

Forensic Force® Series

Part II - The Rebranding of Trayvon Martin and Prosecutorial Deception

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The now infamous Trayvon Martin shooting homicide case has more upside twists and turns than a roller coaster ride at an amusement park. Ever since Martin's shooting by George Zimmerman, a duly appointed Neighborhood Watch captain by the Twin Lakes Home Owner's Association, Martin's family, friends and the family's civil legal team have been hard at work rebranding and rehabilitating Trayvon so that his image will reconcile better with the "victim" profile they, the Florida State Prosecutor and the media are trying to represent to the media.

Consistent with other high-profile cases of this type the media has been complicit in deliberately misleading the public by falsifying information including direct forensic evidence. National and local news outlets either completely fail to or reluctantly report on any information that is negative regarding Trayvon Martin or possibly exculpatory to George Zimmerman. Further and equally damaging to any process of justice is the fact that the majority of the mainstream media have already decided who their "victim" is in this incident and it is clearly not George Zimmerman.

The "Rebranding" and Rehabilitation of Trayvon Martin

Since the February 26th shooting of Trayvon Martin we know much about his shooter George Zimmerman, but relatively little about Martin. Family members, friends and supporters, the Martin family legal team and some members of the media have been actively engaged in "rebranding" and rehabilitating Trayvon since his death under highly questionable circumstances.

Trayvon's Social Media Accounts Taken Down

The media has repeatedly posted doctored and much younger, almost childlike photos of Martin while only allowing us to see George Zimmerman's booking photo. Photos of Trayvon Martin flashing gang signs or posturing in an obviously intimidating manner are never published even though they existed on his Facebook account. It is interesting to note that both Martin's Facebook and Twitter social media accounts were conveniently pulled down after his death. If Trayvon was such an innocent "victim" then why was there such a rush to attempt to erase key elements of his personal background? Perhaps it is because a number of elements in Trayvon's life would not necessarily endear him to the general public if they knew him better.

Those quick enough to research the Google caches of each of Trayvon Martin's social media accounts before they conveniently disappeared have discovered important information that provides critical insight into Trayvon's life recent to the shooting. Trayvon and at least one of his friends posted photos on Trayvon's Facebook account of them flashing obvious gang signs. Trayvon's Twitter account name was "NO_LIMIT_NIGGA;" not the most respectful nom de plume for any African-American male. Trayvon and his friends also casually and frequently referred to themselves by the term "cuz and Cuzz."

Cues to Gang and Drug Related Activity

Anyone who has ever associated with or has investigated black street gangs knows that only Crip gang members refer to and greet each other as "Cuz" or "Cuzz." In one telling post mortem salutation to Trayvon, one of his thuggish colleagues tweeted, "@NO_LIMIT_NIGGA, IMA MISS YU TILL I DIE. DOG I KNOW YOU WHOOPED HIS ASS DOE..CUZ I PRAY TO GOD HELP ME AND WATCH YU. LOVE YOU CUZZ REST ETERNALLY." Other terms and phrases that Trayvon and his social media friends frequently posted on his sites include references to "gangstas," selling marijuana and encouragements to assault others.

Although Trayvon was only 17 years old when he died he was already sporting several gold teeth, tattoos and was tweeting references to selling drugs and assaults. While one tattoo was reportedly his mother's name, the autopsy report has not yet identified Trayvon's remaining tattoos. Why not? It would be important to know whether or not these tattoos were gang related. Certainly it would appear that Trayvon Martin was directly involved in if not at least associated with street gang and or drug-related activity.

Suspicious, Unexplained Suspension from High School

Trayvon Martin normally resided in the Miami-Dade area with his mother. However, on the day of his temporary move to the Twin Lakes condominium complex in Sanford, Florida to spend time with his father, which was the same day that he was shot by George Zimmerman, Trayvon had been suspended for 10 days from Dr. Michael M. Krop Senior High School in North Miami-Dade. School officials state that Trayvon was not suspended for any crime or a violent act. They only state that Martin "was in an unauthorized area of school property." However, the school officials decline to explain why Martin was suspended so many days for such a minor appearing administrative infraction that would usually result in an after school detention program. Unfortunately, we will not know what Trayvon actually did to receive such a harsh suspension from his high school because his family has sealed his school records. How does this action reconcile for Trayvon's family who initially accused police of a lack of transparency and who have repeatedly stated that they only want to see justice done in this case? One would think that "justice" is a two-way street with both sides providing transparent representations and forensic evidence to support their positions.

