

For Immediate Release

Contact: Adam Bingman  
[adam@ambassadorstrategies.com](mailto:adam@ambassadorstrategies.com)  
(202) 221-0266

**April 22, 2026**

**Statement from Karyn Kirby, Mother of Isaiah Kirby, on behalf of the Family of Isaiah**

Ya'll were looking for me to say something, well here I am to say something. I am the mother of the one who was slain on the street in East Lansing, Michigan on April 15, 2026, a month before he turned 22 – weeks before graduation from Michigan State University. He was a Spartan through and through – Go Green! And a Philadelphia Eagles Fan, with Jalen Hurts, being his favorite NFL player.

On April 20th, I saw my son's lifeless body after just seeing him 3-weeks prior.

Our family is devastated by the loss of our son, Isaiah Kirby, a 21-year-old Black Male.

Isaiah was a Michigan State University senior, who majored in Zoology with concentrations in Herpetology and Aquarium Science. He looked forward to graduating in a few weeks, and our entire family and community looked forward to celebrating his success. He graduated from Sparrows Point High School in Sparrows Point, Maryland in 2022, where he played football, was awarded the Maryland Scholar Athlete of the Year and graduated with a 4.2 GPA. Isaiah also ran AAU Club track for the Baltimore City White Knight Track Club in Baltimore, MD.

Since the age of 3, all Isaiah wanted to do was to play with sharks and snakes. Isaiah had a bright future ahead of him. At the time of his death, in addition to being a full-time student at MSU, he worked part-time at the Potter Park Zoo in Lansing. Last summer, he completed an internship at the Detroit Zoo and previously worked for Pruess Pets in Lansing.

Isaiah was especially excited about his upcoming job interview with the Austin (TX) Zoo, which was scheduled for Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup> – just 3 days before he was killed.

He was loved deeply by his family and friends, and he deserved the opportunity to graduate, pursue his goals, and live the life he was working so hard to build – a life with just him and his snakes.

In the days since his death, we have been present in East Lansing, trying to understand what happened. Instead of clarity, we have only been met with confusion, limited information, and decisions being made without our knowledge.

We have asked to see the evidence related to our son's death, including video footage, and have been told that what will be shown to us, and to the public, may be edited or compiled. We are requesting, clearly and unequivocally, to view the complete and unedited video and audio evidence.

We have also sought basic information regarding Isaiah's injuries and the circumstances of his death. What we have learned raises serious and painful questions that demand answers.

Both the East Lansing Police Department and Michigan State Police have indicated that police were alerted and were responding to multiple incidents all at the same location. While our grief is heavy, we are demanding answers based on facts and untouched video and audio evidence that show my son's alleged involvement in any of the incidents and/or other actions that took place at the scene.

When I was finally able to see Isaiah's body, I witnessed something no mother should ever have to endure. My son's body was riddled with gunshot wounds. I saw and counted at least 17 bullet wounds, including multiple bullet wounds to his back.

The condition of his body, including his face - that was swollen beyond recognition - reflected a level of force that is devastating to even describe. Based on this, I had to make the hard decision to have our 21-year-old scholar son, who only wanted to study reptiles, cremated and with no public viewing.

I cannot unsee what I saw. I cannot unhear what I heard. No mother should ever have to hear a body bag being unzipped after her child was gunned down in the street by the police.

Isaiah is more than a headline or a set of narratives that others are creating. He was our son. Our brother. Our nephew. Our grandson. Our friend.

We ask for privacy and your prayers as we grieve while continuing to investigate why Isaiah was killed by East Lansing Police Officers. And we thank those who have supported us during this unimaginable time.

We want the truth. We want transparency. We want accountability – and we demand Justice.

Isaiah will forever be missed. #isaiahthesnakehandler

— Karyn Kirby, Mother of Isaiah Kirby