

**October 25, 2022**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Family of Desman LaDuke reacts to Nicholasville Police killing him at his home on Saturday afternoon**

There has been very limited information released regarding the circumstances of Saturday. Much of what has been said is false. And the police have done nothing to correct it. Desman was alone in his home and inside his bedroom when he was shot, through the bedroom window, by a police officer positioned outside the home. Any suggestion that officers made entry into Desman's home, were threatened inside the home by Desman, and shot Desman from inside the home, are false.

Nothing has been said about Desman's character, his kind nature, and the type of person he was. Everyone who knew Desman was familiar with his amazing personality. Desman was the running back during East Jessamine's magical 2016 district title run. Desman was incredible with children. He did not cause trouble. He was a hard worker. He would do anything for anyone. He had no criminal record. We have had former teachers, friends, and coworkers of Desman reach out to us since Saturday to share their memories made with him. They are all positive and full of love, unselfishness, and joy.

Desman lived through a lot of tragedy and struggle. He lost his mom to a car accident in 2011. He lost his brother to a drowning three years ago. So understandably, certain days were really hard for Desman to cope with these losses. On Saturday, Desman was struggling with the desire to live. We asked the police to help him. They responded by sending the SWAT/ERT unit. Nine different officers in tactical gear promptly surrounded Desman's home and pointed assault rifles at the doors and windows. Patrol officers remained across the street.

The woman who had raised Desman since his mother's passing arrived on scene. She begged and pleaded for the SWAT unit to stand down. She insisted that she be allowed to go into the home to talk to Desman, to hug him, and to tell him that everything would be ok. This request was not only denied, but also came with a direct warning to Melissa that she would be tackled if she tried to go talk to her son. After an hour and a half, while Desman was inside his home by himself, an officer shot through his bedroom window. The bullet struck Desman in the chest. Officers made entry and then proceeded to drag Desman across the ground through the bedroom, the hallway, the living room, and the kitchen. Officers left the heavy trail of blood on the floor for the family to discover hours later. When close to twenty officers were inside the home, and as Desman was dying on the kitchen floor, other officers entered, yelling "show me your FUCKING hands" to him and yelling at him that it was his fault. The remaining officers stood around as if nothing had happened. Four hours after Desman was taken by EMS to UK Hospital, he died.

We are devastated. Confused. Angry. Frustrated. Heartbroken. And struggling. Since Saturday, nobody from the police department has come to express condolences. Nobody has given us any answers as to why they took Desman's life. Desman needed help. He did not harm anyone.

He was alone in his home. Nine rifles being pointed at his doors and windows by officers in tactical gear did not do anything to defuse what was an obvious mental health crisis. A tactical kill shot through a window and into Desman's chest was not the solution.

We are grateful for all of those in the community who have shared the great memories they made with Desman. And we urge everyone to help us get an understanding as to why Desman was taken from us. This silence is killing us.