

Testimony of Garnell Whitfield, Jr.
Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing on
“Examining the ‘Metastasizing’ Domestic Terrorism Threat After the Buffalo
Attack”
June 7, 2022

Mrs. Ruth Whitfield was my mother, the heart and rock of our family and my father’s soulmate of 68 years. She was the person who held us together... probably just like your mother did for your family.

What I loved most about her was how she loved her family unconditionally, sacrificing everything for us. She visited my father almost everyday of the last eight years, including on the day she was murdered, to ensure that he got the care that he needed from the nursing home and to supplement that care with her own personal and loving touch.

Our lives are forever changed... forever damaged by an act of profound hate and evil. Nothing will ever take away the hurt, the pain or the hole in our hearts. For her to be ripped from us by someone so full of hate, is impossible to understand and even harder to live with.

But we are more than hurt... we are angry! This should have never happened! We are good citizens, good people. We believe in God. We trust in God. But this wasn’t an act of God. This was the act of a person... and he did not act alone. He was radicalized by white supremacists. His anger and hatred were metastasized like a cancer by people with big microphones screaming that Black people were going to take away their jobs and opportunities.

We are people of decency. We are taught to love even our enemies... but our enemies don’t love us. So what are we supposed to do with all of our anger and pain? You expect us to forgive and forget... again? And what are you doing? You were elected to protect us...

I would ask every senator to imagine the faces of your mothers as you look at the face of my mother, Mrs. Ruth Whitfield... and ask yourself... is there nothing we can do? Is there nothing that you personally are willing to do to stop the cancer of white supremacy and the domestic terrorism it inspires?

If there is nothing then, respectfully, senators... you should yield your positions of authority and influence to others that are willing to lead on this issue.

Mrs. Ruth Whitfield’s life mattered. Your actions here will tell us if and how much it mattered to you.