Beat: Music

"The Sopranos" star James Gandolfini dead at 51

-, 20.06.2013, 19:55 Time

USPA News - American actor James Gandolfini, who won three Emmy Awards for his portrayal of a conflicted New Jersey mob boss in the popular HBO cable television series "The Sopranos," died of a suspected heart attack on Wednesday while vacationing in Italy. Gandolfini, 51, collapsed in the bathroom of his hotel room in Rome just after 10 p.m. local time on Wednesday.

His 13-year-old son, Michael, discovered him and called for help, after which workers tried to resuscitate the actor before rushing him to Policlinico Umberto I hospital where he was pronounced dead at approximately 11 p.m. local time. "It is with immense sorrow that we report our client James Gandolfini passed away while on holiday in Rome, Italy," managers Mark Armstrong and Nancy Sanders said in a statement. "Our hearts are shattered and we will miss him deeply. He and his family were part of our family for many years and we are all grieving." Mara Mikialian, a spokeswoman for cable television network HBO, said Gandolfini died of a suspected heart attack. Medical officials said the actor was pronounced deceased about 20 minutes after he was admitted to the hospital`s emergency room, and an autopsy was carried out on Friday. HBO, which is expected to air a brief tribute to Gandolfini after future airings of "The Sopranos," said it was "feeling immeasurable sadness" at the actor`s sudden death. "He was a special man, a great talent, but more importantly a gentle and loving person who treated everyone no matter their title or position with equal respect," the network said in a statement. The series` creator, David Chase, also paid tribute on Thursday. "He was a genius. Anyone who saw him even in the smallest of his performances knows that. He is one of the greatest actors of this or any time," he wrote in an emotional statement. "He wasn`t easy sometimes. But he was my partner, he was my brother in ways I can`t explain and never will be able to explain." In "The Sopranos," Gandolfini portrayed Tony Soprano who heads the most powerful criminal organization in New Jersey. The series, which ran six seasons between January 1999 and June 2007, revolves around the mobster`s life as he tries to balance the conflicting requirements of his personal life and the criminal organization he heads.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1143/the-sopranos-star-james-gandolfini-dead-at-51.html

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