

Killing an African-American Teenager: Zimmerman - Not Guilty of Cold-Blooded Murder

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When is killing a non-threatening unarmed teenager not murder? When civil rights don't matter. When Jim Crow justice prevails.

When the victim is black. When mostly white women jurors call cold-blooded murder self-defense.

(Note: Juror B29 was the sole Hispanic. Zimmerman's white. He's Hispanic. His voter registration form identifies him that way. His father calls himself white. His mother's Peruvian).

Killing Trayvon Martin's not murder when a jury of peers representing both sides fairly is verboten. When killing black males in America is OK when whites do it.

When a culture of violence prevails. When institutionalized racism is longstanding. When conventional wisdom says black males aren't victims. They're prone to violence.

When equity and justice are four-letter words. When human life has no value. When society doesn't give a damn if a black male dies. When lawlessness is part of the national culture.

George Zimmerman murdered Trayvon Martin. He did so in cold-blood. He's free to kill again. Wrongfully claiming self-defense saved him. It's the American way. It's always been this way.

Cold-blooded murder's not self-defense. Not now. Not ever.

The ACLU responded to Trayvon's killing saying:

His death "once again laid bare the reality that, too often in our nation's history, police actions have been motivated by racial bias and that crimes with an undeniable racial motive have too often been overlooked or swept under the rug."

Florida's Seminole County Court Judge Debra Nelson concluded proceedings telling Zimmerman: "You have no further business with the court."

Benjamin Crump represented Trayvon's family. He expressed their outrage saying:

"Trayvon Martin will forever remain in the annals of history next to Medgar Evers and Emmet Till as symbols for the fight for equal justice for all."

He appealed for calm, adding: "For Trayvon to remain in peace, we must all be peaceful."

NAACP President Ben Jealous issued a [statement](#) saying:

"I know I am not alone in my outrage, anger, and heartbreak over this decision."

"When a teenager's life is taken in cold blood, and there is no accountability for the man who killed him, nothing seems right in the world, but we cannot let these emotions alone rule."

"In these most challenging of times, we are called to act. There is work left to be done to achieve justice for Trayvon."

"The Department of Justice can still address the violation of Trayvon's most fundamental civil right - the right to life, and we are urging them to do so."

"We continue to grieve the loss of Trayvon with his parents, his family, and all who loved him. Do not forget what brought us to this day."

"(W)e have a choice. We can be felled by our sorrows over the jury's decision, or we can turn our frustration into action. We can demand the Department of Justice address the travesties of this tragedy. We can take a step forward in our efforts to finally end racial profiling in America once and for all."

Legal proceedings against Zimmerman's wife remain active. Shellie Zimmerman faces perjury charges. She lied last summer. She did so during her husband's bail hearing.

She wrongfully pled poverty. She did it after she and her husband raised \$130,000 through online donations.

Nationwide protests followed Zimmerman's acquittal. Public anger is real. It's visceral. Twitter messages read:

"My heart is aching with disappointment."

"My tears haven't fallen this hard in years."

"The justice system in America is RIP."

"US jury acquits on black teen death!! Makes me sick to my stomach."

"It's now legal. You can chase someone, start a fight and pull out a gun, kill him & walk away scot-free."

San Francisco protesters marched down Mission and Valencia streets. They called for justice. They held signs saying: "The people say guilty," "No justice, no peace," and "The whole system is racist."

Riots erupted in downtown Oakland. Chicago protesters shouted "Who killed Trayvon Martin? The whole damn system!"

Washington, DC protesters blocked a busy intersection. Marchers in Seminole County's seat, Sanford, Miami, and elsewhere demand justice.

Trayvon was aged 17. He was an African American high school student. He lived in predominantly white Sanford, FL.

On February 26, 2012, Zimmerman murdered him in cold blood. He faced second-degree murder and manslaughter charges.

Trayvon was unarmed. He carried a can of iced tea and some cash. He threatened no one. Neighborhood watch captain Zimmerman claimed self-defense.

Critics called killing Trayvon a hate crime. Police tapes showed Zimmerman obsessed with law and order, suburban life minutia, and black males. He called them "assholes who always get away."

A 2011-established Neighborhood Watch group appointed him captain. It was set up to help local police. He's a former altar boy turned killer.

In 2005, he faced assault charges. He accosted a police officer during an altercation. It was over a friend's underage drinking arrest.

He was a first-time offender. He avoided a felony conviction. The same year, his former fiancée accused him of domestic violence. He counter-charged in response. In 2006, the case ended when both injunctions expired.

Stand your ground laws facilitate anything goes. They legitimize vigilante justice. They permit killing.

Most US states have them. So does Florida. They wink and nod at murder. They do so if authorities or individuals fear assailants pose serious threats. They expand on the so-called Castle Doctrine.

US Legal.com defines it as follows:

"In criminal law, (it's) an exception to the retreat rule. The retreat rule allows a person the use of deadly force while protecting his/her place of abode, its premises and its inhabitants from attack such as from a trespasser who intends to commit a felony or inflict serious bodily injury or harm."

"This defense justifies such conduct constituting a criminal offense. This is also termed as defense of premises, defense of habitation and dwelling defense."

According to Jacksonville, FL State Attorney Angela Corey:

"The stand-your-ground law is one portion of justifiable use of deadly force."

"And what that means is that the state must go forward and be able to prove its case beyond a reasonable doubt."

"It makes the case in general more difficult than a normal criminal case."

Florida's law states:

"A person who is not engaged in an unlawful activity and who is attacked in any other place he or she has a right to be has no duty to retreat and has the right to stand his or her

ground and meet force with force, including deadly force if he or she reasonably believes it is necessary to do so to prevent death or great bodily harm to himself or herself or to another or to prevent the commission of a forcible felony.”

Law Professor Jonathan Turley calls Stand Your Ground, Make My Day, and Castle Doctrine laws abusive and unnecessary.

They “address a problem that does not exist,” he said. There are ample protections under the common law for individuals to use the privilege of self-defense, including reasonable mistaken self-defense.”

“Legislators are now feigning complete shock at the potential for abuse under these laws after refusing to consider” clear warnings about passing them.

Shoot first laws assure trouble. Needless deaths follow. Killers get off scot-free. Wild west justice prevails.

Zimmerman wasn’t initially charged. Public outrage forced Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi to act. She appointed a special prosecutor. She pressed second-degree murder and manslaughter charges.

Under Florida law, second degree murder is lawlessly killing someone. It excludes premeditation. Proving it requires prosecutors show defendants evinced a “depraved mind” without regard for human life.

They must convince jurors that they acted with enmity toward victims or that both parties had an ongoing interaction or relationship. Proving an intent to kill isn’t required.

Second degree murder’s mandated if victims die while committing a felony. They include burglary, home-invasion robbery, kidnapping, sexual battery, and other offenses.

Prosecutors must show victims died as a result of an act committed by a non-participant in the felony. If the defendant or other criminal participant caused the killing, state law requires first degree murder charges.

Second degree murder defenses include:

- justifiable use of deadly force to “prevent the commission of a forcible felony,” or using it “to prevent death or great bodily harm;”
- excusable homicide committed by accident; or
- spontaneous or negligent killing qualifying as manslaughter.

If found guilty, Zimmerman faced up to 30 years imprisonment. Life sentences may be imposed if defendants had other felony convictions, including murder.

Acquitting Zimmerman reflects Jim Crow justice. Killing a nonthreatening unarmed black teenager doesn’t matter. Stand your ground laws make it easy. It’s the American way.

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