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BODY:

REVEREND AL SHARPTON, MSNBC HOST: Welcome to "Politics Nation. I'm Al Sharpton.

Tonight's lead, the shooting death of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin is parking on national outcry for justice. Three weeks ago the high school junior was shot and killed walking back to his father's girlfriend's house in a gated community near Orlando. But still, there has been no arrest even though the police know who shot him.

George Zimmerman, the neighborhood watch captain, says he shot in self-defense. But the young man was unarmed. He was going home after buying an iced tea and skittles candy. In a minute, we will talk with Trayvon's father and family lawyer and we will get a live report from the scene.

But first, the police have now finally released the 911 tapes in the case, and it contained a shocking heart-breaking picture of what happened that rainy night of February 26th and they cry out for justice to be done in the case. Here is the call that George Zimmerman, the shooter, made to police.

(BEGIN AUDIOTAPE)

911 DISPATCHER: Sanford police department.

GEORGE ZIMMERMAN, SUSPECT IN TRAYVON'S MARTIN'S KILLING: Hey, we have had some break-ins in my neighborhood, and there is a real suspicious guy that looks like he is up to no good or on drugs or something.

911 DISPATCHER: Is he black, white, or Hispanic?

ZIMMERMAN: He's got his hands in his waistband. And he's a black male.

911 DISPATCHER: Do you see what he was wearing?

ZIMMERMAN: Yes. A dark hoodie like a gray hoodie and either jeans or sweatpants, and what looks like white tennis shoes. He is here now. He's just staring, looking at all the houses.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

SHARPTON: Up to no good? Looks like he is on drugs or something? Trayvon was just walking home from the store. He was carrying candy, not drugs. But Zimmerman decided he was suspicious. Here is what happened next.

(BEGIN AUDIO CLIP)

ZIMMERMAN: Something is wrong with him. Yes. He is coming to check me out. He has something in his hands, I don't know what his deal his.

911 DISPATCHER: OK, just let me know if he does anything else.

SHARPTON: These (beep), they always get away.

911 DISPATCHER: Are you following him?

ZIMMERMAN: Yes.

911 DISPATCHER: OK, we don't need you to do that.

ZIMMERMAN: OK.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SHARPTON: Zimmerman follows Trayvon even after police told him not to. This self-appointed neighborhood watch leader takes matters into his own hands and then came this chilling frantic call from someone who heard yelling and a gunshot.

(BEGIN AUDIOTAPE)

911 DISPATCHER: 911, did you need police, fire, and medical.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE CALLER: Maybe both, I'm not sure. Someone is screaming outside.

911 DISPATCHER: And is it a male or female?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE CALLER: Sounds like a male.

911 DISPATCHER: You don't know why?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE CALLER: I don't know why. I think they're yelling help, but I don't know. Just send somebody quick, please.

911 DISPATCHER: Does he look hurt to you?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE CALLER: I can't see him, I don't want to go out there, I don't know what's going on. They're sending someone.

911 DISPATCHER: So you think he is yelling help?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE CALLER: Yes.

911 DISPATCHER: All right, what is your (bang)?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE CALLER: There was just gunshot.

911 DISPATCHER: You just heard gunshot?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE CALLER: Yes.

911 DISPATCHER: How many?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE CALLER: Just one. Get down, come here.

911 DISPATCHER: Is he still yelling?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE CALLER: I don't know --

(END AUDIOTAPE)

SHARPTON: Help me, help me, that's tough to hear. And more panicked neighbors were calling for help.

(BEGIN AUDIOTAPE)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE CALLER: They're wrestling right in the back of my porch.

911 DISPATCHER: You just heard one shot go off?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE CALLER: It was either that or a rock go at the window or something. I don't know, the guy yelled help and I'm not going out.

911 DISPATCHER: Somebody is yelling for help?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE CALLER: I'm pretty sure the guy is dead out here. Holy (beep). And there is a black guy down, it looks like he has been shot and he's dead.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE CALLER: There's someone screaming, I just heard gunshots.

