

MISSING IN MISSISSIPPI: Alex Easterling, Holmes County



HOLMES COUNTY — Ashley Martin's son was 30 years old when he disappeared, a grown man with a daughter of his own. But four years into the search for Alex Easterling, she is still just a mother looking for her baby.

Alex vanished from a property on Stockyard Road in Pickens, his family is still waiting for a full search of the last place he was known to be.

Easterling was last seen around 8:15 p.m. on April 20, 2022, when his mother, Ashley Martin, dropped him off at a friend's home

in Holmes County. He told her to text him when she got home. She did. He never answered.

Martin had picked her son up that day after he spent 60 days in the Hinds County Jail. The two signed court paperwork, bought him a new phone at Walmart and had pizza at her Madison home before heading north on Interstate 55 toward his home in Pickens. After a stop at the Shell station off Exit 144 for cigarettes, Easterling asked his mother to drop him at a friend's house on Stockyard Road instead of taking him home.

Something about the property made Martin uneasy. She texted herself the homeowner's name and dropped a pin with the location before pulling away.

Martin texted her son when she got home just before 9 p.m. and got no answer. By the next evening, after a day of unanswered

calls and texts, she asked her husband how long she should wait to request a wellness check. His answer was that she shouldn't wait at all. When she sent the details to her father the next morning so he could contact the sheriff, his reply confirmed the unease she'd felt in that driveway: the house where she'd left her son had a reputation, and locals, including law enforcement, knew it.

Two days later, Easterling's grandfather asked Holmes County Sheriff Willie March to conduct a welfare check at the home. The homeowner told the sheriff the two men were talking on the porch when he stepped inside and came back out to find Easterling gone. In the days that followed, he gave two more versions of that account to Easterling's grandfather and to a deputy, changing the reason he went inside each time. The only detail that never changed was that Easterling had vanished from the porch.

"I just want him home. I just want him back," Martin told Darkhorse Press a month after her son disappeared.

Cell phone data would later show Easterling's phone remained at the home from 8:15 p.m. until 9:27 p.m., when it pinged at a location farther up Stockyard Road near the gates of a large farm. The phone stayed there until the data stopped around 3:21 a.m.

Martin, who is not in law enforcement, taught herself to read her son's Google location data line by line, filling two legal pads as she worked through the raw files at her kitchen counter. She later bought the same model phone, drove the same route and parked at the top of Stockyard Road to confirm what the data showed.

"He never left Stockyard Road," she said.

On April 28, 2022, tracking and cadaver dog teams searched the property with the homeowner's reluctant permission. He told searchers no one was allowed in the backyard, saying Easterling never went back there. When the dogs began trailing toward the back of the property, the homeowner became irate, and handlers ended the search out of concern for their safety.

A handler with the trailing dogs told the family Easterling did not leave the property on foot.

On May 7, 2022, more than 100 volunteers, nine certified canine search and rescue teams, the Lexington police chief and several off-duty officers from outside the area searched the surrounding land. No one was allowed on the Stockyard Road property, though dogs again showed interest from the edge of what would have been the backyard. No Holmes County deputies participated, and family members say deputies told them they were ordered not to take part or communicate with the family.

The Mississippi Bureau of Investigation obtained a warrant for the home's surveillance system on May 4, 2022. Much of the equipment had been removed, but a hard drive remained. When the family reviewed the footage in early 2023, they found gaps between 8:26 and 8:54 p.m. and again between 9:03 and 9:54 p.m., windows that overlap the time Easterling's phone shows him leaving the property.

The homeowner agreed to come in for questioning and a polygraph on May 2, 2022, but arrived more than an hour late, refused both, said he would hire an attorney and left.



July 9 - Barry and Paula Blackstock

July 10 - Ryan and Bree Nolan

July 11 - Chris and Misty Cain, Dane and Lilly Austin

July 12 - Harold and Tiffany Bates Cannon

July 14 - Trent and Laura Johnson, Mitch and Lisa Bethany

July 15 - Louis and Judy Ferrell

To add your birthdays and anniversaries to our list, please send your information by mail to P.O. Box 60, Lexington, MS 39095; fax 662-834-1074; email to hcherald@gmail.com; or stop by our office at 308 Court Square in Lexington. No phone calls, please.

Hinds Community College Spring 2026 Graduates

RAYMOND, MS -- Hinds Community College awarded more than 1,500 degrees and certificates to 1,100 Hinds graduates over three days, May 13-15, which means a number of graduates earned more than one community college credential.

Among the graduates, 615 graduated with honors; 239 students graduated cum laude, a 3.2-3.59 grade point average out of 4.0; 177 graduated magna cum laude, a 3.6-3.99 GPA, and 199 graduated summa cum laude, a perfect 4.0 GPA.

The following local stu-

- dents graduated;
- Aaliyah Campbell of Tchula
- Radaja Gallion of Tchula
- Tamyra Granderson of Cruger
- Kenwanis Jefferson of Lexington
- Ameyr Johnson of Tchula
- Khylen Cockrell of Tchula
- Shi'Ron Young of Tchula
- Ramona Clerk of Pickens
- Tydrevious Henderson of Lexington

neer and left. He has never been questioned or polygraphed.

On Sept. 3, 2023, a fire broke out on the property, destroying the area where search dogs had shown interest.

Sheriff March told Darkhorse Press in 2022 that Easterling's case had been entered into NCIC and pushed out through Crime Stoppers.

"We've done all we can do to try to locate him," he said at the time.

A suspect or person of interest has never been named, and to the best of anyone's knowledge the property has never been fully searched.

Easterling is described as a white male, 5 feet 9 inches tall and 160 pounds, with brown hair and hazel eyes. He was last seen wearing a black T-shirt with a white Egyptian design, blue

jeans and tan military-style boots. He has a large cross tattoo on his back.

Anyone with information is asked to call Crime Stoppers at 1-888-827-4637. Tips are anonymous.



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CAKE FUNDRAISER

Kristen K. Ellis, Miss Black Holmes County, is holding an online fundraiser at Kristenellis07@gmail.com from July 8 to August 8.

7-9,16

BETHLEHEM MB CHURCH

Bethlehem MB Church, Highway 51 South, Goodman, will host a Summer Revival Wednesday, July 15-17 at 7:00 p.m..

7-2,9

Mortimer-Southern FUNERAL HOME
 100 Pine Street, Lexington, MS 39095
 662-834-2607