



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on July 16, 2012

More Evidence Backs Zimmerman

Two new developments in the Trayvon Martin case in Sanford, Florida, cast even more doubt on the prosecutor's second-degree murder charge against George Zimmerman, the Hispanic man accused of killing Martin because the 6-foot-three football player was black.

The [Orlando Sentinel](#) disclosed FBI records showing that federal law-enforcement officers learned that Zimmerman is not a racist and is indeed far from it.



Meanwhile, the *Miami Herald* reported that the lead detective in the Martin case told the FBI that fellow detectives pressured him to press charges.

The latest news in the case provides even more reason for special prosecutor [Angela Corey](#) to drop the case against Zimmerman, [who has claimed](#) from day one, February 26, that he shot Martin in self-defense because Martin was trying murder him.

Zimmerman Not a Racist

The [Sentinel](#) reported,

Federal civil-rights investigators interviewed dozens of George Zimmerman's friends, neighbors and co-workers, and no one said he was a racist, records released Thursday show.

[FBI](#) agents spread out across the state, talking to three dozen people, including gun-shop employees, Zimmerman's ex-fiancée and the Sanford police detective who led the investigation into the fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin, an unarmed black 17-year-old.

The key witness defending Zimmerman from the charge of racism is his ex-fiancée, the [Sentinel](#) reported, "who filed a domestic-violence injunction against him in 2005." She "described Zimmerman as 'protective and territorial' toward her and 'having a bad temper,' but he was no racist, she told the FBI." The paper continued,

He socialized and played basketball with white, black and Hispanic men and "never exhibited any biases or prejudices against anyone and did not use racial epithets of any kind," an agent quoted her as saying.

Co-workers also said they saw no signs of ethnic or racial bias. They described Zimmerman as "pleasant" and "outgoing."

The FBI got involved after the Department of Justice launched a civil-rights investigation into Trayvon's shooting.

That followed weeks of protests and rallies around the country where national civil-rights leaders, including the president of the [NAACP](#), the Rev. Jesse Jackson, the Rev. Al Sharpton and several members of Congress, accused Sanford police of doing a shoddy, racially biased investigation and refusing to arrest Zimmerman.



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The [Sentinel concluded](#) that “most of the new evidence appeared to favor Zimmerman.”

Racial Bias Against Zimmerman

The [Herald's story raises](#) the question of whether prosecutors charged Zimmerman because of racial bias against him. Martin's supporters, including Al Sharpton, charged police with racial bias for refusing to charge Zimmerman.

Sanford police officer Chris Serino told the FBI that his fellow officers kept pushing him to charge Zimmerman even though Serino didn't think the evidence warranted an arrest, the [Herald reported](#). The paper continued,

The lead Sanford Police investigator who sought manslaughter charges against George Zimmerman told the FBI that a sergeant and two other officers tried to pressure him into making an arrest in the controversial case — even though he didn't think there was enough evidence.

Sanford Police Officer Chris Serino first made headlines when evidence released in the case showed he sought manslaughter charges against Zimmerman even while his chief publicly said there was no probable cause to arrest him. But a document released late Thursday casts doubt on Serino's prior sworn affidavit seeking criminal charges, and raises questions about the credibility of the star law-enforcement witness in the murder case against Zimmerman for the shooting death of a black teenager, Miami Gardens high school junior Trayvon Martin.

Telling the FBI that he was concerned that people inside the police department were leaking information, Serino cited Sgt. Arthur Barnes, officers Rebecca Villalona and Trekelle Perkins “as all pressuring him to file charges against Zimmerman after the incident,” an FBI report said. “Serino did not believe he had enough evidence at the time to file charges.”

Those police officers may well have been biased against Zimmerman, the [Herald reported](#), and apparently, their superiors suspected them of leaking information about the case.

The *Herald* continued,

The summary of Serino's statement does not mention the race of the officers who allegedly pressured him, but sources told *The Miami Herald* that Barnes and Perkins are black, and Villalona is married to an African-American man. All three, the source said, had been called in by their supervisor and questioned about leaking information in the case.

One explanation of the bias, Serino told the FBI, is Barnes' friendship with Trayvon Martin's father, Tracy, the *Herald* reported. “He said Tracy Martin at first understood why no charges were filed, but later changed course and accused Zimmerman of racial profiling.”

As well, said the [Herald](#),

Records released Thursday show that Sgt. Barnes, a 25-year veteran of the department, told the FBI that he believed the black community would be “in an uproar” if Zimmerman was not charged. “The community will be satisfied if an arrest takes place,” the FBI quoted him saying. Barnes “felt the shooting was not racially motivated, but it was a man shooting an unarmed kid.”

The report does not make clear why Serino would feel pressure from Barnes and the other two officers he mentioned, when he had the backing of the police chief. Chief Lee was fired last month for his role in the widely disparaged investigation.



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More Pressure to Drop the Charge

The newest revelations will intensify the pressure on prosecutor Corey to drop the second-degree murder charge against Zimmerman.

Leading that charge is leftist legal hero Alan Dershowitz, [who says Corey's affidavit](#) and charge are "immoral," "unethical," and "irresponsible." [According to](#) Dershowitz, the [affidavit lies](#) by omission because it does not include exculpatory evidence that showed Zimmerman told the truth about his encounter with Martin and why he shot him on February 26.

Zimmerman claims that Martin punched him, breaking Zimmerman's nose, then took him to the ground and bashed his head into the ground. [Martin told](#) Zimmerman, "you're gonna die now," or something to that effect.

Prosecutors have adduced no evidence to contradict Zimmerman's claim of self-defense, and indeed, all the medical evidence released thus far [backs up](#) Zimmerman's story, most notably injuries to the back of Zimmerman's head and his broken nose.

After Corey filed the second-degree murder charge, [legal experts said](#) she "overcharged" Zimmerman in order to force him to plead guilty to a lesser charge. Those experts said Corey does not have the evidence to credibly win a second-degree murder prosecution because she cannot show that Zimmerman "[evinc\[ed\] a depraved mind](#) regardless of human life."

When the [prosecutor released](#) her affidavit, [Dershowitz said](#) the evidence was "so thin that it won't make it past a judge on a second degree murder charge."

And with that Corey filed a charge that could end with Zimmerman in prison for life.

Photo of George Zimmerman: AP Images

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