911 DISPATCHER: OK, do you see anything? I don't need you to go outside. Do you see anything, do you hear squealing or tires or anything?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE CALLER: No, hurry up, their right outside my house.

911 DISPATCHER: OK. OK, we have police coming in emergency, OK?

911 DISPATCHER: Did you see the person who had the gun?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE CALLER: No, I just heard a loud gunshot, and then the screaming stopped.

911 DISPATCHER: OK, we have multiple officers in the area right now.

(END AUDIOTAPE)

SHARPTON: No name calling, no incendiary language, just the facts. A young man dead. The assailant says self defense. What is found on the young man, skittles and iced tea. Probably cause for an arrest. The assailant told don't follow him. He decides to follow him anyhow.

He's not law enforcement. He's not uniform. He has no league authority or right to intervene or interfere. Why has he not been arrested? We're coming from around the country this Thursday to Sanford Florida to stand together. Michael Base in the radio, Joe Madison, myself, mass action network, this family has only asked for justice. They have not called anybody names. They have acted in a dignified way. They deserve this nation's support, and we're coming to give it to them.

Joining me live from Sanford, Florida is NBC news correspondent Lilia Luciano.

Lilia, where does the case stand tonight?

LILIA LUCIANO, NBC NEWS CORRESPONDENT: Well, as we know, Reverend Sharpton, local police have stated that they cannot find enough evidence to issue an arrest. So, they handed the case over to the state attorney's office. Now, they're conducting their own investigation and it's up to the state attorney along with the Florida department of law enforcement to determine whether to file an arrest not to do so ore to hand the case over to a grand jury.

SHARPTON: Well, what evidence do they need to make an arrest?

LUCIANO: Well, they need to prove this was not self-defense and that is what they're evaluating now. Of course, the state attorney's office is not commenting on an ongoing investigation. That's their policy, either or they are staying how lone well their investigation take, how long they will take to complete it.

SHARPTON: Well again, I would differ with that, they don't have to prove anything. They have to have probable cause. But, let me ask you this, there was a stand for justice rally today by local law students, what are you seeing in the community down there?

LUCIANO: Well, that's right, today was very impressive. We had from 75 to 100 students, many if not most of them law students from around the state of Florida demanding an immediate arrest. I spoke to one of the students and she told me that the state attorney, the assistant state attorney was able to welcome a few of them, four of them into his office. He heard their concerns. I was also receiving confirmation from the state attorney's office that this happened, and that they're listening to their concerns but they are not releasing any information while the investigation continues.

Of course, we're also hearing pressure from other community leaders from local politician, local congresswoman that has been demanding that the department of justice be involved that they initiate their own investigation. Now, the congressional black caucus has joined in demanding an investigation from the department of justice. But the department of justice has not begun that investigation. They have not said that they will do so, not in the coming time.

Their community relation service will hold the meeting tomorrow. That is not an investigating body. So rising tension here especially to get the federal authorities and federal agencies involved.

SHARPTON: Well, thank you, Lilia.

Let me bring in now, joining me now is Jonathan Capehart, writer for "the Washington Post," who was just written a pile for column on this case today.

Jonathan, the congressional black caucus, mass action that we are going to see right groups would be calling on federal intervention and we are calling for an immediate arrest.

One of the things that is disturbing to me and you raise, is the police are not a judge and jury. They only determine if there is probably cause to make an arrest. If you have a young man dead, and you have no evidence at all that this young man did anything wrong, then what are they waiting on to make an arrest? This seems pretty strange, if not suspicious to me.

JONATHAN CAPEHART, WRITER, THE WASHINGTON POST: Well, it is strange. One of the things about this case -- how is it possible that a young man could be shot, killed, and the perpetrator, the alleged perpetrator, is allowed to talk to the police, and then is set free? He has moved out of his home. Publicly, no one knows where he is. And a lot of things that police, I understand, usually do during situations like this, drug and alcohol testing, and more extensive interviewing was never done. And the police have accepted George Zimmerman's story and let him go. That's the thing that's --

SHARPTON: Did police really take the place of a jury and a judge? I mean, there's clearly a case here that there is no doubt the young man was killed. There is no doubt by Zimmerman's admission that he did it, and there is no doubt that he was not under life extenuating circumstances unless iced tea and skittles are considered a threat.

