

Racism, Conspiracies



Katherine Massey, one of the victims killed in the grocery store shooting in Buffalo on Saturday, is pictured back in 2011. Her sister called her "a beautiful soul." (Photo courtesy The Buffalo News via AP)

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around to the front of the store.

She saw someone being shot, she said, and a man who looked like he was dressed for the Army.

"Like a nightmare," Harris told The Buffalo News, shaken but grateful to have found her daughter safe.

The grisly scene was broadcast online by the gunman, a video notable not just for the cold-bloodedness of the killings, but how fast they unfolded. In the deafening rat-a-tat of gunfire, 10 voices were silenced, their stories left for others to recite.

Of a woman whose niece swore she was "the apple of God's eye." Of a longtime policeman who became a guard at the store and whose son knew he died a hero. Of an ace baker who'd give you the shirt off her back.

Garnell Whitfield Jr., whose 86-year-old mother Ruth Whitfield was killed in the attack, said she had come to Tops after her daily ritual of visiting her husband of 68 years in his nursing home. In so many ways, for so many years, Whitfield Jr. said his mother had devoted her life to those she loved.

"That day was like every other day for my mom," he said Monday as he pondered how to break the news to his father.

Heyward Patterson, a 67-year-old deacon at State Tabernacle Church of God in Christ, was similarly doing the things he'd long been known for. He had just come from helping at his church's soup kitchen and now was at Tops, volunteering in the community jitney service that shuttles people without a ride to and from the store.

Pastor Russell Bell of the Tabernacle Church said he believed Patterson had been loading someone's groceries into his trunk when the shots took him down.

"Anywhere he was, he was encouraging people to be the best that they could be," Bell said.

As customers arrived at Tops

ahead of the shooting, their purpose was clear.

Roberta Drury, 32, was in search of something for dinner. Andre Mackneil, 53, came to pick up a cake for his son's third birthday. Celestine Chaney, 65, needed some shortcake to go with the strawberries she sliced.

For some in the store, it was likely a trip of necessity, to fill an emptied fridge or get a missing ingredient. For Chaney, though, it was more than some stubborn chore. Stores were her passion. Her 48-year-old son, Wayne Jones, said he'd typically take his mother shopping each week, stopping at grocery store after grocery store in search of the best deals, with the occasional stop for a hot dog or McDonald's.

"We'd hit four or five stores looking for a deal," he laughed even as his face was wet with tears.

On Saturday, it was Chaney's older sister, JoAnn Daniels, 74, who accompanied her shopping, and the two sisters made a meandering trip through Tops' aisles. Chaney knew she needed shortcakes, but flitting around the store, she decided she wanted to make shrimp salad, too, giggling with her sister as they filled the cart. She surveyed the roast beef and complained about the price of rolls before taking interest in chicken legs.

"You done?" she finally asked her sister, who said she was.

Pops suddenly ricocheted. The sisters thought they were firecrackers, but others started running. They went to follow, but Chaney was knocked down. Daniels said she reached to help, but her sister said she was fine.

"I'm coming," Daniels said her sister assured. She thought Chaney was behind her.

It would be hours before she learned the truth, when her nephew saw the video of the shooting: Her baby sister, who had survived breast cancer and three surgeries for aneurysms, died on a trip to the grocery store.

PLANS CHANGE. DREAMS DON'T.

Josh Griffie knows the difference. He was a teenager with big plans. Then he was diagnosed with an autoimmune disorder. His soccer career? Over. His other plans? Rearranged. But when one path closes off, Josh sees two more in its place. "One of my biggest strengths is my ability to adapt, dream and persevere," he says.

Despite chronic health issues, he started a photography business in Portland, then landed an internship and a job at Nike. Soon he'll finish his business administration degree online through [Oregon State Ecampus](https://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/josh). And he's ready for whatever comes next.

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