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# Christopher Alder's family told they buried the wrong person

Hull council admit to having no answer to why man who died while in police custody remained in morgue for over 13 years



📷 Christopher Alder, a former paratrooper, died while in custody in a Hull police station in 1998. His family were told on Sunday they buried the wrong person. Photograph: PA

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**Hannah Godfrey**

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More than a decade after 37-year-old former soldier Christopher Alder died while in police custody in Hull, his family have been told they buried the wrong person.

Hull City Council said on Sunday that Alder's body was discovered in the place where the body of a woman was believed to have been stored.

Alder choked to death while handcuffed and lying on the floor of a police station in Hull on 1 April 1998.

In a BBC interview, his sister, Janet Alder, said: "I'm just in total shock, I really can not believe that after all we've been through, after all the family's been through ... there can be so much incompetence."

"It just feels like contempt. It feels like adding insult to injury when you're trying to move on with your life."

In March of this year, Janet Alder lost a civil action she had brought against the Crown Prosecution Service, after she claimed she was racially discriminated against during her dealings with them following her brother's death.

Announcing the mix-up, council chief executive Nicola Yates said: "On Friday, 4 November 2011, I was made aware of a situation relating to the body of a man, who was in his late thirties, located in the city mortuary.

"The body lay in place of where Grace Kamara had been recorded as resting. At the moment I cannot explain this.

"Whilst Grace Kamara died of natural causes in 1999, her burial was, for family-related reasons, only able to take place on Friday. It was immediately postponed ...

"Now that we have made our best efforts to notify and support the families, I can confirm that the body of the man has been identified as Christopher Alder.

"I am appalled and distraught at what I have learned and in conjunction with Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust we will be undertaking a thorough review of the circumstances surrounding the events."

Ten years ago, a coroner's jury returned a verdict of unlawful killing following a seven-week inquest into the circumstances surrounding Alder's death.

In 2002, five Humberside police officers went on trial accused of manslaughter and misconduct in public office, but were subsequently cleared of all charges on the orders of the judge at Teesside crown court.

Four years later, an Independent [Police](#) Complaints Commission report found that four of the officers present in the custody suite when the former paratrooper died were guilty of the "most serious neglect of duty", and the Alder family received an apology from Humberside police. However, the Police Federation said the officers involved "strongly disputed" the IPCC's conclusions.

It is not yet known whose body was buried 10 years ago when family and friends believed they were burying Alder.

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