

DEATH OF
FRANK
MORRIS

157-HQ-2311

NW#: 34210

DocId: 31396120

FD-204 (Rev. 3-3-59)

DocId: 31396120

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

JAN 20 1965

TELETYPE

Mr. Tolson	_____
Mr. Belmont	_____
Mr. Mohr	_____
Mr. DeLoach	_____
Mr. Casper	_____
Mr. Callahan	_____
Mr. Conrad	_____
Mr. Felt	_____
Mr. Gale	_____
Mr. Rosen	_____
Mr. Sullivan	_____
Mr. Tavel	_____
Mr. Trotter	_____
Tele. Room	_____
Miss Holmes	_____
Miss Gandy	_____

FBI WASH DC

FBI NEW ORLS

8-27 URGENT 1/29/65 OLP

TO DIRECTOR

FROM NEW ORLEANS (157-3255)

FOIA(b)6
FOIA(b)7 - (C)

UNSUBS (TWO); FRANK MORRIS DASH VICTIM, FERRIDAY,
LOUISIANA, DECEMBER TEN, NINETEEN SIXTY FOUR, RM DASH CR.

RE NEW ORLEANS REPORT OF SA DONALD J. MCGORTY, JANUARY
TWENTYONE LAST.

ON JANUARY TWENTY FIVE LAST, DELLA MAE SMITH, MAID AT
CONCORDIA PARISH HOSPITAL RE INTERVIEWED AT LENGTH REGARDING
ALLEGED CONVERSATION SHE HAD WITH VICTIM CONFIDED IN HER THAT
THE PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE WERE THE [REDACTED]

NEIGHBORHOOD INVESTIGATION IN NEIGHBORHOOD OF VICTIM'S
SHOP HAS DISCLOSED THAT SMITH IS COMMONLY KNOWN AS A WINO AND
CONSIDERED TO BE TOTALLY UNRELIABLE BY NEGRO PEOPLE IN THE [REDACTED]
AREA. ACCORDING TO HOSPITAL RECORDS VICTIM ARRIVED AT HOSPITAL
AT ONE FORTY FIVE AM ON DECEMBER TEN, NINETEEN SIXTYFOUR, AND
ON DECEMBER ELEVEN, NINETEEN SIXTYFOUR, THE DAY THAT DELLA

END PAGE ONE 91965

D. R. Owen
CRD adw 2/1/65
SPM

6-Epm

PAGE TWO

SMITH RELATES THAT VICTIM NAMED [REDACTED]

AS THE INDIVIDUALS RESPONSIBLE, VICTIM HAD RECEIVED ONE FOURTH GRAIN OF MORPHINE AT THREE AM AND ANOTHER ONE FOURTH GRAIN OF MORPHINE AT NINE AM AND WAS TAKEN TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM OF THE HOSPITAL TO HAVE A TRACHEOTOMY PERFORMED IN ORDER THAT HE COULD BREATHE FREELY. AFTER THE EMERGENCY OPERATION VICTIM WAS UNABLE TO CONVERSE WITH ANYONE AND WENT INTO A COMA ON SUNDAY AND DIED ON MONDAY EVENING. DR. CHARLES HENRY COLVIN, JR. ADVISED THAT VICTIM WAS CONSCIOUS MOST OF THE DAY DECEMBER TEN AND DECEMBER ELEVEN, NINETEEN SIXTY FOUR, BUT WAS UNABLE TO TALK AFTER TRACHEOTOMY PERFORMED AND THAT HE, DR. COLVIN, HAD GONE TO THE VICTIMS'S ROOM EITHER ON DECEMBER TEN OR DECEMBER ELEVEN, TALKED TO THE VICTIM ALONE, AND INFORMED HIM THAT IF, THE VICTIM, KNEW WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE THAT HE HAD BETTER MAKE IT KNOWN NOW SINCE HIS CHANCES FOR SURVIVAL WERE EXTREMELY SLIM. VICTIM AT THAT TIME INDICATED TO DOCTOR THAT HE DID NOT KNOW THE IDENTITY OF THE PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FIRE. DR. COLVIN STATED THAT HE AGAIN INFORMED VICTIM THAT IF HE

END PAGE TWO

UNITED STATES

NW#:34210

DocId:31396120

FOIA(b)6
FOIA(b)7 - (C)

PAGE THREE
KNEW ANYTHING AT ALL HE SHOULD TELL SOMEONE, INDICATING TO VICTIM THAT IT DID NOT NECESSARILY HAVE TO BE HIMSELF, DR. COLVIN, BUT THAT COLVIN WOULD CALL ANYONE VICTIM DESIRED TO CONVERSE WITH.

ON JANUARY TWENTY FIVE LAST, FERRIDAY POLICE OFFICERS,

[REDACTED] AND THOMAS SIDNEY LOFTIN, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] WERE

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INTERVIEWED AS POSSIBLE WITNESSES INASMUCH AS THEY WERE ON DUTY IN FERRIDAY ON THE NIGHT OF DECEMBER NINE DASH TEN, NINETEEN SIXTY FOUR, WHEN VICTIM'S SHOP WAS BURNED. BOTH STATE THAT THEY HAD PASSED VICTIM'S SHOP ON ROUTINE PATROL WITHIN AN HOUR PRIOR TO THE FIRE AND HAD SEEN NOTHING UNUSUAL. BOTH STATE THAT THEY ARRIVED AT THE SCENE OF THE FIRE FROM APPROXIMATELY TEN BLOCKS WEST OF THE FIRE JUST SUBSEQUENT TO IT-S START, AND NOTED VICTIM RUNNING OUT OF THE BURNING BUILDING, PUT VICTIM IN POLICE CAR AND TOOK HIM TO CONCORDIA PARISH HOSPITAL IN FERRIDAY, LOUISIANA. BOTH STATE THAT VICTIM TOLD THEM THAT HE HAD HEARD A NOISE UPON GOING INTO THE SHOP. HE OBSERVED TWO WHITE MEN, WHOM HE DID NOT KNOW, POURING

END PAGE THREE

NW#: 34210

DocId: 31396121

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

NW#: 34210

DocId: 31396120

PAGE FOUR

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KEROSENE OR GASOLINE AROUND THE SHOP. THE OTHER HAD A SHOT GUN AND TOLD MORRIS TO GET BACK AFTER WHICH ONE OF THE UNKNOWN WHITE MEN HAD APPARENTLY THROWN A MATCH OR SOMETHING TO IGNITE THE FIRE. BOTH STATE IN VIEW OF VICTIM'S CONDITION AT THIS POINT, THEY DID NOT QUESTION HIM FURTHER, BUT MERELY RUSHED HIM TO THE HOSPITAL. BOTH OFFICERS STATE THEY HAD OBSERVED NOTHING UNUSUAL OR SUSPICIOUS IN OR AROUND THE AREA PRIOR TO THIS TIME.

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INTERVIEW OF FORMER GIRL FRIENDS, EX WIFE, AND CLOSE ASSOCIATES HAVE INDICATED THAT VICTIM APPARENTLY WELL LIKED BY BOTH NEGRO AND WHITE RESIDENCE OF FERRIDAY. FORMER GIRL FRIENDS AND WIFE STATE THAT VICTIM ENGAGED IN ABNORMAL SEX RELATIONS WITH NEGRO WOMEN BUT HAVE NOT KNOWN HIM TO BE INVOLVED WITH ANY WHITE WOMEN NOR DO THESE PEOPLE KNOW OF ANY ENEMIES OF VICTIM OR STATE THEY KNOW OF ANY CIVIL RIGHTS OR ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES ON THE PART OF VICTIM.

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ON JANUARY TWENTY EIGHT LAST, ERLIE HAYES, SIX ONE ZERO CAROLINA AVENUE, FERRIDAY, LOUISIANA, A NEGRO SCHOOL TEACHER, ADVISED THAT DELLA MAE SMITH, WHOM HE HAD NEVER SEEN PREVIOUSLY, END PAGE FOUR.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

NW#: 34210

DocId: 31396120

FOIA(b)6
FOIA(b)7 - (C)

PAGE FIVE

RELATED TO HIM THE DAY AFTER VICTIM DIED, THAT SHE HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN INTERVIEWED BY SIX FBI AGENTS AND HAD TOLD THEM NOTHING. SMITH RELATED TO HAYES THAT VICTIM HAD CONFIDED IN HER IN HOSPITAL THAT HE HAD BEEN BURNED BY POLICE OFFICERS [REDACTED] AND FRANK "DELAU" PAREN WHICH IS THE NAME, DEPUTY SHERIFF FRANK DELAUGHTER IS KNOWN BY AMONG THE NEGRO PEOPLE END PAREN. SMITH STATED THAT SHE HAD SAID NOTHING PREVIOUSLY BUT WAS "HIGH NOW" AND DIDN'T CARE. HAYES STATED THAT SMITH OBVIOUSLY HAD BEEN DRINKING AND MADE THIS STATEMENT IN THE PRESENCE OF MR. AND MRS. SCOTT, A LOCAL GROCERY STORE OPERATOR OF FERRIDAY. HAYES STATES SMITH APPARENTLY NOW RELATING ABOVE INFORMATION TO NUMEROUS PERSONS ON STREET IN FERRIDAY. HAYES DISCOUNTERED ENTIRE STORY AS UNTRUE AND BELIEVES SMITH TOLD IT WHILE INTOXICATED.

ON JANUARY TWENTY EIGHT LAST, TWO NEGRO BOYS, AGES ELEVEN AND THIRTEEN, ADVISED THAT ON THE NIGHT OF THE FIRE VICTIM ASKED THEM TO CLEAN THE CONCRETE FLOOR OF HIS SHOE SHOP. BOTH STATED THAT THEY HAD MOPPED THIS FLOOR WITH

END PAGE FIVE

NWN: 34210

DocId:31396120

PAGE SIX

APPROXIMATELY ONE HALF GALLON OF COAL OIL AFTER WHICH THEY HAD HUNG THE OIL SOAKED MOP INSIDE THE REAR DOOR OF THE SHOE SHOP. BOTH STATED THAT THIS JOB WAS COMPLETED BETWEEN NINE AND TEN PM ON DECEMBER NINE, NINETEEN SIXTY FOUR. IN SEPARATE INTERVIEWS BOTH BOYS STATED THAT MORRIS HAD ACTED DIFFERENT THAT NIGHT AND LOOKED TO THEM LIKE SOMETHING WAS GOING TO HAPPEN. WHEN QUESTIONED AS TO WHAT THEY MEANT THE ELEVEN YEAR OLD BOY STATED MORRIS LOOKED LIKE HE WAS GOING TO CRY AND THE THIRTEEN YEAR OLD BOY SAID MORRIS SEEMED "HAPPY ABOUT SOMETHING".

JANUARY TWENTY SEVEN LAST, JOHNNY GRIFFIN, NEGRO MALE WHO WORKED FOR VICTIM AND STAYED IN BUILDING AT REAR OF SHOP, ADJACENT TO SHOP, STATED HE HAD WORKED FOR VICTIM IN SHOE SHOP SINCE NINETEEN FIFTY NINE, STATED HE LEFT THE JOB AROUND EIGHT PM ON DECEMBER TEN, NINETEEN SIXTYFOUR, AND RETIRED TO HIS LIVING QUARTERS. GRIFFIN STATED VICTIM ALSO OPERATED CLOTHING STORE IN SHOP AND HAD NUMEROUS ARTICLES OF CLOTHING ON HAND. STATED VICTIM HAD TWO FULL GALLON CANS OF CLEANING FLUID, AT LEAST ONE GALLON CAN OF TURPENTINE AND EIGHT TO
END PAGE SIX

NW#:34210

DocId:31396121

UNITED STATES

NW#:34210

DocId:31396120

PAGE SEVEN

TEN GALLONS OF RUBBER CEMENT IN THE SHOP AT TIME OF THE FIRE. GRIFFIN STATED HE WAS AWAKENED BY EXPLOSION AND HE IMMEDIATELY SAW SHOP ENGULFED IN FLAMES. HE STATED HE FLED FROM THE COTTAGE AND AFTER REACHING VACANT LOT SAW VICTIM AT BILLUPS FILLING STATION, WHICH IS LOCATED APPROXIMATELY ONE HALF BLOCK FROM SHOE SHOP, AND BELIEVED THAT ATTENDANT AT SERVICE STATION WAS SPRAYING WATER ON VICTIM. GRIFFIN STATES HE THEN HEARD A MINOR EXPLOSION BACK AT THE SHOP AND ASSUMED IT WAS CAUSED BY ONE OF THE ABOVE CANS OF INFLAMMABLE FLUIDS.

ON JANUARY TWENTY FOUR LAST, JAMES J. SIMOLKE, OPERATOR OF BILLUPS STATION APPROXIMATELY ONE HALF BLOCK FROM MORRIS' SHOP INFORMED HE WAS ON DUTY ON NIGHT OF DECEMBER NINE DASH TEN, NINETEEN SIXTY FOUR WHEN FIRE OCCURRED. HE INFORMED THAT THINGS HAD BEEN RELATIVELY QUIET ON THAT EVENING AND SHORTLY BEFORE TWO AM DECEMBER TEN, NINETEEN SIXTY FOUR HE HAD HEARD WHAT SOUNDED LIKE A PISTOL SHOT IN THE VICINITY OF MORRIS' SHOE SHOP. ALMOST IMMEDIATELY AFTER THIS A CAR CAME OUT OF THE ALLEY NEXT TO MORRIS' SHOE SHOP AND TURNED LEFT HEADING TOWARD

END PAGE SEVEN

NW 14210

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NW 14210

DOUGLAS 11 196120

PAGE EIGHT

VIADALIA, LOUISIANA. SIMOLKE COULD ONLY DESCRIBE THIS CAR AS DARK IN COLOR AND A LATE MODEL SEDAN. MOMENTS AFTER THE CAR LEFT, VICTIM CAME RUNNING TOWARD GAS STATION FROM DIRECTION OF SHOP WHICH IS THE TIME SIMOLKE NOTED SHOP WAS ONFIRE. VICTIM ARRIVED AT STATION ALMOST THE SAME TIME AS TWO FERRISDAY CITY POLICEMEN DROVE TO STATION. VICTIM TAKEN IMMEDIATELY BY POLICE OFFICERS IN POLICE CAR TO HOSPITAL. SIMOLKE STATES THAT VICTIM WAS NUDE EXCEPT FOR THE WAIST BAND OF HIS UNDERWEAR AND THE NECK BAND UNDER HIS SHIRT AND THESE WERE SMOLDERING. VICTIM DID NOT MAKE ANY PROTEST WHATSOEVER UPON SEEING POLICE OFFICERS, WALKED DIRECTLY TO POLICE CAR AND ENTERED CAR UNDER HIS OWN POWER.

INVESTIGATION CONTINUING IN REGARD TO FIVE GALLON CAN LOCATED AT SCENE OF FIRE INASMUCH AS CLOSE ASSOCIATES OF VICTIM AND PEOPLE WHO WERE IN SHOP HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO IDENTIFY IT AS BEING PRESENT BEFORE. INTERVIEWS OF CLOSE ASSOCIATES AND NEIGHBORHOOD INVESTIGATION CONTINUING.

E CORR CORR PLS ADD " PM " AFTER TIME
FFND.

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This is

FBI WASH DC

FM CLR

CC MR. ROSEN

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

NEW ORLEANS NEW ORLEANS

UNSUB
FRANK MORRIS - VICTIM
Ferryday, Louisiana
12/10/64

SA DONALD J. MC GORTY
CHARGE: 12/10/64

100 - CR

REFERENCES: New Orleans report of SA DONALD J. MC GORTY, 1/14/65
Bureau teletype to New Orleans, 1/14/65.
New Orleans teletype to Bureau 1/20/65.
Bureau teletype to New Orleans, 1/21/65.

FOIA(b)6
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ADMINISTRATIVE

All persons interviewed were advised that this investigation was being conducted at the request of Mr. BURKE MARSHALL, Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice.

The indices of the New Orleans Division reflect that FRANK EDWARD DE LAUGHTER, Deputy, Concordia Parish Sheriff's Office, was one of subjects in Civil Rights case, Bufile 44-25043, captioned " [REDACTED] Patrolman, Ferryday, Louisiana, Police Department, ET AL; Mrs. ANNIE MILDRED GARNER VICTIM." DE LAUGHTER was also a subject in case captioned,

- A -
(COVER PAGE)

APPROVED
COPIES MADE

SPECIAL AGENT
IN CHARGE

DO NOT WRITE IN SPACES BELOW

REC-39

3-Bureau (157-2311)
3-New Orleans (157-3255)

157-2311-30

SA DONALD J. MC GOWEN
January 1965

NW 134110

DocId:31396121

NO 157-3255/mrk

"ROY GEORGE BARLOW, ET AL; CURTIS LEE HARRIS, ET AL - VICTIMS," as set out in report of SA GEORGE A. GUNTER dated August 7, 1962, and in case captioned, "IKE COWAN, aka., Junior, Deputy Sheriff, Vidalia, Louisiana, ET AL; KENNETH MC INTYRE, ET AL - VICTIMS," as set out in report of SA WILLIS BENNETT, JR., dated July 13, 1964, Bufile 44-20164.

Per Bureau request, a Civil Rights investigation will be conducted in this matter.

MEMORANDUM
TO : SAC, NEW ORLEANS
FROM : SAC, NEW ORLEANS
SUBJECT: FRANK MORRIS
RE: NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA
DECEMBER 12, 1968

RACIAL MATTERS CIVIL RIGHTS

Efforts to identify tall Negro associate of MORRIS negative. No information developed linking MORRIS with Civil Rights movement. DELA. MAX SMITH¹¹ advised that she had talked to FRANK MORRIS after the fire at which time he told her that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], were the ones who set his place on fire and who held a gun on him when the fire was raging. She further advised that MORRIS told her that this fire was set at the request of FRANK DE LAUGHTER, Deputy Sheriff, Concordia Parish, because of personal problems between them. Father AUGUST THOMPSON advised that the reason for friction between MORRIS and DE LAUGHTER was due to DE LAUGHTER's wife who he is separated from. On an occasion prior to the fire, Mrs. DE LAUGHTER had attempted to proposition MORRIS. MORRIS told her that he would call her that night and set up a date. MORRIS never called Mrs. DE LAUGHTER at which time she got mad and went to her husband and told him that FRANK MORRIS had made a pass at her while she had been in his store. LA

[REDACTED] advised that at about 1:45 AM on 12/10/68, he observed a white Pontiac police car travelling at a high rate of speed headed toward Vidalia from Ferriday, Louisiana. He advised that he was driving on the Vidalia-Ferriday Highway returning to Ferriday, La., from Natchez, Mississippi.

NO 157-3255/mrk

[] stated he did not pay too much attention to this police car at this time. He stated he continued down the road towards Ferriday; when he was about a mile outside of the city, the same police car passed him travelling at what he estimated to be about 100 miles an hour. He noted [] who he believed to be [] and FNU LOFTIN, were the ones sitting in the front seat of the car, the third man sitting in the rear of the car who was a White male in his 20's.

DETAILS:

This is a preliminary investigation and is based on a request of Assistant Attorney General, BURKE MARSHALL, Civil Rights Division, United States Department of Justice.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date January 21, 1965

EDNA BROWN, 320 South Fourth Street, Ferriday, Louisiana, furnished the following:

Mrs. BROWN advised that she is the former wife of FRANK MORRIS. She stated that she had no idea of who set the fire nor did she have any idea why it was set.

Mrs. BROWN stated that as far as she knew, MORRIS was not involved in any civil rights activities. She further stated that she did not know any business associates of MORRIS and could not think of any one of MORRIS's friends who fit the description of the tall, well dressed Negro from the Shreveport, Louisiana, area.

She stated that she had been in business with MORRIS in some real estate holdings and as far as any other business transactions were concerned, she thought MORRIS was the sole operator.

Page 34212

DocId: 3196121

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date January 20, 1965

DELA MAE SMITH, 603 South Fourth Street, Ferriday, Louisiana, was re-interviewed in the presence of Father AUGUST THOMPSON and furnished the following information:

She advised she is employed at the Concordia Parish Hospital, Ferriday, Louisiana. During the evening hours on December 10, 1964, after she had finished working, she went in to see FRANK MORRIS. She stated that MORRIS was a very close friend of hers for many years. She asked MORRIS what had happened and after she assured him that there was no one else present in the room, he told her that the [redacted], were the ones who had set his place on fire and who had held a gun on him when the fire was raging. MORRIS also told her that the reason he did not tell anyone else who had set the fire was because he thought he would get well and that he did not want these individuals trying it again because he had talked.

She further advised that MORRIS told her that this fire was set at the request of FRANK DE LAUGHTER, Concordia Parish Deputy Sheriff, because of some personal problem between them.

She further advised that because she feared for her life as well as the lives of her children, she would not testify in court to the above information.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

January 20, 1966

Father AUGUST THOMPSON, St. Charles Catholic Church,
Terrebonne, Louisiana, furnished the following information:

He stated that in addition to the information which
DELA MAE SMITH had furnished to the FBI concerning what FRANK
MORRIS had told her in the hospital, she also told him, Father
THOMPSON, the following:

She stated that the reason for the friction between
FRANK MORRIS and Deputy FRANK DE LAUGHTER was due to DE
LAUGHTER's wife, who he is separated from. On an occasion
sometime prior to the fire, Mrs. DE LAUGHTER was at the shoe
shop of FRANK MORRIS and after transacting some business and
before leaving, she tried to proposition MORRIS. MORRIS
told Mrs. DE LAUGHTER that he would call her that night and
set up a date. MORRIS never called and because of this,
Mrs. DE LAUGHTER got mad and went to her husband and told him
that FRANK MORRIS had made a pass at her while she had been
in his store.

Father THOMPSON further advised that DELA MAE SMITH
is known to drink heavily and he did not know how much credence
could be given to her story.

one re-interviewed in the presence of Father AUGUST THOMPSON and furnished the following information:

He advised that at about 4:45 AM on December 10, 1964, he was driving on the Vidalia-Ferriday Highway, returning to Ferriday, Louisiana, from Natchez, Mississippi. He advised that after driving two miles out of Vidalia, he observed a white Pontiac police car travelling at a very high rate of speed headed toward Vidalia from Ferriday. He stated he did not see who was driving it and really did not pay too much attention, thinking that they were taking a prisoner to the county jail at Vidalia.

[redacted] continued down the road toward Ferriday and when he was about a mile outside of the city, the same white Pontiac police car passed him, travelling at what he estimated to be 100 miles an hour. He noticed that the [redacted] who he believed to be named (First Name unknown) [redacted] and (First name unknown) LORTIN, were the ones sitting in the front seat of the car. There was a third man in the car, sitting in the back seat whom he did not recognize. He described this third man as being a white male in his 20's and wearing a Levi type cowboy jacket.

The distance between Vidalia and Ferriday, Louisiana, is approximately 12 miles.

Upon returning to City of Ferriday, he noticed a blaze which he thought emitted from WILL HANEY's place on Fourth Street. Proceeding a little further, he realized that the fire was on the other side of the street. He proceeded down Fourth Street and parked his car in the rear of Joe's Fruit Stand [redacted] This fruit stand is located across the street from FRANK MORRIS' shoe shop. After parking the car, he went out in the street where he met two white men who were standing across the street from the fire. He asked these men what had happened and they told him that they had seen a colored individual walk out of the shoe shop all on fire and apparently in a

1/19/65 Ferriday, Louisiana

File # NO 157-3255

SA DONALD J. MC GORTY/mrk:gml

Date dictated 1/20/65

ent contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

DocId 31596121

NO 157-3255/mrk

state of shock. These two men then told [] that they ran over to him attempting to put the fire out and finally took him up to the Billups Station which is located one block north and poured some water on him in order to extinguish the fire.

