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## Samurai Sword Attacker Died of Natural Causes in Prison, Watchdog Confirms

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A newly released report from the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman has confirmed that Raymond Allison, a 47-year-old inmate with a violent criminal history, died of heart failure in his prison cell, not from drug use, as initially feared. The investigation, published this week, concluded that no psychoactive substances were detected in Allison's system, and no further action or recommendations have been made.

Toxicology reports revealed no trace of psychoactive substances (PS), commonly known as Spice, although the pathologist acknowledged that some variants of PS may go undetected.

The ombudsman's report attributed Allison's death to ischaemic heart disease, noting the presence of methadone, mirtazapine, and pregabalin at therapeutic levels that did not contribute to his death.

"Although Mr Allison's cellmate allegedly said that he and Mr Allison had used psychoactive substances before they both collapsed, toxicology tests did not detect any PS in Mr Allison's system," the report noted. Fellow inmates had raised the alarm after seeing both men unresponsive in the cell.

Kimberly Bingham, who led the investigation, stated that Allison had no prior diagnosis of heart disease and had not reported physical health concerns during his time at Holme House. "Due to his age, he would not have had any cardiac risk factor assessments," she said. "We make no recommendations."

Allison was found unresponsive on April 25, 2021, in his cell at HMP Holme House. Prison staff discovered him collapsed on the floor alongside his cellmate, who survived but was in a semi-conscious state and unable to walk or speak. Emergency personnel were called immediately, but despite efforts from healthcare workers and paramedics, Allison was pronounced dead at 3:19 p.m.

Allison had a history of substance misuse and admitted to using heroin upon entering the prison. He was placed on a methadone programme and was observed under the influence of substances on multiple occasions during his sentence.

At the time of his death, Allison was serving an eight-year sentence for a violent samurai sword attack in 2016, in which he wounded a man in the thigh and elbow at his Middlesbrough home. The victim alleged he was targeted due to a £5,000 bounty placed on him following a conviction for animal cruelty.

The court had also heard that Allison had a long and serious criminal record, including 84 previous offences ranging from knife possession and arson to serious assaults. In 2008, he was sentenced to eight and a half years for aggravated burglary after taking part in a masked home invasion.

Despite the initial suspicions surrounding drugs, the ombudsman's findings confirmed that Allison's death was due to natural causes and found no evidence of negligence or misconduct by prison staff.