

Racist White Factory Worker Kills 4 Blacks In Mississippi

MERIDIAN, Miss. — A white factory worker known as a racist who talked about murdering others opened fire with a shotgun and a rifle at a Lockheed Martin plant Tuesday, killing four blacks and one white before committing suicide, authorities said.

Dozens of employees at the aircraft parts plant frantically ran for cover after the gunman, dressed in a black T-shirt and camouflage pants, started firing during a morning break. As many as eight people were wounded in the nation's deadliest workplace shooting in 2 1/2 years.

"At first I thought it was something falling on the ground. Then I walked to the aisle and saw him aiming his gun. I took off. Everybody took off," said Booker Stevenson, who was helping assemble airplane parts when he heard the first shot.

The gunman was identified as Dou Williams, an assembler at the plant in this city of 40,000 near the Alabama line. Exactly what set him off was not immediately clear. But Stevenson said Williams was known as a racist who did not like blacks.

"When I first heard about it, he was the first thing that came to my mind," said Jim Payton, who is retired from the plant but had worked with Williams for about a year.

He said Williams had talked about wanting to kill people. "I'm capable of doing it," Payton quoted Williams as saying.

One of those killed was Lanette McCall, a black woman who had worked at the plant 15 years. Her husband, Bobby McCall, said she expected Williams to harm someone someday.

"She said he made a threat against black people," a distraught McCall said.

Nevertheless, Sheriff Billy Sollie said it appeared Williams fired at random with the shotgun and the semiautomatic rifle. "There was no indication it involved race or gender as far as his targets were concerned," Sollie said.

The sheriff said he had no information on whether the gunman had been in trouble with his bosses. He said Williams had attended a meeting Tuesday morning with

other employees, some of whom were later shot.

"We are not sure if those killed were friend or foe," the sheriff said.

Austin Clark, who called in sick Tuesday, said Williams made accusations when he was angry.

"He's had problems with white people, too," said Clark, who is white. "I have no idea what set him off."

Law officers made vehicles go through checkpoints outside the plant at midday as about two dozen people waited to learn the fate of their loved ones.

Some of the wounded were hospitalized in critical condition.

The shooting stunned residents of Meridian, whose economy is largely dependent on the military. It is home to the Lockheed plant, a naval air station and an Air National Guard training center.

"We know one another, almost everyone knows someone who works in the building, or has a relative who works in the building," said Craig Hitt, president of the Lauderdale County Board of Supervisors.

The Rev. Kathy Spells pleaded for racial unity the city mourns its losses. "It's time to get together and pray and get this racist thing over with," Spells said.

It was the nation's deadliest workplace shooting since a software tester in Wakefield, Mass., killed seven people the day after Christmas in 2000.

Officials at the Meridian plant declined to comment, and a Lockheed Martin national spokeswoman was unable to immediately provide details.

Gov. Ronnie Musgrove said: "Mississippi's family grieves today for this senseless tragedy. My thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends of those lost."

The Meridian plant employs about 150 people and builds parts for C-130J Hercules transport planes and vertical stabilizers for F-22 Raptor fighter jets.

Lockheed Martin is the biggest defense contractor in the United States. The corporation had sales of \$24 billion in 2001. It employs about 125,000 people.

Dr. Don Phelps, Noted National Educator, Passes

Dr. Donald G. Phelps, former chancellor of the Seattle Community Colleges and president of Seattle Central Community College, died on Saturday, July 5, following a brief illness.

Dr. Phelps was born in Seattle on July 22, 1929, one of three children to Donald S. and Louise Gayton Phelps, and grandson of John T. Gayton, a leading member among Seattle's Black pioneer families.

He had a long and distinguished career in education in the Seattle area, starting as a teacher and principal in the Bellevue School District. He served as president of Seattle Central Community College from 1980 to 1984 and as Chancellor of the Seattle Community College District from 1984 to 1988, when he was appointed chancellor for Los Angeles. He was the first African American to serve as chancellor of both the Seattle District, the largest in the state of Washington, and also of the Los Angeles Community College District, one of the largest in the nation.

