

Martial Arts Champion Kills 'Flirter,' Risking U.S. Contract

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A Dagestani-born mixed martial arts champion may have squandered his prospects of debuting in the United States after killing a 19-year-old student with a single blow in a petty squabble.

A Moscow district court has authorized the detention of Rasul “Black Tiger” Mirzayev, 25, until Tuesday, when the defense will seek bail, Interfax said.

Mirzayev turned himself in on Friday, six days after his argument with Ivan Agafonov near the entrance of the Moscow nightclub Garage on Pushkin Square.

Agafonov flirted with Mirzayev’s girlfriend in his absence by driving a remote-controlled toy car to her and jokingly inviting her for a ride, Gazeta.ru [said](#), citing Agafonov’s friends.

After coming to the scene, Mirzayev spoke to Agafonov for several seconds before hitting him in the face and calmly walking away, Gazeta.ru said. The account appears to be confirmed by an extremely blurry [video](#) — allegedly from surveillance cameras — aired by NTV television.

Agafonov did not appear seriously injured, but died in the hospital four days later after what doctors said was a cerebellum rupture he received when he fell on the asphalt after the blow, Gazeta.ru said.

Mirzayev, who was visibly shocked during the hearing Saturday, apologized to the victim's family, saying he had no intent to kill, Interfax reported. He said he struck Agafonov after the student called his girlfriend a prostitute.

Mirzayev may face up to 15 years in prison, an investigator said at the hearing.

A world champion in sambo, Mirzayev has a professional record of five wins and zero losses in mixed martial arts. He signed with U.S.-based Bellator Fighting Championships on Tuesday, with his American debut scheduled for the fall.

The incident has fueled anti-Caucasus sentiments in the Russian blogosphere, although many bloggers have also praised Mirzayev as a "real man" for standing up for his girlfriend.

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