



US justice system letting slip those behind death of mentally-ill prisoner

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A vigil and a call to bring those responsible for Bradley Ballard's death to justice was held in New York on Thursday.

After the 39 year old, mentally ill and diabetic Bradley Ballard made a lewd gesture to a female guard at the Riker's Island jail, he was locked in his cell alone for seven disturbing days. He was denied his medication and stripped off his clothes and left as his toilet overflowed. Guards passed his cell in the mental observation unit more than a dozen times during that period, but never went inside, until it was too late. When he was finally approached, he was unresponsive on the floor, covered in feces and unconscious. He died hours later after being taken to a hospital. September 11th marks one year since Ballard's death and despite the fact that it was ruled as homicide, no action has been taken against those responsible. Those who gathered here in front of the Bronx District Attorney's office are calling for justice. Ballard's mother filed a wrongful death lawsuit against the city this week. The lawsuit argues that Ballard's death was not an isolated incident and that city jails have been unfit to handle mentally ill inmates for decades. The death of Ballard came six months before another mentally ill inmate died in a 101-degree cell at Rikers Island.

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