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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Concordia 12/19/65 FFM

CONGRESS OF RACIAL EQUALITY
CORE SOUTHERN REGIONAL OFFICE
2209 DRYADES STREET
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70113

NEGRO GAS STATION BURNED AFTER INSURANCE CANCELLED: VIOLENCE CONTINUES IN FERRIDAY, LA.

The Negro-owned Concordia Esso Station on US highway 84 in Ferriday, La., was burned to the ground late Saturday, December 18. At about 11 PM CORE volunteer David Whatley heard a loud report which he thought might have been a firecracker. He learned shortly afterwards, however, that Anthony McCraney's gas station was on fire. The entire station was destroyed except for the fuel pumps, indicating that the fire was deliberately set. The burning is the sixth act of violence in Ferriday in less than two months.

About nine weeks ago McCraney's insurance was cancelled and he had been unable to get other insurance up to the time of Saturday's fire. The loss is estimated at \$6,000. Mr. McCraney has not had previous trouble of this kind but he recently joined the Deacons for Defense and Justice in Ferriday, an armed Negro defense organization. Two Negro churches in Ferriday have also recently had their insurance cancelled.

Local police and the FBI were notified of the burning. Ferriday police found a gasoline can in the ruins, one which Mr. McCraney could not identify, further indicating arson.

The gas station burning is the latest in a series of acts of racial violence in Ferriday. Earlier in December night riders shot at four Negro buildings, including the home of Robert Lewis, president of the Ferriday Freedom Movement. In November Lewis' home was firebombed but not destroyed. Also in November, a dozen members of the Freedom Movement picketing the Arcade movie theater were attacked and beaten by white onlookers.

Recently attorneys with the CORE Scholarship, Education and Defense Fund filed suit in federal court to desegregate Concordia Parish schools, including Ferriday's, in January. CORE officials believe the acts of violence and intimidation in Ferriday, which is 63% Negro, are part of a KKK-type campaign.

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Circumstances pointed to murder; according to "grapevine", four white men entered Mr. Morris' shop, where he also slept, and set the place afire. They then drenched the man with some inflammable fluid and deliberately set him afire. Mr. Morris lived two days after the tragedy; he refused to talk about it. The FBI investigated; no arrests have ever been made.

2. The "silver Dollar" nightclub on Highway 65 was the target of an unsuccessful arson attempt about February, 1965.
3. The residence of Mr. Cleve Singleton on 10th St. ~~in~~ was ~~xxxxxx~~ encircled with a ring of ~~xxxxxxxx~~ burning gasoline. Warning? (July, 1965)
4. The police shot and killed a Negro, Mr. Piercfield, in his home on Doty Road. The man barricaded himself in his home with his two small children. One of the children was shot. The home was marked with over a hundred bullet holes, on all four sides.
5. The home of Mr. Hodgeson, 6th and Georgia, was bombed about the first of this year. There was considerable damage.
6. A bomb was also thrown at the home of Rev. Anthony White, ~~xxxxxx~~ cor. 9th and Georgia. Less damage.
(No.s 5 and 6 occurred on the same night in autumn, 1965.)
7. Shots were fired at the outside lights in the Whatley residence, and at the home and store of Mr. Isaac Calhoun in east Ferriday.
8. McCraney's gas station was burned beyond repair on Dec. 13, 1965.
9. Three young men arrested, charged with insulting remarks to a white woman. They were burned with cattle prods, held overnight, then released without charge.
10. Gibson Duncan (withheld this name) beaten by police on Dec. 17, 1965. He was accused of peeping-tom actions. Afraid to sign affidavit.
11. Attempt in early November to bomb the home of Robert Lewis on 6th and Georgia St.
12. A ~~xxx~~ white man, later identified, fired a shot into the home of Robert Lewis. No arrest was made.
13. Several sticks of dynamite were placed under the home of David Whatley on Jan. 30, 1966 about 3 a.m. Did not explode.
14. Roy Twitty assaulted by Depo. Sheriff Hopp while picketing Arcade Theater. This took place in December. Mr. Twitty died several months later in Tucson, Arizona.
15. A mob attacked pickets in front of the Arcade Theater. They damaged the CORE car extensively. This preceded the abovementioned incident.