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DOTHAN EAGLE

Military will have jurisdiction in Fort Rucker child's death

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The investigation into the death of an infant child in Dale County will be handled by federal authorities.

Fort Rucker officials charged Spc. Dedrick Fisher Sr. with manslaughter Wednesday morning after his infant son, Dedrick Jr., died at Dale Medical Center on Monday.

Dale County officials said they believed Fisher Sr. shook his son, leading to the injuries, and they hoped to potentially upgrade the charges to capital murder in state court.

However, Dale County

District Attorney Kirk Adams learned late Thursday afternoon that because the alleged crime occurred on Fort Rucker, it fell under federal jurisdiction.

"Fort Rucker sent us a jurisdiction map, and the map shows that it is in the exclusive jurisdiction of the federal government," Adams said. "I can't do anything about it, period, and that's very upsetting to my office as well as the sheriff's office. I was at the hospital and saw a 5-month-old child dead, and charging someone with manslaughter, I'm not sure that was the right thing to do."

See DEATH, 7A

Death

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Adams said the exclusive federal jurisdiction news caught him and the Dale County Sheriff's Office off guard.

"The exclusive jurisdiction part of Fort Rucker was something totally new to the 10 of us that were at the hospital, and there were some folks there that had quite a bit of experience with that," Adams said. "Typically, things that happen on Fort Rucker have been in a concurrent jurisdiction, where (the military) can prosecute and we can prosecute. According to their map, there is no concurrent jurisdiction. It's their total jurisdiction."

From here, military officials will handle the investigation. All Adams can do is watch and hope.

"As a prosecutor, I want to see that justice is served, and when someone commits this type of crime, they're punished appropriately," he said. "Even though this child laid dead at the Dale County hospital, there's nothing I can do about it, and that's very disturbing. The military has capable prosecutors, and I just have to trust that they prosecute him appropriately and he doesn't receive any benefits just because he's a soldier."

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Dale county district attorney