

“Parents and teachers should be demanding testing and answers as to what caused this child’s death”

## Anti-COVID advocate Jess discusses death of six-year-old in Detroit from “mysterious illness”

**Evan Blake**  
10 May 2023

*On April 26, six-year-old Jimari Williams died after an outbreak of an unspecified illness at the school he attended, Marcus Garvey Academy in Detroit, Michigan. In addition to Williams’ death, at least two other children in the Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) have been hospitalized and dozens infected with what the district is referring to as a “mysterious flu-like illness.”*

*There have been four confirmed cases of Haemophilus influenzae at DPSCD schools, but there has not been systematic testing of students for this bacterial infection, COVID-19 or other pathogens. DPSCD only briefly closed Marcus Garvey Academy for a “deep cleaning” and reopened the school on Monday, with no protections in place.*

*The World Socialist Web Site spoke with Jess, a prominent anti-COVID advocate on Twitter, about Williams’ death and the broader context in which it is taking place, as governments throughout the world dismantle all mitigation measures to slow the spread of COVID-19 and other pathogens.*

**Evan Blake (EB):** I know you’ve been following our coverage on the death of six-year-old Jimari Williams at Marcus Garvey Academy, which has had an outbreak of a so-called “mysterious flu-like illness.” First, what are your general thoughts on this?

**Jess (J):** I’m not an investigative reporter, but what I’m seeing is a pattern of officials and the media denying COVID and labeling everything a “mystery illness,” which is ridiculous. Watching your interviews and reading the reports on the death of Jimari Williams, they say they’ll disinfect the school, but it’s become completely taboo to even suggest this has something to do with COVID. The words “COVID” and “airborne” have been almost wiped out from the public discourse.

Until an autopsy is done, we can’t say for certain whether he died of COVID or another illness. Will we ever know what happened to this child? I don’t know. But why haven’t they brought back masks into the school? Even if it’s not COVID but some other respiratory illness, masks would protect against it. Why are they just pretending this is normal?

**EB:** As someone who has followed the COVID-19 pandemic closely and the scientific literature on the effects that COVID-19 can have on the body, what would you say about the potential relationship between this outbreak and COVID?

**J:** We know that COVID can damage the immune system, and that after multiple COVID infections another infection with any virus can be deadly. There are now strep infections killing children in the UK, which was highly uncommon before the pandemic. Strep is a common disease, treatable by antibiotics, but now we’re seeing it cause a growing number of hospitalizations in the UK and elsewhere.

Jimari’s death could have been brought on by COVID, or perhaps past COVID infections could have made this *H. influenzae* infection worse than it would have been otherwise.

We’re not even communicating things to people anymore, which should be the basis of feeling safe. Based on your reports, the parents seem to have been left completely in the dark. Every day I see articles like this, and that people aren’t demanding answers, which drives me crazy. It’s all part of “living with this virus.”

**EB:** You’ve been sharing other reports of “mysterious flu-like illnesses” and recently tweeted about Northampton County High School closing last week due to a large COVID outbreak. Can you comment further on this?

**J:** I was surprised that they actually admitted there was a COVID outbreak in the North Carolina school, because they’re not doing that anymore. It shocked me, reading that it was a COVID outbreak. I was relieved to read the word. There are still COVID outbreaks in schools, but nobody is testing, which is a huge problem.

I’m seeing a lot of adults saying their children are hospitalized and they don’t know why, but they aren’t testing them for COVID because they think the pandemic is over. It seems to have been erased from people’s memory that we’re still living in a pandemic. Sometimes I feel like I’m part of an alternate universe.

**EB:** Yes, there’s a massive propaganda campaign to falsely claim that the pandemic is over. Jimari’s death took place just before the WHO declared the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) over, and the Biden administration will declare the end of the COVID public health emergency on May 11. Can you comment on this?

**J:** Obviously, what people are not understanding is that even with the WHO ending the PHEIC, it doesn’t declare the end of the pandemic. The messaging from WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, in which he says that COVID is still killing

thousands of people, disabling millions, is contradictory. They're giving people false hope by declaring the emergency over.

