

# LAW & JUSTICE

## Mass Murder Act of Vengeance

Workplace was racist, killer told 9-1-1

(AP)— For two days, employees at a beer distribution company puzzled over why an easy-going co-worker with no history of violence would go on a rampage, fatally shooting eight men and wounding two others before killing himself.

Then, the shooter himself told them why.

In a chilling, 4-minute 911 call, Omar Thornton told a police dispatcher how he sought to avenge racial discrimination through the shootings Aug. 3 at Hartford Distributors Inc. in Manchester, Mass.

"You probably want to know the reason why I shot this place up," Thornton said in a recording released Thursday. "This place is a racist place. They're treating me bad over here. And treat all other black employees bad over here, too. So I took it to my own hands and handled the problem. I wish I could have got more of the people."

Thornton, 34, went on his killing spree moments after he was forced to resign when confronted with video evidence that he had been stealing and reselling beer.

The 911 call confirmed suggestions from his relatives and girlfriend that he was angered by what he believed was racist treatment in the workplace.

Hartford Distributors president Ross Hollander said there was no record to support claims of "racial insensitivity" made through the company's anti-harassment policy, the union grievance process or state and federal agencies.

"Nonetheless, these ugly allegations have been raised and the company will cooperate with any inves-

tigation," Hollander said.

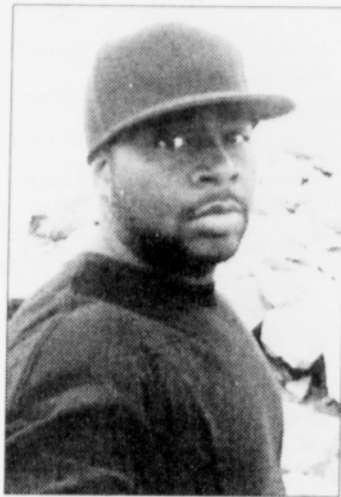
The union said 14 of 69 dock workers, or 20 percent, were racial minorities — four black, nine Hispanic, one Asian.

The idea that Thornton's motive may not have been retaliation for losing his job has not sat well with many of the people who knew the victims and have first-hand knowledge of the environment inside

the enormous distribution center.

"Everybody just thinks this race card is such a wrong thing," said Michael Cirigliano, whose slain brother, Bryan, was Thornton's union representative at the disciplinary meeting and the president of the local union.

Michael Cirigliano also spent three decades working at the warehouse before he retired two years



Omar Thornton

ago.

"The Hispanics and the blacks were telling me they've never seen anything they're accusing the company of in the bathrooms or anywhere else at HDI," he said. "It's never been separated white, black, Asian. It's never been like that."

He said the company had increased its hiring of minorities in recent years.

"They've been bringing in more and more minority people to fill the positions," Cirigliano said. "You could almost go as far as that's reverse discrimination. They were hiring the groups to balance the workplace, because that's what we are in America, there's a balance."

Thornton's ex-girlfriend, Jessica Anne Brocuglio, said he had a history of racial problems with co-workers at other jobs and believed he was denied pay raises because of his race.

She said he told her: "I'm sick of having to quit jobs and get another

job because they can't accept me."

Thornton's girlfriend of the past eight years, Kristi Hannah, said he showed her cell phone photos of racist graffiti in the bathroom at the beer distribution company and overheard managers using a racial epithet in reference to him. Police said they recovered the phone and forensics experts would examine it.

The 911 operator attempted to keep Thornton on the phone and to talk him into surrendering. Thornton said he would not give up his location in the building and knew police were looking for him.

"When they find me that's when everything is going to be over," he said, assuring the operator he was not going to kill anyone else.

He then said he saw a SWAT team and hastened to get off the phone.

"Tell my people I love them and I gotta go now," he said.

Police found him dead with a gunshot wound to his head.

## Bridge Project Scaled Back

continued ▲ from page 3

keep the Hooter's at Jantzen Beach, he was fine with it.

Other Vancouver residents stated that they didn't want a light rail extension into the city, citing concerns over crime and questioned if it was necessary.

In 2011, Vancouver voters will decide on measure to fund light rail to Clark County with a sales tax. A similar measure failed in 1995. If the same happens next year, it could pose a serious funding problem for the CRC.

Last month, the CRC Independent Review Panel, eight experts appointed by the governors of Washington and Oregon to review the project, released a report that argued that there are issues with the project that need to be addressed.

The 317-page report stated that the bridge was largely experimental, and would need to be continuously tested if it came to fruition, adding significantly to the cost. It also stated that tolling was necessary.

The IPR report specifically mentions that more work needs to be done on environmental justice issues concerning the bridge.

Environmental justice has a specific legal context, according to the report, and concerns low-income or minority populations that will be disproportionately or adversely impacted by the project. So far analysis on this issue has blended with "neighborhood" issues, the report states, making it much harder to gauge how these populations will be affected.

Although the CRC Project Spon-

sors Council voted unanimously to scale the bridge back to 10 lanes, CRC opponents are still calling for a complete redo of the project.

Garren said that despite the pleasing outcome with the Hayden Island interchange he is still concerned. He points out that much of the work on the bridge will be done next to a residential area on the island that houses many older, immobile residents who could be negatively impacted by the noise and pollution from the work on the bridge. He also worries that the existing Safeway on the island will be removed to make way for the project, leaving many residents with no way to get their medications.

However, he said that CRC staff worked transparently and collaboratively with residents, a trend he hopes will continue.

## Drive Hammered, Get Nailed

Six extra DUI patrols will travel Vancouver area roadways in search of impaired drivers between Thursday, Aug. 12 and Sept. 6.

Authorities said the 'Drive Hammered, Get Nailed' effort will be the largest summer DUI enforcement campaign ever, with 172 agencies participating throughout the state

of Washington.

Participating locally are the Battleground, Camas, Vancouver and Washougal Police Departments, the Clark County Sheriff's Office and the Washington State Patrol.

The summer months bring the greatest number of alcohol or drug

impaired driver-involved traffic deaths. And Labor Day weekend is one of Washington's deadliest holidays on the highways, averaging more than seven deaths each year.

Last year, impaired drivers contributed to the deaths of more than half of the 491 people who died on Washington's roadways.

## Reward Tracks Driver's Death

Crime Stoppers, in cooperation with the Portland Police Bureau, wants the public's help in solving a homicide that occurred in east Portland.

On June 11, at approximately 12:51 a.m., David Cosmo Jenkins, 33, was shot and killed while driving a light blue, 1991 Oldsmobile westbound on East Burnside at 90th Avenue.

Detectives believe he was coming from the area of 162nd and

Burnside just prior to his death.

Crime Stoppers is offering a cash reward of up to \$1,000 for information, reported to Crime Stoppers, that leads to an arrest in this case, or any unsolved felony, and you remain anonymous. Call Crime Stoppers at 503-823-HELP (4357), leave a tip online at [crimestoppersoforegon.com](http://crimestoppersoforegon.com), or text 823HELP plus your tip and send it to CRIMES (274697).

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