[] advised that these men were not familiar to him as far as names were concerned, however, one of the individuals was an ex-boyfriend of a beauty shop owner in Ferriday. The beauty shop owner is OPEL GRAVELL. He believes that this individual lives and works in Natchez, Mississippi. The other man was "completely unfamiliar to him". He described the first man as being a White male, approximately 45 years of age, 5'6", 145 pounds, curly, dark hair, who has an acne condition on his face.

[] advised that because he feared for his life, he would not testify in court to the above information.

LA 157-3286
January 21, 1968

New Orleans

157-3211

UNKNOWN SUBJECTS (2).
FRANK MORRIS - VICTIM.
Ferriday, Louisiana,
December 10, 1964

RACIAL MATTERS - CIVIL RIGHTS

Efforts to identify tall Negro associate of MORRIS negative. No information developed linking MORRIS with Civil Rights movement. DELA MAE SMITH advised that she had talked to FRANK MORRIS after the fire at which time he told her that [redacted]

[redacted], were the ones who set his place on fire and who held a gun on him when the fire was raging. She further advised that MORRIS told her that this fire was set at the request of FRANK DE LAUGHTER, Deputy Sheriff, Concordia Parish, because of personal problems between them. Father AUGUST THOMPSON advised that the reason for friction between MORRIS and DE LAUGHTER was due to DE LAUGHTER's wife who he is separated from. On an occasion prior to the fire, Mrs. DE LAUGHTER had attempted to proposition MORRIS. MORRIS told her that he would call her that night and set up a date. MORRIS never called Mrs. DE LAUGHTER at which time she got mad and went to her husband and told him that FRANK MORRIS had made a pass at her while she had been in his store.

[redacted] advised that at about 1:45 AM on 12/10/64, he observed a white Pontiac police car travelling at a high rate of speed headed toward Vidalia from Ferriday, Louisiana. He advised that he was driving on the Vidalia-Ferriday Highway returning to Ferriday, La., from Natchez, Mississippi.

NO 157-3255/mrk

[redacted] stated he did not pay too much attention to this police car at this time. He stated he continued down the road towards Ferriday; when he was about a mile outside of the city, the same police car passed him travelling at what he estimated to be about 100 miles an hour. He noted [redacted] who he believed to be [redacted] and FNU LOFTIN, were the ones sitting in the front seat of the car, the third man sitting in the rear of the car who was a White male in his 20's.

DETAILS:

This is a preliminary investigation and is based on a request of Assistant Attorney General, BURKE MARSHALL, Civil Rights Division, United States Department of Justice.

FBI NEW ORLS

FBI WASH DC

34-PA URGENT 1-21-65 RNS

TO NEW ORLEANS

FROM DIRECTOR 1P

UNSUBS (TWO) DASH FRANK MORRIS DASH VICTIM, FERRIDAY.
LOUISIANA, DECEMBER TEN, SIXTYFOUR, CIVIL RIGHTS.

REURTEL JANUARY TWENTY LAST.

DEPARTMENT REQUESTS YOU CONDUCT INVESTIGATION OF THIS
MATTER AS POSSIBLE CIVIL RIGHTS VIOLATION IN VIEW OF POSSIBLE
INVOLVEMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

INSTITUTE IMMEDIATE THOROUGH INVESTIGATION. KEEP
BUREAU ADVISED OF DEVELOPMENTS AND SUREP PROMPTLY.

END

NO...KMD

FBI NEW ORLS

TU CLR

NW#:34010

OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10
MAY 1962 EDITION
GSA GEN. REG. NO. 27

5010-106

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

FBI W TO Mr. Belmont *W*

FBI N FROM A. Rosen *R.1*

5-23P SUBJECT: UNKNOWN SUBJECTS (2);
FRANK MORRIS - VICTIM
FERRIDAY, LOUISIANA
DECEMBER 10, 1964
CIVIL RIGHTS

DATE: January 21, 1965

1 - Mr. Belmont
1 - Mr. Rosen
1 - Mr. Malley
1 - Mr. McGowan
1 - Mr. McDonough

W

Tolson ☒
Belmont ☒
Mohr ☒
DeLoach ☒
Casper ☒
Callahan ☒
Conrad ☒
Felt ☒
Gale ☒
Rosen ☒
Sullivan ☒
Tavel ☒
Trotter ☒
Tele. Room ☒
Holmes ☒
Gandy ☒

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The Civil Rights Division has requested that we conduct investigation of this matter as a possible civil rights violation inasmuch as information has been received that law enforcement officers may have been involved. The investigation has been ordered and the field has been instructed to give this matter prompt and thorough attention and keep the Bureau advised of developments.

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BACKGROUND:

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This case involves the burning of the store of Frank Morris, a Negro, in Ferriday, Louisiana, on 12/10/64 by unidentified white men. Morris later died of burns received in fire. We determined that Morris was not involved in voter registration or civil rights activities and results of inquiries forwarded Civil Rights Division. We have been closely following this matter through informants and sources to determine if the Klan was responsible for this burning.

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The New Orleans Office received information from sources of unknown reliability that local law enforcement officers may have been involved in this incident. This was referred to the Civil Rights Division and it requested investigation of this matter as a possible civil rights violation.

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ACTION:

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Investigation has been ordered. This will be closely followed and results promptly furnished to the Civil Rights Division.

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56 FEB 1 1965

COPY TO MR. TOLSON

EX-100 REC-55 157-2311-28

JAN 20 1965
TELETYPE

Handwritten notes and stamps on the top right of the page, including a checkmark and a routing slip.

FBI NEW ORLEANS

6-23PM CST 1-20-65 URGENT RLA

TO DIRECTOR /157-2311

FROM NEW ORLEANS /157-3255/
~~UNKNOWN SUBJECTS~~

UNSUBS, TWO; FRANK MORRIS DASH VICTIM, FERRIDAY, LOUISIANA.
~~RACIAL MATTER~~ ~~CIVIL RIGHTS~~
DECEMBER TEN, NINETEEN SIXTYFOUR. RM DASH CR

A SOURCE, WHO WILL BE IDENTIFIED IN REPORT AND WHO HAS STATED
BECAUSE OF FEAR OF LIFE AND LIVES OF FAMILY, WOULD NOT TESTIFY IN
COURT, ADVISED FRANK MORRIS, VICTIM, ON DEC. TEN LAST TOLD SOURCE

[REDACTED] WERE THE ONES WHO SET MORRIS'
PLACE ON FIRE AND WHO HELD GUN ON MORRIS WHEN FIRE WAS RAGING.

ACCORDING TO SOURCE, THE FIRE WAS SET AT REQUEST
OF FRANK DELAUGHTER, CONCORDIA PARISH DEPUTY SHERIFF.

FOIA(b)6
FOIA(b)7 -

IT WAS ALLEGED THAT THE FRICTION BETWEEN MORRIS AND DEPUTY
SHERIFF DELAUGHTER WAS DUE TO DELAUGHTER'S WIFE AS IT
WAS ALLEGED MRS. DELAUGHTER TOLD DELAUGHTER THAT FRANK
MORRIS HAD QUOTE "MADE A PASS AT HER" UNQUOTE WHILE SHE HAD
BEEN IN MORRIS'S STORE.

157-2311

2 JAN 25 1965

THE ABOVE SOURCE IS KNOWN TO DRINK HEAVILY AND
FATHER AUGUSTUS THOMPSON, FERRIDAY, LA., STATED HE DID
END PAGE ONE

memo Rosen to
Belmont, 1-21-
Lynn/pak

67 FEB 1 1965

NOV 34210 00010 0000121

PAGE TWO
NOT KNOW ANY OF THE INDIVIDUALS WHO WERE INVOLVED IN THE CASE.
ANOTHER SOURCE, WHO ADVISED HE WANTED FOR HIS LIFE AND
WOULD NOT TESTIFY IN COURT, ADVISED HE HAD OBSERVED TWO
FERRIDAY POLICEMEN AND A THIRD MAN IN A POLICE CAR
ON THE VIDALIA DASH FERRIDAY HIGHWAY AT ABOUT ONE FORTY FIVE A.M.
DEC. TEN LAST.

THIS SOURCE ADVISED THAT ON THAT NIGHT HE HAD OBSERVED
TWO MEN AT THE SCENE OF FIRE WHO TOLD THE SOURCE THEY HAD
ATTEMPTED TO PUT OUT THE FIRE ON VICTIM AND TOOK VICTIM
TO FILLING STATION AND POURED WATER ON HIM IN ORDER TO
EXTINGUISH FIRE. ONE OF THESE INDIVIDUALS, ACCORDING TO SOURCE,
WAS AN EX ~~DART~~ BOY FRIEND OF A BEAUTY SHOP OPERATOR IN
FERRIDAY NAMED OPEL GRAVELL.

FRANK EDWARD DELAUGHTER, DEPUTY, CONCORDIA PARISH ^{SHERIFF} ~~SO~~,
^{CIVIL RIGHTS}
WAS ONE OF SUBJECTS IN ~~OR~~ CASE, BUFILE FOUR FOUR DASH TWO FIVE ZERO
FOUR THREE CAPTIONED [REDACTED], PATROLMAN, FERRIDAY, LA., PD,
TAL, MRS. ANNIE MILDRED GARNER, VICTIM. HE WAS ALSO SUBJECT IN C
ND PAGE TWO

FOIA(b)(6)
FOIA(b)(7) - (C)

DATE 12-1-68

PAGE TWO

ONE MORE MAN WHO COULD BE SEEN IN THE
ADDITIONAL ROOMS, WHO ADVISED HE HAD BEEN WITH THE
WOMAN WHO TESTIFY IN COURT, ADVISED HE HAD OBSERVED TWO
FEDERAL POLICEMEN AND A THIRD MAN IN A POLICE CAR
ON THE VIRGINIA PARK PARKWAY HIGHWAY AT ABOUT ONE FORTY FIVE A.M.
ON THE LAST.

THE ROOMER ADVISED THAT ON THAT NIGHT HE HAD OBSERVED
TWO MEN AT THE FRONT OF THE HOTEL WHO TOLD THE ROOMER THEY HAD
ATTEMPTED TO PUT OUT THE FIRE ON VIRGINIA PARK AND TOOK HIM
TO THE FIRE STATION AND Poured WATER ON HIM IN ORDER TO
EXTINGUISH FIRE. ONE OF THESE INDIVIDUALS, ACCORDING TO ROOMER,
WAS AN ASIAN BOY DRESSED IN A BEAUTY SHOP OPERATOR IN
PARKWAY HALLWAY OFF, BEAVER.

12-1-68

FRANK EDWARD DELACROIX, DEPUTY, BIRMINGHAM POLICE DEPT.,
WAS ONE OF SUBJECTS IN AN CASE, NORTON, FROM ROOM DASH TWO FIVE, AND
FROM THREE CAPTIONED [REDACTED] PATROLMAN, BIRMINGHAM, ALA., PD,
ALAL, MRS. ANNE MILDRED BARNER, VICTIM. HE WAS ALSO SUBJECT IN CASE,
AND PAGE TWO

12-1-68
12-1-68 (1)

PAGE THREE

CAPTIONED ROY GEORGE BARLOW; ~~ETAL~~, CURTIS LEE HARRIS, ETAL
DASH VICTIMS AS SET OUT IN REPORT OF SA GEORGE A. GUNTER DATED
AUG. SEVEN, SIXTYTWO AND IN CASE CAPTIONED IKE COWAN, JR.,
DEPUTY SHERIFF, VIDALIA, LA., ETAL, KENNETH MC INTYRE ETAL,
VICTIMS, AS SET FORTH IN REPORT OF SA WILLIS BENNETT, JR. DATED
JULY THIRTEEN, SIXTYFOUR, BUFILE FOUR FOUR DASH TWO ZERO ONE
SIX FOUR.

IT IS REQUESTED THE BUREAU DISCUSS THIS MATTER WITH THE
DEPARTMENT TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT THEY DESIRE ^{CIVIL RIGHTS} ~~OR~~ INVESTIGATION
BE CONDUCTED IN THIS MATTER.

END

WA RPP

FBI WASH DC

BURLINGTON COUNTY BRANCH OF THE F.A.A.C.P.

December 21, 1964

Senator Clifford Case
U. S. Senate
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Case:

On December 14, 1964, Mr. Louis A. James of Marlborough, Massachusetts, President of the Burlington County Branch of the F.A.A.C.P., has notified that the home of his cousin, Mr. Frank Morris, a Negro who resided in Portney, Louisiana, had been the subject of unknown persons and that Mr. Morris had been killed.

A telephone conversation with a relative of Mr. Morris and Mr. James disclosed that prior to Mr. Morris' death, he had indicated that white persons were responsible for the bombing and that he was afraid to testify that.

It is requested that the Justice Department be contacted to ascertain if a thorough investigation is being conducted of the incident. Mr. James has requested that this inquiry be made in a confidential manner in order to avoid further reprisals against other relatives living in Louisiana.

Sincerely yours,

Louis A. James
(Louis A. James)

Secretary to Burl. Co. Branch

WJS:lj

cc: Senator Harrison Williams

ENCLOSURE

157-2411-24

To
Earl
Mr.
Let
Case
Call
Case
Felt
Gale
Rosen
Sullivan
Tavel
Trotter
Tele.
Holmes
Gandy

12 19 64

Date 12/19/64

1

GEORGE WILSON, owner and operator, Radio Station KFNV, Ferriday, Louisiana, furnished the following:

He advised that FRANK MORRIS had a weekly radio program on his station which was aired on Sunday mornings between 6:00 AM to 7:30 AM. WILSON described this program as a religious one which had no overtones of civil rights. He stated that MORRIS would play religious records, often dedicating them to his friends, both white and colored. He, MORRIS, would often have a preacher on the program who would give a little talk about God.

WILSON stated that he often listened to the program and never heard anything mentioned, whether it be civil rights, the Klan or anything bearing on the racial situation, on the program.

WILSON advised that MORRIS was well liked in the community by both the white and colored population. He further described him as being a "white man's Negro."

WILSON could not think of any reason why this incident directed against MORRIS had occurred. He stated he could not furnish any suspects.

6/64 , Ferriday, La. File # NO 157-3255

DONALD J. MCGORTY /dms Date dictated 12/17/64

NY# 34210,

DocId: 31396129
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

NY# 34210,

DocId: 31396129
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION1

Date 12/19/64

Father AUGUST THOMPSON, St. Charles Roman Catholic Church, Ferriday, Louisiana, furnished the following information.

He advised that upon checking further he has found that there is no NAACP group in the Ferriday area. He stated that about five years ago was the last time that organization was active in the town and at that time, MORRIS was an officer. There has been no other civil rights groups active in the community since that time.

Father THOMPSON further advised that he had heard talk about a finger which was found near MORRIS' building in the afternoon following the fire. A MACK HENRY MOORE, who is LA a high school teacher in town, saw it on the ground near the building and later told him that it eventually had gotten into the hands of a Mrs. CATHERINE JOHNSON, who allegedly had buried it.

Father THOMPSON further stated that after giving deep thought to the subject, the only reason he could think of for the burning was the dedication of records MORRIS would make to the white women on his radio program. He stated that it was always done with taste, with no insinuations, however, there are people who probably wouldn't like a Negro dedicating a record, even a religious one, to a white woman over the radio.

He further advised that it has become very difficult for him to obtain any information about the burning from the Negro community. He stated that they all fear for their lives and are afraid if they give information, they will be next.

6-64 Ferriday, La. File # NO 157-3258

WALD J. MOOREY /dms Date dictated 12/17/64

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NY# 34210,

DOCId: 31396129
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

NY# 34210,

DOCId: 31396129
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 12/19/64

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MRS. CATHERINE X JOHNSON, operator of the Junction Inn
on Fourth Street, Ferriday, Louisiana, furnished the following:

JOHNSON advised that she knew nothing about what had happened to FRANK MORRIS or about a finger which was found in the area of the building the afternoon after the fire.

However, eventually, she made available which appeared to be the remains of a finger or a toe. She advised that she was scared to death and did not want to get involved. She would furnish no further information.

NYW 34210

DOCID: 31396129
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date 12/19/64

Father JOHN GAYER, St. Patricks Roman Catholic Church, Ferriday, Louisiana, furnished the following information:

He advised that an employee at the hospital, namely DELA MAE SMITH, had spoken to MORRIS before he died and he had told her the names of the men who had set the fire. He added that he did not know how much store should be put in this information because when SMITH had made the statement she was drunk, and since that time she has told a few different stories.

LA
Father GAYER also advised that up until about a week before the fire, a LYODE PAUL had a used car lot right next to MORRIS' shop. But, as of about a week before the fire he moved all his cars off the lot and put them in a different part of town.

Father GAYER advised that if any other information he received was pertinent, he would make it available to the FBI.

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DocId:31396129
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date 12/19/64

Father JOHN GAYER, St. Patricks Roman Catholic Church, Ferriday, Louisiana, furnished the following information:

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L.A.
Father GAYER also advised that up until about a week before the fire, a LYODE PAUL had a used car lot right next to MORRIS' shop. But, as of about a week before the fire he moved all his cars off the lot and put them in a different part of town.

Father GAYER advised that if any other information he received was pertinent, he would make it available to the FBI.

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 12/19/64

1

DELA MAE X SMITH, 603 South Fourth Street, Ferriday, Louisiana, furnished the following information:

She advised that she is employed at the Concordia Parish Hospital, Ferriday, Louisiana. She stated that she had visited MORRIS on a few occasions while he was there but she had never spoken to him, other than to inquire about how he was feeling.

She stated that MORRIS had not told her who had set his place on fire. She further stated she knew nothing about this incident and could not furnish any suspects or other pertinent information.

BU 157 3255
3M Page

On January 7, 1965, ROBERT E. STANLEY, Chief of Police, Ferriday Louisiana Police Department, advised SA DONALD J. MCGOWAN that no suspects had been developed in connection with the arson murder of FRANK MORRIS.

On January 11, 1965, E. W. PHARIS, Louisiana Deputy State Fire Marshal, Alexandria, Louisiana, was furnished the results of the FBI Laboratory examination. Mr. PHARIS stated that no suspects had been developed.

AT NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

ERNEST NATHAN MORIAL, President, New Orleans Chapter, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) advised SA MERRIMAN D. DIVEN on December 23, 1964, that FRANK MORRIS, the victim of an arson and murder at Ferriday, Louisiana, was to MORIAL's recollection not connected with the NAACP or otherwise active in Civil Rights activities.

On December 22, 1964, CARLTON PECOT, Executive Secretary, Louisiana Advancement Association, 205 North Claiborne Avenue, advised SA MERRIMAN D. DIVEN with regard to FRANK MORRIS who was burned to death at Ferriday, Louisiana, that he was not personally acquainted with MORRIS and had no information concerning him. PECOT recommended that WILL HAYNEY, who operates a bar under Hayney's name on Main Street in Ferriday, Louisiana, be contacted and that HAYNEY might be able to provide some information regarding this matter.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA
DECEMBER 10, 1964

UNKNOWN SUBJECTS (2),
FRANK MORRIS - 71-114
FERRIDAY, LOUISIANA
DECEMBER 10, 1964

A confidential source, who has furnished reliable information in the past, advised that EDDIE MC DANIEL, self-admitted Grand Dragon of the United Klan of America, Inc. (UKA) of Natchez, Mississippi, had made the statement that NORMAN HEAD is the Exalted Cyclops of Vidalia, Louisiana group of klansmen. MC DANIEL also made the statement that J. L. "BUD" SPRINKX of the Police Department of Vidalia, Louisiana is a klansmen, and that IKK HUDNALL is secretary treasurer of the Vidalia, Louisiana Klavern. Source does not know whether the klansmen are members of the UKA or the Original Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (OKKKK) of Louisiana but believes the above mentioned individuals are members of the UKA.

Source advised it was source's opinion klansmen were responsible for the burning of FRANK MORRIS, that source had talked to a number of people in Ferriday, Louisiana, all of whom described MORRIS as a fine, reputable individual.

According to the source, JOE SANTANIO, who operates a business located across the street from the home of MORRIS, possibly has information regarding this matter but is afraid to talk.

Source further advised that a Negro male, reportedly from Shreveport, Louisiana and a business associate of MORRIS, was with MORRIS when he died.

A characterization of the OKKKK (Louisiana) and UKA is attached.

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ENCLOSURE

157-2311-20

JANUARY 7, 1962

Examination requested by:

Reference:

New Orleans

Examination requested:

Letter 12-15-64

Remarks:

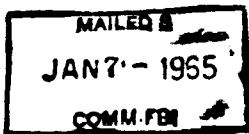
Chemical Analyses - Fingerprint

Specimen Q9 was broken when received in the Laboratory.

A separate report was forwarded to you regarding the fingerprint examination on specimen Q11.

Specimens Q1 through Q11 are being returned to the New Orleans Office by Railway Express. The evidence is being returned to the New Orleans Office inasmuch as flammable liquids were recovered from many of the specimens.

Enclosures (2) (2 Lab report)



ADMINISTRATIVE PAGE

REF: a1b(-4)

REPORT
of the
F B I
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
WASHINGTON, D. C.

FBI, New Orleans

January 7, 1966
157-2311-
PC-83000 24

SUBJECT (2):
FRANK MORRIS - VICTIM
Ferryday, Louisiana
12-10-64
RM

12-22-64

- Q1 Debris taken from inside of building
- Q2 Debris taken from inside of building
- Q3 Soil sample
- Q4 Soil sample
- Q5 Soil sample
- Q6 Liquid and soil sample
- Q7 Portions of clothing
- Q8 Debris from inside of building
- Q9 Debris from outside of building
- Q10 Portions of materials removed from outside of building
- Q11 Five-gallon container

Results of examination:

Small quantities of flammable liquids were recovered from specimens Q1 through Q4 and Q8. The flammable liquids from Q1 through Q4 corresponded generally to a petroleum mixture characteristic of kerosene or a light fuel oil. The liquid from Q8 was found to be more volatile than the other liquids and corresponded to a petroleum product characteristic of a petroleum naphtha, such as "Varsol."

Very small quantities of oily like residues, too limited for chemical classification, were recovered from specimens Q5 and Q10. A partially burned pocket watch was also found in the Q10 debris.

Approximately 1/8th of an ounce of an oil having a green coloration with properties of a motor oil was recovered from the Q11 can. There were no traces of petroleum products characteristic of the flammable liquids from the above specimens found in the Q11 container.

The only markings visible on the side of specimen Q11 appears to be the letters "H D" over the words "MOTOR OIL," the word "COMPANY" along the bottom area of the can and a small picture of an oil derrick.

There were no traces of accelerants found on the Q7 clothing and specimen Q8.

another
of same
skin



another
of same
skin



is of
same fuge
skin



1

Date 12/16/64

JOHNNY GRIFFIN, 415 South 4th Street, Ferriday, Louisiana, furnished the following information:

GRIFFIN advised that he is employed by FRANK MORRIS in Frank's Shoe Shop and has been for the past few years. As part of his pay, he lives on the premises in a small house at the rear of the shop. Also living in this building is [redacted], who is the 11 year old grandson of MORRIS.

GRIFFIN stated that during the evening hours of December 9, 1964, he was in his room with [redacted] watching television. At about 11:00 PM GRIFFIN turned out the lights and went to sleep. He advised that prior to going to sleep he had neither heard nor seen anything suspicious. GRIFFIN stated that he was awakened by a blast which shook his little house sometime during the early morning hours. He stated that when he looked out the window he could see that the whole shop was on fire. By this time [redacted] was also awake and they both ran out the door, jumped over a fence and ran away from the flaming building. GRIFFIN stated that as they were climbing the fence he saw MORRIS run from his room, located at the rear of the shop, covered with fire from head to toe.

