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Missouri man convicted in massive funeral scam found dead

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ST. LOUIS (AP) — A Missouri businessman who was part of a scheme to scam millions of dollars from customers for prearranged funerals has been found dead in his home.

James Cassity, 74, was **sentenced** in 2013 to nearly 10 years in prison but he was among thousands of federal prison inmates released amid concern about the coronavirus spreading inside prisons.

Cassity was found dead in his Clayton apartment on Sunday. The St. Louis Medical Examiner's office said Cassity died from apparent natural causes, The St. Louis Post-Dispatch **reported**.

Cassity, who owned National Prearranged Services, based in Clayton, and his son, Brent Cassity, 46, were among six people sentenced in 2013 for their roles in the fraud. James Cassity and three others also were ordered to repay \$435 million.

The company sold insurance policies promising prearranged funeral services but didn't deliver those services for more than 16 years, prosecutors said. Instead, they spent customers' money on themselves and for business expenses. They also repeatedly lied to state regulators about their actions.

Prosecutors said the scam affected up to 150,000 customers.

The company stopped selling funeral policies in 2008 after Missouri and other states began questioning its practices and Texas forced the company's liquidation later that year.

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