Since 1994, he had been serving as the W.K. Kellogg Regents Professor in the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas at Austin.

Early in his career, Dr. Phelps also held leadership positions in county and federal government. He was director of Executive Administration for King County and director in the U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare, where he authored the first report on alcohol abuse issued to the U.S. Congress. He also became a familiar figure in Seattle as a news commentator at KOMO radio and television beginning in the late 1960s.

Dr. Phelps earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in education from Seattle University and his doctorate in education from the University of Washington. He also studied at the Cornish College of the Arts and did postgraduate work at Harvard University.

He had received numerous honors, including the 1998 Distinguished Leadership Award from the American Association of Community Colleges, the highest recognition awarded in the community college field. He also received the National Leadership Award from the National Council of Black American Affairs in 1998. While at Los Angeles, he was named Outstanding CEO by the University of Texas and Man of the Year by the U.S. Constitution Bicentennial Committee of Los Angeles.

At the University of Texas, Dr. Phelps served as member and chair of the Men's Athletics Council and as chair of the Department of Educational Administration. He was a member of two professional fraternities, Sigma Pi Phi and Gamma Gamma Boulé.

"Don Phelps was a mentor and a personal inspiration to me and to hundreds, if not thousands, of students," said Dr. Charles H. Mitchell, chancellor of the Seattle Community College District. "His impact on our community is almost immeasurable." As chancellor, Dr. Phelps named Mitchell to be president of Seattle Central Community College.

Donald Phelps is survived by his wife, Pamela; his children, Richard N., Michael K., and Dawn S. Phelps; his grandchildren, Nichole, Damon, Dominique, Marcel, and Deshawn Phelps; and his great-grandchildren, Brenda Jackson and Damoni Phelps.

In lieu of flowers, the Phelps family requests that donations be made to the Seattle Central Community College Foundation, 1701 Broadway, Seattle, WA 98122; or to the Community College Leadership Scholarship Program, The University of Texas, One University Station, D5600, Austin, Texas, 78712.

A memorial service is planned for Tuesday, July 15, at First A.M.E. Church on Capitol Hill.

Clarence Thomas Hides Behind Frederick Douglass Quotes

By Artelia C. Covington
NNPA National Correspondent

WASHINGTON — When one thinks about Frederick Douglass, the famous abolitionist, several familiar quotes come to mind. "Without a struggle, there can be no progress," is one.

Another is: "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will."

And there's this one, "If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and deprecate agitation, are the men who want crops without plowing up the ground, they want

rain without thunder and lighting."

However, when U.S. Supreme Court Clarence Thomas selects a Douglass quote to use in his dissenting opinion in the University of Michigan's law school case that upheld affirmative action, he chooses one that many African-Americans have never heard. And if they have heard it, they don't go around quoting it.

"The American people have always been anxious to know what they shall do with us," Douglass told abolitionists 140 years ago. "... I have had but one answer from the beginning. Do nothing with us!"

Douglass continued, "If the

Negro cannot stand on his own legs, let him fall also. All I ask is give him a chance to stand on his own legs! Let him alone! Your interference is doing him positive injury."

In his opinion, Thomas wrote: "Like Douglass, I believe Blacks can achieve in every avenue of American life without the meddling of university administrators. Because I wish to see all students succeed whatever their color, I share in some respect, the sympathies of those who sponsor the type of discrimination advanced by the University of Michigan Law School."

Thomas's critics are outraged that he is trying to use one of Douglass' lesser known quotes to defend his opposition to affirmative action.

"When you consider the many quotes you could have used from Fredrick Douglass, he clearly really looked for one that would suit his purposes and decided to omit the more salient ones and it's reflective of the skewed logic that he uses in his opinion," says Barbara Amwine, executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

Joseph Hopkins, a civil rights attorney in Pasadena, Calif., agrees.

