



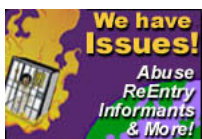
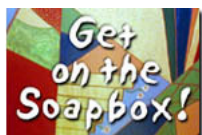
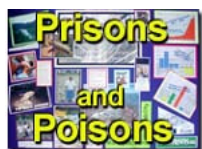
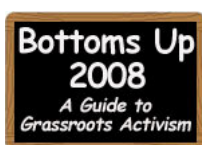
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February 9, 2006 - Miami Herald (FL)

Guards Seen Beating Teen In Video

Two South Florida Lawmakers Who Saw A Video Of A Teen's Final Hours Say He Was Abused At A Juvenile Boot Camp. The Boy Died Later That Day.

By Carol Marbin Miller

A 14-year-old boy was "brutally" beaten by guards and "flung around like a rag doll" at a boot camp for juvenile delinquents in Panama City hours before he died at a Panhandle hospital, according to two lawmakers who on Wednesday saw a videotape of the incident.

The video, which recorded the last 20 to 30 minutes of the teen's stay at the Bay County Sheriff's Office Boot Camp, shows officers at times kicking, punching and choking Martin Lee Anderson after he refused, or was unable, to comply with officers' orders to run or do other exercises, the legislators said.

Martin, of Panama City, died Jan. 6 at Pensacola's Sacred Heart Hospital, hours after he was admitted to the boot camp, which is operated under a contract with the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice.

The state Department of Law Enforcement, which is investigating Martin's death, showed the camp videotape to two members of the Florida House of Representatives who oversee youth corrections, and at least four members of the governor's staff at FDLE headquarters Wednesday morning.

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Clearly shaken, state Rep. Gus Barreiro told *The Miami Herald* that the tape depicted "the most heinous treatment of a human being" he had ever seen. "It was obvious to me the kid was unconscious, and they were still abusing him. People will be outraged when they see this tape, and they should be outraged."



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"This could be anybody's son," added Barreiro, a Miami Beach Republican who chairs the House Juvenile Justice Appropriations Committee, and has headed a separate committee investigating alleged abuses in DJJ facilities.



State Rep. Dan Gelber, a Miami Beach Democrat who investigated dozens of alleged police brutality cases as head of the U.S. attorney's office civil-rights division in Miami for a decade, also saw the video.



"There's no question that the force used here was well beyond what was necessary for the situation," Gelber said. "The truth is that this kid died in custody. . . . What we saw was very, very distressing."



Governor's Office

A spokesman for Gov. Jeb Bush confirmed that four staffers from his office viewed the tape, but he declined to discuss what they saw. The officials were Bush Chief of Staff Mark Kaplan, Public Safety Policy Director Randy Ball, Deputy Chief of Staff Carol Gormley, and legal advisor Vicki Brennan.



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"They viewed the video in light of their duties overseeing the [juvenile justice] agency," said Bush spokesman Russell Schweiss. "They thought it was appropriate to help them understand the incident."

FDLE officials and the Bay County Sheriff's Office declined to discuss the contents of the tape Wednesday. The FDLE also denied a request from *The Miami Herald* for a copy.

"We believe, in good faith, that this video is not a public record at this time," said FDLE spokesman Tom Berlinger. "The limited disclosure that took place this morning was to government officials who have oversight authority of state government agencies."

The *Miami Herald* was not able to reach a spokeswoman for the Department of Juvenile Justice, which has consistently declined to discuss the investigation.

'Many Questions'

On Jan. 17, Bay County Sheriff Frank McKeithen issued a terse statement, saying release of the tape will raise "many questions,

concerns and accusations."

"We must not leave you with the impression that this is going to have a good ending," he wrote.

Said Barreiro on Wednesday: "I now know why the sheriff was so concerned."

Reached by telephone in Panama City on Wednesday night, Martin's parents expressed outrage and sadness at hearing of the tape's contents.

"I want justice; that's what I want," said Robert Anderson, Martin's father. "But I can't really get it, because my son is gone."

"What the hell is a [large] man doing putting his knee into my son's back?" Anderson said. "He was only 14. He weighed less than 140 pounds."

Said Benjamin Crump, the family's Tallahassee attorney: "This is just too painful. To say that the family is devastated by this news is an understatement. Losing a child is hard enough."

Juvenile justice officials have said Martin may have bled to death. No autopsy report has been made public. Barreiro and Gelber said they were told by the FDLE that Martin displayed no visible bruising.

Martin was arrested after he and four cousins took their grandmother's car from a church parking lot during Sunday services, and then crashed it. Though the grandmother did not wish to press charges, the youths all were arrested on grand-theft charges, Crump said.

The teen was in the admissions area of the boot camp Jan. 5 when he was ordered by drill instructors, along with several other youths, to perform exercises. While the youths were being initiated into the program, an officer held a video camera and zoomed in to film moments when youths were being restrained, Barreiro said he was told.

As the video begins, several other youths are seen being held up against a wooden fence as drill instructors yell at them. Martin, in what has been described by juvenile justice officials as a "restraint," is first seen being held down on the ground by two officers, with his arms spread out, Barreiro said.

One officer is seen with his knee pushing into his back. Though the tape contains no sound, the officers appear to be yelling at the teen, Barreiro said.

After a minute or two, Martin stands up and attempts to run around the camp's track, Barreiro said. Officers "rush" to hold him up against the wooden fence, "with his arms spread out like a crucifix," Barreiro said. Then four guards are seen holding Martin to the ground, with one officer pushing his knee into the youth's back.

As Martin gets up to run again, he is clearly "stumbling," unable to run or walk, Barreiro said.

Rewind Request

What happened next, Barreiro said, was so disturbing he asked the FDLE agent showing the tape to rewind several times. On screen, a guard is seen apparently choking Martin by pushing his forearm against his throat, Barreiro and Gelber said.

The youth is once again encouraged to begin running, but again he stumbles and falls down, Barreiro said: "He is like a rag doll . . . They are holding him up."

Said Gelber: "They are moving his body around like a sack of potatoes."

Then, both lawmakers said, an officer either kicks or knees Martin in the back of his knees so that he falls down. "When he's on the ground," Barreiro said, "they start punching him in the arms. He's like comatose, and they are punching and punching."

Moments later, the lawmakers say, officers yank Martin by the head and jerk it back. Once again, Barreiro said, they place Martin in what appears to be a type of choke hold.

"That was pretty violent," Gelber said of what he called the "jolting" of the teen's head. "You could see from the very beginning [Martin] had a problem. His legs were rubbery. The kid was fainting and losing consciousness repeatedly."

At some point, officers appeared to be pushing an object -- the lawmakers said they were told it was ammonia to help Martin regain consciousness -- forcefully into his nose. Juvenile justice officials have previously said Martin bled profusely from some injury to his nose.

Gelber said he was particularly struck by the apparent lack of any urgency or concern on the part of the boot-camp officers - -and a nurse who appeared to stand by doing little -- while Martin was clearly in grave distress for about 20 minutes.

"This was too long a period of time to not have sought medical

attention," Gelber said. "Giving the officers the benefit of all doubt, it's hard to divine what the possible justification was for their treatment of the juvenile."


Crump, the family's attorney, described Martin on Wednesday as "a good kid" who made honor roll on his last report card, and played basketball for his school team.

"It is not the policy of our country to kill a kid for going joyriding in his grandmother's car," Crump said.

Contact Carol Marbin Miller at cmarbin@MiamiHerald.com

Miami Herald staff writers Marc Caputo and Mary Ellen Klas contributed to this report.

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