

Study: Who Cares about Trayvon Martin?

The shooting death of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin by a neighborhood watch captain in Sanford, Fla. has dominated national news lately, with African-Americans more than twice as likely as Whites to follow the story very closely, according to a study by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press.

The study, conducted March 22-25, found that 70 percent of African-Americans followed the story very closely, compared to 30 percent of Whites. Women were more likely to closely follow events surrounding Martin’s death than men, 40 percent to 29 percent. There was also a political divide, with 50 percent of Democrats saying they followed the story very closely, compared to 31 percent of Republicans and 26 percent of independents.

Older respondents followed the story more closely than younger people. The study found that 40 percent of those 65 and older followed the story very closely, trailed by the 50-64 age group (37 percent), 30-49 (33 percent) and 18-29 (26 percent).

When pollsters approached the issue another way by asking respondents to rank their top stories, there was also a sharp racial divide. Fifty-two percent of Blacks ranked the Trayvon Martin story as their top pick, followed by the presidential elections at 13 percent. Whites were almost even-

ly divided, with 20 percent ranking the death of Trayvon Martin as No.1, edging out the presidential election at 19 percent. Among

THE CURRY REPORT

George E. Curry



Whites, the economy was a close third at 17 percent. The economy was a distant third among African-Americans, with only a 7 percent ranking.

The wide gulf between the views of Whites and Blacks on race is nothing new. The two communities hold distinctly different views toward law enforcement officials. While Whites tend the view cops as protective allies, many African-Americans, especially males, live in fear of being mistreated by police officers.

A 2009 study by the Pew Research Center found that 38 percent of Whites expressed a great deal of confidence in local police treating Blacks and Whites equally. However, only 14 percent of African-Americans shared that view. At the other end of the spectrum, 34 percent of Blacks expressed very little confidence in

police treating Blacks and Whites equally, a view shared by 9 percent of Whites.

Interestingly, the national news media did not provide widespread coverage of the Feb. 26 Trayvon Martin shooting until a month later. In the meantime, the Black Press and social media kept the story alive. Release of the 911 tapes and the public outcry that followed forced national media organizations to take notice.

A 2010 Pew study found that African-Americans are highly critical of news coverage of their community.

“Nearly six-in-ten (58 percent) said that coverage of blacks was too negative. Just half as many (29 percent) said the coverage was

negative.” In addition, 51 percent of Blacks said race relations received too little media coverage while only 24 percent of Whites agreed with that opinion.

Undergirding all of those statistics are different perceptions about the existence of racial discrimination.

For example, 43 percent of Blacks said there is a lot of discrimination against African-Americans, compared with 13 percent of Whites. In the survey, Whites were more likely to say Latinos were discriminated against more than Blacks (21 percent vs. 13 percent).

Eighty-one percent of African-Americans said “our country needs to continue making changes to give Blacks equal rights with Whites.” Only 36 percent of

watershed moment for race relations in the U.S.

A Gallup Poll conducted the day after Obama was elected president in November 2008 showed that 70 percent of Americans believed race relations would improve as a result of his victory. Today, however, 48 percent of African-Americans and 31 percent of Whites believe race relations have improved under the president.

In addition, the glow from Obama’s election has faded over the past three years.

In 2009, 71 percent of Blacks thought the election of Obama was one of the most important advances for African-Americans in the past 100 years; today that percentage has declined to 65 percent, a drop of 6 percent. Among Whites, there was nearly a 20 percent decline, falling from 56 percent in 2009 to 37 percent today.

Although there should be universal outrage against a 28-year-old man shooting to death an unarmed 17-year-old, interest in the case, like so many other things in America, is heavily influenced by race.

George E. Curry, former editor-in-chief of Emerge magazine, is editor-in-chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service (NNPA) and editorial director of Heart & Soul magazine

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either fair (28 percent) or too positive (1 percent),” the report said. “By contrast, nearly half (48 percent) of whites said that coverage of blacks was generally fair. Just 31 percent of whites thought that news coverage of blacks was too

Whites agreed. A majority of Whites – 54 percent – said “our country has made the changes it needed to give blacks equal rights with whites.”