"He takes Frederick Douglass' comments out of context and ignores the fact that Douglass fought for integration, abolition of slavery and equal rights for Blacks all his life," says Hopkins, author of a new book, "I Will Not Apologize." Keith Watters, a former president of the National Bar Association, says he was struck by a section of Thomas' opinion that tried to place a heavier burden on historically Black colleges and universities.

"In 2000 at Morehouse College, one of the most distinguished HBCs in the Nation, only 0.1 percent of the student body was White, and only 0.2 percent was Hispanic... And at

Mississippi Valley State University, a public HBC, only 1.1 percent of the freshman class in 2001 was White. If there is a 'critical mass' of Whites at these institutions, then 'critical mass' is indeed a very small proportion," Thomas writes.

"It follows, therefore, that an HBC's assessment that racial homogeneity will yield educational benefits would similarly be given deference," he says. "An HBC's rejection of White applicants in order to maintain racial homogeneity seems permissible, therefore, under the majority's view of the Equal Protection Clause... Contained within today's majority opinion is the seed of a new constitutional justification for a concept I thought long and rightly rejected—racial segregation."

Watters rejects that view of Black colleges, which were founded because White colleges would not accept African-Americans.

"You look at Justice Thomas and you always wonder where he's coming from," says Watters, a lawyer in Washington, D.C. "He says that since it's okay for Black schools to educate Blacks without Whites, then it should be okay for White schools should educate Whites without Blacks—he sounds like a segregationist."

Watters adds, "I think that this is a desperate attempt to explain himself, and I think the only people who are really listening are primarily White conservatives. He's playing to that audience and to himself, and I think he believes this stuff at this point."

Hopkins, the California attorney, isn't as kind.

"Clarence Thomas is the chief house slave, but he should be fired because he can't do his job—he can't keep us down," says Hopkins. "He's the house slave appointed to keep the field slaves and the yard slaves down, but he can't do it. It just doesn't work."

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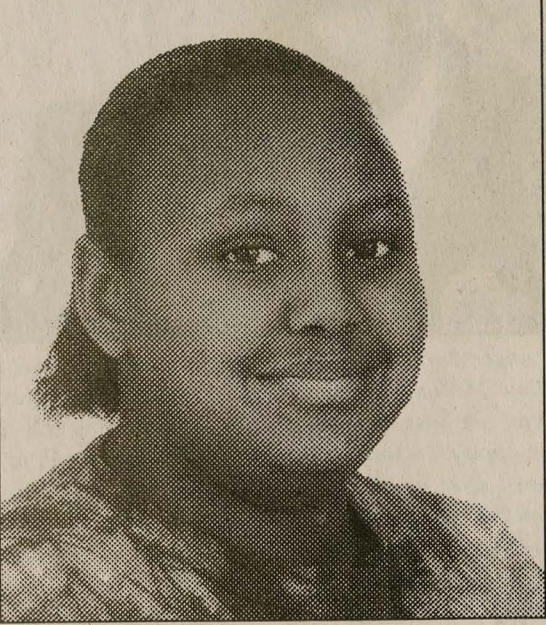
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Connie Cameron, Publisher

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BONkids

young achievers



Olivia Tobin
Martin Luther King

Age: 10 Grade: 5
Favorite School Subject: Olivia is very good at art.
Hobbies/Interests: She likes to swim, jump rope, style hair, doodle and draw cards.
Proudest Achievement: She taught her sister how to read.
Ambition: To be a professional artist or an animal doctor.
How She'll Get There: By studying at school and getting her degree.

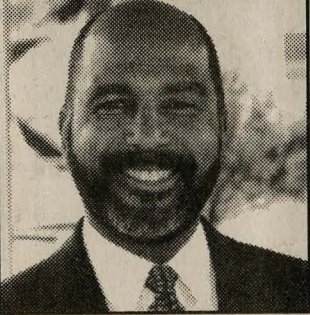
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