

District Attorney's
Office
State of North Carolina
26th Prosecutorial District
Mecklenburg County

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NEWS RELEASE

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III
District Attorney

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Man sentenced to life in prison for murder of 7-month-old infant

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Today, Zaki Davis was found guilty of the 2021 murder of 7-month-old Israel Williams. The trial, which began on March 16, 2026, and concluded with today's verdict, was held in courtroom 5370 before the Honorable Tessa S. Sellers, Superior Court Judge. The DA's Homicide Team prosecuted the case.

Zaki Davis, 26, was tried for first-degree murder. The jury found him *guilty as charged*. Judge Sellers sentenced Davis to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

On the evening of December 17, 2021, Zaki Davis was the person supervising and providing care to 7-month-old Israel Williams at Davis's northwest Charlotte home. Davis was in a dating relationship with Israel's mother, who was at work. Davis fed Israel and texted pictures and updates to Israel's mother throughout the evening to check in with her. He sent a photograph to her at 9:23 p.m. of his mother, who was also in the home, holding Israel. After that, Davis and Israel were upstairs together alone.

Less than 30 minutes later, Israel was unresponsive and had suffered abusive head trauma and non-accidental trauma intentionally inflicted by Davis around 9:50 p.m. Cellphone data revealed Davis searched the internet for "baby acting lifeless" and "baby not responding but heart is" before calling 911 at 9:59 p.m. Israel was transported to Levine Children's Hospital where he succumbed to extensive injuries a short time later.

Today marks the start of Child Abuse Prevention Month. As DA Merriweather said at yesterday's Child Abuse Prevention Month kickoff event, "April is a rife occasion for our community to remind one another about our collective obligation to support and strengthen families, to foster caring communities, and to protect all children." If you suspect a child may be the victim of abuse, neglect, or human trafficking, call Mecklenburg County's 24-hour HELP line: 980-31-HELPS (43577).

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