CAPEHART: Right.

SHARPTON: So, I mean, it seems to me the police have more than enough to go with if they were looking to proceed.

CAPEHART: Right. But here is the crazy thing about Florida law, the stand your ground law, which is very, very broad. It allows people to defend themselves and claim self-defense if they feel they were in danger.

And so, you know, George Zimmerman could say to the police that he felt he was in danger. He pulled the trigger, and as we have seen, he did that, said it to the police, and now he is not in jail. He is not answering to law enforcement. And quite frankly, I think it's rather offensive that law enforcement is not saying, isn't talking publicly about this case to -- at a minimum make sure that people who are very, very concerned about this, very, very, concerned about what happened to Trayvon Martin have the information that they can at least possibly give out.

SHARPTON: Well, the other thing, Jonathan, on the stand your ground case, and I said anything and we will be dealing with this Thursday at the rally and going forward, that that law has to be challenged and examined. But even if you go by that law, which says anyone not committing a crime can use deadly force if threatened by death, or great bodily harm.

CAPEHART: Yes.

SHARPTON: Once you hear the tape, two things are glaring in the 911 tapes. One, he was told, Zimmerman, not to pursue the guy. Second, he said that he was following the guy. So, if he was following Trayvon, how could he feel he was under threat? He was pursuing Trayvon, Trayvon was not pursuing him.

CAPEHART: Right, he was pursuing him, and pursuing him with a 9milimeter weapon.

SHARPTON: And 100 pounds heavier than him.

CAPEHART: Exactly. Trayvon was 17 years old, young kid. George Zimmerman is 28-years-old. I guess head of the neighborhood watch program. A person who called the central police department 46 times, since January 1st 2011. This was a person by all accounts that I have read, was someone who viewed himself as sort of a proxy cop.

SHARPTON: Well, he also someone that had a (INAUDIBLE). He wanted to be a policeman, but he himself

assaulted a police officer in the past and the young man that has been killed has no record.

CAPEHART: Right. Exactly, one of the stories from "the Orlando Sun- Sentinel" had a terrific description of Trayvon from his English teacher who said that Trayvon Martin was an `A & B` student who majored in cheerfulness. How does someone who major in cheerfulness threaten someone who is a 100 pounds heavier than he is, eleven years older than he is and is carrying a 9mm weapon.

SHARPTON: Alright, Jonathan Capehart. Thank you for your time tonight.

Next, the family of Trayvon Martin, what do they say? We`ll talk with his father live. That`s next.

SHARPTON: Trayvon Martin`s father is fighting for justice for his son. We will talk to him live. That`s next.

SHARPTON: The case of Trayvon Martin calls for justice in many of us from national civil rights groups and national media will be in Florida this Thursday with a national rally to support this family.

Joining me now is Trayvon`s father, Trayvon Martin`s father, Tracy Martin, and also family attorney, Benjamin Crump.

Tracey. First of all, thank you for joining us, and let me say first and foremost that we give our condolences to you for your loss and all of your family. An secondly, I must commend you and Trayvon`s mother for the dignity in which you have handled this extremely difficult situation.

TRACY MARTIN, TRAYVON MARTIN`S FATHER: Yes, sir.

SHARPTON: I think that -- first of all, give people a sense of what the family is calling for, Mr. Martin?

MARTIN: First and foremost I would like to thank you for having me on. The family is calling for justice. We don`t want our son to be -- we don`t want our son`s death to be in vain. We`re looking for answers. We have not received any answers, and we just don`t understand, you know. I don`t have any understanding as to why my son is dead to this day.

SHARPTON: Now, attorney Crump, you and I, spoke and we worked on civil rights cases, I can`t for the life of me understand how they can justify not making an arrest. Arrest does not mean conviction, but clearly there is probably cause here even with this law that we would question. This is a national outrage to many of us.

