



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney Eastern District of Arkansas

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GEORGIA MAN INDICTED FOR 1994 MURDERS DISCOVERED DEAD

Little Rock - United States Attorney Bud Cummins announced that he has been advised by federal authorities that Leo Lamont Utley, age 54, of Augusta, Georgia was found unconscious by Bureau of Prison authorities December 25, 2005 in his cell at the Federal Transfer Center in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma at approximately 8:58 p.m. Medical staff at the facility immediately rendered emergency medical attention and emergency medical services subsequently arrived and continued life support efforts. He was transported to Southwest Medical Center where he was pronounced dead at 9:53 pm. The death is being investigated as an apparent suicide. An autopsy will be performed by local authorities.

Utley was arrested on December 13, 2005 by special agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Utley's arrest stemmed from his indictment on December 7, 2005 by a federal grand jury for the Eastern District of Arkansas. In that three-count indictment, Utley was charged with conspiring to kill two federal witnesses in 1994. Utley was also charged in two counts with killing the witnesses. A detention hearing was held in the United States District Courthouse in Augusta on December 13, 2005 and Utley was detained pending his return by the United States Marshals to the Eastern District of Arkansas. Utley had subsequently been transported to the Oklahoma facility en route to Arkansas.

The indictment alleged that Utley killed federal witnesses Judson Fielding and Charles Winfield in 1994 at the direction of Willie Hankerson. Hankerson is a convicted drug dealer from Washington D.C. who was indicted in the Eastern District of Arkansas in February 1994 for conspiring to distribute PCP. Hankerson was arrested in August 1994 by United States Marshals in Maryland and returned to the Eastern District of Arkansas. In October 1994, a detention hearing was held and Hankerson was released on bond over the Government's objection. According to the indictment, during the detention hearing Hankerson became aware

that Fielding and Winfield would testify against him and also became aware of the substance of their damaging testimony. The indictment alleged that Hankerson enlisted Utley to kill Fielding and Winfield. Winfield was allegedly killed in Washington D.C. by Utley with Hankerson's assistance and Fielding was allegedly killed in Augusta, Georgia by Utley. The indictment also asserted that Utley killed Hankerson's co-defendant in the Arkansas indictment, Lonnie Moore, as well as Moore's associate, all at the direction of Hankerson in exchange for a \$100,000 payment.

If he had been convicted, Utley faced either a maximum sentence of life without parole or imposition of the death penalty. The decision of whether to seek the death penalty would have been made at a later time by the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, in consultation with the Attorney General of the United States.

The investigation was handled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Washington D.C. Metropolitan Police Department. In light of Utley's death, the government will file a motion to dismiss the indictment.

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