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NBC News Transcripts

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HEADLINE: Social media spreading controversy over shooting of a teenager by a Neighborhood Watch volunteer

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BODY:

BRIAN WILLIAMS, anchor:

Now to the story in this country that has exploded, thanks largely to social media. The use of deadly force against a teenager carrying nothing more than a bag of Skittles, shot and killed by a man who was carrying a gun. Tonight, the dramatic 911 tapes that captured the young man's last moments and the growing calls now for justice in a state with a surprising law along those lines. Our report from our justice correspondence Pete Williams.

PETE WILLIAMS reporting:

Outside a Florida prosecutor's office today, students demanded criminal charges in the death of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin. Walking through a gated community near Orlando three weeks ago, he was shot by a Neighborhood Watch volunteer, George Zimmerman, who's Hispanic. It all began when Zimmerman called 911 worried about recent break ins.

(Clip from 911 call)

Mr. GEORGE ZIMMERMAN: This guy looks like he's up to no good or he's on drugs or something. He's got his hand in his waistband and he's a black male.

Unidentified 911 Operator #1: Are you following him?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN: Yeah.

911 Operator #1: OK, we don't need you to do that.

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(End of clip)

P. WILLIAMS: What happened next was captured by 911 calls from neighbors.

(Clips from 911 call)

Unidentified Woman: Sir, I don't know what's going on. They're sending...

Unidentified 911 Operator #2: So you think he's yelling help?

Woman: Yes.

911 Operator #2: All right, what is your...(gunshot).

Woman: There's gunshots.

(End of clip)

Ms. SYBRINA FULTON (Shooting Victim's Mother): That was my baby, and he was pleading for his life. And I just don't understand how that's self defense.

P. WILLIAMS: Zimmerman actually did claim self defense and police declined to arrest him. Friends say he's not gun happy or a racist.

Mr. FRANK TAAFFE (George Zimmerman's Friend): George is a very congenial, amiable person. He never showed up to HOA meetings dressed in camouflage or looked like Rambo.

P. WILLIAMS: Florida has what's called a Stand Your Ground law, giving people the right to use deadly force if they reasonably fear for their safety. But some legal experts say the man who fired the shots in this case was the aggressor.

Mr. DARREN HUTCHINSON (Professor, American University Washington College of Law): He was in a car. He was told to stay in his car. He got out and confronted a young man who was merely walking home from the convenience store.

P. WILLIAMS: As it turned out, Trayvon Martin was carrying only a bag of candy and a can of ice tea. Social media are buzzing over the case, spreading the controversy nationwide. This Twitter page gets a new entry every 20 seconds. Prosecutors say the police gave them the case file just a week ago and insist it's still under investigation. Pete Williams, NBC News, Washington.

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