He stated he could think of no suspects or reason why anyone would do this to MORRIS. He advised that as far as he knows, MORRIS was not threatened by telephone, letter, or personally prior to this incident. He further advised that FRANK MORRIS was not active in the civil rights movement. MORRIS, stated GRIFFIN, had not participated in any voter registration drives, Negro demonstrations or other racial matters.

GRIFFIN also added that he did not see or hear anything prior to the explosion, nor did he see anyone or any automobiles in the vicinity after he had left his living quart. He could not furnish any suspects.

12/10/64 at Ferriday, Louisiana

File # NO 157-3255

SA's DONALD J. MCGORTY and

PAUL R. LANCASTER/bap

Date dictated

12/15/64

1Date 12/16/64

[redacted] 415 South 4th Street, Ferriday, Louisiana, furnished the following information:

He advised that he is eleven years old and is cared for by his grandfather, FRANK MORRIS.

[redacted] stated that all he could remember was a loud noise which awakened him during the evening hours of December 9 - 10, 1964. Upon awaking he saw that the shop was on fire. He stated that he and GRIFFIN ran from the building, jumped over a fence and ran away from the fire. He further advised that he had not seen any individuals or cars after he awoke.

FOIA(b)6

FOIA(b)7 -

On December 10, 1964, Dr. C. H. CALVIN advised Special Agents DONALD J. MCGORTY and PAUL R. LANCASTER that the victim had received 3rd degree burns on his entire body and that he did not expect the victim to live more than 48 hours. He advised that it was permissible to interview MORRIS, however, he, MORRIS, was under heavy sedation and might not be able to answer questions.

On December 12, 1964, W. H. HARP, Fireman and Police Radio Dispatcher, Ferriday, Louisiana, advised Special Agent MCGORTY that MORRIS was still on the critical list at the hospital and that no pertinent developments in the investigation had occurred.

On December 14, 1964, Chief WARREN, Ferriday, Louisiana, advised Special Agent MCGORTY that the victim FRANK MORRIS was still in critical condition at the hospital. He stated that the doctor still had no hopes for his recovery.

WARREN also stated that no suspects or motive in this matter had been developed.

During the evening hours of December 14, 1964, Chief of Police C. W. WARREN advised Special Agent PAUL R. LANCASTER that the victim, FRANK MORRIS, had died at 7:30 PM, December 14, 1964, as a result of the burns he had received in the fire at his shop on December 10, 1964.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

NW 34210

DocID: 31396140

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date 12/16/64

FRANK MORRIS was interviewed at Room Number 101, Concordia Parish Hospital, Ferriday, Louisiana. At the time of the interview, 6:35 AM, MORRIS was in critical condition and under heavy sedation. Also present during the interview were R. W. WARREN, Chief of Ferriday Police Department, and W. H. HARP, JR., of the Ferriday Fire Department.

MORRIS stated that he did not know what happened. He advised that he was laying in bed and he heard someone break the glass out, after they broke the glass out he went out into the shop. When he came into the shop one of the men, holding a shotgun, told him to get back.

MORRIS further stated that he did not recognize the men. He described one of them as being "real white". He advised that he thought that he had seen these men before and that they were from the Ferriday, Louisiana, area. He also thought that these men worked in Natchez, Mississippi.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 12 10 64

FRANK MORRIS, Room Number 1101, Concordia Parish Hospital, Ferriday, Louisiana, was reinterviewed at 9:55 AM, with the assistance of JOHNNY GRIFFIN, an employee and long time friend of MORRIS. Also present during the interview were R. W. WARREN, Chief of Ferriday Police Department; W. H. HARP, JR., Ferriday Police Department; C. W. PHARIS, Deputy State Fire Marshal and NOLAND MONKLE, Chief of Ferriday Fire Department.

MORRIS advised that he did not know exactly who the men were who started the fire in his shop. He stated that the window the men broke was the one near the shine stand. After the window was broken everything happened so fast he could not remember what happened. He stated that these men had been in his shop before but he did not know exactly who they were.

When MORRIS saw the men, one of them was putting gas around the outside of the building. He did not see them put gas inside the building but thought they must have because the fire started so fast. He once again stated that he believed the men worked in Natchez, Mississippi, but did not know exactly which company.

MORRIS advised that he believed the vehicle used by these men was a car, but could give no further description. He advised that the car was parked in the alley next to the shop and was headed toward the street. He did not see in what direction they fled after starting the fire.

Date 12-10-64

1

FRANK MORRIS was reinterviewed in Room 101, Concordia Parish Hospital, Ferriday, Louisiana, at 10:40 AM. Also present during this interview was Dr. CHARLES H. COLVIN, who advised MORRIS that he was in bad shape and should cooperate fully.

MORRIS once again stated that he did not know exactly who the men were who set the fire in his shop. He advised that the man who was pouring the gas wore khaki pants. After the window broke, MORRIS stated he went to the door when he saw a man with a shotgun. This man told MORRIS "to get back in there nigger". He stated that the shotgun was a single barrel. He advised that he did not get a good look at the car because he went right back into the shop.

After the fire started, he had to go from the shop, through his sleeping quarters in order to get out of the burning building. By the time he got out of the building, the men had fled in the car. He did not see which way they went.

MORRIS further advised that, although he only saw the two men, he thought there was a third, who was the driver of the car, but could not remember exactly because everything happened so fast.

He described these men as being 30-35 years old, kind of small, and the younger of the two men was the one who poured the gas. The man holding the shotgun was bigger than MORRIS. He stated that he saw one of the men strike the match and throw it on the gasoline.

He could not furnish any other pertinent information or suspects.

12/10/64 at Ferriday, Louisiana File # NO 157-3255
SA PAUL R. LANCASTER /scr Date dictated 12/15/64

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Reverend Father JOHN GAYER, St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, Ferriday, Louisiana, furnished the following information:

Father GAYER stated that FRANK MORRIS was the Secretary of the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He further stated that there have been no demonstrations, voter registration drives or other civil rights activity on the part of the Negroes in the City of Ferriday.

Father GAYER further stated that many Negroes have been threatened and given a hard time, but this incident involving the burning of MORRIS and his property had been the first violent act committed. He could give no reason why MORRIS had been singled out, except possibly that in his business he dealt with both white and colored.

He advised that at present all the Negroes are afraid of further violent acts. However, he, Father GAYER, has personally requested the Mayor of Ferriday to rigidly enforce the law and offer protection for both the white and Negro community. Father GAYER stated that he did not have any faith in the local police department and hoped that by talking to the Mayor, pressure could be put on the department to insure that the individuals responsible for the fire could be brought to justice.

Father GAYER advised that he is presently contacting his sources of information and, if anything of value was obtained, he would immediately notify the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

12/14/64 at Ferriday, Louisiana File # NO 157-3255
SA DONALD J. MC GORTY /scr Date dictated 12/

Date 12/16/64

Mayor DAVIS advised that he was shocked that such a thing as the burning of MORRIS and his property could have occurred in Ferriday. He stated that, as far as he knew, the relationship between the white and Negro community of that city was excellent. No problems have arisen which resulted in any public demonstrations or drives by either group.

DAVIS stated that he realized there are those who continually fight the problem, however, he never imagined that it would lead to such violence. He stated that he could not give any names of persons who might have been involved in this incident. He could not think of anyone who would have condoned or committed such an act.

He further stated that this matter would be thoroughly investigated and the individuals responsible brought to justice.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date

1-10-64

Reverend Father AUGUST THOMPSON, St. Charles Roman Catholic Church, Ferriday, Louisiana, furnished the following information:

Father THOMPSON advised that he is the pastor of the Negro Catholic Church in Ferriday. He further advised that he is a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, as was the victim, FRANK MORRIS. Father THOMPSON advised that in his capacity as a priest, and a Negro living in a Negro community, he received many complaints from the people about receiving threatening phone calls, having rocks thrown at them and similar occurrences. However, Father THOMPSON stated that as far as he knew, MORRIS had not been threatened in any way.

He could not think of any reason why MORRIS and his shoe shop were picked as the victims of this violence. He described MORRIS as a business man who catered to both white and Negro customers and appeared to be respected by the community.

Father THOMPSON stated that in the event he hears of any pertinent information regarding this matter, he would make it available to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as well as local authorities.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date January 29, 1965

DELLA MAE SMITH, 603 South 4th Street, Ferriday, Louisiana, was advised of the identity of the interviewing agents as being Special Agents of the FBI.

SMITH advised that she knew FRANK MORRIS since 1951. She stated that she and MORRIS were just good friends and that was the extent of their relationship. She added that she lived in the neighborhood where MORRIS had his shoe shop and that she would bring shoes into be repaired and they would talk about various events in the Ferriday area.

She continued by saying that FRANK's murder was a shock to her, and she felt very bad about it as FRANK was liked by everyone in the area. She advised that she had been told by FRANK of one incident where he had an argument with someone in the Ferriday area. She stated that this argument took place over three years ago. It was between MORRIS and FRANK DE LAUGHTER. SMITH stated that it seemed that Mrs. DE LAUGHTER had opened a shoe store in the Ferriday area and had been doing some business with FRANK MORRIS. She advised that Mrs. DE LAUGHTER would buy supplies for FRANK MORRIS through her contacts with wholesalers and MORRIS would in turn come and buy the supplies from Mrs. DE LAUGHTER. On one occasion MORRIS went to pay Mrs. DE LAUGHTER for some supplies she had bought for him and Mrs. DE LAUGHTER attempted to proposition FRANK MORRIS. She tickled the palm of his hand which indicated that she would like to have sexual intercourse with him. MORRIS told Mrs. DE LAUGHTER that he did not want any trouble but said that he would call Mrs. DE LAUGHTER at a later date, but never did. SMITH said that MORRIS had continued by saying that several weeks later FRANK DE LAUGHTER, who was at that time a policeman with the Ferriday Police Department came into FRANK MORRIS's shop and said that his wife had received an obscene telephone call and that his wife identified the caller as FRANK MORRIS. SMITH said that MORRIS told her that he told FRANK DE LAUGHTER that this was a lie, and that he and DE LAUGHTER had an argument.

On 1/24/65 at Ferriday, LouisianaFile # 157-3255by THOMAS MC GUINNESS, JR.
WILLIAM C. QUINN /ledDate dictated 1/25/65

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: 34210

DocId:31396151

2
NO 157-3255
TMG/jed

during which time DE LAUGHTER warned him that it had better not happen again. SMITH said that as far as she knew that was the only difficulty that FRANK ever had with any white people.

She continued by saying that as far as she knew about MORRIS's business affairs, his main source of income was from his shoe repair shop. She advised that his other interest was church activities. She stated that MORRIS would make periodic trips out of the Ferriday area to do church work. She advised these trips would take place an average of once or twice a month and would be to places such as Natchez, Mississippi, or to Eaton Rouge or New Orleans in Louisiana, she said that she did not know of any other long distance trips to big cities. She added that most of the trips were made in an old car or truck which FRANK usually had around. She said that she believed that these trips were financed from the money made from the operation of his shoe shop. She stated that REVEREND FRED WILLIAMS was the pastor of FRANK MORRIS's church and he might be able to furnish information about FRANK's church work.

SMITH continued by saying that as far as friends of FRANK's, there were many of them, in that she did not know of anyone that MORRIS had any trouble with and he was liked by white and colored. She said that on Sunday mornings MORRIS had a radio broadcast for about one hour during which MORRIS would act as the announcer and would dedicate songs to various people (both white and colored) in the Ferriday area. The music that MORRIS played was mainly spiritual type songs, and he did nothing or said nothing on any of the programs that she heard which could be considered to be in poor taste. She advised that FRANK got a great deal of enjoyment from these radio programs and would ask many of his customers how they enjoyed his program. SMITH stated that a boy by the name of BUBBA who worked near FRANK MORRIS's store would usually drive MORRIS to the radio station and might be able to furnish more information about the program.

SMITH stated that MORRIS had another friend by the name of HUNTER who is an ordained minister of the Baptist Church. She stated that she does not believe that First Name Unknown HUNTER has a church of his own but that he is now employed by one of the two paper mills in the Ferriday area. She stated that this would be either

NW#:34210

DocId:31396151

3
NO 157-3255
TMO/Jed

Mr. First Name Unknown CARTER's mill or Mr. First Name Unknown ROGERS mill. With regard to any girl friends that FRANK had she knew of several in addition to EDNA BROWN who was MORRIS's first wife and who still lives in the Ferriday area. One was a girl by the name of MADDIE MAIDEN, who lives near the ALLEN family near St. Charles Church. Another girl who is believed to be the last girl that FRANK had before his death lived in Clayton. SMITH said that she does not know the girl's name or anything about her only that FRANK had mentioned to her several weeks before his death about his new lady friend in Clayton. SMITH stated she believed that the man who helped FRANK in the shoe shop would be in a better position to know as FRANK and the helper would have probably discussed FRANK's girl friends. SMITH stated that one of MORRIS's old girl friends was named DOROTHY FREEMAN, but she has since married a man whose last name is HUNDALL and left the Ferriday area. SMITH said that other than the difficulty MORRIS had had with Mrs. DE LAUGHTER, she had never heard of FRANK being involved with white women. SMITH said that with regard to her relationship with MORRIS, she must admit that MORRIS had tried several times to get her to be his girlfriend but that she refused mainly because MORRIS was older than her.

SMITH said that one other friend of MORRIS that she forgot to mention was a white man by the name of "PAUL" who operates the used car lot next to FRANK MORRIS's shop. SMITH said that PAUL and FRANK were very good friends and would often go to one another's shop. She said that she never heard of the two of them making trips together. SMITH said that she did not know of any business trips or of business partners that MORRIS might have had or had made.

SMITH said that with regard to the weeks prior to FRANK's death, she had not heard anything which might have any thing to do with MORRIS's murder. She stated that with regard to the night of the fire she was at home in bed when she was awakened by the sound of a siren; she said that she thought to herself that there was a bad accident and that she would probably be busy the next day at the hospital. She advised that she is maid at the local hospital, having been employed there since July 24, 1964. She said that after a while the sound of the siren grew faint and she thought no more of this until her house was brightened by reddish light.

NW#: 34210

DocId: 31396151

4

NO 157-3255
TMG/jed

She said that she got up and looked out the window and saw that it was a fire. She stated that she could not tell if it was MORRIS's shop or the house next door to his shop. She stated she got dressed and went to the fire and discovered that it was MORRIS's shop. She added that when she got to the area of the fire there were many people there. She said that no one at the fire seemed to know if MORRIS was still in the house or had gotten out. She added that she later learned that MORRIS had been taken to the hospital.

SMITH advised that later on the same day, Thursday, December the tenth, she reported to work at the hospital. She advised that during the morning as she was about her duties at the hospital she went to FRANK MORRIS's room to pick up the dirty linen. She said that when she was in the room she said to MORRIS, "What happened? Who did this to you?" SMITH stated that MORRIS replied, "I saw two men, two white men. I heard glass break. I got up and went to the front of my shop and the two white men were inside. One had a shotgun, the other had a five-gallon gas can. One held the shotgun on me and the other poured liquid from the can on me, and said 'I want you to see yourself die.' The man with the can struck a match and threw it, I went on fire. The man with the shotgun ran as did the other man. I ran to the Billups station and the service man sprayed water on me. If he had not done this I would have burnt up." SMITH said that MORRIS had some difficulty in telling this story and it took a little while for him to get it all out. She said that after he finished this story she left the room, as MORRIS appeared to be having difficulty breathing.

FOIA(b)6
FOIA(b)7 - (C)

SMITH stated that on the following day, she went back to MORRIS's room and spoke to MORRIS again. She said that she said to him I am not sure that if it was me that I wouldn't tell someone who did this to you. She stated that MORRIS said "I thought they were my friends, but they weren't, they were [redacted]"

[redacted] SMITH stated that she asked MORRIS "Why did they do this?" To which MORRIS replied, "They were friends of 'BIG FRANK' meaning FRANK DE LAUGHTER. SMITH stated that MORRIS indicated that it had something to do with the old argument that he had with DE LAUGHTER over DE LAUGHTER's wife.

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FOIA(b)7 - (C)

5

NO 157-3255

TMQ/Jed

2 SMITH said that MORRIS said that he thought that the one policeman [redacted] was related to "BIG FRANK." SMITH said that at this point MORRIS made her promise not to tell anyone what he had told her. She stated that MORRIS indicated to her that he was going to live and he did not want anything to happen to him or his grandson when he got out of the hospital. SMITH said that MORRIS was convinced that he was going to live. SMITH said that was all the conversation that she had with MORRIS before he died. SMITH said that she was glad to tell this to someone, as it was bothering her to know this and not be able to tell it to anyone. SMITH stated that during the course of both of these conversations with MORRIS, FRANK appeared to be having difficulty breathing, but was able to talk, and did appear to know what he was saying.

She said that she had talked to Mrs. HAWKINS, First Name Unknown, who is a nurse at the hospital and that HAWKINS had told her that FRANK was a very strong individual in that he had walked into the hospital and did not have to be carried in, despite his condition.

SMITH said that a boy who works at the hospital by the name of "GRIMM," First Name Unknown, told her that his father who is a barber, had received a telephone call the day after the fire at FRANK's shop and the individual calling said, "We got FRANK, you are next." SMITH said that when the boy told her this he was very frightened and said that he and his family had moved to a neighbor's house and that his father stayed in the house alone for a few days to see what would happen.

SMITH continued by saying that as far as she knew MORRIS was not connected with any Civil Rights group nor was he involved in any illegal activity. She said that other than the motive that MORRIS gave about FRANK DE LAUGHTER, she could not give any reason for the murder.

SMITH concluded by saying she is afraid for her and her seven children and for this reason would not testify.

NW#:34210

DocId:31396151

6

NO 157-3255

TMG/jed

to the information she had furnished. She added that she believed that MORRIS might have told someone else besides her of the identities of the individuals who set the fire, but that these people were afraid to tell. SMITH could not give any reason for this belief, nor did she have any idea as to who else might know the identities of the individuals.

The above information was furnished in the presence of Father AUGUST THOMPSON, a Catholic Priest of St. Charles Roman Catholic Church, Ferriday, Louisiana.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

FOIA(b) 6

FOIA(b) 7 - (C)

Date 2/5/65

DELLA MAE SMITH, 603 South Fourth Street, was re-interviewed and furnished the following information:

The information she previously furnished was true. The first time she talked to FRANK MORRIS was on the afternoon of December 10, 1964, time not recalled. She reiterated that on this occasion he did not mention the identities of the persons he saw at his shop on the morning of December 10, 1964.

On her second visit to MORRIS' room on December 11, 1964, which was a Friday, she encouraged MORRIS to tell her who burned the shop. This was while she was changing linen between 9 and 10 a.m. She recalls she came to work at 8 a.m. It was at this time that he told her the two men responsible were [redacted]

[redacted] It was also at this time that he said one of these policemen, [redacted] was related to FRANK DE LAUGHTER former policeman and now a deputy sheriff.

She related that to her personal knowledge [redacted]

[redacted] During the last conversation with MORRIS, he also remarked that the burning of the shop was because of the trouble MORRIS had previously encountered with DE LAUGHTER's wife.

SMITH was questioned concerning the condition of MORRIS on December 11, 1964, and she related that he could talk distinctly but had some breathing difficulty. She was questioned whether this was prior to or subsequent to the operation and she admitted she did not know he had an operation other than being taken to the operating room to be "cleaned up." She further stated that he spoke distinctly through Saturday, December 12, 1964.

SMITH was questioned whether she had any conversation with MORRIS after December 11, 1964, and she said she had only casual conversation with him not pertaining to the fire because she had received the answer to what she wanted to know on December 11, 1964, and there was no further need to talk to him about the matter.

On 1/29/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana File # 157-3255

by SA DONALD R. BELMONT and SA MCINNIS L. WARD /sab Date dictated 1/31/65

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NW#:34210

DocId:31396151

2

NO 157-3255/sab

In addition to the above, she said MORRIS could in addition to talking on December 12, 1964, drink juices without very much difficulty. She said he did not respond very well on Sunday, December 13, 1964.

She further related that she was told by LAURA SCOTT that the latter and her family, who live on Fifth Street, were among the first persons to arrive at the scene of the fire at MORRIS' shop and at that time saw MORRIS lying on the ground at the Billups Station and saw him taken to the hospital.

SMITH was questioned whether she had told anyone other than the FBI that she had information regarding the persons responsible for the burning of MORRIS' shop. She stated that she had told no one of this but the FBI and Father THOMPSON. She was confronted with the information that she had told other persons and she said she does not know who these persons might be.

She further related that she was the maid regularly assigned to the ward where MORRIS was located. She said she personally does not believe the [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] were the ones responsible for the burning of the shop since she now understands they were [REDACTED].

FOIA(b)6

FOIA(b)7 - (C)

MISSISSIPPI, listed as follows:

She is a nurse and was hired by THELMA MORRIS, step-mother of FRANK MORRIS, to attend him at night at the hospital in Ferriday, after he was burned. She stayed with him for four nights, Thursday night through Sunday night, from 8:00 p.m., to 8:00 a.m., and on one or two mornings she remained until about 10:00 a.m., until someone else would come to stay with him. She had not known FRANK MORRIS prior to this time.

During the time she attended him he never volunteered any information as to what had happened to him or who had done it to him, and she never questioned him about it. There were a number of people who visited him during the early evening on all the nights she stayed there, but she did not know any of them, except FRANK's step-mother. She heard very little conversation on those occasions and it consisted mainly of the visitors asking if he knew who they were. He appeared to be conscious enough to recognize their voices and would indicate he knew who they were.

FRANK's step-mother never made any remarks to her to indicate FRANK had told her who started the fire or that he might know who started it.

65 of Natchez, Mississippi File # NO 157-3255

NALD R. BELMONT
AES M. SCHEFFER/dcs

Date dictated 1/25/65

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While the doctor was attending FRANK MORRIS at the hospital in Ferriday, she was called, the bed was changed and she left the duty. Apparently, the doctor was called after she left in the morning. She remembered seeing a mail call in the hospital corridor and in the hallway to MORRIS' room occasionally in the morning, before she left, but she never saw this mail inside the room. She identified this mail as short, in her 30's and wearing a uniform which she believed was true denim. She did not know the mail's name and did not recognize the name DELLA MAE SMITH.

On Friday morning, after the first night she was on duty at the hospital, she left at about 9:30 AM. MORRIS' step-mother arrived late, explaining that she had had to take care of her husband. The bed had not been changed at the time she left. She remembered that before she left that morning, the doctor came in and looked at MORRIS. He did not say anything, merely shaking his head and leaving. When she came back on duty Friday night, MORRIS had a tube in his throat. When she came on duty Saturday night, he also had a tube in his bladder. After the tube was in his throat, she never heard him carry on a conversation and he would merely say "Uh huh" to questions asked of him. She recalled that on Thursday night and Friday night his breathing was fairly good, although after the tube was inserted in his throat she would occasionally have to suction the mucous from his mouth and from the tube during the night so he could breath better.

She recalled that on one night after she came on duty, two police officers came in to visit MORRIS. She believed this was Thursday night, the first night she was on duty and that it was around 9:00 or 10:00 PM when they came in. She did not know who they were, but assumed they were local Ferriday officers. They were dressed in uniforms.

/30/65 at Natchez, Mississippi File # NO 157-3255

A DONALD R. BELMONT and

A MC INNIS L. WARD /scr

1/31/65

Date dictated

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4# 34210

DocId:31396151

NO 157-3255/scr

2

and wore guns. One was about 5'7", the other taller. She could not furnish any further description. She was in the room when they entered, but she left while they talked to MORRIS. Before she left the room she heard one of them say, "FRANK, remember when we brought you in -----." It was at this point the officers looked at her and, feeling they wanted to talk to FRANK in private, she left the room. The officers remained only a few minutes.

VI

NEIGHBORHOOD INVESTIGATION

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

... Ferriday, La. 1964

[redacted]
was advised of the identity of the interviewing agents. The following information was furnished by [redacted].