Many pointed to the election of President Barack Obama as a

Trayvon Martin Stress Test – We Failed

“Can’t we just get along?

Those famous words from Rodney King still apply to America today. It is 2012 and race based hate haunts us daily. There is always something sensational to remind us that we have yet to overcome this evil. The latest big indication that it still lives is the incident from Sanford, Fla. A child of God, a son and brother of only 17 years in age was struck in the chest by a bullet. The bullet did not come from a gang member, robber or thug. It came from a “volunteer neighborhood watchman” – whatever that is.

Like the Watergate Incident which took down a U.S. president, it wasn’t the initial act that causes us to scream. It was the cover up. What the authorities of Sanford did or did not do subsequent to the shooting is deplorable and leans towards racism.

First, they showed no regard for the family of Trayvon. Here is a corpse of a teenager with his cell phone in his pocket. They made no attempt to locate his family which could have been done in minutes via the cell phone. It wasn’t until his father called police that they informed the family. Secondly, they took the shooter’s word on what happened. Whenever a policeman shoots an individual his



CHAMBER WATCH

Harry C. Alford

weapon is taken for testing; he is given a blood alcohol and drug test and then he is assigned to desk duty until a thorough investigation is completed. Sanford police took his weapon but did nothing else. In fact, they performed a drug test on Trayvon for some reason.

There are a lot of things that don’t add up. Why was this watchman following Trayvon who was walking directly home from a convenience store? The watchman’s

Trayvon’s girlfriend who he called claiming a person was following him. They need to do a run on the

Emmett Till, Rodney King and now Trayvon Martin are just a few reminders that if you are a parent

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shooter’s weapon to see if it has been used in other shootings. Why haven’t they begun a grand jury investigation? Why isn’t there an autopsy done on Trayvon? That might show the entry of the bullet and if he was shot lying on the ground as opposed to attacking the watchman.

This is a pure tragedy but there

of a Black male, you have much to fear.

I have four Black daughters. Not one day ever occurred that I feared for their safety from police. I also have two sons, the babies, and there have been many times that my wife and I would seriously worry about their future and safety. The fear was justified. One of my sons was beaten by DC policemen and falsely charged. It took \$20,000+ to get the false charges thrown out. The other son was given a false citation and harassed by a University of Maryland policeman which we also had to get thrown out. Their best friend escorted a white female student back to her dorm after a campus nightclub closed. The Prince Georges, MD police department declared this to be disturbing the peace (interracial walking after hours). For this they stayed in a jail cell from Friday night to Monday afternoon. His family had to

also pay big bucks to get it thrown out. Just about every Black family I know with a son has similar horror stories.

My wife and I are lucky. Our sons are grown now and have survived with their lives and no trumped up criminal record. There are too many of us who cannot say that. It is an American shame and, somehow, we have got to end this institutional illness. Perhaps we can develop a protocol for all correctional administrators to adhere to. A check list that can be used as a requirement for all policemen, guards etc. That will promote fair and impartial treatment for all regardless of race and/or ethnicity.

The time to end stereotypes and prejudgment is long overdue. Perhaps we should no longer hope for it but sincerely demand it. Something stinks in Sanford, FL and we must expunge it from our society. May God bless the Martin family and may justice prevail in Sanford, FL. All individuals who have failed should pay for their transgressions. May this become an example of what happens whenever fair and impartial treatment is not applied to each and every citizen.

Mr. Alford is the Co-Founder, President/CEO of the National Black Chamber of Commerce.

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911 call sounds like someone drunk but yet they never test him. He weighs more than 100 pounds over Trayvon’s weight but yet he says Trayvon was beating him up. The police ignore the claims of

is more to it than the great loss suffered by the Martin family. It is the reminder that Black young men are at risk whenever they intermingle in the same environment as policemen or guards.