

Mother Remembers Son Killed Protecting Her in Chicago Knife Attack

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The mother of 11-year-old Jayden Perkins appeared in court on August 5 as the man convicted of murdering her son was sentenced to life in prison. Jayden was fatally stabbed on March 13, 2024, while protecting his pregnant mother, Laterria Smith, during a violent knife attack in their Chicago home.

Authorities say Crosetti Brand forcibly entered the family residence while the children were getting ready for school. Brand, who had a previous relationship with Smith over a decade earlier, had been released on parole just one day before the attack. His parole followed a conviction for aggravated assault and home invasion.

During the attack, Brand stabbed Smith 15 times. Despite her injuries, she survived. Tragically, Jayden died from a stab wound to the chest. His 5-year-old brother witnessed the entire assault, an event officials warn will have lasting emotional effects.

At the sentencing hearing, Smith shared her grief and trauma. “You have taken away one of the greatest gifts God has blessed me with,” she said, according to reports. “I am broken without my son.” She described suffering from nightmares and ongoing emotional pain as she copes with the loss.

Chicago Police Superintendent Larry Snelling highlighted the profound impact on the family, especially Jayden’s younger brother. “We have to imagine what that 5-year-old is going to have to deal with the rest of his life after witnessing something so brutal,” Snelling said.

Brand was convicted of murder in June and received a life sentence without the possibility of parole. Smith had a restraining order against Brand at the time of the attack, underscoring the dangers faced by victims of domestic violence and the challenges of protecting families from repeat offenders.

This case has reignited discussions in Chicago and beyond regarding the parole system and how it manages individuals convicted of violent crimes. Critics argue that early releases can put communities at risk if adequate supervision and support systems are not in place.

Victim advocates stress the need for stronger protections and resources for families affected by violent crime. Smith’s ordeal is a stark reminder of the personal toll violence takes and the importance of support services for survivors.

The community has responded with vigils and calls for justice following the tragedy. Local leaders continue to explore policy changes to reduce risks associated with parole and improve protections for those vulnerable to violence.

Jayden Perkins is remembered for his bravery and sacrifice. His mother’s testimony at the sentencing hearing honored his memory while shedding light on the enduring pain left behind.