He advised that FRANK MORRIS and he have known one another all of the latter's life. They have had some social life together.

MORRIS took one or two trips a year. He had accompanied [redacted] to Houston in 1963 when the latter had to go to Texas on business. On that occasion MORRIS stayed by himself in the Ajapo Hotel. [redacted] believes that the purpose of most of the trips taken by MORRIS was to observe how other shoe shops operate. MORRIS returned to Ferriday with [redacted].

[redacted] saw MORRIS between 8:30 and 9:30 p.m. on the night of the fire when MORRIS came to [redacted] store to buy groceries. [redacted] left Ferriday for Natchez via his home immediately after MORRIS left the store.

[redacted] did not observe anything that he considered unusual or suspicious around MORRIS' store the night of the fire. He recalled that MORRIS' red and white GMC or Chevrolet was parked on the vacant used car lot next to MORRIS' shoe shop during the fire.

At approximately 1 a.m., December 10, 1964, [redacted] left Natchez enroute to Ferriday in his stake-body truck. When he was approximately two miles out of Vidalia towards Ferriday, driving 35 to 45 miles per hour, he noticed a car coming towards him from the direction of Ferriday at a high rate of speed. As it passed him he noticed that it was a white Pontiac. He continued to observe it through his side mirror after it passed him. [redacted] knew that it wasn't Deputy Sheriff's FRANK DE LAUGHTER's car, but he observed what appeared to be a red light on the top of the car.

Shortly before [redacted] reached the end of the four lane highway near Ferriday, he saw headlights coming from behind him. At the time [redacted] was driving at a

5/65 at Natchez, Miss. File # NO 157-3255

SA THOMAS MC GUINNESS JR and
SA WILLIAM QUACKENBUSH /sjt Date dictated 1/29/65

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[redacted] was driving
[redacted] was on the passenger side and [redacted] was wearing
a blue leather jacket was sitting on the back seat. [redacted]
was wearing his police officer's uniform but the other
police officer was not.

Approximately five minutes elapsed from the time
[redacted] observed this car going toward Vidalia and its
return to the above point of contact.

At approximately 1:25 or 1:30 a.m., [redacted]
approached the Ferriday city limits. As he reached the
last curve before Ferriday he noticed a red glow in the
sky. His first thought was that WILL HANEY's place was
on fire. He parked his truck [redacted]
across from the used car lot. There were two white men
standing in front of his father's store and near a late
model car not further described. He recognized one of these
men as a past boy friend of OPEL GRAVELLE and a resident of
Natchez. He asked those men what had happened and they replied
"Some old nigger was walking out of that building that
didn't seem to be in his right mind. They had to take him
to the Billups station to put him out."

The identities of "they", the persons who had
taken him to the Billups station were not known to [redacted].
[redacted] had the impression that these two men had seen
MORRIS go or be taken to the Billups station.

When [redacted] arrived at the scene, MORRIS' building
was still standing and no one, other than the two white men
above, and the attendant at the Billups station were in sight.
It appeared to [redacted] that there had been an explosion of
some kind before his arrival due to the fact that there was
broken window glass in the street some distance from the
building.

The next person to come into view was a Negro
woman who came out of the house adjacent to MORRIS' building
and ran across the street with what appeared to be clothes.
Shortly thereafter other people started to leave their homes.

After the arrival of the police and the fire
trucks appeared, [redacted] was driving the fire truck and
it did not seem to be in a hurry although it may have used
the siren and red light.

After [redacted] started the fire for about five minutes,
with both [redacted] and the other police officer leaving with the
trucks, the side of the building fell out. At no time while
[redacted] was present was there an explosion.

[redacted] has no knowledge as to why the fire was
started or by whom.

MORRIS had not been living with any particular
girl at the time of his death. One of his former girl
friends was very jealous of him because "young girls were
in his store." FRANK FLEMING, who used to shine shoes in
MORRIS' shop, used to talk about different women that
MORRIS took into his back room. He has had two or three
women in the past 3 to 5 years. The last one was MATTIE,
last name unknown. Another one was MARY, last name unknown.
In addition to his wives he had a sweetheart who was a young
girl named MINNIE.

Colored people in the area talked about one phase
of MORRIS' relationship with white women that could "get
him into trouble." When white ladies drove up to his shoe
store, instead of taking the shoes through the car window,
he inserted his head into the window on the driver's side,
or entered the car on the passenger side and sat next to
them on the front seat while they discussed the needed shoe
repair.

When pretty white women came to his shop with
shoes to be repaired and were not in cars, MORRIS covertly
stared at them and winked at [redacted].

MORRIS' best friend in the white community was
LLOYD PAUL. [redacted] does not know why they were such good

NO 157-3255/ejt

4

friends. It was rumored that MORRIS had borrowed money from PAUL and vice versa. PAUL visited MORRIS' shop two to three times per day. Also, MORRIS was permitted to borrow any car of PAUL's that he wanted. The two of them went to Monroe, Louisiana, frequently ostensibly to buy used cars. MORRIS drove some of those cars back to Ferriday for PAUL.

MORRIS also visited Natchez frequently. [redacted] noted that MORRIS had relatives living in Natchez.

[redacted] added that he could not recall seeing any other car coming from Ferriday as he approached Ferriday, but that it was very possible that one or more cars did come from the direction of Ferriday without him recalling them.

FOIA(b)6

FOIA(b)7 - (C)

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

2/3/65

Mrs. RUTHIE SCOTT, Scott's Grocery, 424 South 5th Street, Ferriday, Louisiana, advised as follows:

She was acquainted with FRANK MORRIS and attended the same church he attended. She last saw him at church on the first Sunday in December, 1964. She was at her home in the country on the night FRANK's shop burned down and did not see it. She knows of no reason why anyone would want to do this or to do away with FRANK.

She recalled that one day shortly after FRANK died, DELIA MAE SMITH, who works in the hospital in Ferriday, came into Scott's Store and started talking about FRANK's death in the presence of her husband and herself and Mr. ERLIE HAYES, a school teacher. This was in the afternoon and they were fairly busy and other people were coming and going, but would not have heard DELIA MAE's conversation. Mrs. SCOTT was busy waiting on people and heard only portions of her conversation. She thought DELIA MAE had been drinking. She heard DELIA MAE say that she had been hearing rumors there were two or three men who started the fire and that one held a gun while another poured gasoline and lighted the fire. Mrs. SCOTT thought DELIA MAE told the names of the men, but she does not now recall what they were. She recalled DELIA MAE said the men were local men.

Mrs. SCOTT said she also heard DELIA MAE remark that the Federal Bureau of Investigation had talked to her about the fire and that she had either told them what she had heard or that she was going to tell them what she had heard. Mrs. SCOTT did not hear DELIA MAE say where she heard these rumors.

Mrs. SCOTT said she has had little contact with DELIA MAE SMITH and this was only the second or third time DELIA MAE had been in the store as far as she knew.

On 1/29/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana File # NO 157-3255
SA DONALD R. BELMONT and
SA MC INNIS L. HARD /bcr Date dictated 1/31/65

128

CARLENE MURKIN, operator of the Junction Inn
411 Street furnished the following information:

She has known FRANK MORRIS for many years and her
business establishment is located diagonally across the
street from MORRIS' shoe shop.

On the evening of December 9-10, 1964, she was in
bed in her quarters at the rear of her place of business when
she was awakened by some type of explosion. She jumped up
to run to the front of her establishment to look out, but
stumbled and fell. After she recovered, she went to the
front of the building and looked out the front window. She
did not see any cars or people go by but could see a fire
at MORRIS' shop. She did not see FRANK MORRIS and she did
not go outside of her own place of business. A crowd
began gathering outside the front of the shoe shop and the
fire engine arrived on the scene. She observed nothing that
would indicate what or who might have caused the fire. She
has heard nothing as to who might have been responsible for
the fire.

She considered FRANK MORRIS a good friend and
knows nothing in his background that would possibly have
motivated anyone to burn his shop.

She has a daughter, BEATRICE JOHNSON, presently
visiting in Natchitoches, Louisiana. BEATRICE, who is
a friend of FRANK MORRIS, was out of town at the time of
the fire. BEATRICE never dated MORRIS to her knowledge.

The day after the fire, some children brought
her what appeared to be a portion of a human finger which
they claimed they found near the burned shop. She kept the
finger and later turned it over to an FBI Agent. She claimed
not to recall the names of the children who brought the
finger to her.

She stated she has no additional information
concerning this matter.

1/27/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana
SA's THOMAS MCGUINNESS, JR., and
MCINNIS L. WARD/bap

File # NO 157-3255

Date dictated 1/30/65

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JOHN LEE, JR., owner of the Pic & Pac Store, South 4th Street, Ferriday, Louisiana, was advised of the identity of the interviewing agents. The following information was furnished by JOHN LEE, JR.

He advised that he has known FRANK MORRIS all of his life, in that he was born and raised in Ferriday, Louisiana. He stated insofar as he knew that MORRIS was well liked by the people of FERRIDAY, both white and Negro. He added that if there was any one thing that could be said against MORRIS was that MORRIS "had a lot of girlfriends."

LEE continued by saying that he had heard from the people who frequent his store that many of the young Negro girls who live in the area were afraid to go into MORRIS' store as he would be quite blunt in his conversation with them in regard to sex. In addition to this, LEE informed that MORRIS was also known to have had sexual relations with Negro women in the back of his shop. He stated that he had not heard of MORRIS being involved with any white women. But that it was not unusual for MORRIS to come out of his shop and talk to white women customers who would drive up in front of his store. LEE said that MORRIS would come out of the shop when a white customer would drive up and depending on the direction in which the customer's car was facing would either put his head in the driver's window, or lean on the drivers side of the car and talk, or if the car was facing the other direction, MORRIS would open the passengers side of the car and get in and sit along side of the driver presumably to discuss the repair of shoes.

LEE continued by saying that in addition to the shoe shop, MORRIS would also express an interest in church work, and had made many trips out of town, allegedly in furtherance of this church work. LEE stated that MORRIS would average one or two trips a month for this church work. LEE added that many times after these trips MORRIS would tell him that he had gone to a shoe shop in one of the cities.

~~1/25/65~~ at ~~Ferriday, Louisiana~~ File # ~~NO 157-3255~~

SA THOMAS MCGUINNNESS, JR.

-Date dictated- 1/28/85

he had visited and they did or did not have better equipment than he had. LEE said that he knows of two specific trips that MORRIS made, one was to Houston on July 11, 1962, and the other was to Windsor, Ontario, on November 9, 1964. LEE stated that the reason he knows of the Houston, Texas trip was that his father, JOHN LEE, SR. died in Houston and FRANK MORRIS had told him that he had seen his father before he died.

In regard to the Windsor, Ontario trip he, LEE, received a post card from MORRIS, postmarked Windsor Ontario, on November 9, 1964, the post card said that MORRIS was seeing a lot of old friends and that he was having a good time. LEE did not know of any friends of MORRIS in Canada and MORRIS never identified them. LEE said that MORRIS would make these trips by train or would drive in his car or truck. LEE said that he believed that the trips were financed by profits from MORRIS's shop, as MORRIS had no other source of income that he knew of.

LEE stated that in addition to the trips MORRIS also acted as an announcer on local radio programs on Sunday mornings. LEE said that MORRIS would dedicate religious records to the various friends of his in Ferriday, both white and Negro. LEE stated that he did not know of any one objecting to these programs.

LEE stated that MORRIS had told him on one occasion that he considered himself to be training to become a religious prophet. LEE said that he did not discuss this with MORRIS any further, but that MORRIS had told LEE that when he was young he was wild but that he had grown a little older and a little wiser.

LEE stated that one of MORRIS' good white friends was LLOYD PAUL, who operated the used car lot next to MORRIS shop. He, LEE had heard that at one time PAUL loaned MORRIS

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5

money and later MORRIS loaned PAUL money. LEE said that was the extent of his knowledge concerning MORRIS and PAUL's friendship. LEE noted that as far as money was concerned MORRIS commented to him when he received some new equipment for his shop, that he was broke. LEE advised that he believes that this was approximately three months prior to the fire.

With regard to any individual who expressed any opinion as to the possibility of violence in connection with the Civil Rights problem, ELLIE RIAL, a white barber had said that when any Civil Rights movement starts in the Ferriday area, that any of the "nigger troublemakers" whose identity was learned, would probably be frightened into leaving Ferriday and this would stop any Civil Rights movement. LEE said that he did not give much thought to this statement at the time he heard it in that RIAL and a companion of his (FNU) BATEMAN would come into LEE's store on many occasions and sit and drink beer.

LEE stated that with regard to the apparent reluctance of the majority of the Negro population to discuss the killing of MORRIS, he was of the opinion that this was due to various superstitions that the Negro has regarding death and violence, and they were afraid that something bad would happen to them if they became involved in something which was not any of their business. In addition to their fear of bodily harm, they are also afraid of losing any benefits they might be receiving such as welfare checks.

LEE advised that with regard to the evening preceeding the fire, December 9, 1964, he closed his store at about 10:00 PM, he noticed nothing in the area which was unusual or suspicious. He advised that during the early morning hours of December 10, 1964, he was awakened by a loud banging on the door of his residence which is located in the rear of the store. He answered the door and was told by IKE HARTFORD that there was a fire across the street.

NO 157-3255/mh

4

LEE said he ran around to the front of his store and saw that MORRIS' store was on fire. He ran back around to his house, hooked up a garden hose, and came back to the street, and proceeded to wet down the front of his own store. He said that later on the fire engines came and that he did not recall anything else other than the fact that MORRIS' shop was on fire and the excitement which resulted.

LEE said that he does not have any idea as to who might have started the fire, nor why it was started.

BLAIR said that before he took the job, he had consulted with the Mayor of Ferriday about it, as he was concerned over what he might be getting into, in view of the circumstances under which BECKWITH had left. He was unable to determine whether the job had anything to do with the threatening calls BECKWITH had reportedly received. BLAIR said he did not know where BECKWITH was now living.

BLAIR said he did not know FRANK MORRIS well. He said he, BLAIR, had resided in Ferriday for 36 years and had never had any trouble with the law. BLAIR at first stated he knew nothing about the fire or the identity of the persons responsible for it. Subsequently, he suggested that JOHN GRIFFIN, employee of FRANK MORRIS, be talked to, and also JAMES WHITE, a cousin of MORRIS. When asked what GRIFFIN would know, he said he had overheard a conversation between GRIFFIN and a man whom he declined to identify, about a week after the fire, in which GRIFFIN said FRANK knew this was going to happen and who did it, and that FRANK had received a telephone call before it happened. He stated GRIFFIN also told the unidentified man that FRANK had asked GRIFFIN to stay with him at the shop that night, but GRIFFIN had refused. BLAIR said he understood FRANK had been, prior to the night of the fire, staying at Clayton, Louisiana, a short distance from Ferriday, at night. BLAIR claimed he did not know why MORRIS spent the night of the fire in his shop or why GRIFFIN had refused to stay with him. He claimed he did not know who had made the alleged telephor

1/26/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana

File # NO 157-3255

SA's JAMES M. SCHEFFER and
DONALD R. BELMONT

/bab

Date dictated 1/27/65

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NO 157-3255/bab

2

call to MORRIS or what was said. Upon further questioning, BLAIR said he was not positive GRIFFIN was referring to the night of the fire when he said MORRIS asked him to stay with him at the shop.

BLAIR said he overheard the conversation between GRIFFIN and the unidentified man "down the street". He refused to state just where the conversation had taken place, and again refused to identify the other party to the conversation.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

ELLEN HAYES, 610 Carolina Avenue, who is employed as a teacher, furnished the following information:

On a Tuesday in December, exact date not recalled, which was the day following the death of FRANK MORRIS, he went to Scott's Grocery Store at the corner of Carolina Avenue and 5th Street, sometime after 5:00 PM. When he walked into the store, DELLA MAE SMITH, a maid at Concordia Hospital, was talking with Mr. and Mrs. SCOTT who operate the store. The conversation was concerning the death of MORRIS, and HAYES commented he certainly would like to know who was responsible. At this point DELLA MAE SMITH said she knew who burned the shop because MORRIS had confided in her while still alive at the hospital but had made her promise not to divulge the information. She further said she would not mention it now, but that she was "about high" and did not care. HAYES noted she appeared to have been drinking.

SMITH stated she had been previously interviewed by six FBI Agents about the matter and had told them nothing, but would now tell them if she was recontacted about the matter. She then told how MORRIS had told her that the persons responsible were [redacted] and FRANK "de Law", the name commonly given to FRANK DE LAUGHTER, a Deputy with the local Sheriff's Department.

She did not state any reason why these persons were alleged to have burned the shop. She indicated the FBI Agents had interviewed her the day of MORRIS' death.

HAYES did not believe SMITH and discounted her statements as untrue. Several days later the Fire Chief at Ferriday and two fire marshals from Alexandria, Louisiana, came to see him and asked him about what SMITH had said. He repeated the above statement to them and assumed from conversation with these men that SMITH was telling the story all over town while she was drinking. He has since that time heard from a number of sources that she has been repeating the above statement to anyone she meets on the street.

1/28/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana
SA's DONALD R. BELMONT and
MCINNIS L. WARD/bap

File # NO 157-3235

Date dictated 1/31/65

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On the afternoon of the fire, MORRIS was not
seen by anyone. He was not seen by anyone who
was in the neighborhood at the time. He was not
seen by anyone who was in the neighborhood at the time.
by the committee to see the fire. He was not seen
by the committee to see the fire. He was not seen

Regarding the fire, he was concerned to what
appeared to be an explosion the night of the fire. He was
in 1964. He was not of the nature of his time and was
flame against the day. He did not get up and
the next day he went MORRIS' shop and business.

Various rumors from unknown origin have circulated
since the fire. One rumor was that MORRIS had been inter-
vening between men and women of mixed races. Another
rumor was that he was an official of the National Association
for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

He is aware that MORRIS had a radio program on
Sunday mornings and has heard him make dedications of religious
music to his friends, both Negro and white. He has heard
dedications to white couples, white males and white females.
He feels it is possible that someone objected to this
practice.

The only girl friend of MORRIS he ever knew was
MATTIE MAIDEN, an employee of Haney's bar.

GEORGE TAYLOR, who lives behind the fruit stand
on 4th Street, is alleged to have seen something on the night
of the fire, but he does not know the details.

[redacted] who was a student at the school
where HAYES is a teacher, after the fire, related that when
he awoke the night of the fire, he heard MORRIS outside
telling someone, "I thought you were my friends". He did
not talk to [redacted] further but because of the above,
believes he knows more than he told.

He has no additional information regarding the
matter.

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FOIA(b)7 - (C)

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

2/5/65

JOHNNY GRIFFIN, Negro male, age 40, a resident of 314 Morning Star Alley, furnished the following information:

He has known FRANK MORRIS since about 1934, and has worked for him in his shoe repair shop on Fourth Street, Ferriday, Louisiana, since 1959. His job was that of shoe repairman.

In addition to the shoe repair business, MORRIS also sold clothing. The north side of the building housed the machinery for the shoe repairs and the south side was used for the clothing business. MORRIS had considerable wearing apparel on hand which he kept on racks and tables in the south side of the building.

MORRIS did a good business on shoe repairs having the only shoe shop in Ferriday. His customers were both white and Negro residents of the community. He did a fairly good business in the sale of clothing, particularly on Thursdays when the other dry good stores in Ferriday were closed. He ordered most of his clothing from businesses in Natchez, Mississippi, and Monroe, Louisiana.

There was no telephone located inside the store, but they used a pay telephone located on the sidewalk near the corner of the building. MORRIS would occasionally receive calls on this phone from customers. MORRIS has never mentioned receiving any threatening telephone calls or threats through any other media. MORRIS seemed to be well liked by both whites and Negroes. He recalls no telephone calls being received from anyone for several days preceding the fire.

On Wednesday, December 9, 1964, MORRIS told GRIFFIN he was going to make a trip on Thursday, December 10, 1964, but did not say where he was going or how long he would be gone. This was not unusual since MORRIS made occasional trips away from Ferriday to attend conventions and church functions. He recalls he, in the past, went

On 1/27/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana File # - NO 157-3255
by SA THOMAS MC GUINNESS, JR. /dcs Date dictated 1/30/65
SA MCINNIS L. WARD

to Chicago, Illinois, Shreveport and Monroe, Louisiana, and other cities not recalled, on such trips. When he made such trips, he merely told GRIFFIN he was going out of town and for GRIFFIN to run the shop.

MORRIS did not request GRIFFIN to stay in the shop with him on the night of December 9-10, 1964. MORRIS' living quarters, located in the rear of the building, contained only one bed. There was, however, a small cot located in the building. GRIFFIN and MORRIS' grandson, [redacted] age 11, had been staying in a small cottage located behind the shop. MORRIS had raised [redacted] who was commonly known as [redacted]. [redacted]'s mother has been living in Las Vegas, Nevada, and MORRIS had raised the grandson. GRIFFIN had been living in the cottage for the past three years.

MORRIS did not regularly live in the quarters at the rear of the shop. He had been living there however for the month preceeding the fire. For several months he had lived with a girl friend, whose name he does not know, at Clayton, Louisiana. The girl friend however had gone to Chicago, Illinois, to see her daughter and for that reason, MORRIS moved back to the living quarters at the shop. The girl friend in Clayton is a seamstress and GRIFFIN met her only one time. He does not know if MORRIS intended to go to Chicago to see her on December 10, 1964.

On the evening of December 9, 1964, GRIFFIN left the shop around 8:00 PM and went to the cottage located at the rear of the building. At the time he left the shop, FRANK ASHFORD, Negro, a friend of MORRIS, was still at the shop with MORRIS. There were no others in the shop. He watched television with [redacted] in the cottage until about 10:30 PM and they went to bed. He was awakened by a loud noise, apparently some sort of explosion, and some time thereafter, but exact time or approximation unknown.

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3

Immediately upon awakening, he realized something was on fire as the flames were reflected about the room in which he was sleeping. He dashed for the cottage door after seeing that [redacted] who was sleeping in another bedroom, had already left the cottage. As he departed through the cottage door, he could see flames through the glass upper part of the rear door leading into the shop. He did not see MORRIS in the shop but only saw fire as he fled past the shop door. [redacted] was already outside the cottage when he got out and he and [redacted] climbed a fence and ran into a vacant lot at the rear of the cottage and shop.

They stopped in the vacant lot. He could only hear the fire crackling. The fire was not yet through the roof of the shop. He observed no automobiles and did not hear any.

Apparently MORRIS was already out of the shop before GRIFFIN left the cottage. After he went over the fence into the vacant lot, he thought he saw MORRIS standing near the Billups Service Station on Fourth Street and the night service attendant was putting water on MORRIS. He saw a police car drive up to the service station at this time and his impression is the police car came from a street which crosses Fourth Street and was proceeding in an easterly direction.

"While he was standing in the vacant lot, he heard a minor explosion come from within the shop. He felt this might have been some of the inflammable material MORRIS kept in the shop. He explained that MORRIS had the following such materials in the shop on hand at the time of the fire:

- Two full gallons of cleaning fluid which he bought at Williams Company, Natchez, Mississippi
- One gallon of turpentine
- Eight or Ten gallon cans of rubber cement
- Some shoe dye and polish in rather large quantities

It was his first thought that the gas stove located in MORRIS' living quarters in the shop, had exploded. He

explained that MORRIS had, in addition to the bed, a stove and refrigerator in the room.

