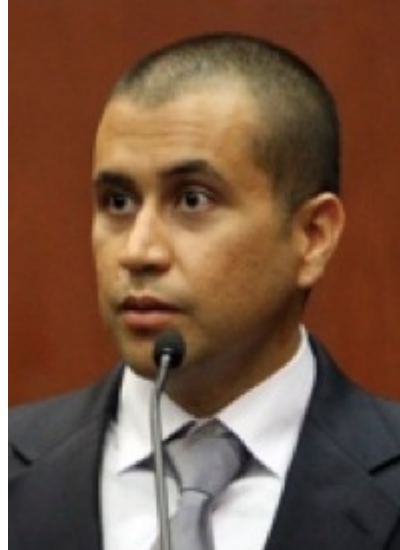




Written by [Alex Newman](#) on April 22, 2012

Zimmerman Injury Photo Raises Questions About Prosecution, Media

The press had previously [released](#) images from a security camera, taken much later, purporting to show that Zimmerman was not actually injured. But with the newly released photo, experts raised fresh questions about both the media circus surrounding the case and even the prosecution.



The graphic picture, obtained by ABC News from an unidentified source and released on Friday, shows blood dripping from two wounds on the back of Zimmerman's head, as well as an apparent contusion forming on the crown. All of the wounds would be consistent with Zimmerman's self-defense story and the original police report filed by the first officer on the scene.

"I could observe that [Zimmerman's] back appeared to be wet and was covered in grass, as if he had been laying [sic] on his back on the ground," noted Sanford Police Department officer Timothy Smith in the [report](#). "Zimmerman was also bleeding from the nose and back of his head." Zimmerman was reportedly treated by paramedics at the scene before being taken in for questioning by law enforcement.



According to legal analysts, the recently released picture could help support Zimmerman's claim that he shot 17-year-old Martin in self-defense on February 26. Zimmerman has maintained all along that Martin attacked him, bashed his head on the concrete, and broke his nose. The state originally declined to press charges.

Some activists, however, encouraged by deceptive media reports and assorted race mongers, portrayed the shooting as a racist murder, demanding Zimmerman's immediate arrest. And after weeks of protests across the nation, Zimmerman was [eventually charged with second-degree murder](#) by a Florida Special Prosecutor earlier this month.

The newly released picture quickly attracted headlines across America. It was seized on by analysts to criticize both the establishment press and the prosecution as a whole. A lawyer for the Martin family, however, was not convinced the image showed Zimmerman truly acted in self-defense.

"How bad could it have been if they didn't take him to the hospital [and] didn't stitch him up?" [asked](#) attorney Benjamin Crump, who represents Martin's parents. "The special prosecutor has seen all the evidence and still believes George Zimmerman murdered Trayvon Martin."

It was not immediately clear whether prosecutors had seen the photo before charging Zimmerman with



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murder. But it was not mentioned in the [state's affidavit](#). If they had not, legal experts [cited](#) in media reports said the new evidence could be a game changer — assuming the image has not been altered in any way, which nobody has seriously suggested so far.

If, however, the prosecution team did indeed see the photo but failed to mention it in the affidavit, that would be even more troubling, according to experts. Harvard Law School Professor Alan Dershowitz, who had already criticized the prosecution in the Zimmerman case, [told](#) Breitbart news that affidavits are supposed to address all relevant information. So, if the prosecutors had access to the picture yet did not include it in official documents, the omission would constitute a “grave ethical violation,” he said.

“An affidavit that willfully misstates undisputed evidence known to the prosecution is not only unethical but borders on perjury because an affiant swears to tell not only the truth, but the whole truth, and suppressing an important part of the whole truth is a lie,” Prof. Dershowitz explained. “I’m not taking sides, but I’m insisting that both sides play by the rules, and so far the prosecution is not playing by the rules.”

According to the liberal-leaning law professor, this would not be the first time Florida prosecutors had been caught deliberately omitting exculpatory evidence. “It’s a continuing problem,” he said. “Here, it’s not only immoral, but stupid. The whole country is watching. What do they benefit from having half-truths in an affidavit?”

While state prosecutors came under fire in the divisive case, much of the mainstream media has been lambasted for what critics say was biased, improper, and sometimes outright deceptive reporting. ABC News, which released the most recent photo Friday and other images last month, claimed that in the original police footage, “Zimmerman’s wounds are not apparent, and there were no bandages on his head.”

Critics, however, were not buying it. “I think ABC isn’t being entirely honest about it,” [noted](#) Bryan Preston in a piece about the new photo, the previously released footage, and the media’s past coverage of the case. “The network centered its story about that clip on the lack of visible wounds, wounds which we now know were visible. So someone at some point in the process of ABC obtaining and posting that video handled it in a less than honest manner.”

The most alarming example of improper reporting, however, came from NBC, which [deceptively edited](#) a recording of Zimmerman’s 911 call. As the case was attracting national attention, the network’s editing of the tape made it appear as though Zimmerman had mentioned Martin’s race for no reason.

In reality, the dispatcher had asked Zimmerman about the suspicious person’s race — and Zimmerman responded by saying he thought the man was black. After getting caught, NBC apologized for the deception and fired a person it said was responsible. But the race narrative had already been ingrained in the public consciousness by then.

Analysts have blamed the deceptive media coverage for much of the strife that emerged in the weeks and months after the shooting. The race-driven media agenda resulted in black and white racists [threatening a “race war”](#) even as professional race mongers like Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson sought to whip up a frenzy of agitation. Even President Obama jumped on the race bandwagon.

As the facts emerged, however, the hysteria died down somewhat. But it has certainly not disappeared — more than a few race agitators have staked what remains of their reputations on the Zimmerman case. And if the prosecution collapses, their careers might well crumble with it.



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If convicted of the murder charge —which legal analysts say would be tough to prove beyond a reasonable doubt — Zimmerman could face life in prison. But appearing in court the same day the bloody photo was released, the judge in the case set Zimmerman's bail at \$150,000 — indicating that, at the very least, the case is not as open-and-shut as some activists and media outlets had portrayed it.

Speaking publicly for the first time since the fatal shooting, Zimmerman [apologized](#) to Martin's family during his bond hearing. "I am sorry for the loss of your son. I did not know how old he was. I thought he was a little bit younger than I was," Zimmerman said. "I did not know if he was armed or not."

Zimmerman surrendered his passport to authorities and must wear a GPS tracker as a condition of release. His arraignment is scheduled for next month.

Thumbnail photo of George Zimmerman at top left: AP Images

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