If you're not actively participating in Twitter and other social media groups, you would think everything was done. They're trying to compare this to seasonal illnesses like the flu, but the flu doesn't kill seven million people in three years. The messaging that people are hearing is that the pandemic is over, which is really dangerous. Senior citizens, who might not be on social media, might believe in "hybrid immunity" and other lies.

People think the entire pandemic is over, when in reality they're just hiding data and all the tools that kept people semi-safe, and declaring this end of public health emergencies, which has nothing to do with the end of the pandemic. This is all a coordinated plan to get kids back into schools, to get parents back to work. It's killing many people, including children. People of any age, mostly working class people who are forced into unsafe environments are becoming disabled.

We don't have vaccines that stop transmission or treatments for people crippled by Long COVID. The vaccine doesn't stop you from being disabled. People are saying they had COVID last month and got over it, while not understanding what's happening to their bodies. There are people still suffering from the initial SARS outbreak in 2003, which luckily didn't hit the pandemic stage.

They're creating a really dangerous precedent right now. Already people were relaxed and now they're saying it's over. There's no more rapid testing, reduced access to vaccines. They're just "culling the herd," pushing people to their deaths, and it's really monstrous.

**EB:** The WWSWS has made the argument that the capitalist ruling elites have viewed the pandemic as a positive good for lowering life expectancy in the working class, because it has reduced pension obligations and other social spending, and that under capitalism future pandemics will be met with virtually no response whatsoever. I think this outbreak of an unknown infectious disease at an elementary school in Detroit is in some sense a microcosm of this. There's been no systematic effort to address this from a public health standpoint. They're just sending the kids back to school so their parents can keep working. What are your thoughts on this?

**J:** I think future pandemics will be met with an excellent response by the ruling elites for themselves, as we saw with #DavosSafe, where at this year's Davos World Economic Forum the elites used every mitigation measure available to protect themselves.

One big issue going forward will be the loss of trust in public health, which is huge. No one trusts public health anymore. In Canada, they opened, closed, reopened, required vaccine passports, removed them, required vaccine mandates for nurses, removed them. It's been a wishy-washy approach.

I don't trust any officials in public health anymore, which is horrible. This lack of trust, which they made disintegrate, will be made a major problem for future pandemics. Nobody is going to see what's really going on, and there are huge reservoirs for future viruses to spill over into human populations.

I do think that the rich are keeping themselves safe. They have access to first-class doctors, testing, etc. At the White House Correspondents' Association dinner, they required everyone to take a rapid test beforehand. Why, if it's over? Beyond rapid tests, I'm sure they had air purifiers, Far-UV lamps, etc.

CDC Director Rochelle Walensky and White House COVID Response Coordinator Ashish Jha's children attend schools with improved ventilation, CO2 monitoring and other mitigations. They'll continue to keep themselves safe, while workers will be in danger

going forward.

They're looking to cull the vulnerable. They know very well how COVID-19 is transmitted, but they're choosing not to protect people.

**EB:** What would you say to parents and teachers at Marcus Garvey about how to protect themselves?

**J:** Parents and teachers should be demanding testing and answers as to what caused this child's death. They shouldn't feel intimidated or feel like they're being silenced. We need to use our voices as parents. We've been silenced from the beginning of the pandemic.

I would demand answers and ask children to mask until the end of the semester. There's obviously a health issue at this school. As a parent whose child goes to that school, you have a right to know what's going on. If we're telling parents when a kid has lice, but not how another student died, there's something wrong. What is going on?

If my kid was going back, they'd be masking. Parents and teachers should demand improved ventilation. It's not just COVID which is airborne. Influenza is also airborne. There should be masking, ventilation, social distancing. Closing for one day makes no sense. There should be a town hall, call a meeting with the director of this school.

There are countless ways to safely clean the air. From upgrading ventilation, air purifiers, Corsi-Rosenthal boxes, and even simpler, opening windows. I'm not an expert on Far-UV, but this is also a technology we should be looking into and how to safely implement it. Changes are being made silently and secretly by those in power, they don't want people to know they're using these mitigations. All of these layers must be added as part of a broader program.

We need to think out of the box, but right now we're shutting all the doors. We're not safe until we're all safe. COVID is a preventable illness, it's not the same as someone dying from something we couldn't prevent.



To contact the WWSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wws.org/contact](https://wws.org/contact)**