

No Charges

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Zimmerman has said he acted in self-defense when he shot the 17-year-old Martin during a confrontation inside a gated community in Sanford, Fla. Martin, who was black, was unarmed when he was killed.

After Zimmerman was acquitted of second-degree murder by a state jury in July 2013, Martin's family turned to the federal investigation in hopes that he would be held accountable for the shooting.

That probe focused on whether the killing amounted to a federal civil rights violation, which would have required proof that it was motivated by racial animosity. The Justice Department said there was not enough evidence to establish that Zimmerman willfully deprived Martin of his civil rights -- a difficult legal standard to meet -- or killed the teenager on account of his race.

"This decision is limited strictly to the department's inability to meet the high legal standard required to prosecute the case under the federal civil rights statutes; it does not reflect an assessment of any other aspect of the shooting," the Justice Department said.

Martin's parents were too distraught after their meeting in Miami with Justice Department officials to speak with reporters, their attorney Ben Crump said.

The Justice Department's decision not to file federal charges against Zimmerman was expected but still "a bitter pill to swallow," he said.

"What they told his family and I was that because Trayvon wasn't able to tell us his version of events, there was a lack of evidence to bring the charges. That's the tragedy," Crump said.

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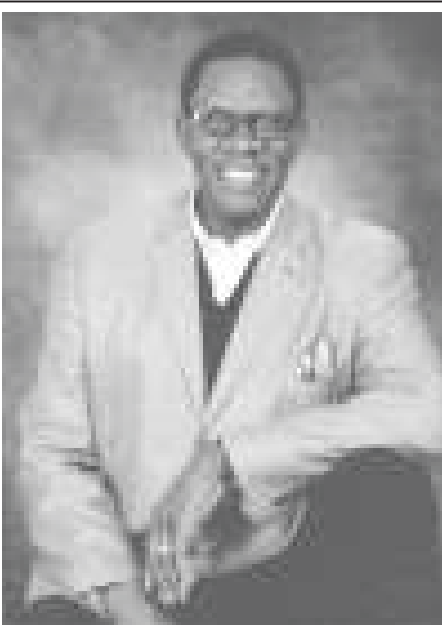
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