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AN ALL-NEW '20/20' FEATURES ASHLEY BENEFIELD TELLING HER STORY IN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH DEBORAH ROBERTS

Former Ballet Dancer at the Center of the So-Called 'Black Swan Trial,' Accused of Fatally Shooting Husband, Breaks Her Silence



ABC News*

In 2016, the once aspiring ballerina Ashley Benefield met her husband Doug, a Navy veteran and businessman, in Palm Beach, Florida. The two began a whirlwind romance and married just 13 days after meeting for the first time. While the couple set out to revolutionize the dance world with the creation of the American National Ballet, their dreams quickly unraveled when adequate funding for the company failed to materialize.

Over the next three years, the couple's tumultuous relationship would also fall apart, and in September 2020, Ashley shot Doug in her Florida home. She claimed self-defense, alleging years of domestic abuse and invoked Florida's controversial Stand Your Ground law. Doug's family and friends, however, painted a different picture, accusing Ashley of manipulation and deception and refuting the claims of domestic abuse. The case would draw national attention with Ashley being called a "Black Swan" — some seeing her as a woman who concealed her true nature behind a facade of grace and beauty, ultimately leading to Doug's untimely death and others seeing her as an alleged victim of domestic violence who was trying to protect herself.

In an exclusive interview, Benefield breaks her silence, sitting down with co-anchor Deborah Roberts to provide shocking details of the events leading up to the shooting and the continued legal battles she faces over Doug's killing.

The "20/20" episode includes interviews with Ashley's mother, Alicia Byers; Doug's daughter, Eva Benefield; assistant state attorneys Suzanne O'Donnell and Rebecca Freel; Ashley's defense attorney,

Neil Taylor; former American National Ballet principal dancer Sara Murawski; Doug's cousin Tommie Benefield; and family attorney Stephanie Murphy.

This episode of "20/20" airs **Friday, Sept. 13** (9:01-11:00 p.m. EDT), on **ABC**, next day on [Hulu](#).

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