



Gloucester County NAACP #2345

Opinion

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As I observe the ongoing events following the death of Trayvon Martin, in Sanford Florida, I am both sad and hopeful.

I am sad because an overzealous, armed, town watch volunteer took it upon himself to follow, confront, and then kill a young African American man armed with nothing more than Skiddles candy, and an ice tea drink from the local convenience store, no more than 75 feet from the back door of his own home.

I am sad that a neighborhood watchman described Martin as "suspicious" to a 911 operator, it begged the question: What, precisely, made him suspect? Since there was no indication from the call that Martin's actions were untoward, logic turned to his mere presence. He was a black man in jeans and ... a hoodie. (*The Daily Beast*)

I am sad that less than 2 hours after what was reported to be a life and death struggle where the assailant's nose was supposed to have been broken, a video of the assailant, George Zimmerman showed no evidence of a broken nose or any evidence of a struggle between himself and the victim Trayvon Martin.

I am sad because the Florida State Attorney General's office made a determination that despite evidence to the contrary, that Mr. Zimmerman should not be arrested or charged with any crime, even though the Sanford Police Department's initial investigator wanted to charge Mr. Zimmerman with involuntary manslaughter.

I am sad that it appears that Mr. Zimmerman's father who is a retired Supreme Court Justice and his mother who is a court clerk may have had something to do with the lack of access to his criminal file. The same file which showed Mr. Zimmerman had been charged with assaulting a police officer.

I am sad that the Florida State "Stand Your Ground" Statute, which is supposed to empower citizens to defend themselves, was instead used to usurp and circumvent the Grand Jury and indictment process.

I am sad that as Americans are drawn into this tragic episode, we are viewing this tragedy through the prism of race and politics. We aren't seeing the real truth in anything anymore, just our version of the truth. The truth in this case is that a life was taken unnecessarily and that no one has been called to account for that life.

Even after expressing all that sadness, I am still hopeful.

I am hopeful because ordinarily the tragic story of Trayvon Martin would not have been told. He would have died in relative obscurity with only local leaders and his family crying out in vain for justice, and Mr. Zimmerman would now be getting on with his life with no remorse and no justice for Trayvon. Instead, with the help of the NAACP and African American media pushing this story past the usual gauntlet of editorial gatekeepers, and with social media keeping Trayvon's murder relevant and topical on the 24 hour Cable News networks. Trayvon's story gained traction, and became a national, and then international movement for fairness, accountability, and true justice in our nation.

I am hopeful because, at a time when our nation seems so hopelessly divided along Geo-political, religious, and racial lines, that truth is still finding its way to the people.

I am hopeful because Trayvon's tragic death will not be in vain. His life cut short, will be a beacon protecting millions of African American and Hispanic young men from slaughter and help to preserve their futures.

But most of all, I am hopeful because there are people who seek fairness and truth in every race, in every political party, in every religion, in every neighborhood, city, state, and country. Reason and right will always prevail over passion and pride

JUSTICE WILL PREVAIL