Crump and his national network of specialized attorneys have spearheaded a legal movement to better protect the rights of marginalized citizens. He has led landscape-changing civil rights cases and represented clients in a wide range of areas including civil rights, personal injury, labor and employment, class actions, and more. Ben Crump Law is dedicated to holding the powerful accountable. For more, visit BenCrump.com or call (800) 935-8111.

About Romanucci & Blandin, LLC

Romanucci & Blandin is a Chicago-based national trial practice committed to fighting for victims of negligence, abuse and wrongful death arising from police misconduct, corporate negligence, civil rights actions, medical malpractice, mass torts and class actions. Founded in 1998, the firm is widely recognized for representing plaintiffs in numerous practice areas including: workers' compensation, pharmaceuticals, civil rights, police misconduct, excessive force, aviation, product liability and premises liability. For more information, please visit www.rblaw.net or call (312) 458-1000.