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Family Of Woman Killed In Tenn. Prison Sues CCA

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Dow Jones Business News

Associated Press

NASHVILLE -- The family of a woman found dead in her prison cell from a head wound is suing Nashville-based Corrections Corp. of America (CXW) and eight employees for \$60 million in damages, the second lawsuit this month against CCA.

Estelle Richardson, 34, was killed during a "savage beating" that grossly violated her civil rights, a lawsuit filed Thursday in U.S. District Court contends. Richardson's family on behalf of her two children filed the suit, which seeks compensatory and punitive damages from CCA, four unnamed guards and four unnamed supervisors.

A Metro Nashville police investigation into Ms. Richardson's death - ruled a homicide - found she was killed while in custody at the Metro Detention Facility, which is operated by CCA. An autopsy showed Richardson died from a skull fracture and also had other internal injuries.

No criminal charges have been filed.

The company has placed four male correctional officers on paid administrative leave, CCA spokeswoman Louise Chickering said. She didn't say whether any supervisors were placed on leave.

The lawsuit comes as the company deals with another court filing from a former prisoner who got tuberculosis while in a CCA facility.

Last week, Phillip Van Taylor III said in court filings that he contracted tuberculosis because prison officials didn't take proper precautions to prevent the spread of the airborne disease at the Hardeman County Correctional Facility run by CCA. He is seeking two judgments of less than \$1 million each against CCA.

CCA declined to comment on either of the lawsuits, saying it had yet to receive one and was evaluating the other.

The company has been plagued with a string of problems in July, including two prison riots last week -one in Colorado and another in Mississippi. The uprisings followed the July 7 homicide, and a smaller uprising in Oklahoma.

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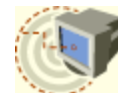
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