Orleans Parish Prison inmate dies of cancer, authorities say

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John Alexcee Jr.

orleans-parish-prison-opp-exterior.jpg

An inmate being held at the Orleans Parish Prison died just before midnight Tuesday, authorities said.

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An inmate being held at the Orleans Parish Prison died late Tuesday, authorities said.

John Alexcee Jr., 50, died just before midnight, according to John Gagliano, chief investigator for the New Orleans Coroner's Office.

According to a statement from the Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office, Alexcee was diagnosed with metastatic cancer during his incarceration and died at Interim LSU Public Hospital.

Alexcee was indicted in 2010 for the rape of a woman in July 1993 after police submitted DNA evidence linking Alexcee to the case, for which he was being held on a $3 million bond.

He was awaiting trial on charges of aggravated rape and aggravated kidnapping at the time of his death.

Katie Schwartzmann, Director of the Southern Poverty Law Center in Louisiana, said that her office had received reports from the jail that Alexcee had died Tuesday evening but that they were unable to confirm his death until Wednesday morning.

"Our office worked with John for the last several months, and we are deeply saddened by his death. We again call upon the City and the Sheriff to move forward with reforms at the jail quickly. Our leaders must act to prevent any more tragic and unnecessary loss of life," Schwartzmann said.

In recent years, the mortality rate at the jail -- deaths and suicides -- has been higher than at most large jails in the country.

"While we are frustrated when one of our inmates passes away, there are instances such as when dealing with terminal cancer where medical situations are out of our control," a statement from the Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office medical director, Dr. Samuel Gore, said.

Alexcee is the 41st inmate to die while at the prison since 2006.

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