While he was standing in the vacant lot watching the fire, his mother appeared and he went home with her. Sometime thereafter, he was contacted by the Chief of Police and asked to come to the hospital with him so he could talk to MORRIS in an effort to get him to tell anything he knew about who set the fire. He said he went to the hospital with the chief and talked to MORRIS. MORRIS did not tell him who set the fire. This conversation with MORRIS was in the presence of FBI Agents and this was the only time he talked to MORRIS after the fire. While he feels MORRIS knew who set the fire, he cannot be sure of this, and has no personal knowledge as to who might have been responsible. He feels that because MORRIS responded reasonably well during the conversation with him that MORRIS was mentally alert and knew what he was talking about.

RICHARD KENNEDY, commonly known as "RICK", an elderly Negro, formerly stayed in the shop and slept on the cot mentioned above. "RICK" did the cleaning up around the shop and MORRIS in turn permitted him to sleep in the building. MORRIS finally accused "RICK" of being lazy and asked him to leave so the latter moved to a room at the rear of Haney's Bar on Fourth Street. This was some time ago.

GRIFFIN has on occasions when MORRIS was not in town, slept in the building rather than the cottage, but this was not frequent.

The following persons were probably MORRIS' closest friends:

JAMES WHITE

LEO GRAHAM, a barber

FRANK ASHFORD, employee at Lancaster's Service Station

These persons are all Negroes and frequently came by MORRIS' shop to chat with him. Also on occasions, ANDREW SLAINE,

...

...resident of Seventh Street, would come by and talk.

He had a girl friend named MINNIE HANIMAN and another named MARTIE BAILMAN, but does not believe he dated the latter in a long time.

MORRIS was good natured and yelled and waved at anyone passing by the shop on the street. This included his white customers, but he has never heard anyone voice any objection to this habit. He has never heard of MORRIS being involved with white women and none ever called him at the shop with the exception of customers who sometimes called about shoes left at the shop.

MORRIS did some drinking, however, he did not use alcohol excessively. He would drink anything and usually bought no more than a pint of whiskey at the time. He used no particular brand. GRIFFIN has never known of MORRIS having any large quantity of whiskey on hand and had no knowledge of the half pint of whiskey found in MORRIS' quarters after the fire. He has no information that would indicate MORRIS was engaging or had ever engaged in selling alcoholic beverages or dope.

He recalls no incidents where MORRIS had trouble with anyone, either white or Negro. He has listened to the Sunday morning radio broadcast MORRIS put on and never heard anything on it he felt someone could construe as objectionable.

He has heard that a Negro named "BRIGHT BOY" left town because of alleged telephone threats about the time of the fire, but only heard this as a rumor from an unrecalled source. He does not know the nature of the threat or where "BRIGHT BOY" is alleged to have gone. There was also some talk that GRAHAM, a Negro barber in Ferriday, also received some sort of telephone threat about that period of time. He does not, however, know anything of the details of the alleged threat.

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NO 157-3253/600
6

[redacted] has gone to Nevada to live with his mother since MORRIS died.

He has no additional information in this matter; has no suspects and knows of no motives.

4/3/65

FRANK FLEMING, JR., 120 South 5th Street, Merriway, Louisiana was advised of the identities of the interviewing agents. FLEMING stated that he was employed by FRANK MORRIS as a shoe shine boy and worked in the shop each evening after he got off from his regular employment and would work in the shop from about 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 or 8:00 p.m. He would work all day on Saturdays and had been working in the shop for about five years.

FLEMING advised that on the night of the fire in the shoe shop he came to the shop at about 5:00 p.m. and believes he left between 7:00 and 8:00 p.m. He remained in the area of the shop on Fourth Street talking to friends and going into some of the "joints" and went home about 8:30 or 9:00 p.m. FLEMING stated that while he was in the shop on that night there were not any customers in the shop. JERRY CHIFFIN left the shop to get some wine and the only persons in the shop besides MORRIS and FLEMING were two small boys, who were cleaning and oiling the floor. FLEMING stated he did not know the names of these boys. They were sweeping the dirt and trash up and mopping the floor with "coal oil" to clean the floor.

FLEMING stated that when he left the shop MORRIS and the two young boys were the only ones in the shop. MORRIS' grandson [redacted] was in the rear shack watching television. FLEMING stated that MORRIS discussed things with him and he believes that if MORRIS had received any threat from anyone MORRIS would have told him. He stated MORRIS did not mention any threat or problem and seemed to be his normal self when he, FLEMING, left the shop.

MORRIS was staying in his room to the rear of the shop and had been staying there at night for a week or two prior to the fire. He advised that MORRIS usually had a "woman friend" he stayed with at night and had been going to Clayton, Louisiana and staying with a woman there. He believed this woman went to visit relatives out of state and this was the reason MORRIS was staying at the shop. He advised that MORRIS had several different Negro "women

FOIA(b) 6
FOIA(b) 7 - (C)

on 1/28/65 at Merriway, La. File # NO 157-3255

SA ELMER E. LITCHFIELD and
SA WILLIAM QUACKENBUSH /ajt

Date dictated 1/29/65

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friends' from time to time but to his knowledge never had an affair with a white woman. He advised that MORRIS would give the white women customers out service, go out to their cars and get their shoes up the women would not have to come into the shop. He stated he had never seen MORRIS get into the car with any white woman and did not know of any trouble MORRIS had had with any customer or anyone.

FLANNING stated that MORRIS from time to time would go out of town to hear a gospel group sing and that he went on these trips alone. MORRIS had a radio program on Sunday morning and he would give advertisements for some of the local businesses and would sometimes receive letters with a contribution from some of the people whose business he talked about. MORRIS would use this money to pay for the radio time. FLANNING said that he listened to the radio program of MORRIS and had never heard MORRIS say anything on the program to offend anyone.

He advised that MORRIS was a good friend of LLOYD PAUL and that PAUL operated the used car lot next to MORRIS' shoe shop. PAUL would let MORRIS use a car from time to time and MORRIS would recommend that people buy cars from PAUL. He stated that Mr. PAUL was friendly to all the people that worked in the shoe shop and never said or did anything to hurt or offend anyone working in the shop. He advised that EARL and MORRIS went to Monroe, Louisiana together once; PAUL to pick up a used car and MORRIS to attend a gospel sing and to drive one of the cars back to Ferriday.

FLANNING stated that MORRIS was not engaged in any illegal activity and MORRIS had never been active in any civil rights activity.

FLANNING stated he did not know of the fire and injury to MORRIS until the morning after the fire. He stated he did not know how the fire started and had not heard any talk as to the cause of the fire. FLANNING stated he did not know of any one, white or negro, that MORRIS had trouble with and did not know of any reason why any one would harm FRANK or his business.

Mrs. EYNA MORRIS, 26 Feeders Street, Natchez, Mississippi, advised as follows:

She is the stepmother of FRANK MORRIS. On the day FRANK was burned in the fire at his shoe shop, she was notified of the fire by EDNA MOORE, FRANK's ex-wife. EDNA telephoned her between 5:00 and 6:30 AM that morning, saying FRANK's place had exploded and that FRANK was in the hospital, badly burned. EDNA said she had already been to see him at the hospital.

Mrs. MORRIS arrived at the hospital in Ferriday, sometime between 8:00 and 10:00 AM. There were two men with him in his room when she went in, but she did not know their identities. FRANK was conscious but apparently in great pain. When she asked him what happened he said, "They threw gasoline on me and set me afire." She asked him if he could identify who did it, and he said no, but that they were two white men. The only other thing he said that she could recall was the remark, "I didn't think I had a white enemy."

She remained with FRANK at the hospital all that first day, which was Thursday, and they hired a nurse named MARTHA BARNES to stay with him at night. Mrs. MORRIS returned to stay with him on Friday and she remained all day. FRANK was fairly calm by then but was swollen and was unable to carry on a conversation. He was conscious, and appeared to know her, but did not talk much. Mrs. MORRIS also stayed with him during the day on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, and MARTHA BARNES stayed with him again Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights, and she came back again Monday night but he had died by then. He died about 7:30 PM, and Mrs. MORRIS was with him at the time. He did not say anything to her at the end, and he had apparently been in a coma on Sunday and Monday.

Mrs. MORRIS stated they had another woman, BESSIE COLLINS, a practical nurse, stay with FRANK on Friday, from noon until 7:30 PM.

On 1/24/65 at Natchez, Mississippi File # NO 157-3286

by SA DONALD R. BELMONT/bap

Date dictated 1/24/65

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

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Mr. SULLIVAN MORRIS, 36 Woodlawn Street, Natchez, Mississippi, advised he is the father of FRANK MORRIS. He said he visited FRANK three times in the hospital after FRANK was burned, but FRANK was never able to talk to him. However, his wife, ETHEL MORRIS, who is FRANK's step-mother, visited FRANK every day in the hospital, and she informed him FRANK had told her the people who started the fire wore two white men, who threw something on him that exploded, that he then ran to a filling station where two white men put out the flames. He stated his wife informed him that FRANK said he did not know who the men were who burned him.

Mr. MORRIS advised that his son, FRANK MORRIS, was born in Vidalia, Louisiana, but he does not know his birthdate. FRANK's mother, CHARLOTTE JAMES MORRIS, died when FRANK was about three years old, and FRANK thereafter lived a large part of his growing years with his paternal grandmother and her husband, ELLEN MOODY and NATHAN MOODY, in Vidalia. This grandmother died about three years ago. FRANK attended Bloomfield High School, and Mr. MORRIS subsequently taught him the shoe repair business, which has been Mr. MORRIS' occupation until he has had to give up the active business due to his age. He estimated that prior to his death, FRANK had been in the shoe business for almost 40 years.

Mr. MORRIS stated FRANK had never been in any kind of trouble to his knowledge, that he was well liked, had never participated in any civil rights movements, and he had no idea why anyone would want to hurt him.

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NO 157-3255

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that she was not sure if Morris was a white man or a Negro. She stated that she did not know what the exact relationship was between Morris and the woman who was with him at the time of the shooting.

She stated Morris showed signs of abnormality in his personality that prompted Brown to be concerned in his behavior. She stated that Morris was a very nervous man and was very physical in his manner. She stated that Morris was a very violent man and was very physical in his manner. She stated that Morris was a very violent man and was very physical in his manner.

In addition, it appeared to Mrs. BROWN that MORRIS could not be satisfied with normal sexual intercourse. He had never asked Mrs. BROWN to have abnormal relations with him but she heard rumors that he had been having such abnormal relations with other women both during their marriage and after their divorce. When she discussed this with him, he did not deny it, nor did he admit to such activity.

Mrs. BROWN stated that one of the women that MORRIS had been dating was a PAULINE HAYES, who lives next to Hayes Cafe. She stated she did not know what the exact relationship was.

Mrs. BROWN did not know of any major involvement that MORRIS had with white women, however, he was the type of person who, if an opportunity for an affair with a white woman presented itself, he would take advantage of it without thinking about the consequences.

In 1947 or 1948, he, MORRIS, was arrested by the local police for insulting the white wife of the Billups gas station owner. Mrs. BROWN did not know what this insult consisted of but he was kept in jail in Vidalia, Louisiana, for two or three weeks. He was then released on the condition that he stay out of town until told by the local police that he could come back. She stated she did not know any other details or the final outcome.

HAL MONROE, now deceased, told Mrs. BROWN that

1/26/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana File # 157-3253

SA ELMER E. LITCHFIELD &
SA WILLIAM QUACHENBUSH/gal

Date dictated 1/28/65

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2
NO 137-38504/241

In 1943, MORRIS had said something improper over the telephone to the white wife of [redacted] and that [redacted] pulled a gun on MORRIS. When Mrs. BROWN heard about this, she immediately called MORRIS to her home to question him about it. MORRIS told her that there was nothing to it, that [redacted] was crazy and that he, MORRIS, had a witness, to the telephone call and that he was not in the telephone booth that long. He neither admitted nor denied that [redacted] had pulled a gun on him.

There has not been any other known trouble between [redacted] and MORRIS or between [redacted] and other Negroes to Mrs. BROWN's knowledge.

MORRIS was always going out of town on trips partly to follow gospel singers, and partly for reasons unknown to Mrs. BROWN. When his trips were connected with gospel singers he often went with a JAMES H. [redacted], the nephew of HATTIE SAIDEN. In May or June, 1964, he went to Atlanta, Georgia. In September, 1964, he went to Detroit, Michigan and to Canada. He had also gone to New Orleans, St. Louis and Houston, at various times. Mrs. BROWN stated that about two weeks before the fire, he was scheduled to go to Chicago, but did not go. She did not know why this trip was cancelled. Mrs. BROWN did not know how he financed these trips, but did not believe that he could have afforded it based only on his income from his shoe store, although she knew of no other source of income that MORRIS had.

MORRIS also sponsored and was the announcer of a radio program, at the local radio station. However, partly the cost of this program was defrayed by donations solicited by him from businesses which he advertised on the program. Mrs. BROWN informed that MORRIS had a substantial amount of insurance on his building, plus a number of small policies on his own life. His aunt, now deceased, and his grandson, were the two beneficiaries of these policies. He also had savings accounts in two local banks, in his grandson's name. Mrs. BROWN stated she did not know the total amount of insurance, nor the amount in the bank.

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3
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Mrs. BROWN informed there was no indication that he was despondent or afraid before the fire. On the day before the fire he had purchased a used pick up truck, believed to be from the International Harvester Company for which he gave them a check for \$50.00 or \$75.00. This company reclaimed the truck after his death and returned the check.

Mrs. BROWN stated that MORRIS' close association with LLOYD PAUL, a white man, was very unusual for this area. She explained that she talked to MORRIS about this and asked him to stay away from PAUL. His answer was "you have to do it to make it". PAUL and MORRIS went out of town together frequently. Why or where was not known to Mrs. BROWN. Usually they returned the same day or the next day.

Mrs. BROWN had discussed MORRIS' death with many of the local Negroes. However, no one has been able to provide a reason for it.

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Mrs. AGNES SCOTT, Clayton, Louisiana, was advised of the identities of the interviewing agents. She advised that she lived with FRANK MORRIS in a common-law marriage relationship from May 1964 to November 1964. She knew MORRIS for about 10 to 13 years and last saw MORRIS on November 2, 1964. On that date she left for Chicago, Illinois, to stay with her daughter and did not return to Clayton, Louisiana, until about January 10, 1965.

About one week before the fire at MORRIS' shop she telephoned MORRIS and he stated that he might come to Chicago to see her. She advised that no definite plans were made regarding his coming to Chicago, and she did not know of the fire and his death until a friend wrote her about the incident and then she read something in the newspapers about the incident. She stated that she had not heard anything about the matter since her return to Clayton as none of the people seemed to want to discuss the matter.

She advised that from July 1964 until she left for Chicago, MORRIS and his grandson would come to her home every night when he completed his work and they would sleep at her place and then return to Ferriday in the morning to MORRIS' shop. SCOTT stated she did not know anything of MORRIS' business affairs or personal affairs and stated she had only been in his shop on one occasion.

She advised that she did not know any of the people that MORRIS associated with either white or Negro as she stayed close to her home in Clayton and did not get to Ferriday often. She stated she knew that JOHNNY GRIFFIN worked for MORRIS in the shoe shop and that a Negro woman by the name of "Speedy" cooked for MORRIS at the shop. She stated she did not know "Speedy" by any other name and does not know where "Speedy" lives.

SCOTT advised that she did not have any information as to the reason MORRIS's shop burned. She stated she did not know of anyone he was having any problems with or anyone that might be mad at him.

1/27/65 at Clayton, Louisiana File # MO 157-3255

SA's ELMER B. LITCHFIELD and
WILLIAM QUACKENBUSH

End

Date dictated 1/30/65

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1 [redacted] Ferriday, Louisiana, advised that she had known FRANK MORRIS since 1941, and had lived with him in a common-law marriage for about five years. They terminated this common-law marriage in the summer of 1964. She went to the shoe shop owned and operated by MORRIS one day and found that MORRIS was in the rear of the shop with a woman, [redacted] last name unknown. She and MORRIS had words and MORRIS called the police. The police came and told them that since they were living in a common-law status the best thing for them to do was to split up and to leave each other alone. MORRIS moved his belongings from her home.

[redacted] advised that MORRIS had a girl friend at Clayton, Louisiana, whom he went to see during the time that he was living with her. This girl friend, AGNES, last name unknown, was not known to [redacted], however, [redacted] advised that she had heard AGNES went to California prior to the death of MORRIS and she did not know if AGNES had returned to CLAYTON. She never mentioned to MORRIS that she knew of AGNES as MORRIS was paying some of her bills.

[redacted] advised that MORRIS, during the time they lived together, never had intercourse with her, but would bite her and hit her savagely with his fists, and engaged in unnatural sex acts. She advised that even though he caused her pain at these times, she stayed with him as she did not have any relatives or anyone else to assist her.

During the time that [redacted] and MORRIS were residing together, Mr. PAUL, a white man, who had a used car lot next to MORRIS' shop would come by the house to get MORRIS. MORRIS never explained to [redacted] as to where they were going or what they were going to do. [redacted] stated that Mr. PAUL would often go into the shoe shop and that PAUL and MORRIS seemed to be close. On the occasion when she, [redacted], went to the shop and found [redacted] there with MORRIS, Mr. PAUL came to the shop and offered to take her home and told her to leave and to leave MORRIS alone.

[redacted] advised that to her knowledge MORRIS had

1/26/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana

File # NO 157-3255

SA ELMER B. LITCHFIELD

SA QUACKENBUSH /sgr

Date dictated 1/27/65

agent

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NO 157-3255
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never done or said anything to offend anyone, white or Negro. She stated that none of the Negroes in the community have talked to her regarding the death of MORRIS and no one has indicated to her that they have any information regarding his death.

The night of the fire she was in her room at [redacted] buildings on Fourth Street and the shoe shop is not visible from this room. [redacted] stated that on the night of the fire, MORRIS' grandson came to her door and told her that MORRIS had been burned in the fire and wanted to know if he could stay with her. She let him in and put him to bed. She did not realize how bad MORRIS had been burned. She thought he had burned his hands and the grandson would not tell her anything except that he wanted to stay with her. The grandson did not tell her anything about the fire except that his grandfather had been burned.

Miss [redacted] furnished the following information after being advised of the identity of the interviewing Agents.

She stated she had been FRANK MORRIS' girl friend and mistress off and on since 1957. She stated their last association ended in the summer or fall of 1961. Miss [redacted] stated that MORRIS' other wives in common law were [redacted] (last name unknown), MARY (last name unknown), and the most recent was a woman in Clayton, Louisiana, whom she, [redacted] did not know.

Miss [redacted] stated to the best of her knowledge MORRIS was not involved in any civil rights movement nor was he engaged in any illegal activity. She stated she believed that MORRIS quite often purchased half pints of whisky in half case lots to give to his friends and to drink in the shop.

Miss [redacted] stated about two years ago she heard rumors, the source of which she could not recall, that MORRIS had called the police station to get a policeman to come and help him with some problem that he, MORRIS, was having with his grandson. She stated that the rumor related that he had called for a certain policeman, and upon being told that this policeman was not there MORRIS allegedly said "thank you" and hung up. She stated that allegedly the following day a Ferriday police officer came to MORRIS' shop and asked MORRIS why he had hung up in the lady's face. She stated that a discussion between the police officer and MORRIS followed in which MORRIS denied he had hung up on anyone, and the police officer allegedly pulled a gun on MORRIS.

She stated MORRIS had never discussed this incident with her, and she was not in the shop when the incident was supposed to have happened. She stated that if she ever heard the name of the officer involved she had forgotten but did not believe she had ever heard the name.

1/26/65 at Ferriday, La.

136

File #

NO 157-3255

SA [redacted] QUACKENBUSH

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1/31/65

DocId:31396151

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

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She stated she did not have any information regarding the fire at MORRIS' shop and had not heard any talk as to what the cause of the fire might have been.

In regard to her relationship with MORRIS, Miss [] stated that she had never lived with MORRIS in a common-law relationship, as such, but that they had engaged in unnatural sex relations at the desires of MORRIS. She stated that they had never engaged in a normal sex relationship.

HARRISON JOHNSON, 444 76, was apprised of the identity of the interviewing Agents and furnished the following information:

He had known FRANK MORRIS since 1938, was in almost daily contact with him and was a close friend. He did not see MORRIS the week of the fire due to the fact that Mr. JOHNSON was in a different hospital as a result of an automobile accident.

MORRIS did not have any serious problems known to JOHNSON. If he had, JOHNSON was confident that MORRIS would have told him about them.

MORRIS was active in church work. He was an usher in his own Baptist church and did some work for the Catholics also in Ferriday.

In 1959 or 1960, MORRIS had been involved in a bus accident. He collected some insurance money as a result of this accident after obtaining an attorney in Jackson, Mississippi.

The last woman in MORRIS' life was a woman, name unknown, who lived in Clayton, Louisiana. She had gone to Chicago just before the fire. MORRIS went to Clayton every night to stay with this woman. Two other women, known only as HATTIE and MINNIE, had been past girl friends of MORRIS'. He was never involved with white women.

MORRIS went on out-of-town trips approximately seven to eight times per year. Once a year he went to a Baptist convention. This past year he also went to Detroit and Chicago to buy second hand shoes to have shipped to his shop in Ferriday. JOHNSON knew nothing more about these trips other than MORRIS sometimes traveled by train.

JOHNSON did not believe that MORRIS was involved in any illegal activity. He specifically denied that MORRIS was

1/25/65

Jonesville, Louisiana

NO 157-3253

at

File #

SA's JAMES E. SCHEPPER & WILLIAM QUACKENBUSH/lrs

1/27/65

Date dictated

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138

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implicated in any way with bootlegging, narcotics or gambling activities.

MORRIS' radio program had religious overtones. It invited people to attend church services, mentioned names of out of town visitors, advertised local business establishments, and dedicated songs to local residents, both white and colored.

LOYD PAUL was one of MORRIS' closest friends. Occasionally he came into MORRIS' shop while JOHNSON was there and PAUL and MORRIS went outside to talk. Occasionally, PAUL allowed MORRIS to borrow one of PAUL's used cars to go to Clayton, Louisiana.

When MORRIS was and at his woman in Clayton, he stayed in the back room of his shop.

MORRIS' grandson was a problem to him due to the fact that the grandson could not stay home when needed. MORRIS mentioned to JOHNSON that he was going to call the police to get his grandson straightened out. JOHNSON does not know if he ever did this nor does JOHNSON know of his own personal knowledge of a policeman or other white man ever having come to MORRIS' shop to talk to him about this problem. JOHNSON never saw a policeman or a white man "pull a gun" on MORRIS. At one time a colored woman, possibly MABEL, last name unknown, also known as "M.B.", asked JOHNSON about such an event. JOHNSON, in turn, repeated the story involving someone pulling a gun on MORRIS, to MORRIS. He laughed and said "people sure carry anything don't they."

JOHNSON had also heard unspecified people talk on the street about the "gun pulling" incident that had allegedly occurred about one year ago.

A Negro man, named RIT or RICK, had worked for and lived with MORRIS until two or three months ago. He and MORRIS had an argument, believed to be over rent payment, and this man moved out.

There are rumors in the Negro community in Ferriday about MORRIS' death. Some believe that it resulted from his holding civil rights meetings. JOHNSON knows for certain that he was not. Another rumor was that MORRIS was "taking up too much time with white people" in a business sense. Actually, MORRIS always took care of his white customers first. He went out to the street to pick up and deliver their shoes so that they would not have to leave their cars and come into his shop.

JOHNSON did not know why MORRIS broke up with RATTIE. He had stayed with her two or three years, which was longer than he stayed with any other woman. RATTIE was his girl friend up to the time of his death. She was his "second" girl friend.

JOHNSON never observed a five-gallon can in MORRIS' shop.

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1/25/63

Mr. JAMES WHITE furnished the following information after being advised of the identities of the interviewing Agents:

He and FRANK MORRIS had grown up together and considered themselves good friends.

