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## Slain Inmate's Family Will Be Paid \$175,000

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The state of Utah has agreed to pay \$175,000 to the family of an inmate murdered in the Central Utah Correctional Facility. Lonnie Blackmon, 32, was stabbed 67 times in the head and chest by inmate Troy Michael Kell on July 6, 1994. Blackmon's family sued corrections officials two years later, alleging guards did not act to stop the deadly attack.

The state denied wrongdoing, but agreed to settle out of court after recent mediation sessions, said Assistant Atty. Gen. Dan Larsen.

“We thought that was a reasonable amount to settle the case,” he said.

Nora Blackmon, the inmate's ex-wife, filed the federal suit on behalf of their two daughters, now ages 12 and 13. A portion of the settlement will be used to purchase annuities to pay the girls' college expenses, said their attorney, **James Bradshaw**. The Blackmons live in Little Rock, Ark.

“The family feels like it's an insufficient amount for what happened,” Bradshaw said. But the girls' mother decided it was in the girls' best interest to settle, after considering the uncertainty of a trial, he said.

U.S. District Judge Dee Benson approved the settlement Wednesday.

Blackmon had been transferred to the Gunnison facility from Arkansas as part of a prisoner-exchange program. He was serving a sentence for robbery and theft. Kell, 30, had been transferred to Utah from Nevada, where he had been convicted of a previous homicide. Kell was sentenced to die for Blackmon's murder and is now on Utah's death row.

Prosecutors contended Kell was a racist and killed Blackmon because he was black. Kell argued he had acted in self-defense, alleging Blackmon had previously threatened his life. Other inmates were prosecuted for holding Blackmon down during the stabbing.

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