



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on April 27, 2012

Sister of Beating Victim In Mobile Says Theft Was Motive

Matthew Owens, the victim, is in the hospital with severe wounds, [including a fractured skull](#). Terry Rawls, the suspect, faces charges of first-degree assault, and police expect to arrest three more assailants, news reports say. Rawls was released on \$7,500 bond, the [Mobile Press-Register reported](#).



Owens' sister, who witnessed the attack, [says the beating](#) occurred after her brother confronted some youngsters stealing from yards, and that someone in the crowd claimed the beating was "justice for Trayvon," a reference to the [shooting death](#) of Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida, on February 26.

But an angry neighbor claims Owens is a bigot who got what he deserved after he pulled knives and confronted children playing basketball near his home.

The Beating

The incident concerning Owens on April 21 in the city's [Pleasant Valley neighborhood](#) began when he confronted some children playing basketball in the street, according to the first accounts to emerge. Their ball landed in Owens' yard. According to NBC affiliate WPMI, Owens pulled blades. One of the kids claims that they apologized, but that Owens said "get the F out of the yard!" the station reported.

[One boy] says that's when Owens started spewing racial slurs and pulled out two knives.

"It was like kitchen knives," [the boy] says. "They were long."

Lemika Whisenhunt, who lives on the street, says Owens is the problem, [WKRG reported](#). "Every single day it's a problem with Mr. Owens concerning our kids," she told the station.

All these kids do is shoot basketball. We keep 'em in the yard. They don't bother anybody. We'd rather them play basketball than to be around here vandalizing, breaking into people's homes. We try to bring our kids up the right way and show people that all black kids are not bad.

And Owens, she told WPMI, said "he's going to lynch all the black kids, he hates black n*****, he hates that we moved on this street."

Owens' sister says otherwise. [The Daily Caller interviewed](#) Ashley Parker, who told the webzine that the beating started after her brother tried to stop a group of black youths who were stealing from yards in the neighborhood.

According to the *Daily Caller*, "She told Owens, who confronted the youths."

She "saw one of them take something off a porch," Parker said, "and that is when Matthew approached them and told them they need to go home."



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The group returned with more than a dozen others, she said, beating Owens with bats, brass knuckles, a chair, a paint can and other objects. The attack left him bloodied and unconscious.

Parker has since reinforced her account about petty theft precipitating the incident, telling the same version of events to a Facebook group that was started to support her brother.

Parker says she and her children are “scared to death,” the [DC reported](#), and plans to move out of the neighborhood this week.

Parker further refined her account, [telling WKRG](#) that the kids purposely throw a ball into her yard as a ruse to steal something. Police say she did not tell them that story.

As well, Parker says someone in the angry mob yelled, “Now that’s justice for Trayvon.” Other witnesses [back up](#) her story, [news accounts say](#), although police [have said](#) they cannot corroborate that claim.

Owens told police he doesn't know why the mob attacked him, the [Press-Register reported](#).

Police say the beating has nothing to do with Trayvon Martin. Mobile police Cpl. Chris Levy said he is “100 percent certain that Trayvon Martin is not a motivating factor in this incident. We don't actually have anything that says that happened,” Fox 10 station WALA reported.

Levy says the beating is just one incident in a long-running feud between Rawls and Owens. “This here is an incident stemming from an ongoing dispute between neighbors,” he said, the [Press-Register reported](#), adding,

Levy said the 2 traded racist epithets in July 2009 and that Rawls assaulted Owens. While a witness initially told police that Rawls had used a baseball bat, Levy said the suspect denied that, insisting he had only used his hands. The witness later said he could not be sure a bat was used, Levy said.

At any rate, Levy said, the District Attorney’s Office reduced the charge to third-degree assault and dropped it when Owens declined to pursue it.

Both men have violent criminal records. Rawls, 44, was convicted of first-degree assault in 2000, but served only two years of his sentence in prison, the [newspaper reported](#).

