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Rare Form of Cancer Causes Death of Former Rulo Cult Leader

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) - A man who spent 30 years on Nebraska's death row for two cult murders died of complications from a rare cancer in his salivary glands.

A death certificate obtained Tuesday by The Associated Press lists the cause of death for Michael Ryan as "metastatic carcinoma of parotid gland origin."

Ryan died on May 24 at the Tecumseh State Correctional Institutional in southeast Nebraska.

Ryan was convicted in the 1985 torture and killing of 25-year-old James Thimm at a farm near Rulo, where Ryan led a cult, and in the beating death of Luke Stice, the 5-year-old son of a cult member.

State Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha told a legislative committee in March that Ryan suffered from terminal brain cancer. It's not clear whether the cancer had spread.

Associated Press