



As Justice Department investigates shooting of Florida teen, doubts arise about federal charges

McNabb Associates, P.C. (Federal Criminal Defense Lawyers)

Submitted at 10:37 AM March 21, 2012

The Washington Post on March 20, 2012 released the following:

“By Sari Horwitz,

The decision by the Justice Department and the FBI to open an investigation into the slaying of an unarmed black teenager in Florida has spurred internal debate at the agency over whether the federal government could bring criminal charges in the case, which has sparked widespread protest.

Lawyers at the department said Tuesday that while the investigation into the shooting of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin would go forward, it would be difficult to prosecute the case under federal law. Civil rights law protects against “hate crimes” or actions by police officers, but Martin’s shooting may not have either of those elements, two officials said. They spoke on the condition of anonymity because the probe is still under federal review.

Martin was shot and killed Feb. 26 by a neighborhood watch volunteer, George Zimmerman, who told police he was acting in self-defense. Zimmerman, 28, had called police from his car after he saw Martin walking in a gated community in Sanford, Fla.

According to the 911 tapes, Zimmerman told the dispatcher, “this guy looks like he’s up to no good or he’s on drugs or something ... they always get away.” The dispatcher told Zimmerman not to follow, saying an officer was on the way. Minutes later, Martin was shot in the chest.

No charges have been brought against Zimmerman. Along with the Justice investigation, a local grand jury will consider evidence in the case.

Zimmerman’s family described him as “a Spanish-speaking minority,” and his

father released a statement to the Orlando Sentinel saying his son did not target Martin because he was black.

Martin’s mother, Sybrina Fulton, said Monday, “I don’t understand why this man has not been arrested ... let a judge and jury decide if he’s guilty.”

Lawyer Benjamin Crump, who represents Martin’s parents, said at a news conference in Florida on Tuesday that the teenager was on a cellphone with his girlfriend in Miami when he told her he was being followed, according to the Associated Press. She said Martin told her that he was trying to get away.

Crump, who did not release the name of Martin’s girlfriend because of privacy concerns, said she heard a scuffle and an altercation before the call was cut off.

Martin had not been using drugs or alcohol and would have had no reason to confront Zimmerman, Crump said in an interview. He had been watching basketball at his father’s girlfriend’s house when he went to a nearby 7-Eleven store for a snack, Crump said.

A bag of Skittles and a can of iced tea were on his body when police arrived.

Rallies have been held across Florida, with students calling for Zimmerman’s arrest, and the Rev. Al Sharpton will hold a national rally Thursday in Sanford.

Thomas E. Perez, assistant attorney general for civil rights, met in Washington on Tuesday with Sanford Mayor Jeff Triplett and Rep. Corrine Brown (D-Fla). Brown urged Perez to prosecute the case as a hate crime.

Stephen A. Saltzburg, a professor at George Washington University Law School, called the case “a difficult one for the Justice Department.”

“This may be somebody who is racially biased, but from the 911 calls, it looks as though, however misguided this guy was,

he thought that Trayvon was involved in some kind of suspicious activity,” Saltzburg said. “Race may play a role, but I just think it will be hard to bring this as a federal hate crime, given the limited reach of federal hate-crimes law.”

Justice Department spokeswoman Xochitl Hinojosa issued a statement late Monday saying that in civil rights crimes, the government “must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that a person acted intentionally and with the specific intent to do something which law forbids — the highest level of intent in criminal law.”

White House spokesman Jay Carney offered condolences to the Martin family but said the White House was “not going to wade into a local law enforcement matter.””

Douglas McNabb – McNabb Associates, P.C.’s

Federal Criminal Defense Attorneys

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Douglas McNabb and other members of the U.S. law firm practice and write and/or report extensively on matters involving Federal Criminal Defense, INTERPOL Red Notice Removal, International Extradition and OFAC SDN Sanctions Removal.

The author of this blog is Douglas C. McNabb. Please feel free to contact him directly at mcnabb@mcnabbassociates.com or at one of the offices listed above.

Noted Scientist Sentenced to 13-Year Prison Term for Attempted Espionage, Fraud and Tax Charges

(USDOJ: Justice News)

Submitted at 12:10 PM March 21, 2012

Stewart David Nozette, 54, a scientist who once worked for the Department of Energy, the Department of Defense, the National Aeronautics and Space

Administration and the White House’s National Space Council, was sentenced today to 13 years in prison for attempted espionage, conspiracy to defraud the United States and tax evasion.



'Botched' Federal Criminal Indictment Ends in Acquittal

McNabb Associates, P.C. (Federal Criminal Defense Lawyers)

Submitted at 11:34 AM March 21, 2012

The Gainesville Sun March 20, 2012 released the following: "‘Botched’ indictment ends in local firm’s acquittal

By Jason Geary and Anthony Clark
The Gainesville Sun
A Gainesville-based construction company and its vice president were acquitted on federal charges of bribing a Polk County school official in Tampa on Monday because the grand jury indictment mistakenly referred to the Polk County government and not the Polk County School District.

M.M. Parrish Construction Co. and its vice president, Lloyd Whann, were on trial in Tampa’s federal courthouse for two weeks on charges of bribing Bob Williams, former assistant superintendent of facilities for the Polk County School Board.

Prosecutors accused the company of gaining a competitive edge by bribing Williams with posh hunting and fishing trips, expensive bathroom renovations on Williams’ home and a \$2,000 shotgun.

The Gainesville-based company has received more than \$100 million worth of work from the Polk County School Board, nearly four times as much work as its nearest competitor.

Federal Court Bars Former Owner of Brooklyn Tax Firm from Operating Tax Preparation Businesses

(USDOJ: Justice News)

Submitted at 10:29 AM March 21, 2012

A federal court has permanently barred Annie P. Williams, the former proprietor of PPH Tax & Realty Inc. in Brooklyn, N.Y., from preparing federal tax returns for others and from having any ownership or financial interest in any tax preparation business, the Justice Department announced today.

The defense argued the company got work based on its reputation for high-quality work and had no intent to influence Williams with gifts. "Witnesses testified one after the other that there was not a better construction company in the state to show they got the work they got because they are the best. That’s the only reason they got it," said Henry M. Coxe III, the company’s attorney.

Williams still faces punishment because he accepted a plea deal last year. He pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit bribery, which carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison.

Whann’s attorney, Larry Turner of Gainesville, said the acquittal was about more than poor verbiage in the indictment. The case was in federal court because the indictment said Polk County received federal funding, but Williams worked for the Polk County School District, a separate government agency. That meant the evidence presented was insufficient, he said.

Turner said there were other problems with the way the indictment was drafted. U.S. District Judge Richard A. Lazzara said he has never seen a "botched situation" like this in his 14 years on the federal bench.

Lazzara told Michael Walsh, the company’s president, and Whann that they

were not guilty of the charges and were free to leave.

The sudden ending brought both men to tears, and they embraced their lawyers, family and friends.

"I just had to thank God, that’s all I could think was thank you God for bringing us through this," Walsh told The Sun on Tuesday. "We just appreciate all the love and support that we received from friends and customers and people from all over throughout the whole process."

While M.M. Parrish Construction and the local real estate firm Coldwell Banker M.M. Parrish Realtors were founded locally by the Parrish family, the construction company was sold in the early 1980s."

To find additional federal criminal news, please read [Federal Crimes Watch Daily](#).

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