MORRIS went out of his way to be nice to white people and depended upon them for a substantial part of his business. With reference to his personal life, MORRIS was divorced from EMMA BROWN who now resides in Ferriday, Louisiana. In recent times, until at least five months ago, a girl known to WHITE only as MATTIE, and who works for BILL HANEY, was the mistress of MORRIS. This relationship ended due to the fact that MORRIS considered her to be jealous. MORRIS had been living with MATTIE until he ended the relationship and moved back to the living area in his shop. WHITE knew of no other women, white or colored in MORRIS' life.

WHITE advised that he was home on the night of the fire and did not hear about it until the next morning. He visited MORRIS frequently in the hospital before the latter died. MORRIS claimed that he did not know who the men were who caused the fire, but WHITE believes that their identities were known to MORRIS. There are rumors around Ferriday, that the refusal of MORRIS to identify these men was due to MORRIS' fear for the life of his grandson. WHITE could not furnish the names of the sources of this rumor or of the persons who had repeated it.

MORRIS stated that JOHN GRIFFIN and EMMA BROWN said that they were with MORRIS on the morning of his first day in the hospital and MORRIS was the remark, "I didn't think they were going to do anything to me. I thought all white men were my friends."

1/23/63 at Stogore, Louisiana
SA JAMES H. SCHNEPP
LIAM QUACKENBUSH/dcc

NO 137-3235

1/25/63

WHITE had no explanation or opinion as to the significance of the above remark. There have not been any recent serious incidents that created friction between MORRIS and the white community. WHITE stated that he did hear that last summer MORRIS had called the local police and asked them to chastise his grandson for staying out late. As a follow up to this request a local policeman, not further identified, went to MORRIS' shop, some sort of argument followed and the officer pulled a gun on MORRIS. HARRISON JONES, a Deacon in a church in Jonesville, Louisiana, was supposed to have been present in the shop when this incident occurred.

WHITE informed that he was sure that MORRIS knew all of the local police officers by name and would be able to identify them by sight. WHITE stated that there was a rumor among the Negro people that police officers were involved in the burning of MORRIS' shop, but no one apparently had anything to back up this rumor.

With reference to the burning, MORRIS explained to WHITE, during one of his visits to the hospital, that he had heard glass break after which he rushed into his shop from the living area. WHITE was not sure but had the impression that MORRIS placed the responsible men inside the shop. MORRIS specifically denied that either man had a shotgun. He did say that there was gasoline on the floor and that there were flames all over after one of the men waved his hand or threw something.

WHITE advised that there were many visitors to the hospital and that Reverend HERBERT SMITH from Clayton, Louisiana, stayed with MORRIS the first day at the hospital. He had a nurse whose last name was BARNES stay with him every night. During the day, MORRIS' step-mother, ERIE MORRIS, stayed with him in the hospital. WHITE stated that he never got the impression that any of the visitors were just attempting to determine if MORRIS had named the persons responsible for the burning, but believed they were all acutely concerned with MORRIS's condition.

MORRIS' closest friends included CATHERINE JOHNSON, her daughter, THOMAS HART and WILLIE HANEY, all colored people living in Ferriday. One LLOYD PAUL, a white man in the used car business in Ferriday, was also a close friend of MORRIS.

With referenced to a "finger" found in the alley next to the burned shop, WHITE explained that this was the skin and fingernail from one of MORRIS' fingers. WHITE purposely examined MORRIS' hands after hearing about the finger and disclosed that the skin and fingernail was missing from one finger. He could not recall the exact finger.

In spite of this close relationship, WHITE did not believe that MORRIS would confide in him with reference to any personal problem, nor would WHITE necessarily know about any possible affair MORRIS may have had with a white woman. WHITE did recall that many years ago, possibly in the early 1940s, MORRIS had a close relationship with the owner or operator, name not recalled, of the Billups Station, up the street from his shop and the white wife of this man.

WHITE advised that there were many visitors to the hospital and that Reverend L. LAMONT SMITH from Clayton, Louisiana, stayed with MORRIS the first day at the hospital. He had a nurse whose last name was MORRIS stay with him every night. During the day, MORRIS' step-mother, IRMA MORRIS, stayed with him in the hospital. WHITE stated that he never got the impression that any of the visitors were just attempting to determine if MORRIS had named the persons responsible for the burning, but believed they were all acutely concerned with MORRIS's condition.

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There were rumors at that time that MORRIS was having an affair with this woman. He stated that this man and his wife departed Farriday many years ago and he, WHITE, did not believe there was anything to this rumor.

MORRIS used to take trips out of town and out of State as often as twice a year. At least once he went to New York City. MORRIS told WHITE that when he arrived in those out of town places he went to the biggest shoe repair shop in town, looked for new ideas in shoe repairing and at times, brought ideas back to Farriday to put into operation in his own shoe shop.

WHITE stated he could think of absolutely no reason anyone would want to harm MORRIS. He stated that MORRIS was not involved in any illegal activity. WHITE informed that he was in MORRIS' shop most every day and by this, does not think it possible that MORRIS could have been doing anything illegal unless he, WHITE, knew of it and he knew of nothing along this line.

WHITE was shown a five gallon can which was located in the ruins of the fire of MORRIS' shop. WHITE stated he had been in MORRIS' shop many times but had never seen a five gallon can or container of any kind.

CHARLES HUDMALL, 87 Greenbush Street, furnished the following information:

He knows FRANK MORRIS for at least 25 years. Most of his dealings with MORRIS was as a customer and at one time he was in MORRIS' shop almost weekly.

He has never heard of any difficulties MORRIS has had with anyone, white or Negro. He has heard his Tuesday radio program and does not see how anyone could have been offended by anything MORRIS said on it.

He last saw MORRIS the week end before the fire. He was home asleep the night of the fire and did not hear of it until the next day. He did not go to the hospital to visit MORRIS.

He has never heard that MORRIS was involved with any women, and has no reason to suspect he has had any trouble in connection with white women. He has not heard that MORRIS received any sort of threat before the fire.

HUDMALL does not have a telephone, but there is a phone in his home located in his mother's house, located next door. Either he or his mother have received any threats, telephonic or otherwise. He heard someone say that FRANK GRAHAM, the barber, received a telephone threat after the fire. He might have been told this by LEO GRAHAM, FRANK's son, but is not certain. He also heard a rumor that he, HUDMALL, had received a threat. He does not know how this rumor got started and it is absolutely untrue. He also heard something about a young Negro who worked at the funeral home leaving town because he had received a threatening phone call. He does not believe the latter rumor either because this man was from out of town and had likewise not been involved in any racial matters or trouble to his knowledge. He feels he might have left town just because the rumors got started.

He has never heard anything that would indicate MORRIS was selling anything illegal in his shop. He has no information as to how the fire started or who might have been responsible. He knows no possible motives anyone would have had for burning MORRIS' shop.

1/31/66 at Terriday, Louisiana
SA DONALD B. BELMONT &
SA MCINNIS L. WARD/gal

File # 157-3293

Date dictated 1/31/63

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

2/5/68

Reverend ALFREDERICK WILLIAMS, 614 Carroll Avenue, Ferriday, Louisiana, advised he is pastor of the Mercy Boat Baptist Church, Ferriday, and is also pastor of St. Matthews Baptist Church in New Orleans, Louisiana. He spends half of each month at each church. He was not in Ferriday at the time FRANK MORRIS' shoe shop was burned, having left town the day before the fire, and he did not return until after FRANK MORRIS died.

He stated he has been pastor of the Mercy Boat Baptist Church for three years and for two years before he was affiliated with that church under the pastorate of his father. FRANK MORRIS was a member of that church, holding the position of pastor's chief usher, and was a faithful attendant at the church. Rev. WILLIAMS considered him to be a very fine person and stated he was the type of person whom everybody loved and who tried to do his best at whatever he was doing.

Rev. WILLIAMS stated that although he had been connected with that church only five years, he has known FRANK MORRIS for many years. He was unable to think of any motive anyone would have for burning down MORRIS' shoe shop and stated he knew of nothing in MORRIS' past or his recent activities that would cause resentment by anyone against MORRIS. To the best of his knowledge, MORRIS got along well with law enforcement officers and had been in no trouble with the law. He has no knowledge that MORRIS was ever a member of any organization other than the church, and he has never known MORRIS to be active in the promotion of integration in the community.

Rev. WILLIAMS stated he had received no information from members of his congregation or anyone else that anyone had seen the fire being started at MORRIS' shoe shop or that they knew the identity of the persons who had started it.

150

1/31/68 " Ferriday, La.

File # NO 157-3255

SA DONALD R. BELMONT

SA ROY L. WARD

ich

Date dictated 1/31/68

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Mr. PETH H. TURNER, JR., 514 South Seventh Street, Ferriday, Louisiana, was advised of the identities of the interviewing agents. TURNER advised he had known FRANK MORRIS for about 25 or 30 years and during all this time he has never known anyone who had a grudge against MORRIS. TURNER found that MORRIS was well liked by the Negroes and whites in the community. He did not know anything about MORRIS' business affairs except that MORRIS had the only shoe repair shop in Ferriday and had both white and Negro customers. He did not know anything regarding the private, personal life of MORRIS and thought that he was a very religious man.

TURNER advised that MORRIS had a radio program on the local radio station each Sunday morning and would dedicate songs to all persons regardless of race and would put in plugs for local business concerns. TURNER advised that he never heard MORRIS make any statement on this program that could offend anyone. MORRIS was always polite and humble to all women and would go out to the cars to get shoes and to take shoes as he, MORRIS, did not like for the women to have to come into his shop as some men were usually sitting around in the shop and these men would sometimes talk "ugly."

TURNER advised that he is a member of the volunteer fire department and on the night of the fire at MORRIS' shoe shop he did not arrive until the fire truck was at the scene and many people had gathered at the fire. TURNER stated he did not see or hear anything that night as to who or what might have started the fire in the shop. He did not know until the following morning that FRANK MORRIS had been burned.

TURNER advised he did not know what cleaning agent MORRIS used in the shop but stated that MORRIS probably used Varsol or could have possibly used naphtha. He thought probably MORRIS had Varsol, and Varsol can be purchased in Ferriday at the Magnolia Oil Company.

TURNER stated that he did not know of any white people who were friends of MORRIS except LLOYD PAUL. PAUL

1/28/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana File # NO. 157-3255
SA ELMER B. LITCHFIELD and
SA WILLIAM QUACKENBUSH /med Date dictated 1/28/65

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operated a used car lot next to the shoe shop of MORRIS and would visit in the shop.

TURNER advised that he had heard of an incident where FRANK MORRIS had supposedly made a telephone call to the wife of Mr. [] and [] allegedly went to the shop of MORRIS and put a gun on MORRIS. TURNER had no personal knowledge of this incident and advised that it was some "gossip" he had heard and did not recall from whom he had heard this. MORRIS never mentioned the incident to him, and he never asked MORRIS anything about the incident.

TURNER advised that he had never received any threats and had heard that "GRAHAM at the barber shop on Front Street had received a call after the fire." He did not have any information regarding the call and stated the fact that GRAHAM had received the call was common knowledge throughout the town.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

2-2-65

Mr. LLOYD PAUL, Box 816, Ferriday, Louisiana, was advised of the identities of the interviewing agents. He advised he had known FRANK MORRIS for 20 to 25 years and was a good friend of MORRIS'. PAUL advised that he had a used car lot next to the shoe shop that MORRIS operated and would go into MORRIS' shop several times during the day when his, PAUL's, business was slack and would talk with MORRIS.

PAUL advised that he and MORRIS would go out of town together on occasion. When he, PAUL, had some cars to pick up to bring to Ferriday for sale he would ask MORRIS to go along and drive one of the cars for him and if MORRIS was not busy he would go. These trips were usually to Monroe, Louisiana. PAUL stated that in about May, 1964, he went to Atlanta, Georgia, on a business trip and MORRIS drove to Atlanta with him. MORRIS returned on an airplane and PAUL stated he did not know where MORRIS stayed while in Atlanta, nor did he know whom MORRIS contacted while in Atlanta. PAUL advised that MORRIS would on occasion ask to use one of the cars that PAUL had on his used car lot and PAUL stated he would let MORRIS use a car as he considered MORRIS his friend.

He advised that MORRIS would ride to Natchez, Mississippi, with him and he would leave MORRIS in the Negro section of Natchez and usually would have an understanding he was to pick MORRIS up a couple or three hours later. He stated he did not know of any friends, male or female, that MORRIS had in Natchez, Mississippi. PAUL stated that on these trips he and MORRIS took there was never any time that there were any white women in the car with them nor was there ever a time that any Negro women were in the car with them.

PAUL stated that he knew that MORRIS usually had a "Negro woman friend" in Ferriday but did not know of any problems that he might have had with any of these women. PAUL stated that the only time he ever knew of anything happening resembling a problem was on one occasion one of the women whom MORRIS was living with came to the shop and supposedly found MORRIS with another Negro woman. PAUL stated that the woman MORRIS was living with created a scene by

On 1/29/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana

File # 157-3255

SA ELMER B. LITCHFIELD and

SA WILLIAM QUACKENBUSH /sab

Date dictated 2/1/65

2

NO 157-3255/sab

shouting at MORRIS and he, PAUL, went over to the shop and asked her to leave and to stay away from the shop. He stated the reason he did this was because he did not want any problems or incidents at shoe shop as his business was next to the shoe shop.

PAUL advised that MORRIS was courteous and nice to everyone and to his knowledge was never involved in any incident with a white woman. PAUL advised that on his trips with MORRIS and when talking to MORRIS, MORRIS never expressed any interest in a white woman and never made any offhand or off color remarks about a white woman.

PAUL advised that MORRIS never said anything to him that would indicate he had any problems or differences with anyone.

PAUL advised that to his knowledge MORRIS was not engaged in any illegal activity and that he and MORRIS were not in any business deals together.

SA [redacted], owner and operator of radio station [redacted], was interviewed in his radio station.

He advised that FRANK MORRIS had purchased radio advertising time for a period of three years or, to the time of his death. For about one year he had spot commercials and for approximately the last two years MORRIS had a one hour program from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. on Sundays. This program was religious in nature and included gospel singing, prayers, and talks by persons connected with religion. His guests included the minister of his church and various gospel singers. The program cost MORRIS \$75 per month. WILSON stated it is difficult to imagine how this program could possibly offend anyone. He did dedicate songs to various local citizens including white women. Such dedications were always friendly and non-offensive. WILSON never heard any talk among the white community that would indicate someone had taken offense at anything said on this program. MORRIS had received mail, but, to WILSON's knowledge, none of it was threatening or disparaging.

WILSON had heard rumors several months ago, sources not known, that MORRIS had been active in Civil Rights work. WILSON had not heard this rumor in the last six months.

Another rumor heard in the white community is that on the night of the fire some unknown white man had taken his child's shoes to MORRIS's shop to be repaired. MORRIS was allegedly with another man, both were described as "a little loaded," and he, MORRIS, didn't want to take the shoes.

WILSON observed that MORRIS drank intoxicants but that he, WILSON, had never seen MORRIS intoxicated.

MORRIS was not known to have been in trouble with the law. In fact, it was not uncommon to see MORRIS talking to different policemen who had stopped by his shop.

WILSON had been in MORRIS's shoe shop which he

1/28/65 at Ferriday, La. File = NO 157-3255

SA ELMER B. LITCHFIELD and

SA WILLIAM QUACKENBUSH /sjt

Date dictated 1/29/65

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NO 157-3255/sjt

2

described as a "fire trap," and he was of the opinion that if a fire started, the building would burn very fast. The belief of the white community is that the fire was an accident, but if it was discovered that someone started it intentionally, he should be caught and punished.

WILSON does not know of any problems between the Whites and Negroes in the community.

WILSON had no information concerning the trips that MORRIS had taken on occasion to other cities, his affairs with women, or any phase of his personal life.

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LOVE, E. LOVE, Attorney, Ferriday, Louisiana, was advised of the identity of the interviewing Agent. The following information was furnished by LOVE:

LOVE advised that he was the attorney for FRANK MORRIS who formerly operated the only shoe repair shop in Ferriday, Louisiana. LOVE continued by saying that he had known MORRIS from 1948 to the time of his death in December 1964.

LOVE stated that he handled all of MORRIS' legal affairs which consisted of routine business transactions. LOVE advised that to the best of his knowledge MORRIS had never been in any difficulty with any police agencies. LOVE added that he had handled one transaction for MORRIS involving a law suit. He stated that this transaction was back in 1948, possibly in the fall of the year. MORRIS stated that the suit was against MORRIS and had been started by EDNA BROWN, MORRIS' former wife. The suit had to do with back payment of the divorce settlement.

LOVE advised that as far as MORRIS' business transactions were concerned he knew of no instance where MORRIS engaged in anything but ethical business transactions. LOVE stated that he knew very little as far as MORRIS' personal life was concerned as they had no social contact. LOVE stated that as far as he knew, MORRIS had no business partners nor was he engaged in any venture other than the operation of the shoe shop. LOVE noted that MORRIS would appear on a local radio station on Sunday morning on spiritual type program where he (MORRIS) would dedicate religious recordings to the various residents of Ferriday, both white and colored. LOVE stated that there had never been any legal problems as a result of MORRIS' participation in these programs. LOVE added that he had never heard any of the residents of Ferriday object to the program as it appeared to have been done in good taste. LOVE stated that as far as he knew MORRIS had many friends in the white community in Ferriday as he was always most respectful in his dealings with the white customers who frequented the shoe shop. LOVE noted that he did not believe

1/28/66 at Ferriday, La.

File # NO 157-3255

SA THOMAS MC GUINNESS, JR. :ch

Date dictated 1/31/65

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58

ME 15-1735

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that MORRIS was involved in any civil rights movement as he believes that MORRIS would have discussed any such involvement with him as to any possible legal problems which could arise.

LOVE continued by saying that he knows LLOYD PAUL, as the operator of a used car lot on South Fourth Street in Ferriday, Louisiana. As far as business transactions that might have been made between PAUL and MORRIS, he was not aware of any. LOVE stated that he has heard that the used car lot run by PAUL is not a very lucrative operation and therefore doubts if PAUL was in any position to lend MORRIS money, but the possibility exists that MORRIS might have loaned PAUL money, although this was never mentioned to him by MORRIS.

LOVE stated that with regard to any trips MORRIS might have taken, MORRIS never discussed them with him. LOVE said that the only time he had heard of these trips was from a friend of his who told him that an attorney in Natchez, Mississippi, was acting on MORRIS' behalf in a law suit against the Ajapa Hotel in Houston, Texas. LOVE stated that the suit was instituted by MORRIS for an injury that he received while a guest at the hotel in November of 1962. LOVE stated that he believes the suit was settled and that he does not have any further details concerning this suit.

LOVE advised that CLEMENTINE MORRIS, daughter of FRANK MORRIS, was the sole heir to MORRIS' estate. LOVE advised that MORRIS resides at 712 West Orange Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. LOVE noted that MORRIS was an illegitimate child, therefore, his parents were ineligible to inherit his estate under state law. LOVE stated that an approximation of the condition of MORRIS' estate would be as follows:

\$33,993 - total assets of which \$17,000 was in property and \$16,993 in claims against insurance companies. Against this estate there is a figure of less than \$10,000 indebtedness. The figure of \$10,000 represents an estimate of the money owed to the various suppliers with whom MORRIS did business. In addition to the suppliers there were several firms who had sold machinery to MORRIS, who might possibly have additional payments which are due them. After the reduction of the estimated \$10,000, CLEMENTINE MORRIS would

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received approximately \$20,000. LOVE noted that there
was a small insurance policy in the name of
[redacted] who was FRANK MORRIS' grandson.

LOVE continued by saying that he knew of no
legal situation that MORRIS could have gotten into that
he could not have discussed with LOVE. LOVE advised that
he now receives all of MORRIS' mail, and he has not re-
ceived any correspondence which would indicate MORRIS'
involvement in any integration movement.

LOVE advised that he does not know of any
individual from Shreveport, Louisiana, who would have any
interest in MORRIS' shop or its fixtures. LOVE advised
that in going through the personal effects of MORRIS which
survived the fire he has found nothing which would indicate
MORRIS being in any sort of financial difficulty. LOVE
noted that he did find one piece of correspondence between
MORRIS and the Payscott Landis Machine Company, 8707 River-
view Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri, which indicated that
MORRIS might have purchased some machinery and might possibly
still owe some money on the machinery. LOVE advised that he
was in the process of trying to ascertain the status of this
account.

LOVE stated that he had been MORRIS' attorney
since 1948. He continued by saying that during this time
there was only one period which MORRIS was in any sort of
financial difficulty. This was from 1948-52, the reason for
the difficulty being that MORRIS' business was not doing a
volume business due to the fact that the entire area was
undergoing a transition and money was "tight."

LOVE advised that the property he had previously
mentioned was the tract of land on which MORRIS' shop was
located. LOVE added that he believes that the title to this
land is free and clear of any liens, but he was going to
check and insure that this was correct.

LOVE concluded by saying that he was at a complete
loss to explain why anyone would want to burn MORRIS out if
this is what actually happened. He stated that he, as
MORRIS' attorney, could provide no apparent reason for anyone
doing this to his former client.

2/1/65

C. W. PHARIS, Louisiana State Deputy Fire Marshal, furnished the following information:

He advised that he was called by Ferriday Fire Chief MOUELLE at about 4:00 A.M., on December 10, 1964, concerning the fire which had occurred at FRANK MORRIS' Shoe Shop. MOUELLE told him that a terrible thing had occurred and inasmuch as he did not get along too well with the Fire Marshal assigned to the area, he wanted him, PHARIS, to do the investigation. PHARIS advised him that it would have to be OK'd by his supervisor. PHARIS stated that about ten minutes later he received a call from his supervisor, Mr. JOHNSON, who told him to proceed to Ferriday and conduct the necessary investigation. PHARIS then proceeded to Jonesville and picked up W. A. KENDRICKS, also a Deputy State Fire Marshal, and then proceeded to Ferriday, arriving at the scene of the fire at about 7:00 A.M.

MOUELLE advised PHARIS that the alarm was called in at about 1:45 A.M., December 10, 1964. MOUELLE also told PHARIS that he had heard that the victim had stated that two or three white men had set the fire, one of the men allegedly held a shotgun on MORRIS while the fire was being set.

PHARIS stated that in conjunction with FBI Agents, he interviewed JOHNNY GRIFFIN, [redacted] and the victim, FRANK MORRIS. He then made an examination of the debris and secured some samples which he requested be examined by the FBI Laboratory. Further investigation revealed that the fire originated in the interior of the shop; however, a determination as to a particular location within the shop could not be made due to the extensive damage to the entire structure. The estimated value of the building was \$8,000, and the estimated value of the contents and machinery in the shop was \$12,000. The victim had the following insurance: \$6,500 on the building and \$5,000 on the contents.

FOIA(b)6

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1/27/65 Alexandria, Louisiana

NO 157-3255

SA DONALD J. MC GORTY/lrs

Date dictated

1/27/65

MO 157-3255

3

During subsequent investigation PHARIS stated he spoke to JAMES SIMOLAK. He stated that SIMOLAK was the night attendant at the Hillups Service Station. SIMOLAK advised PHARIS that he had not seen nor heard the fire until the police car drove up, at which time he noticed the fire and the victim running toward the service station. However, he told Pharis that about ten minutes prior to the time he noticed the fire, he saw a black sedan car pull out of the alley next to MORRIS' shoe shop and head toward the Vidalia area at a high rate of speed.

PHARIS went on to state that JUNIOR HARP, who is a fireman in Ferriday, gave him the names of two individuals who were suppose to be in the Ku Klux Klan. These individuals were DEWEY CLARK and RAY WILLIAMS. PHARIS also stated that DEWEY CLARK, who resides somewhere between Ferriday and Vidalia, was seen by Ferriday City Policeman KNIGHT or MC KNIGHT, at the scene of the fire while it was being fought during the early morning hours. PHARIS also learned, from JOHNNY GRIFFIN, that the victim had only one visitor on the night prior to the fire. This individual was FRANK ASHFORD, who operates a service station in Ferriday. ASHFORD is a Negro and allegedly was in MORRIS' shop for five or ten minutes somewhere between 8:00 P.M. and 9:00 P.M.