BENJAMIN CRUMP, MARTIN FAMILY ATTORNEY: You`re absolutely right, Reverend Sharpton. They have so much evidence to just make an arrest. We have three witnesses now that has come forward to say that the voice you hear crying out for help before you hear that definite gunshot, is Trayvon Martin`s voice.

And the 911 tapes should clearly hear Zimmerman`s voice sounds like, and hear the voice as crying out for help.

SHARPTON: Right.

CRUMP: It is distinctly different. His father, his mother, his family have heard them for us and they all know that is Trayvon Martin.

And Reverend Sharpton, it makes no sense whatsoever. Everyone is America wants to know when this neighborhood association lose him and be arrest if the man did shot in cold blood. He had a 9mm gun.

SHARPTON: Right,

CRUMP: And Trayvon Martin had a bag of skittles. And we need everybody -- we thank you especially, Reverend

Sharpton, and people everywhere who say we want stand for this. We cannot let this man go out to America that you can kill a little minority child and nothing happens to you. George Zimmerman is free as a jay bird.

SHARPTON: No. And this could be our son, Tracy. This could be anyone. And when you look at this law, where they're saying if you feel you're under threat you can use deadly force, first of all, I think the law is outrageous.

But second of all, the law that I have on the screen as I read before, anyone not committing a crime can use deadly force. But anyone not committing a crime can use every force but there was nothing threatening that we have seen in any of this from your son.

And for this young man to be dead, and this man to pursue him. He is not a policeman. We do not even know if your son knew who he was or what he was or whether your son felt threatened.

To turn around and make him the victim is something that we cannot sit by and allow to happen. We have to stand with your family.

MARTIN: And to call Mr. Zimmerman the victim is a slap in the face to me and my family. It's a slap in the face to our community. My son was being attacked. He wasn't aggressive in this instance, and the Sanford police department is trying to make George Zimmerman out to be the victim. And the victim is clear, Trayvon Martin who is dead in the grave.

SHARPTON: Give me a sense of what kind of young man your son was.

MARTIN: He was very outgoing young man. He was an upbeat individual. I tried, you know, my best to groom him to be a upstanding citizen, to be that man that society doesn't want us to be. I wanted him to explore things, you know. He had admiration of being an aviation mechanic. Trayvon never had a run in with the law. He -- I was molding my son to be a man, a young man and that was taken away from me, taken away from his mother, and it's devastating.

SHARPTON: Attorney Crump, the congressional black caucus has called for justice department investigated this as a hate crime. We and mass action, we are going to groups to doing that. Someone asked me today about race. And I must say, I don't know Zimmerman, I'm not calling him awe name. I don't know his background. But I have to question whether the police department there, if it was reversed would have been as reluctant to make an arrest if it had been the other way around.

I do not, for the life of me, we have seen tycoons. We have seen the head of IMF taken off a plane and arrested, and then later we see whether or not there was an indictment. How can they not make an arrest in this case? What is going on there locally, and why does it seem like they're allowing probable cause to be dismissed and they're trying this in the secrecy of the police department?

CRUMP: Reverend Sharpton, you're absolutely right. There's enough probable cause here. It's one of those things when you really look at it. Race is the elephant in the room. That nobody really wants to talk about it, nobody really feels comfortable talking about it, but we know two things.

Number one, if Trayvon Martin would have been the shooter, he would have been arrested day one, hour one, right there on the spot, and he would still be in jail today. His father and mother would have to talk to him through a glass window.

Number two, if Trayvon Martin had been a white child, do you think the police would have not ran a background check on George Zimmerman? They did not even run a background check on him. They took his word even though he just shot Trayvon Martin, a human being in cold blood. And they knew that Trayvon did not have a weapon because they checked him and saw he has skittles, a can of iced tea and a phone, and that is it. And they took his word, Reverend Sharpton. And you have to ask if they would have done this any way else besides a little minority child.

SHARPTON: Well, I'm going to ask that and a lot of us are going to ask that. We want you to know, Mr. Martin that you're not alone. And attorney Crump can tell you, I don't believe in drive by activism. When we get in, we will be there until we see justice for your family. And you stand with attorney Crump, Jackson and all involved.

