



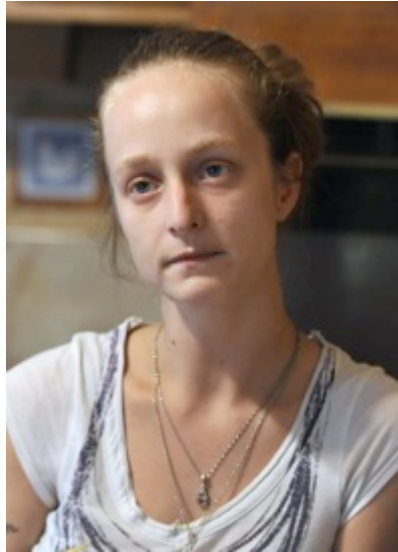
Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on August 5, 2010

Were “Racists” Responsible for Hartford Massacre?

After Omar Thornton murdered eight people at Hartford Distributors in Connecticut before turning his gun on himself, the major media quickly began looking for excuses to explain the heinous crime.

Thornton, who was black, [opened fire](#) on coworkers on August 3 after a meeting at which officials of the beer distributorship gave him the choice to resign or be fired for theft. Thornton signed the letter. Then he opened fire.

Yet the major media quickly injected the question of whether “racists” at the company were torturing Thornton, sending him into a justifiable rage. As Steve Sailer at VDare.com [put it](#), “Did The Hartford Massacre Victims Have It Coming?”



The *Christian Science Monitor* [ran this headline](#) over a follow-up story about the case: “Is racism at heart of Connecticut shooting? Answer still unclear.” The CBS News [website carried](#) this one: “I Killed The Five Racists.” A headline in the *New York Daily News* [ran thusly](#): “Kristi Hannah, girlfriend of Omar Thornton, recalls gunman’s goodbye, racism concerns.”

Those stories showcased Thornton’s girlfriend and family expanding upon that theme. They accused the company of permitting employees to conduct an unrelenting campaign of racial harassment. Reported the *Monitor*, “Reports indicate that, to Thornton at least, race was an issue at Hartford Distributors. He told friends and relatives that coworkers had scrawled racist epithets on a bathroom wall and a hung a stick-figure effigy in a miniature noose.”

[According to the New York Times](#), the girlfriend, Kristin Hannah claims

Mr. Thornton called her from the men’s room at the plant to let her hear his boss and a colleague he identified as a union representative say they were going to get rid of him, using a racial slur. Ms. Hannah said she could hear the comments clearly because of how they echoed in the bathroom. She said that even though Mr. Thornton brought the case to his union representative several times, the union never followed up.

“I know they pushed them; they did this to him,” [Hannah told](#) the *Times*. “I know what was said, and I know it was very hurtful, and I know it bothered him a lot.” The *Times* [then sought](#) Hannah’s 13-year-old brother’s opinion: “Omar was a great guy,” Ryan said. “This thing was brought on by people who don’t treat each other as equals.”

[Hannah told](#) the *New York Daily News* that “every one of [the victims] was a person I heard Omar mention. He didn’t go around randomly shooting people. He knew these were the people who harassed him.”

As well, she said, he “was very sensitive about his race. If you called him a n—r, he would go off. But he



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kept it inside. He kept it all bottled up."

Thornton's uncle [unburdened himself](#) to the CBS affiliate, WFSB: "He said, 'I killed the five racists that was there bothering me,' He said, 'That's it. The cops are going to come in so I'm going to take care of it myself.'"

"This all could have been avoided," Holliday said. "He went to the union a couple of times with issues concerning what was going on, and it was not dealt with appropriately."

The problem? Not one news organization has published any hard evidence that any of these accusations against the company, its union, or its employees is true.

As the [Associated Press reported](#), "Brett Hollander, whose family owns the distributorship, told the Associated Press, 'I can assure you there has never been any racial discrimination at our company.' And a union official said Thornton had not filed a complaint of racism with the union or any government agency."

[The company's union leader told](#) the *Hartford Courant* "they had no record of any complaints filed by Thornton based on racial harassment. He said there would have been an immediate investigation of the complaint if one had been made. 'There was no complaint of any kind like what was communicated [by Thornton's family].'"

As well, and perhaps most importantly, the company caught Thornton redhanded. [Reported the AP](#), "Thornton had been caught on videotape stealing beer, Teamsters official Christopher Roos said. 'It's got nothing to do with race,' Roos said. 'This is a disgruntled employee who shot a bunch of people.'

[Reported the Times](#),

Once inside the office, the disciplinary hearing went about as smoothly as such things could, one person who was present said. The company, it turned out, had hired a private investigator, who had been following Mr. Thornton on his delivery route for weeks. They showed him videotape that apparently showed him stealing beer along his route.

Mr. Thornton calmly remarked on the quality of the surveillance camera, signed a resignation letter and asked if he could get a glass of water from the kitchen. He got the guns instead.

Thornton's girlfriend [also admitted](#) to the *Times* that his "frustration with his job had been growing for many reasons. He had been frustrated by the inability to quickly become a driver; she said workers filled his truck with so many deliveries that he often worked much later than his co-workers, sometimes until 1:30 a.m. One longtime driver at the company, however, said it was normal for the newest drivers to get the worst and longest shifts."

So despite evidence in its own stories that Thornton was simply a lazy, violent thief who was angry he got caught stealing and forced to resign, the media gave Thornton's sympathizers a forum to concoct what appears to be a bogus tale of racial harassment.

As best we can tell right now, Thornton did not kill "five racists." He murdered eight innocent people in cold blood and wounded two more, as a Fox News psychiatry consultant

[Keith Ablow observed](#)

:

It might be some strange comfort to his family to think that Mr. Thornton was avenging



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wrongdoing when he went on his rampage, but it would be false comfort.

I've evaluated plenty of murderers during my career as a forensic psychiatrist, and I can tell you that people don't commit atrocities because of name-calling.

They don't perpetrate carnage because they are undone by crude, insensitive drawings.

They kill because of longstanding psychological or characterological disorders that lead them to have no ability to reason, or no impulse control or no capacity to appreciate the suffering of others or no moral compass.

The *Christian Science Monitor* story contained similar comments from a criminologist. To their credit, the news organizations in question did publish the truth: that Thornton got caught stealing. Question is, why publish unsubstantiated accusations of racism directed at the company and its employees. Thornton, [the AP reported](#) in its lead sentence, was "cold as ice."

Photo of Kristi Hannah: AP Images



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