The following information was obtained by PHARIS from EARLY HAYES on January 7, 1965:

HAYES is a teacher in the Negro high school in Ferriday. HAYES advised him that FRANK MORRIS' cousin, DELA MAE SMITH, told him that MORRIS had told her that three white men and one Negro had set the fire. She stated that MORRIS said that two of the white men were [redacted] and DE LAUGHTER. HAYES further advised PHARIS that at the time SMITH gave him this information, she was drunk. HAYES also stated that he has heard "street talk" that MORRIS used to set up dates for men and women at his place. PHARIS stated that HAYES inferred that these dates were for both white and Negroes. HAYES further advised PHARIS that a [redacted] Negro male, 17 years old, had talked to other boys at the high school, telling them that his uncle had seen or heard MORRIS arguing with two

FOIA(b)6
FOIA(L)7 - (C)

163

NO 157-9255

3

white men in front of his shop on the night of the fire. There was allegedly a Negro who was acting as a look-out for these two white men.

PHARIS advised that he had not spoken to LLOYD PAUL, who runs the used car lot next to MORRIS' shop. However, he added that the business is partly owned by one CHARLES HUFFMAN, whom PHARIS described as a "bad egg." PHARIS stated that HUFFMAN was also the part owner of a bar-dance hall, that recently burned down in the City of Ferriday.

PHARIS further stated that his department's efforts to locate JOHNNY BECKWITH have been negative to date. He has learned that BECKWITH is supposed to be presently living somewhere in Jonesboro, Louisiana.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1
1 63
Mayor L. B. DAVIS, Ferriday City Hall, furnished the following information:

About two years ago FRANK MORRIS came to his office and complained that [redacted] of the Ferriday Fire Department had come to his shop and pulled a gun on him while they were engaged in an argument. Mayor DAVIS interviewed all parties involved and determined that MORRIS had called the Ferriday Police Department to talk to some officer. Mrs. [redacted] answered the telephone as customary when there is no one in the office. MORRIS was a little abusive when told there was no officer there, and Mrs. [redacted] in turn got mad and said something she should not have said to MORRIS. The upshot of the entire matter was that both MORRIS and Mrs. [redacted] were "off base" on the matter. Mrs. [redacted] then related the matter to her husband who got mad and went to MORRIS' shop armed with his revolver. Mayor DAVIS talked to all of them, and they all apologized to one another. After this incident, [redacted] and MORRIS have been on good terms.

He has never heard of any incident involving FRANK DELAUGHTER and MORRIS. He pointed out that FRANK DELAUGHTER formerly had the job that [redacted] has at this time, and DELAUGHTER's wife handled the incoming telephone calls as Mrs. [redacted] does at the present time. This was prior to October, 1962, because DELAUGHTER left the department at that time. He is confident someone has confused the [redacted] incident with DELAUGHTER. As far as he knows, DELAUGHTER was always on good terms with MORRIS. To his knowledge, DELAUGHTER is not related to any policeman presently on the force, either by blood or marriage.

The [redacted] Ferriday Police Department were [redacted] and THOMAS LOFTON. These are the two officers [redacted] the night of the fire.

He talked to MORRIS one time at the hospital and this was sometime on the morning of December 10, 1965. He

NW#: 34210

DocId:31396151

NO 157-3255

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2

felt he knew MORRIS well enough that the latter would confide in him if he knew the identities of persons responsible for the fire. MORRIS told him he had seen two white men at the shop but did not know them. He believes MORRIS did not know who they were because as previously stated feels MORRIS would have told him.

He has no additional information concerning the matter.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

2/5/65

Deputy Sheriff FRANK DE LAUGHTER, Vidalia, Louisiana, was advised of the identities of the interviewing agents. He was advised by SA LITCHFIELD that he did not have to make a statement and that any statement he did make could be used against him in a court of law. He was advised by SA LITCHFIELD of his right to consult an attorney or anyone else prior to making a statement. No threats or promises were made to him to get him to make a statement.

DE LAUGHTER advised that he had known FRANK MORRIS since 1957 when he, DE LAUGHTER, moved to Ferriday, Louisiana, and had done business with MORRIS since that time up until the death of MORRIS. DE LAUGHTER stated that neither he nor his wife LULA MAE had ever had any trouble with MORRIS and that MORRIS had never said anything to his wife that was insulting or insinuating. He stated that his wife was formerly employed in a shoe store in Ferriday, but did not have any business dealings with MORRIS except for getting some of the family shoes repaired.

He stated that he had never received any complaints from anyone about MORRIS and had not received any information from anyone that MORRIS was connected with any illegal activity.

DE LAUGHTER stated that on the night of the fire after the fire he was told by the Sheriff to go to FERRIDAY and to MORRIS' shop. He stated that he went there and arrived about 3:00 a.m. but did not conduct any investigation. He stayed in the vicinity of the shop for about ten or fifteen minutes and went to the hospital. He stated that he went into the hospital and talked to MORRIS. He stated MORRIS did not indicate to him who burned his shop. He said that MORRIS stated that two men were outside just before the fire and he, MORRIS, saw them through the window. He stated that MORRIS did not say who the men were and only stated that he saw the two men outside the shop.

DE LAUGHTER stated he did not press MORRIS with questions as he believed MORRIS was in great pain from the

2/1/65 at Vidalia, Louisiana

File # 157-3253

SA ELMER B. LITCHFIELD and
SA WILLIAM QUACKENBUSH /sab

Date dictated 2/1/65

NO 157-3255/sab

burns he had suffered. DE LAUGHTER stated he was not able to get any descriptive data regarding the men that MORRIS thought he saw and did not have any idea as to whom they might be.

DE LAUGHTER stated that he has not heard any talk among the Negroes or the white people as to who or what might have caused the fire. He advised that he had not conducted any investigation regarding the fire as the fire was in the city of Ferriday and the Ferriday Police were handling the investigation.

He advised that no member of the Ferriday Police Department was related to him. He stated that he did recommend for a position with the Police Department. DE LAUGHTER stated that he did not have much contact with the Ferriday Policemen as he worked in the Parish and the police handled investigations in the City of Ferriday.

The following is a description of DE LAUGHTER from interview and observation:

Name	FRANK DE LAUGHTER AKA "FRANK" De LA W
Race	White
Sex	Male
Height	6' 4" LA.
Weight	250 pounds
Build	Heavy B. APPROX. 1923-1925
Hair	Brown (reddish)
Age	40 to 42
Occupation	Deputy Sheriff
Employment	Concordia Parish Sheriff's Office

On 2 March, 1964, employees of the Portland Fire Department and Police Department, furnished the following information:

Records of the Ferriday Fire Department reveal that Mrs. W. H. HARP made an entry on the book at 1:15 AM, December 10, 1964, a call was received that there was a fire at FRANK MORRIS' shoe shop in Ferriday.

After the fire had been put out, which is estimated as about one hour later, he went with the fire chief to see FRANK MORRIS who had been taken to Concordia Hospital. Also present was the District Attorney and they were told by MORRIS that two or possibly three white men had poured gasoline around the building and set it afire after he had been ordered back into the building by one of the men who held a shotgun on him. He did not name the men and claimed he did not know who they were. After hearing this information the District Attorney decided to call the FBI into the matter.

On 1/28/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana File # NO 157-3255
by SA DONALD BELMONT
SA MC INNIS L. WARD /sgr Date dictated 1/31/65

DocId 31396151

NO 157-3255 /ugr

2

Negro. He did not find this objectionable, but possibly someone else might have thought it disrespectful. In addition, for the past three or four years it has been rumored that MORRIS engages in unnatural sexual acts with his girl friends. He has no additional information as to who the women might be or circumstances. Also for the past three or four years the police department has been receiving information that MORRIS has been engaging in "bootlegging" whiskey and selling barbiturate type narcotics. The police department has never developed any positive information in this respect, but believes that MORRIS was actually "bootlegging" because the half pints of whiskey recovered at the shop after the fire were individually wrapped in newspaper.

MORRIS was a steady drinker and most of the time, it was not noticeable, however, at times MORRIS would drink a little heavier and was capable of becoming a problem. As an example in about 1961 or 1962 the Police Department had arrested a girl friend of MORRIS, whose name HARP could not recall, on a theft charge. MORRIS came to the city jail, obviously drinking, and wanted to see the woman. HARP was on duty and told him it was not during visiting hours and explained to him when he could see her. MORRIS was not satisfied with this explanation and attempted to force himself past HARP to get into the prisoner area. It was necessary that HARP pick up a night stick and threaten to use it before MORRIS agreed to comply with the visiting rules.

Since the fire he has heard another rumor from an unrecalled source to the effect that MORRIS had been arranging dates with white women for LEONID PAUL. He has no more specific information on this and does not believe it is true. He explained that PAUL is known as a ladies' man even though married and has a family, and PAUL has no problem getting women. PAUL would, therefore, need no help from MORRIS in making arrangements with women. He feels that rumor probably started because PAUL operates the used car lot adjacent to the shoe shop and PAUL was a good friend of MORRIS'. He knows that PAUL went over to the shop from time to time presumably to chat and this might have sparked the rumor. At one time PAUL got involved with the wife of the ex-chief of police at Vidalia, Louisiana, and in fact, took her away from the chief. PAUL was formerly very successful and made a lot of money as owner of the Dodge Agency in town. Later he bought the Chevrolet Agency and began drinking heavily and running around. This resulted in him filing bankruptcy proceedings and he has gone downhill since that time.

In his investigation of the matter, he learned that MORRIS made a loan from the Concordia Bank and Trust Company a few days before the fire, but does not know that this has any significance. He had bought an old truck from Delta Truck and Tractor Company a few days before the fire, making a down payment with a check for \$75. After the fire, the Delta company returned the check to the attorney handling the estate and took back the truck.

MORRIS had the only shoe repair shop in town and probably had more white customers than Negroes. He appeared to be reasonably prosperous.

He has developed no additional information regarding this matter. He described MORRIS as a Negro male, early 50's, 5' 11", 160 pounds, black hair, brown eyes.

Warranted Mr. Morris, Fire Chief, Ferriday, Louisiana, to-
ment furnished the following information.

He was not feeling well on the evening of January 26, 1965, and sometime after midnight he got out of bed and went to the bathroom. After he returned to bed that was still awake, he received a telephone call from Mrs. JUNIOR HARP at the Fire Department who advised him FRANK MORRIS' shop on 4th Street was on fire. He immediately dressed and went to the fire. Upon arrival the entire inside of the building was blazing but the walls had not collapsed, other than the front window, which had been blown out into the street. He felt at the time and still feels the heat that had built up inside the building caused the front window to blow out.

FRANK MORRIS had already been taken to the hospital and JOHNNY GRIFFIN and [redacted] had already left the area. There was a crowd of persons which had accumulated in front of the shop watching the fire.

The fire was burning with intense heat and during the fighting of the fire, the roof and walls collapsed. Chief MOUELLE was almost hit by the front wall when it fell. After the fire was out he went to the Concordia Hospital to see MORRIS. He estimates this was about an hour or more after the fire had started. MORRIS related to him that someone pointed a gun at him and told him to get back into the shop or he would blow off his head. He said the fire then started. He could not understand everything MORRIS was saying, but understood him to say at one time there were two white men and another time there were three white men. He never described them but mentioned he thought they worked at the paper mill or tire plant in Natchez, Mississippi. One of the first things MORRIS said was to ask Chief MOUELLE how bad his building was burned and whether JOHNNY GRIFFIN and [redacted] got out alright. MORRIS never mentioned anything about a car.

He again talked with MORRIS around 8:00 or 9:00 AM,

1/28/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana File # NO. 157-3255

SA's DONALD R. BELMONT and
MCINNIS L. WARD/bap

Date dictated 1/30/65

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175

...the fire started in the living room. He added
that he was in the living room at the time the fire started.

He also was present when MORRIS was interviewed
later that day by the presence of other officers and
agents of the FBI.

He doubts that MORRIS knew what he was saying
any of the interviews as he repeated the same thing
over and over and doubts that he was completely rational.

He knows MORRIS would on occasions drink
and it is his opinion that MORRIS was drunk when he
went to sleep and somehow the fire accidentally originated. He
feels that MORRIS awoke after the fire was burning intensely
and by the time he could get out, had been badly burned.
He does not know, however, if this is the case, why MORRIS
was not overcome by smoke and fumes to the extent of
suffocating and dying inside the building. He discovered
the suitcase containing half pints of whiskey which were
individually wrapped in pieces of newspaper which makes him
believe MORRIS might have been doing some "bootlegging" on
the side. In addition, he noticed 2 or 3 empty half pint
whiskey bottles on the floor of MORRIS' living quarters.
The latter is one reason why he suspects MORRIS was drinking
the night of the fire.

He feels the fire started in MORRIS' living
quarters because that area was badly burned. He was unable
to determine the origin of the fire, however, through his
investigation. He could not detect a gas or kerosene smell
in the building during his investigation.

He recalled that many years ago, MORRIS had a shoe
shop located in someone else's building and that building
also burned. He does not recall the details of this fire
and does not know an approximate date.

About two or three weeks before the fire on

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176

December 10, 1964, he inspected MORRIS' Shoe Shop and building was up to standards. He noticed that MORRIS a number of extension cords lying about the floor and plugged in several of his shoe repair machines to the cords. He told MORRIS the cords might get overloaded and to do away with them and get a safer arrangement installed. He does not know whether MORRIS corrected this or not.

MORRIS was the type person who knew everyone and would yell a greeting to anyone he knew on the street, both Negro and white. He was sort of a "mouthy" individual, but no one paid any attention to this as he was not disrespectful in this respect. He had the radio program on Sundays and Chief MOUELLE has heard him dedicate religious music to his friends, both Negro and white. Chief MOUELLE never heard anything he would consider objectionable or in poor taste on the program.

With respect to the five gallon can found inside the building, he recalls that MORRIS recently bought an old truck and feels he might have had the can for gas or oil for this truck.

He has heard that MORRIS had several Negro girl friends, but does not know their names and knows of no trouble MORRIS might have had in connection with women. He has never heard of MORRIS making any advances toward white women.

The Fire Department is composed of volunteers with the exception of Chief MOUELLE and JUNIOR HARP.

During the fire, he recalls that a white man named [redacted] drove by, stopped, and attempted to direct traffic. He was drunk, nearly fell into the fire and was getting in the way so they ran him off.

Since the fire, he has heard a rumor from un-recalled source that a cook in Haney's bar was alleged to have seen a car drive by on the street just after the explosion.

Also, ERLIE HAYES, Negro school teacher, told him

NW 14210

DocId:31396151

NO 157-3255/bap

4

that DELLA MAE SMITH, Negro maid at the hospital, had information as to who burned the shop, but he discounted the story because SMITH is a common drunk and cannot be considered reliable.

He has developed no additional information and has no suspects in this matter.

Records of the Commercial Bank and Trust Company reflect the following information:

FRANK MORRIS opened a savings account with that bank in the name of FRANK MORRIS on December 31, 1963 with a deposit of \$450.00. He made the last deposit into this account on December 31, 1964 in the amount of \$364.20. This account has no interest to the name of [redacted]. The latter was done by the attorney for the MORRIS estate since [redacted] who is MORRIS' grandson, has the legal surname of [redacted]. The total amount in the account is \$871.62.

MORRIS has also maintained a checking account at the bank for many years, however, he apparently wrote few checks since he conducted most of his business transactions in cash. His balance in the checking account seldom exceeded \$500.00.

It was general practice for MORRIS to make frequent signature loans from the bank, which he would repay by making deposits almost daily toward payment of the loan. These payments were generally in cash and MORRIS would make them through the night depository at the bank. As soon as MORRIS would pay off the loan, he would immediately make another one. He regularly paid off these loans and created no problems for the bank. He was considered a good credit risk. He made signature loans on the following dates for indicated amounts:

December 8, 1964	\$500.00
November 23, 1964	500.00
November 9, 1964	500.00
October 26, 1964	500.00
October 15, 1964	500.00
September 30, 1964	500.00
September 16, 1964	500.00

1/29/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana

File # NO 157-3255

SA DONALD R. BELMONT and
SA MC INNIS L. WARD /scr

Date dictated 1/30/65

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180

NW# 34210

DocId: 31396151

NW# 34210

DocId: 31396151

NO 157-3255/scr
2

August 25, 1964	\$500.00
August 12, 1964	500.00
July 27, 1964	500.00
July 14, 1964	500.00
July 2, 1964	500.00
June 12, 1964	500.00
May 20, 1964	500.00
May 4, 1964	500.00
April 6, 1964	500.00
March 19, 1964	500.00
March 3, 1964	500.00
February 11, 1964	500.00
January 15, 1964	500.00
December 31, 1963	250.00
September 20, 1963	500.00
June 28, 1963	300.00

MORRIS presently owes no money on the loans, since the balance in his checking account covered the balance of the loan.

The above information is available only through issuance of a subpoena duces tecum to K.E. BLAYLOCK, Vice-President and Manager of the Concordia Bank and Trust Company, Ferriday, Louisiana.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1Date 2/4/65

K. E. BLAYLOCK, Vice President and Manager, Concordia Bank and Trust Company, Main Street, furnished the following information:

He knew FRANK MORRIS for a number of years and knows he was considered as a good credit risk in the community. In transactions he has had with MORRIS, a signature loan was all that was necessary. MORRIS banked with this bank and to his knowledge did not do business with any other banks.

MORRIS operated the only shoe repair shop in town therefore had a number of white customers. To the best of his knowledge MORRIS was well regarded by the white residents of the community and he has never heard of any differences he had with anyone.

He has never heard of MORRIS being involved in racial matters or anything of a controversial nature. He recalls that MORRIS had the Sunday radio program, but never heard anyone voice any dissatisfaction concerning MORRIS' dedication of songs to his white customers.

He has no information as to how MORRIS' shop burned down or who might have been responsible.

3-1-65

The following is the result of a search of
 files of FRANK MORRIS' shoe shop, located on South 4
 Street, Ferriday, Louisiana, by SA THOMAS MC GUINNESS

Facing the front of MORRIS' shoe shop
 on South 4 Street to the rear it was noted that the left
 wall remained intact with the right front plate
 window missing. The left front wall was 75% dam-
 aged with the right corner of the left front wall re-
 maining intact. The left side wall was 50% demolished
 principal portion of the damage occurring at the
 wall near the corner of the left front wall. The
 roof which had previously sheltered MORRIS' shoe
 quarters which were to the right rear of his shop
 to a great extent by the fire but it remained
 house in which JOHNNY GRIFFIN lived which is 1
 to the rear of the store was damaged and score
 The roof of this dwelling remained intact.

The interior of the shop was completely covered
 with approximately eight inches of rubble. A clearing was
 made of several portions of the floor, and it revealed that
 the floor was composed primarily of concrete. It is to be
 noted, however, that an area of less than three feet from
 the left side wall window was covered by a linoleum type
 covering.

In the center of the shoe shop were located
 numerous pairs of shoe heels which had not been damaged
 nor were there any indications that these heels had been
 exposed to any extreme heat. Throughout the entire floor
 area there were many cans which it is believed that they
 contained shoe polish. In addition, there were numerous
 cans of the one gallon variety which appeared to have con-
 tained a glue-like substance.

The area in which FRANK MORRIS lived was located
 to the right rear of the shop. The interior of these living
 quarters bore evidence of having been exposed to fire. The

1/29/65 at Ferriday, La, File # NO 157-3255

A THOMAS MC GUINNESS, JR. :ch Date dictated 2/4/65

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185

DocId:31396151

NO 157-3255

TM:ch

2

mattress on MORRIS' bed was not burned. However, the
dresser in MORRIS' living quarters was completely burned.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

2/10/65

The following is a description of the interior of FRANK MORRIS' shop as obtained through interview of JOHNNY GRIFFIN who was employed by MORRIS in the shop up until the time that it was destroyed by fire.

GRIFFIN advised that walking in the front door of MORRIS' shoe shop on the left hand side was a shoe shine stand which was placed directly against the front window. Continuing on to the rear of MORRIS' shop was located a work area which was composed of a counter and four machines. Toward the rear of the shop located in the left corner was a combination bath and storage room. Returning to the front portion of MORRIS' shop and continuing to the rear there were located approximately ten display counters which were stocked with numerous dry goods. GRIFFIN noted that the front of the shop was made entirely of concrete with the work area around the machines protected by linoleum and plywood. GRIFFIN stated that the floor was painted red and was in good condition. GRIFFIN stated that the walls of the shop were faced with numerous display cases which contained men, women and children's shoes. In addition these cases contained cowboy boots and similar wearing apparel.

Continuing on to the rear portion of the shop where FRANK MORRIS lived GRIFFIN stated that MORRIS had a bed which was directly between the two windows in the living quarters, a refrigerator and several dressers.

GRIFFIN noted that there was a partition directly in front of the door used by MORRIS to enter the shop which meant that it was necessary upon emerging from MORRIS' living quarters to make a left hand turn followed by a sharp right hand turn in order to see the interior of the shoe shop.

NW#: 34210

DocId: 31396151

DRAWING OF

SHOP OF FRANK MORRIS

FERRIDAY LOUISIANA

GRIFFIN'S
HOUSE

22 VICTIM'S
23 QUARTERS

21

Index

1-4 Shoe repair
machines

5-16 Display
case and
counters

17-19 Chairs

20 Morris's bed

21 Refrigerator

22-23 Dressers

BATH
&
STORAGE

FRANK MORRIS'S
Shop

17

18

19

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

SOUTH 4TH STREET

188

DRAWING
BY G. GUINNESS
1/31/65

NO 157-3255/bab

On January 25, 1965 THOMAS SIDNEY LOFTIN, Ferriday, Police Officer, advised SA's DONALD J. MCGORTY and DONALD BELMONT that he had located a suitcase in the bedroom in FRANK MORRIS' shop after the fire and it had contained 14 half pint bottles of bourbon. LOFTIN advised that this bourbon was being retained by the Ferriday Police Department.

On this same date SA DONALD J. MCGORTY examined the suitcase found by Officer THOMAS SIDNEY LOFTIN at Ferriday Police Department and determined that it contained 14 half pint bottles of bourbon individually wrapped in newspaper. The suitcase was slightly scortched but not badly burned.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 2/5/65

Mr. J. ARMSTRONG, Manager, Quality Oil and Tire, Inc., Highway 15, Wisner, Louisiana, advised that Quality Oil is the distributor for Skelley Oil Products in that area. He advised that the main office for the Quality Oil Company is at Winnsboro, Louisiana.

Mr. ARMSTRONG after viewing a five gallon can taken from the burned shoe shop of FRANK MORRIS at Ferriday, Louisiana, advised that it was the same type can used by SKELLEY Oil. He advised that that type of can was used for heavy grease and he had not had any oil in cans of that type. He checked the stock on hand in the warehouse and stated there was some light duty oil in cans of that type. He advised that he had not sold any heavy duty oil from the Wisner branch of the company in a can of that type.

Mr. ARMSTRONG stated that oil and grease in containers of the five gallon type was purchased mostly by farmers for use in tractors and farm machinery.

The cans in the warehouse of Quality Oil were checked and no cans were found with manufacture date numbers corresponding to the numbers on the can taken from the shop of FRANK MORRIS.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 2/5/65

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The cans in the warehouse of Quality Oil were checked and no cans were found with manufacture date numbers corresponding to the numbers on the can taken from the shop of FRANK MORRIS.

