



“Challenging People to Shape a Better Future Now”

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- Jobs, Bids
- Sports
- Entertainment
- Music reviews
- Bulletin board
- RSS feeds

12 Things to Know About Trayvon's Murder

1) Trayvon Martin was a 17-year-old Miami student visiting Sanford, Fla., near Orlando, with his father when he was killed On Feb. 26. His father, who also lives in Miami, was visiting his girlfriend in Retreat at Twin Lakes, a gated townhouse community.

2) Trayvon had made a short trip to a nearby 7-Eleven store to pick of a bag of Skittles and a can of Arizona iced tea as was returning when he was stalked by Zimmerman.

3) George Zimmerman, whose father is White and mother is of Peruvian descent, fatally shot unarmed Trayvon in chest.

4) Zimmerman was an unregistered neighborhood watch captain who was not supposed to carry a weapon while on patrol. Chris Tutko, director of Neighborhood Watch for the National Sheriffs' Association, told the Orlando Sentinel that Zimmerman had broken a couple of cardinal rules. "If you see something suspicious, you report it, you step aside and you let law enforcement do their job," Tutko said. "This guy went way beyond the call of duty. At the least, he's overzealous." Tutko also said volunteers should never carry lethal weapons. He said "There's no reason to carry a gun."

5) Though Zimmerman acknowledged killing Trayvon, he was questioned and then released. Police did not follow basic guidelines of homicide investigations such as testing him for drugs and alcohol, though they performed the tests on Trayvon.

6) Benjamin Crump, the family's lawyer, said that based on 911 tapes, Zimmerman harbored at least three stereotypes of Black males: "He said, No.1, he looked suspicious. No.2, he must be high. No. 3, he's looking to break in some place."

7) Some said that Trayvon became a suspect because he wore a hooded sweat shirt, known as a hoodie. Some have even blamed Trayvon's death on his clothing. On the March 23 edition of Fox News' Fox & Friends, network contributor Geraldo Rivera said, "I am urging the parents of Black and Latino youngsters particularly to not let their children go out wearing hoodies. I think the hoodie is as much responsible for Trayvon Martin's death as George Zimmerman was." However others, such as CNN's Anderson Cooper, say they frequently adorn hoodies and have never been

8) Trayvon was talking on his cell phone to his girlfriend shortly before his death and reported being followed by a strange man

THE CURRY REPORT

George E. Curry



Trayvon's parents still have nightmares about his death

in a vehicle.

9) A police dispatcher specifically told Zimmerman not to follow Trayvon, instructions he ignored. When Zimmerman confirmed he was following Trayvon, the dispatcher said.

"OK, we don't need you to do that." Zimmerman continued anyway.

10) Police say Zimmerman was not arrested because of Florida's stand your ground law, a measure that gives broad protection to any citizen acting in self-defense. However, Jeb Bush, who as governor of Florida signed the stand your ground bill into law, said the legislation does not cover the neighborhood watch captain who shot Trayvon Martin to death.

11) At 9 years old, Trayvon saved his father's life. In an interview with Roland Martin on TV One, the elder Martin said: "At the time, he was 9 years old. We had just came from the Little League football park. We fell asleep while the stove was on. A grease fire started. I went into the kitchen to try to put the grease fire out. The grease splattered all over my leg. My body went into shock and by me and him being in the house, I started calling out his name. He finally woke up and, at 9 years old, he pulled me from out of the kitchen, where the kitchen cabinets were on fire. He pulled me out of the kitchen onto the balcony. He actually went back into the house and got the cell phone and called 911."

1972: What Happened to Audacity?

Forty years ago this month, ten thousand African Americans thronged to Gary, IN for the first National Black Political Convention. They gathered to develop a black agenda, and to influence 1972 presidential politics. One of the things on the agenda was the development of an independent black political party and to explore the notion of independent black politics. To commemorate this anniversary, Dr. Ron Daniels convened a group of people on Capitol Hill to see the movie, *Nation Time*, and to listen to a group of people, some of whom had been at Gary, talk about what Gary means today.

One of the things that was exciting about the film was the energy and audacity of the black folk who were gathered at Gary. There is a young Jesse Jackson leading the chant, "What time is it? It's nation time". There is a forceful Richard Hatcher, then mayor of Gary, explaining why the gathering was necessary. There is Imam Baraka, calling for votes. There is Queen Mother Moore, speaking on the necessity for reparations. There is energy, audacity.

All weekend, there have been rallies in support for Trayvon Martin and his family, demands that George Zimmerman, the man who executed Trayvon, be arrested, and demands that Florida's vigilante



BENNETT COLLEGE

Julianne Malveaux

laws be reviewed. Rev. Al Sharpton led some 30,000 people in a Florida rally, and the NAACP also plans a rally. As people rally to

Facing an organized African American community, Zimmerman might have thought twice between raising his gun and using it

support Trayvon Martin and condemn Zimmerman, it is important to remember that this tragedy is one of several. Zimmerman, apparently, felt threatened by Skittles, iced tea, and a hoodie. How many other young black men have been executed in similar circumstances?

This Trayvon Martin case may have a galvanizing effect on African American people. Still, we have to ask what has happened to

the audacity that was so clearly present in Gary four decades ago. Since then, too many of us have become satisfied and complacent. Too many are into "me" not "we". Even as African Americans continue to be battered by our economy, too many are blaming themselves, not our economic structure, for the situation they find themselves in. And we have been too tolerant of those who freely bandy about racial slurs. George Zimmerman apparently

thought he could get away with a public execution. And, truth be told, to date he has. There has been no investigation, no arrest. All he had to say was that he acted in self-defense, and he was off scott free. No matter that the 911 operator told him not to pursue Trayvon. No matter that there is no evidence of self-defense. Trayvon Martin is dead and George Zimmerman is free. Where is our audacity?

George Zimmerman seems to

think there are no consequences to executing a young black man on the public streets. He seems to think so because African American audacity has just about disappeared. Facing an organized African American community, Zimmerman might have thought twice between raising his gun and using it. Fearing an organized black community, Zimmerman might have thought twice before uttering a racial slur. No doubt, he has learned from the best. Rush Limbaugh pops off at the mouth any chance he gets, using racial and gender slurs and only recently suffering any consequences. Newt Gingrich calls President Obama a "food stamp president" and he is only mildly called on it. No wonder Zimmerman thought his effort was acceptable. Until now, he has had no evidence to the contrary. It is easy to say, "black people need to be more organized", but it is difficult to do. Still, the Trayvon Martin case reminds us of the need for an organized African American movement. And Gary reminds us that once there was audacity. We have to find that audacity again so that no racist on the loose ever again feels it acceptable to execute a child on the street.

"This law does not apply to this particular circumstance," Bush said after an education panel discussion at the University of Texas at Arlington. "Stand your ground means stand your ground. It doesn't mean chase after somebody who's turned their back."

12) Trayvon's parents still have nightmares about his death. His father, in an exclusive interview with NNPA publishers, said: "I can't describe the feeling, I can't describe what was going through my mind because I was actually staring at a photo of my pride and joy on the ground dead. I still see the photo now - his eyes weren't closed all the way, his mouth wasn't closed, it was the worst feeling of my life."

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