And thank you. I know it's painful for you to have to keep doing the interviews, but I thank you for coming forward tonight and we'll see you later this week in Florida.

MARTIN: Thank you, Reverend Sharpton.

SHARPTON: We'll be right back.

SHARPTON: The Republican senate prime man in Missouri is turning to a contest for the most out of touch Kennedy. In a recent radio interview, none of the candidates knew the federal minimum wage.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE REPORTER: Do you know what the minimum wage is?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: No, sir.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE REPORTER: OK. How about you?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: \$7.50 an hour.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE REPORTER: Do you know what the minimum wage is?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: My guess is that somewhere at six or seven, but I don't know the exact number.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SHARPTON: But that doesn't matter. To them, they still want to keep the wage down or get rid of it all together.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE REPORTER: Are you in favor of increasing it?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: No, I'm not in favor of increasing it at this time. I think it's high enough as it is.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I don't think the government should setting prices on wages in any way shape or form.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SHARPTON: The current minimum wage, 7.25 and hour is just above the poverty line for a single person. A person will makes a little more than \$15,000 a year. But you can't blame them for being on the dark on this one, none of them make anywhere near the minimum wage. In fact, one of the candidate's net worth is as much as a \$100 million. Folks, I can't picture one winner. They are all out of touch. So, congrats to the Missouri Republicans, at least you'll win one race this fall.

SHARPTON: Welcome back to POLITICS NATION, tomorrow, Willard Mitt Romney gets yet another chance to lock up this nomination with the Illinois primary, but so far, nothing has come easy. Even Willard's supporters don't seem all that well supportive.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R), ARIZONA: Obviously Mitt Romney will tell you first of all, he's got to do a better job. He's working on doing a better job.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SHARPTON: Gee, what a ringing endorsement, but the truth is, Romney is working on doing a better job. He knows that he has to connect better with voters. And what better way to do that than by posing with pictures with giant pancakes. People love giant pancakes, almost as much as a love pancake jokes.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

MITT ROMNEY (R), PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES: These pancakes are as large as my win in Puerto Rico last night. I must admit, the margin is just about as good. I'm looking forward to getting one of these pancakes. Can I have one of these on my way? Not the super big one, I can't fit that on the vehicle. All right? The car is only a, you know, Chevy SUV.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SHARPTON: Those jokes are almost as flat as those pancakes. But meanwhile, his main rival Rick Santorum has found a new issue. Romney's infamous drive with Seamus with the Seamus the dog, on the roof of his car.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

RICK SANTORUM (R), PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: As far as Seamus the dog, look, all I would say is, you know, the issues of character are important in this election and we need to look at all of these issues and make determination as to whether that's the kind of person you want to be president of the United States.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SHARPTON: But the real joke is Romney's failure on the central issue of this campaign.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ROMNEY: I believe the economy is coming back by the way. We'll see what happens, it's had ups and downs. I think it's finally coming back.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SHARPTON: Keep saying the economy is improving, Willard. The more credit you give President Obama, the more your whole rationale for running seems funny. Joining me now is Steve Kornacki, columnist for Salon.com, and MSNBC political analyst and Erin McPike, reporter for Real Clear Politics. Thank you both for coming on the show.

STEVE KORNACKI, SALON.COM: Sure.

SHARPTON: Steve, let me start with you. What's the rationale for Romney's campaign if by his own admission, the economy is improving.

KORNACKI: Well, you're sort of seeing it there. There isn't much of a rationale at that point, and you're trying to set for that that possibility that you know, he becomes a republican nominee and more good economic news follows in the next few months. The case that they're trying to build this okay, yes, sure, the economy is improving, the unemployment rate is dropping. But the economy was inevitably going to improve no matter who the President has been and therefore, this is been a weak and delayed and prolonged recovery, it could have been better. It could be better in the future if we get rid of this guy. History tells you what a tough argument that is to make. You think of Bob Dole,

trying that against Bill Clinton. You think of Walter Mondale trying that against Ronald Reagan. When times are good and people feel.

SHARPTON: And both Mondale and Bob Dole lost.

KORNACKI: Yes. They are not in the winners.

