



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on December 31, 2019

Cuccinelli Tweets Truth About Hanukkah Stabbing Suspect; Critics Blow a Gasket

It turns out that Grafton Thomas (shown), suspected of stabbing five people at a rabbi's house in New York, is the unassimilated child of an illegal alien who wrangled an amnesty with millions of other illegals during the Reagan administration.

The news came from Ken Cuccinelli, acting director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), who disclosed the fact on Twitter but then deleted the tweet.



Though critics rushed to suggest that Cuccinelli was a xenophobic racist stoking fear of immigrants, they did not dispute the facts in the tweet: that Thomas was indeed the unassimilated child of an immigrant who jumped the border.

Five Attacked

On Saturday, police allege, Thomas, 38, forced his way into the home of Orthodox Rabbi Chaim Rottenberg in Monsey, New York, about 30 miles northwest of Manhattan across the Hudson River. He stabbed five people, the [New York Times reported](#), as they were lighting the traditional Hanukkah candles.

Thomas faces five counts of attempted murder from local authorities.

Federal prosecutors charged him with a hate crime after finding that he searched Google on his smartphone three times for "Why did Hitler hate the Jews?" the [Washington Post reported](#).

"There were more online searches, for temples 'near me,'" the newspaper reported. "There were journals with the words 'Nazi Culture' on the same page as a swastika and a Star of David."

Thomas attacked a home in an area heavily populated by Hasidic Jews.

But Cuccinelli's deleted tweet quickly became the story on Monday.

The [Times rushed](#) to find the usual suspects to denounce Cuccinelli for disclosing an unwelcome fact: Maybe the amnesty that Ronald Reagan signed in 1986 wasn't such a bright idea.

The Tweet

As head of USCIS with access to immigration records, Cuccinelli had access to the background of Thomas.

"The attacker is the US citizen son of an illegal alien who got amnesty under the 1986 amnesty law for illegal immigrants," [Cuccinelli wrote](#). "Apparently, American values do not take hold among this entire family, at least this one violent, and apparently bigoted, son."

Yet the possible danger posed by illegal aliens who grew up to hate the United States and/or its citizens was of less concern than Cuccinelli's CrimeSpeech.

[Reported the Times:](#)



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[Cuccinelli] took to Twitter to say that Mr. Thomas's father came to the country illegally but gained amnesty under a far-reaching immigration bill signed by President Ronald Reagan in 1986. ...

Some inside and outside the Department of Homeland Security were appalled by the message, which drew a connection between the citizenship status of the suspect's family and the gruesome crime. They said it was highly unusual to reveal the immigration records of a suspect's family to the public during the early stages of an investigation.

David Lapan, a former department spokesman in the Trump administration, accused Mr. Cuccinelli of "fear-mongering" and sending a political message to Stephen Miller, the architect of hard-line immigration policies at the White House.

"I see no relevance at all, especially today at this early stage, and that's what's really distasteful," Mr. Lapan said. "Inside 48 hours of this horrific incident happening he's already trying to leverage it for his own and Stephen Miller's own agenda on immigration."

Lapan also tweeted his opinion of Cuccinelli.

"This is a despicable tweet by a senior gov't official, impugning the 'values' of an entire family based on the actions of one member," [he wrote](#). "Why is the past immigration status of the father relevant to this case, for which a motive is not yet known?"

Cuccinelli, [he continued](#), is "exploiting a tragedy to drive an anti-immigrant message, creating more division at a time when more togetherness, understanding and healing is needed."

Cuccinelli did not mention the father of Thomas, but at any rate the suspect's attorney, Michael Sussman, called Cuccinelli's tweet a "stretch" and "absurd," the [Times reported](#).

Yet Sussman also blurted out the truth: Cuccinelli was right. "He also said that Kim Thomas, Mr. Thomas's mother and a nurse, had immigrated to the United States from Guyana and became a citizen in 1986."

Sussman, of course, did not say she was illegal.

Hallucinations?

As for Thomas, his family and attorney are laying the groundwork for an insanity defense, the [Post reported](#).

"Thomas's family sought to dispel accusations of anti-Semitism in a statement released Sunday through a lawyer, saying he was not a member of any hate groups and 'was raised in a home which embraced and respected all religions and races.'"

Sussman told reporters that Thomas suffered from hallucinations, wasn't taking his medication for "psychosis and 'severe depression,'" and that voices told him to attack the home, the newspaper reported.

The lawyer rejected descriptions of his client as a "domestic terrorist" who carried out a targeted attack. He said his review of papers from Thomas's home revealed not anti-Semitism but the "ramblings of a disturbed individual."

Photo of Grafton Thomas: AP Images

R. Cort Kirkwood is a longtime contributor to The New American and a former newspaper editor.



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