Police arrested him again in 2004 on a pair of third-degree burglary charges, records show, though one of those was dropped. After Rawls pleaded guilty, Johnston sentenced him to 15 years, though only one of those was to be served in confinement, with the rest suspended.

Prior to those charges, Rawls was arrested and convicted of first-degree theft of property and firing a weapon into a building or vehicle, according to court records.

And Owens is no saint. [WKRG reported](#) that “Owens has a violent track record.”

The Mobile County Metro Jail log shows police have arrested Owens numerous times over the past 12 years for things like domestic violence, assault and sex abuse. His first arrest was November 4, 1990 for assault. The last time officers transported Owens to jail was last March on a domestic violence charge.

Although police initially said they were not investigating the beating as a hate crime, authorities in Mobile turned the case over to federal authorities, who will decide whether such a crime was committed, the [Press-Register reported](#).



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The *Press-Register* reported that "Rawls and the other assailants on Saturday are black, while Owens is white."

"Justice for Trayvon"

So far, at least three victims [have suffered](#) revenge attacks for the shooting of Trayvon Martin, according to news reports from across the country.

Martin died after George Zimmerman, a neighborhood watch volunteer, shot him. [Zimmerman says](#) he shot Martin in self defense after Martin attacked him, a claim supported by most of the evidence adduced thus far. Just days ago, ABC News published a photograph [that shows](#) blood running down the back of Zimmerman's head, which supports his claim that Martin bashed his head into the ground after punching him and knocking him down.

Prosecutors [have charged](#) Zimmerman with second-degree murder, but some legal experts believe the charges are a ploy to persuade Zimmerman to plead to a lesser charge. Leftist legal eagle Alan Dershowitz [has called](#) the prosecutors' affidavit "irresponsible," "immoral," "unethical" and "stupid."

During the past month, race hustlers and demagogues have exploited the case to inflame racial tensions, which may have led to the beatings of innocent whites. The [New Black Panthers put a bounty](#) on Zimmerman's head, calling for his capture "dead or alive." And movie director Spike Lee, seeking "justice for Trayvon," [tweeted an address](#) he thought was Zimmerman's but that turned out to be that of an elderly couple. They were so scared they left their home.

When police released Zimmerman on a \$150,000 bond on Monday, Twitter users rushed to tweet death threats.

That is the climate in which the revenge beatings have occurred.

In Chicago, a suspect [has admitted](#) robbing and beating a white victim to exact revenge for Martin's death. Two blacks men approached the victim from behind, "pinned his arms to his side," the [Chicago Sun-Times reported](#), and then threatened him with a tree branch. "Empty your pockets, white boy," they said. Then they shoved him to the ground and beat him.

[Mobs have attacked](#) two men in Gainesville, Fla. On April 7, a black mob attacked a 27-year-old white man who was returning home from a bar. According to police, The [Gainesville Sun reported](#), the mob yelled "Trayvon," then assaulted the victim for a full five minutes.

He sustained injuries to the left eye, abrasions to his palms and a cut on his right kneecap, and [the police spokesman] said he would likely have "permanent disfigurement to the left side of his face."

The Florida Civil Rights Association [denounced the crime](#).

On April 11, a mob attacked a good Samaritan, the [Sun reported](#), who had tackled a black convicted felon, Carl Babb. Released from prison that very day, Babb had snatched a woman's purse.

[According to](#) the *Sun*, "The scene attracted a crowd, and a number of people on the plaza approached Babb and the Good Samaritan, who tried to explain that Babb had just stolen his friend's purse."

Some members of the crowd shouted "Trayvon!" and that at least three of members of the crowd began stomping on the hands of the woman's friend to force him to let go of Babb....

Some witnesses to the robbery tried to calm down the crowd, affirming the victim's story that he



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was trying to stop a man accused of a crime and retrieve his friend's purse.

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