(CROSSTALK)

It works both ways. And you know, that cuts across party lines, a good economy.

SHARPTON: Erin, let me go to you, Romney today in a big economic speech said that he has a vision to create jobs and fix the debt. Listen.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ROMNEY: I'm running for president in part because I have the experience and the vision to get us out of this mess. I'm offering a real choice and a very different beginning. I have a conservative economic plan that will deliver more jobs, less debt, and smaller government.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SHARPTON: He has the vision and experience, Erin, but a little fact check on his claim turns out that he must have blurry vision because he has as bad of a record on jobs as anyone. Massachusetts was 47th in job creation under Romney. The only 50 states. And his no better on the debt. His tax proposal when add 3.4 trillion with the T to the deficit over ten years. Erin, how does it settle this given his experience and background?

ERIN MCPIKE, REAL CLEAR POLITICS: You know, Al, I don't know. He didn't give a lot of details in that economic speech today. In fact, the speech was a little bit strange and that he kept talking about this idea that under the Obama administration, we have had an assault on economic freedom. Now, I'm not entirely sure what that even means. You know, he is getting further and further away as Steve pointed out from his message. Now, there are things he can point to in his record, he turned a \$3 billion deficit in the state of Massachusetts to billion dollar surplus, that is a good talking point but he is not saying things like that and he's not getting into the details of his experience that he can use. And so, that's why we'll going to see more economic speeches from him, but all fairly general. So, again, you know, just like Steve, I'm not sure how he can make a winning argument with that.

SHARPTON: Now, Steve, the "New York Times" did a piece over the weekend saying that said even if we wins tomorrow, there is a real possibility that there could be a broker convention. Let me show you what The Time said. It says, for the first time in a generation, Republicans are preparing the possibility that their presidential nomination could be decided at the national convention rather than on the campaign trail. If that happens, does that mean Romney could possibly not be the nominee, or does that mean he wins it at the convention but it weakened by the process?

KORNACKI: Yes. I think it's still a remote possibility. It's is more possible at this phase in the cycle than in any other recent, you know, cycle at this point, but I think there is two sort of end games to keep in mind here with the kit playing out like this. One is the actual deadlock convincing scenario where we end up in August, at the end of August in Tampa and none of these candidates has or even really close to that magic number. I think the more realistic scenario though is that we get to the end of this primary process, and Romney, maybe he is short but maybe it's only by a couple of dozen, maybe by about 50 or so. And Republicans do have the equivalent of super delegates. I expect they will put them over the top then. So, it wouldn't go away through the summer.

SHARPTON: Steve Kornacki, Erin McPike, thank you for your time this evening.

KORNACKI: Welcome.

SHARPTON: Still ahead, disturbing new questions about the soldier accused in that horrific shooting rampage in Afghanistan. What happened to Staff Sergeant Robert Bales? We'll talk to his boyhood friend, next.

SHARPTON: We're back on POLITICS NATION with the disturbing story of Staff Sergeant Robert Bales. The man accused of going to a killing rampage in Afghanistan last week. Bales met with his lawyer for the first time today as he plans to face trial for allegedly murdering 16 civilians including women and children. Officials are now examining his personal life and military record. The 38-year-old father of two joined the army two months after the September 11 terror attack. He's been deployed four times to Iraq and Afghanistan and reportedly suffered a traumatic brain injury and lost part of his foot while serving overseas. Bales was also pass-over for promotion just last year. And while he was serving overseas, his life back here at home was crumbling. In 2002, Bales was charged with criminal assault on a girlfriend. And he had to take 20 hours of anger management classes. Just three years ago, he was charged with a hit-and-run car accident. Though the charges were later dropped. Bales was also severely in debt. He had defaulted on one home and was falling behind on another. But the people who knew him say, they can't believe he committed these heinous acts and these heinous crimes. His former platoon leader in Iraq who asked that his face not be shown has this to say.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: He was one of my best guys. He was very solid and skilled. Just not him, you know. Something bad had to happen to him to, you know, cause something like that.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SHARPTON: Just moments ago, Bales' wife released a statement saying quote, "What has been reported is completely out of character of the man I know and admire. I cannot shed any light on what happened that night. I too want to know what happened. I want to know how this could be."