More Suspicious Activity in Trayvon Martin's Past

At least two outside news sources have reported that Trayvon Martin had been previously detained by police for suspicious activity and searched. It has been reported that during a search of Martin's backpack an officer found women's jewelry including diamond earrings and a long flathead screwdriver. When questioned about the jewelry, Martin reportedly told the officer that one of his friends had given him the jewelry but he was otherwise unable to account for it. In many states, carrying an instrument such as a large flathead screwdriver by itself especially under such highly suspicious circumstances would constitute a crime of possession of a burglary tool.

Our "Collective Knowledge" of the Real Trayvon Martin Grows Putting the Shooting Incident Puzzle Together Piece by Piece

In Part One of my series on the Trayvon Martin shooting I discussed the legal issue of "collective knowledge." The term actually comes from the police practices concept of establishing reasonable suspicion or probable cause to stop/detain and perhaps arrest a suspect. Reasonable suspicion and probable cause are separate standards of proof used by police in their daily enforcement activities. However, we can also apply the term "collective knowledge" and reasonable suspicion to both sides of the Martin – Zimmerman equation to help us understand better what might have occurred that fateful night.

We now have some additional facts regarding Trayvon Martin's background recent to the shooting. We can objectively determine that he was certainly not entirely the innocent teen victim his parents, supporters and the Martin's legal team have represented him to be. The Martin family and their legal team's successful efforts (at this point) to deflect and redirect negative attention towards George Zimmerman, while sealing Trayvon's school disciplinary records and erasing his social media accounts in an effort to rebrand and rehabilitate the deceased Trayvon is clear evidence of a "consciousness of guilt" and a cover-up of the youth's true character. However, what remains to be objectively determined is exactly what Trayvon was doing on the night and at the time that he and George Zimmerman encountered each other.

Despite the obvious attempts to rehabilitate Trayvon's Martin's post mortem public image the pieces of our forensic puzzle are forming up to provide us with an increased "collective knowledge" of Trayvon character profile.

We know that Trayvon had previously been detained by police for suspicious activity. We know that during this detention police searched and recovered women's jewelry and a possible burglary tool from Trayvon's backpack. What was Trayvon doing with a backpack containing women's jewelry and a long, flathead screwdriver? Why was Trayvon in an "unauthorized area" of school property and what was he doing there to receive a 10 day suspension and an abrupt temporary move to his father's home at Twin Lakes?

What is a 17 year old teen calling himself “No Limit Nigga” doing running around with gold teeth, tattoos, flashing gang signs and being referred to by the Crip street gang salutation “Cuzz?” When stopped and detained by police, what was Trayvon doing with expensive women’s jewelry and a flathead screwdriver concealed in his backpack? Why would Trayvon Martin’s family and their attorneys be so engaged in sealing his school disciplinary records and acutely tearing down all references to this young man’s Facebook and Twitter social media accounts with profuse references to drug sales, violence and “gangsta” activity if Trayvon was really the “innocent victim” they have been representing him to be?

Take what we now know about Trayvon Martin and add this information to the criminal and demographic facts and information for the Twin Lakes condominium complex I discussed in Part One of my series on this shooting (See: “The Trayvon Martin Shooting – Justice Unbalanced,”). Next, add in the facts that George Zimmerman, many of his neighbors and the Sanford Police Department were keenly aware that young black males had been identified and arrested for a rash of burglaries and thefts in the complex including one at Zimmerman’s home.

Next, add in the facts that since the shooting incident, there has been a concerted effort by Trayvon Martin’s family, friends, the family’s legal team and a complicit mainstream media to rebrand and rehabilitate this young man. The elephant in the room question is, “Why?”

