

Man had history of conflict with council

by UPI

KIRKWOOD, Mo. -- The man police say went on a shooting spree during a council meeting in a St. Louis suburb had a history of conflict with city officials, it was reported. Charles "Cookie" Thornton reportedly stormed into the Kirkwood City Hall Thursday, opened fire and killed five people before Kirkwood police officers shot and killed him. Police said Thornton brought a revolver to city hall, then took a handgun from the first victim, a police officer, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported Friday. The gunman left for his brother a note that read, "The Truth will win in the end." Gerald Thornton said he found the note after the rampage that left two police officers, three city officials and the gunman dead, the newspaper reported. The dead were identified as police officers Tom Ballman and William Biggs; council members Connie Karr and Mike Lynch, and Public Works Director Kenneth Yost. Kirkwood Mayor Mike Swoboda was shot and listed in serious condition Friday. Another victim, Suburban Journals newspaper reporter Todd Smith, was hospitalized with a gunshot wound to the hand. Gerald Thornton told CNN his brother, an independent contractor, thought he was "ticketed unjustly" and fined for violating city ordinances.

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