Joining me now from Cincinnati is Michelle Caddell and her brother Michael Blevins. They grew up across the street from Robert Bales in Ohio. Michael, what went through your mind when you first heard him named in this tragedy?

MICHAEL BLEVINS, FRIEND OF SERGEANT BALES: When I first heard his name announced on the news, I had the same reaction that my sister had. Basically my jaw hit the floor. There is no way that is the same Bobby that grew up across the street from me, and he was my role model from the time I was two years old until the time I was 24 or 25. He was just somebody I always looked up to. Very admirable character, just an awesome guy. There is no way it's Bobby Bales.

SHARPTON: Now, Michelle, growing up, did he have anger issues, was he the kind of guy that was aloof and mysterious? I mean, was there any kind of swing in his personality that could make you in any way say he was different and capable of doing something like this later in life?

MICHELLE CADDELL, FRIEND OF SERGEANT BALES: The exact opposite. When Bobby was growing up, he was the shy quiet one, you ask questions and it was yes sir, no, it was always, yes sir, yes ma'am. If there were small children in the neighborhood, you know, Bobby was always making sure, don't go out in the street, stay there, I'll get the ball. Or there was a handicap boy next to him that did not have time for his grandmother and grandmother while raising. And he was about 15 years older than Bobby and he would go next door and walk him and help feed him all through High School, and then when he went to college, he drove back to Norwood from campus just to make sure the way he was taken care of. We would take him on fishing tournaments and he would help the younger children reel in their fish while they screamed, and kicked, and hugged Bobby and running grabbed him. And he always stayed in the background, and made sure everyone else was taken care of, and he was very nurturing. So, there was nothing mischievous, it was always just a protective sort of feeling when you're around him.

SHARPTON: Now, Michael, then if this is the Bobby you knew and your sister knew, do you think that if, in fact, this proves to be that he is the one that did this heinous crimes, you think something may have happened to traumatize him? Or that drastically changed him while he's in the military? I mean, what is your hunch? I know you have no way of knowing but what do you think could have possibly happened here?

BLEVINS: He would have had to have had more than a complete nervous breakdown. I mean, you're talking complete polar opposites. I mean, like you had mentioned earlier and has been broadcast all over the news, this is a guy that even his CO said that was just an excellent soldier, excellent person to be around. You don't sit there and say that someone is an excellent soldier and excellent person to be around, and a very admirable person, and is the same guy that goes out and murders 16 people for no apparent reason. I heard that he had a friend that lost a limb days before, but still that's not going to be enough to push you over the edge. There's no way possible it's the same Robert Bales.

SHARPTON: Michelle, let me ask you before we go. You saw him a couple of years ago, how was he acting then? Was he the same Bobby you knew or did he seem him anyway different?

CADDELL: He was the exact same Bobby. He came in. He made it a point to come in for my father's funeral, and he admired my father very much. And there was no talking about himself then. It was all about me and Michael which, now looking back, that may sound a little selfish, but he wanted to make sure we were consoled, he wanted to make sure that we had met his new wife, that cars were parked out of the way so that they could bring the hearse. Just little things like that. You know, to make sure that our time of grief right there was our time and nobody was interfering with it, and that's what he did at their and his funeral. So, we greatly appreciated that, but he did not talk about himself at all. He made sure he was there for us.

SHARPTON: Well, Michelle and Michael, thank you both for your time tonight.

CADDELL: Thank you for having us, we appreciate it.

SHARPTON: Joining me now is Eric Zillmer, who is a professor of neural psychology at Drexel University. He has the author of the book "Military Psychology: A Study of the Effects of War on Military Personnel." Professor Zelma, you heard Sergeant Bales friends say this does not sound at all like the friend they knew Bobby. Could Sergeant Bales have just snapped?

ERIC ZILLMER, PSYCHOLOGY PROFESSOR, DREXEL UNIVERSITY: He could have just snapped. It's quite common that friends and relatives talk about a perpetrator who committed a crime in normal terms. Reverend, most crimes are committed by normal people. It would be very convenient to think of this staff sergeant as being crazy, but people with PTSD or traumatic brain injury and people in the armed services are typically not crazy, so it's entirely possible the stress got to this man.