The most likely truth here is that there may be far more of a dark side to Trayvon Martin than the public has been led to believe. If not, then why all the smoke and mirrors to conceal this side of Trayvon’s character and behavior?

It is rapidly becoming a distinct possibility that Trayvon Martin may have been either a street hood or a “wannabe gangsta” who was rapidly moving more towards a life of petty crimes and community victimization, than towards an honest and upstanding life. What I find absolutely amazing and incomprehensible is that while there is evidence readily available to suggest this may well be the case, it appears that the State Prosecutor and the majority of the mainstream media refuse to even consider this possibility. If true, why is this so?

Possible Prosecutorial Misconduct – Misunderstood “Advocacy”

Let me be one of the first to say that I believe that there is already evidence to suggest that State’s Special Prosecutor Angela Corey may have committed serious prosecutorial misconduct in this case by unethically, willfully and deliberately refusing to release critical evidence that was possibly exculpatory to George Zimmerman to the Court and to ensure that this evidence and information was included in the police investigator’s probable cause affidavit.

For instance, it can now be proven that George Zimmerman sustained a broken nose, two black eyes and bloody lacerations to the back of his head during his confrontation with Trayvon Martin. This information has been forensically confirmed through the reports filed by paramedics who treated Zimmerman, in subsequent medical reports and from color photographs taken at the scene and in enhanced surveillance video from the Sanford Police

Department. One witness has told police that on the night of the shooting he heard a shot, ran outside and observed George Zimmerman standing and bleeding from the back of his head.

We also know from Trayvon Martin's autopsy report and accompanying photographs that Martin sustained cuts and bruises to both hands and a single close proximity gunshot wound to his chest. This evidence would suggest that absent any other injuries to Martin, his injuries would be consistent with "Witness 6's" initial statements to investigators that he observed a black man on top of a lighter-skinned man, "just throwing down blows on the guy, MMA (mixed martial arts) style." "Witness 13" has told investigators that Zimmerman told him that (Zimmerman) had to shoot Martin because Martin was beating him.

Both Special Prosecutor Corey and a police investigator authoring the probable cause affidavit have mentioned that George Zimmerman "profiled" Martin. However, when asked about what objective basis the investigator used to determine that Zimmerman "profiled" Trayvon Martin the investigator conceded that he really had "no objective basis" to support his comment. Again, none of the aforementioned evidence and information found its way into the probable cause affidavit submitted to the Court. Why not?

An Increasingly Compromised Investigation and Trial

The investigation into the shooting death of Trayvon Martin and any potential for a fair trial is becoming more compromised as the weeks pass. This week it was revealed that at least four key witnesses in the investigation have altered their stories. This is evidence that the percipient witnesses in the case now feel intimidated and pressured by all of the media attention and public sentiment. Some in the media have even suggested that the public may emotionally react to any verdict to acquit George Zimmerman similarly to how Los Angeles residents reacted to and rioted following the acquittal of the LAPD officers in the first Rodney King trial. As one of the experts who consulted in the Rodney King case I can assure you that the two cases could not be further apart in fact patterns and sentiments.

As I reported in my first article about the shooting, the investigation and trial should ultimately be about the criminal culpability of George Zimmerman to have committed Second Degree Murder; not whether it was prudent or not for him to follow and/or engage Trayvon Martin. This is not a civil case where we can argue the issues of "contribution" to an injury or death. The standard of proof in a criminal venue is guilt beyond a reasonable doubt that George Zimmerman met all of the elements of the crime of Second Degree Murder as charged by the State's Special Prosecutor and filed.

There are still many pieces of the puzzle yet to be put properly together. We must also be ready to accept the fact that some pieces have been lost and the puzzle may never be completed in its entirety. However, so far it would appear that the misdeeds of the Florida Special Prosecutor and at least one of the police investigators, exacerbated by a reckless,

fraudulent and biased news media have created an atmosphere where any opportunity for a fair trial and justice in this case has nearly evaporated.

About the Author

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