SHARPTON: Now, we see Bales' wife kept the blog and wrote about her husband getting passed up for promotion last year. Quote, "We found out yesterday that Bob did not get promoted. It's very disappointing after all the work Bob has done and the sacrifice he made for his love of country, family and friends." I mean, could it be a combined financial problems, not getting promoted, physical, losing part of a foot. I mean, could all of this combined have been just something that just caused him to just lose it? Or cause it to just strike out?

ZILLMER: I believe so. And you know, some of the details, the alleged details, they really sound like workplace violence, where somebody in a workplace in this case is Afghanistan, and the fact that this man may have experienced so much stress including two traumatic events, roadside bomb exploding, losing part of his foot, being, you know, having problems with his promotion. But also Al, don't underestimate the stress of war itself. It's a fourth deployment. Afghanistan has to go down in the history of war, one of the most complicated engagements that the United States military has ever launched. So, you know, while many people looked towards whether this man was crazy, they may have been, you know, it's hard to talk about it, you know, rational ideas behind the attack, revenge, stress, and just losing it, not being able to tolerate being in this war anymore.

SHARPTON: Now, I mean, you talk about redeployment, since September 11, 2001, one in five troops have been redeployed more than three times. And when you look at the cases of post-traumatic stress disorder, they have skyrocketed since 2001. In 2001, zero cases. Then in the next year, 138 cases. There are 1169 and 3901. And then by '05, 6700 all the way to 2010, 7,739 cases so we have seen a huge increase in PTSD cases.

ZILLMER: For two reasons, one is they're counting them now. And on the past, they were missed a lot. You know, PTSD or combat stress as we also call it, has been around for the history of war since the civil war, it's been talked about, and the World War I, certainly Vietnam. But also the second reason Al is, this war is very stressful.

SHARPTON: Yes, it is.

ZILLMER: And it's very hard to put the troops on the ground, there's 90,000 troops in Afghanistan, and the only way to get a lot of those soldiers to come there is through redeployment and also to put reservists into action.

SHARPTON: Well, I'm going to have to hold it there, Professor Zillmer. I'm sure we will be talking more as this case evolves, thank you for your time tonight, Eric Zillmer.

ZILLMER: Thank you.

SHARPTON: We'll be right back.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, it's time for tonight's edition of, you know it's over when starring Rick Santorum, and your host Reverend Al Sharpton.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SHARPTON: Thank sir for that fine introduction. Rick Santorum is down in the polls for tomorrow's primary in Illinois, and he is way behind in delegates. So, he is letting loose and really going to new levels of absurdity. You know it's over when he says this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SANTORUM: I don't care what the unemployment rate is going to be. It doesn't matter to me. My campaign doesn't hinge on employment rates and growth rates.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SHARPTON: I don't care what the unemployment rate is going to be. Good luck with that strategy. And maybe he can blame it on the sun, but you know it's over when he says this about Puerto Rico.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SANTORUM: You have to speak English. That would be a requirement. It's a requirement that we put on other states. It's a condition for entering the union.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SHARPTON: Actually Rick, making English a state's official language is not a condition for entering the union. And finally, you really know it's over when he is talking about pornography on the campaign trail. No, folks, I'm not kidding. Here is a look at ricksantorum.com. The headline enforcing laws against illegal pornography, and quote, "America is suffering a pandemic of harm from pornography." Yes, folks, this is his new talking point.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SANTORUM: The hardcore pornography is very damaging particularly to young people in that exposure in the internet. That can be very damaging. Under the Bush administration, pornographers were prosecuted much more rigorously than they are, under existing law than they are into the Obama administration. So, you draw your conclusion.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SHARPTON: Folks, is that the sound of the fat lady singing?

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ANNOUNCER: Thanks for joining us for this edition of "you know it's over when".

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SHARPTON: Thanks for watching, I'm Al Sharpton, "HARDBALL" starts now.

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