2/65 at Wisner, Louisiana File # 157-3255

ELMER B. LITCHFIELD and
WILLIAM QUACKENBUSH /sab

Date dictated 2/1/65

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1Date 2/10/65

Mrs. CHARLOTTE BETHELEY, General Delivery, Jonesboro, Louisiana, telephone 4683, in care of BOOKER ANDERSON, Gin Quarters, was advised of the identities of interviewing Agents. She stated that she is the mother of JOHN EDWARD BECKWITH, who formerly resided at Ferriday, Louisiana. She stated that her son visited her at Jonesboro, Louisiana, on January 17, 1965, and at that time he told her he had received telephone calls at Ferriday soon after the Negro man was burned in his shop at Ferriday around December 10, 1965, and that he was told he was to leave Ferriday at once or he would be next. Mrs. BETHELEY stated that her son told her that he left Ferriday immediately after receiving the telephone calls. She stated that she did not know where he was until he arrived in Jonesboro on January 17, 1965. She stated that he left Jonesboro the same day he arrived there to return to the Lone Star Funeral Home, 3626 Spring Avenue, Dallas 10, Texas, where he had been employed since shortly after he left Ferriday. Mrs. BETHELEY stated that her son had told her that he had been a close friend of FRANK MORRIS, who had died from burns received at Ferriday, Louisiana, around December 10, 1965, but according to Mrs. BETHELEY, her son made no mention of knowing anything regarding the circumstances of the burning of MORRIS' shop or knowing who might have been responsible for the burning of the shop.

2/5/65 at Jonesboro, LouisianaFile # NO 157-3255A's EARL COX and
PAUL M. CONRAD /bab

Date dictated

2/7/65

INDEX

ALLEN, HERBERT
 ANDERSON, FRANK
 BARNES, MARTHA
 BATEMAN, (FNU)
 BECKWITH, JOHN EDWARD
 "Bright Boy"

BEARD, WILLIE
 BLAIR, EDWARD
 BLAYLOCK, K. E.
 BROWN, EDNA

[REDACTED]
 COLLINS, TOM
 COOTON, JUNIOR
 COLVIN, DR. CHARLES HENRY
 CONEY, GEORGIA A.
 DAVIS, CHARLES

[REDACTED]
 DAVIS, W. L.
 DE LAUGHTER, FRANK,
 "Big Frank" "Frank DeLaw"

DE LAUGHTER, Mrs. FRANK

[REDACTED]
 FLEMING, FRANK
 FREEMAN, DOROTHY
 GRAHAM, LEO
 GRAHAM, SADIE
 GRAHAM, WILLIE
 GRAVELLE, OPEL
 GRIFFIN, ELIZA

[REDACTED]
 GUICE, JOHN
 HALCOMB, ROY S.
 HANEY, WILL

[REDACTED]
 HART, THOMAS J.

30, 31
 110, 111, 140-149, 151
 45-47, 126
 85

37, 94, 119, 164, 165,
 200, 201
 29, 31
 94-96
 182
 20, 38, 123, 126, 127,
 129-131, 141, 152

[REDACTED]
 108
 10, 15, 24-25, 26, 27, 28
 87, 88, 100-1
 132

[REDACTED]
 167-168

36, 39, 40, 42, 53, 66,
 78, 97, 163, 169-170
 36, 42, 169

[REDACTED]
 68, 75, 121-122, 123
 38
 146
 103-104, 105
 89, 103, 105, 118, 119
 67, 194, 196
 102

[REDACTED]
 67, 89-90, 103, 141

[REDACTED]
 92, 143

**FIFTYTHREE, THE
CARRIAGE, MARINE
MAYHEW, MARY
MASTED, MATTHEW
MCOWAN, CATHARINE
MORRISON, FLEMING
MURPHY, CATHERINE
MYNTER, HARRISON**

LOVE, LLOYD

PHARIS, C. W.
PRAETER, JANAS
PUTNAM, JAMES D.
RIAL, EZZIE
ROLLINS, BESSIE
ROOSEVELT, JAMES

SMITH, ROBERT

118, 123-124, 139, 1-
99
83-86
50, 51, 52, 53, 55-
164, 167, 189
158-160

22-23
21, 159
45, 126-127, 128
21, 128
8, 9, 10, 64, 162, 175-178
38, 69, 85, 89, 122, 123,
131, 134, 135, 145, 151,
154-155, 159, 163, 174
162-164
130, 147
29
85
48, 126
77

133-134
81
78-79, 97
43, 81
80, 97
70-72, 163
118, 145
29, 30, 31, 46, 36-43,
78, 79, 80, 97, 163, 178
153

NO 157-3735

[REDACTED]
THOMPSON, AUGUST
TURNER, PETER R. JR.
VEGAS, VICTOR
VOGT, MARGARET

[REDACTED]
WARREN, R. W.
WHITE, JAMES
WILLIAMS, ALFREDERICK, "Fred"
WILLIAMS, GERTRUDE "Speedy"
WILSON, GEORGE
WISNER, MARY E.

[REDACTED]
41, 43, 98
151-152
109
28, 32, 33

[REDACTED]
15, 16, 17, 18, 166, 171
94, 118, 141-144
37, 150
125, 133
156, 157
25, 27-28

FOIA(b)6
FOIA(b)7 - (C)

BU 157-2220

MIL/day

1

The following are two interviews recorded on IBM Dictaphone by Special Agent PAUL R. LANCASTER with the victim. It is noted that a great deal of the victim's answers are very difficult to understand and it is set forth below as near verbatim as possible:

This is Special Agent PAUL R. LANCASTER at the Ferriday Hospital. Time is 9:56 AM on Thursday, December 10, 1964. We are about to go into the Hospital Room of FRANK MORRIS in Room 101 and his friend JOHNNY GRIFFIN who is going to try to talk with FRANK.

GRIFFIN: FRANK this is JOHNNY.

Victim: Uh (unintelligible)

GRIFFIN: All right

Victim: (Unintelligible question about [redacted])

GRIFFIN: [redacted] is all right.

Victim: Did he get burned?

GRIFFIN: Uh huh, I didn't get burned.

Can you identify who they was, FRANK?

Victim: I don't know exactly who they was. Uh I don't know exactly who they was.

GRIFFIN: Was there a car there?

Victim: Uh huh white car when I heard they they hit the window ——— knocked the window out was when I woke up. I don't know exactly who it was in the car outside.

GRIFFIN: What window was it?

Victim: Where we work at.

GRIFFIN: By the shine stand?

Victim: Uh huh

GRIFFIN: Was you in the place or in the back?

FOIA(b)6

FOIA(b)7 - (C)

Victim: I was in the back.
GRIFFIN: So is in back.
Victim: Yeah it hurts, it hurts so.
GRIFFIN: You don't know?
Victim: And I don't know.
GRIFFIN: You ever see them before?
Victim: I imagine so. — go fast I couldn't
GRIFFIN: You couldn't see who they was?
Victim: No and (groans)
GRIFFIN: There ain't nothing you want to tell me.
Victim: So just no work (unintelligible) everything burnt
up.
GRIFFIN: Yeah everything burnt up.
Victim: It hurts so
GRIFFIN: We want to find out who he was, FRANK. Why don't
— you tell us please.
Victim: I can't tell you I don't ^{know} exactly who.
GRIFFIN: That's the only way you are going to solve this
thing is to tell us.
Victim: I know. It hurts.
GRIFFIN: You don't want to tell.
Victim: I don't know exactly who it was. (groan)
GRIFFIN: Do you know who did it?

no 100-2221 Aug

Victim: I don't exactly know ——— (sounds like colored
follows man.) ——— (unintelligible)

GRIFFIN: Eh

Victim: Just take care of yourself and the boy. I don't
know whether I will get well or not. (unintelligible) and
shape I'm in.

GRIFFIN: Do you ain't in no bad shape.

Victim: Backen? (groan) You get out there
didn't you?

GRIFFIN: Yeah she did.

Burned those trees and everything.

Victim: Yes Partner I gets cold (sounds like kill goats)
(unintelligible) fresh gown.

GRIFFIN: No worried about it. We want to find out who it
is. You won't tell us.

Victim: I can't do it. I don't exactly know.

GRIFFIN: Why you can't do it?

Victim: I don't know exactly who it was. I had to run
real fast. See I come out there man put a shotgun on me
told me to get back in there.

GRIFFIN: Well you must have saw them if he told you to get
back in there.

Victim: Uh huh.

GRIFFIN: Didn't you? Eh?

Victim: Uh huh.

GRIFFIN: Well why don't you tell us who it is.

Victim: (Unintelligible) I don't exactly know.

ME 157-2852/100

GRIPPIN: Did you ever see them before?
Victim: Oh Sir. I guess so.
GRIPPIN: Had they ever been in the shop?
Victim: Oh Sir. I do ——— sure don't
LANCASTER: He did say that he
GRIPPIN: He did say that they had been in the shop before.
LANCASTER: But he just won't tell who it was.
GRIPPIN: He won't tell who it was.
ROLAND BOUELLE
(Chief Ferriday
Fire Dept.) I'm trying to find out something now, we are
trying to get this thing straightened out. Where
do those folk come from?
Victim: I don't know where they come from Mr. BOUELLE.
BOUELLE: You don't know where they came from?
Victim: No sir, I don't know exactly.
BOUELLE: Do they live in Ferriday?
Victim: I imagine they do.
BOUELLE: Oh?
Victim: I imagine they do.
BOUELLE: You imagine they do?
Victim: The old fellow the one out there putting gasoline
on the building, yes sir.
BOUELLE: You saw him put it around the building?
Victim: Yes

MOUELLE: Well did they put any on the inside?

Victim: They must have, I came out came out I don't know how he did it so quick.

MOUELLE: Well, something else I want to ask you, where do they work FRANK?

Victim: I don't know where they work at.

MOUELLE: They work in the paper mill?

Victim: I think so, but I don't know.

MOUELLE: Or do they work at Youngs over in Hatches?

Victim: Yes, I wasn't exactly straight if I was I could move fast.

MOUELLE: You had to move fast?

Victim: Yes, what I mean I would a gotten a door.

MOUELLE: Well how much time from the time you saw him until - how did you get burned that bad?

Victim: I don't know.

MOUELLE: Did they throw any gasoline on you?

Victim: No the gas must a been already in there.

MOUELLE: Already in there?

Victim: Already in.

MOUELLE: And you don't know whether they work for John Knoxville or over at the paper mill do you FRANK?

Victim: Yeah

MOUELLE: Where do they work?

Victim: I don't know sir.

NO 157-3256/hap

BOUILLÉ: We want to try to find out who this is to clear this mess up.

Victim: I don't know exactly who it was.

BO: BOUILLÉ: Have you seen them before?

VI: Victim: Looks like I have. I didn't have a chance to talk with them. I had to move fast.

LANCASTER: FRANK I'm with the FBI, my name is LANCASTER.

B: Victim: Yes sir

V: LANCASTER: Was it a car or pickup truck that you saw?

I: Victim: I think it was car in the alley - sitin in the alley in the alley.

LANCASTER: Was it pointed out toward the street?

Victim: Yes, pointed out toward street (unintelligible).

LANCASTER: It was

BOUILLÉ: Which way did they go when they left there?

Victim: I don't know

LANCASTER: Do you remember when these men were last in you shoe shop? Are they customers? Did you ever repair their shoes?

Dr. COLVIN: This is Doctor COLVIN. I want you to understand that you are in real bad condition.

Victim: Yes sir.

Dr. COLVIN: And I want you to do something to help me. I want you to cooperate with these men, do all you can to help them find out who burned your place down and who burned you. Will you do that for me?

Victim: Yes yes. All right.

Doctor I don't know exactly who the man was one had on khaki pants and he was pouring gas out and when I got up to see he hit the window he did. He hit the window and broke the window pane out and while he was breaking

SO 157-3253/rap
7

window pance out I came out to catch this joker he had a shotgun told me get back in Nigger.

DOVELLE: Was that before he got — struck the match?

Victim: Must have been. Must have been ——— just like something when ——— looks like — I ask (sounds like what you doing in there) put yourself in there when that thing caught.

DOVELLE: You don't have any idea who it was?

Victim: No sir I an't got no idea.

DOVELLE: You can't even give us any idea at all?

Victim: No sir.

LANCASTER: Have you ever seen them before FRANK?

Victim: I can't say who it was ——— I probably seen them before ——— jacket on had a shotgun and I went on back in house, sure had a time getting myself out cause man its ——— best gone.

LANCASTER: Did you notice if it was a single or double barrel shotgun.

Victim: Yes it was single barrel.

LANCASTER: Did the men have hats on?

Do you remember what kind of car they were driving?

Victim: No sir I sure don't. This fellow you know I couldn't get through the door to look ever time I got to the door this fellow he had shotgun in my face and told and me to get back in.

LANCASTER: Which window did they break. Did they break the one near your machine?

Victim: Yes one right in front my machine.

ME 157-2888/244

LANCASTER: On Feb.
 Were they inside your shop?
Victim: No sir they were not inside the shop.
LANCASTER: Did you see them pouring the gasoline?
Victim: Yeah.
LANCASTER: They were pouring it through the window?
Victim: No sir, one of the fellows this fellows around
 the outside pouring it along the side.
LANCASTER: He didn't pour it inside your shop?
Victim: No sir, they must have poured it before I got
 there to the front.
LANCASTER: I see
Victim: They must have poured it in some kind of way
 before I got there in the front.
LANCASTER: And how did you come out, did you come out that
 little alley way where the gate is?
Victim: Yes.
LANCASTER: You had to open your gate to come out?
Victim: Yes Yes
LANCASTER: And when you came out was the car there or had
 they driven away.
Victim: They had driven off.
LANCASTER: Did you see which way they drove?
Victim: No sir sure didn't.
LANCASTER: You are sure it's a car?

Victim: Yes sir I positive it's a car.
LANCASTER: And there were two men?
Victim: I saw two maybe more than that about 3 of them, cause this fellow on the other side.
LANCASTER: There was a fellow on the other side too.
Victim: Yes, here's what I mean, must have been man that drove the car.
LANCASTER: Oh huh.
Were those men over in your shop before?
Victim: I can't remember. I know most likely have been in the shop. I just I had to do it in such a hurry I couldn't (sounds like got there).
LANCASTER: I understand.
Victim: Yes sir.
LANCASTER: How old were they do you thing, were they young men?
Victim: Yes sir, between about 30 and 35.
LANCASTER: Were they heavy or small?
Victim: Kinda small.
LANCASTER: Both of them small.
Victim: Yes sir about my size. One of them he was kinda uh young there he had grey hair with khaki.
LANCASTER: Just like khaki trousers.
Victim: Yes sir. Yes sir.

LANCASTER: What kind of shirt did you notice?
Victim: No sir I sho didn't.
LANCASTER: Was he the man who hold the gun?
Victim: No sir.
LANCASTER: Did either of them have a flash light to shine
in your eyes?
Victim: So, no sir.
LANCASTER: Was one of them old or were they both young?
Victim: Both of them was kinda young.
LANCASTER: Were they as big as you or were they smaller men?
Victim: The one with the gun was bigger than me.
LANCASTER: The biggest one?
Victim: Yes. I was gonna get up to the door see I just
stood by the door he told me to get back in there.
LANCASTER: Got back in you little room?
Victim: No sir in the shop.
LANCASTER: Oh, he told you to get back in the shop.
Victim: Yes.
LANCASTER: Where the fire was?
Victim: Yes.
LANCASTER: Oh, you didn't go back into your bedroom?
Victim: I had to go back in bedroom to get out.

LANCASTER:

I see and the place was on fire then.

Victim:

Yes sir, yes. No sir. He struck the match ---
out.

LANCASTER:

You saw him strike the match?

Victim:

Yes sir.

LANCASTER:

Then he throw it inside?

Victim:

Yes sir.

LANCASTER:

Thank you FRANK.

help?

Anything else that you can tell me that night

Victim:

No sir that's all.

Victim:

I can't tell Dr. Calvin I also can't. How they do
it is such a hurry Dr. Calvin --- I don't had a chance to
do nothing.

Dr. COLVIN:

You would tell me wouldn't you?

Victim:

Yes sir, I'd tell you, I'd tell you too but I
just don't know exactly who it was.

End of Record Number One.

R. V. WARREN
Chief of
Police:

This is Mr. BOB. Go ahead and talk to them and
don't worry.

Victim:

I don't know what happen and here is what it I
was laying there asleep and I heard someone breaking
glass out. They broke the glass out they broke glass out.
I come into my shop and --- it look like one he beat on
the window with a ax handle or something and then two and
another man around there --- pouring gasoline around the
place ---. I said what are you doing there. --- told
me to get back in there Nigger --- better off --- shotgun.

NO 157-3252/200

LANCASTER: FRANK did you recognize these men?

This is important now did you recognize them?

Victim: No sir I didn't recognize. I couldn't recognize

WARREN: FRANK go ahead and tell them if you want to me and
Mr. JUNECH will get out if you want to talk to him by your-
self.

Victim: It's alright Mr. BOB only thing I just didn't
recognize them.

WARREN: Huh?

Victim: I just couldn't recognize them.

WARREN: Just couldn't recognize them at all.

Victim: No sir.

LANCASTER: Could you give any description, FRANK, were they
young or old?

Victim: young men.

WARREN: Huh?

Victim: ——— working. One of them kinda white real
white.

WARREN: He was what?

Victim: Real white.

WARREN: Was real white?

Victim: Yes.

WARREN: Could you tell if he had blond hair, black hair,
red hair, or something, or did you have time to see all of
that?

MO 157-3235/LAD
13

WARREN: FRANK?
LANCASTER: Apparently out now.
WARREN: FRANK can you hear Mr. DOB?
Victim: Yes sir.
WARREN: FRANK do you think that you had ever seen those men before?
Victim: I think so.
WARREN: You think you have seen them before?
Victim: Yes.
WARREN: Do you think they are from here?
Victim: Yes sir. I think they from here.
WARREN: Do you think they are from here in town?
Victim: Yes.
WARREN: Where do you think they might work here FRANK?
Victim: I think they might work at John Massville or something like that over in Hatches.
WARREN: Huh.
Victim: In Hatches, Mississippi, or something like at.
WARREN: The National Food?
Victim: (Unintelligible)
WARREN: Hatches, Mississippi?
FRANK? Do you think that they worked over at Hatches,
Victim: Yeah very much.

ME 157-3226/1a
14

WARREN: Mmh?
Victim: Yeah (very weak)
LANCASTER: Do you know if it was a double barrel or single barrel shotgun, FRANK?
Victim: (Groan)
LANCASTER: Did they have hats on? Can you tell me how they were dressed?
Female: Say he had a shot about 40 minutes ago.
Female: Had a shot at 4:25
LANCASTER: Is that a pain killer?
Female: Oh mmh.
WARREN: How long do you think that might last?
Female: Two or three hours.

That concluded an interview with FRANK MORRIS, the victim of a fire in his home. FRANK is in Room 101, of the Ferriday Hospital, Ferriday, Louisiana.

This interview took place at approximately 6:35 AM, on December 19, 1964. Present were Special Agent PAUL R. LANCASTER and DONALD J. MCCORTY of the FBI and Chief of Police, what is your full name Chief, R. W. WARREN, of the Ferriday Police Department, and Mr. W. H. HARP, of the Ferriday Fire Department.

III

REINTERVIEW OF DELLA MAE SMITH

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

January 29, 1955

ELLA MAE SMITH, 203 South 4th Street, Ferriday, Louisiana, was advised of the identity of the interview agents as being Special Agents of the FBI.

SMITH advised that she knew FRANK MORRIS 1951. She stated that she and MORRIS were just friends and that was the extent of their relationship. She added that she lived in the neighborhood where MORRIS had his shoe shop and that she would bring shoes into the shop and they would talk about various events in the Ferriday area.

She continued by saying that FRANK's son was a shock to her, and she felt very bad about it as he was liked by everyone in the area. She advised that she had been told by FRANK of one incident where he had an argument with someone in the Ferriday area. She stated that this argument took place over three years ago. It was between MORRIS and FRANK DE LAUGHTER. SMITH stated that it seemed that Mrs. DE LAUGHTER had opened a shoe store in the Ferriday area and had been doing some business with FRANK MORRIS. She advised that Mrs. DE LAUGHTER would buy supplies for FRANK MORRIS through her contacts with wholesalers and MORRIS would in turn come and buy the supplies from Mrs. DE LAUGHTER. On one occasion MORRIS went to pay Mrs. DE LAUGHTER for some supplies she had bought for him and Mrs. DE LAUGHTER attempted to proposition FRANK MORRIS. She tickled the palm of his hand which indicated that she would like to have sexual intercourse with him. MORRIS told Mrs. DE LAUGHTER that he did not want any trouble but said that he would call Mrs. DE LAUGHTER at a later date, but never did. SMITH said that MORRIS had continued by saying that several weeks later FRANK DE LAUGHTER, who was at that time a policeman with the Ferriday Police Department came into FRANK MORRIS's shop and said that his wife had received an obscene telephone call and that his wife identified the caller as FRANK MORRIS. SMITH said that MORRIS told her that he told FRANK DE LAUGHTER that this was a lie, and that he and DE LAUGHTER had an argument.

1/24/55 at Ferriday, Louisiana

File # 157-3255

THOMAS MC GUINNESS, JR.

WILLIAM COAKNEUSE

/led

Date dictated 1/25/55

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SMITH said that MORRIS was a very nice person and that he was a very good person. SMITH said that MORRIS was a very good person and that he was a very nice person. SMITH said that MORRIS was a very good person and that he was a very nice person.

She continued by saying that as far as she knew about MORRIS's business affairs, his main source of income was from his shoe repair shop. She advised that his other interest was church activities. She stated that MORRIS would make periodic trips out of the Ferriday area to do church work. She advised the trips would take place an average of once or twice a month and would be to places such as Natchez, Mississ or to Baton Rouge or New Orleans in Louisiana, she sa that she did not know of any other long distance trip to big cities. She added that most of the trips were made in an old car or truck which FRANK usually had around. She said that she believed that these trips were financed from the money made from the operation of his shoe shop. She stated that REVEREND FRED WIL was the pastor of FRANK MORRIS's church and he might be able to furnish information about FRANK's church work.

SMITH continued by saying that as far as she knew of FRANK's, there were many of them, in that she did not know of anyone that MORRIS had any trouble with and that he was liked by white and colored. She said that on Sunday mornings MORRIS had a radio broadcast for about one hour during which MORRIS would act as the announcer and would dedicate songs to various people (both white and colored) in the Ferriday area. The music that MORRIS played was mainly spiritual type songs, and he did nothing or said nothing on any of the programs that she heard which could be considered to be in poor taste. She advised that FRANK got a great deal of enjoyment from these radio programs and would ask many of his customers how they enjoyed his program. SMITH stated that a boy by the name of BUBBA who worked near FRANK MORRIS's store would usually drive MORRIS to the radio station and might be able to furnish more information about the program.

SMITH stated that MORRIS had another friend by the name of HUNTER who is an ordained minister of the Baptist Church. She stated that she does not believe that First Name Unknown HUNTER has a church of his own but that he is now employed by one of the two paper mills in the Ferriday area. She stated that this would be either

Mr. First Name Unknown SMITH said that Mr. First Name Unknown SMITH said that with regard to any girl friends that FRANK had she knew of several in addition to EDNA BROWN who was MORRIS's first wife and who still lives in the Ferriday area. One was a girl by the name of MARTIN RAYMON, who lives near the ALLEN family near St. Charles Church. Another girl who is believed to be the last girl that FRANK had before his death lived in Clayton. SMITH said that she does not know the girl's name or anything about her only that FRANK had mentioned to her several weeks before his death about his new lady friend in Clayton. SMITH stated she believed that the man who helped FRANK in the shoe shop would be in a better position to know as FRANK and the helper would have probably discussed FRANK's girl friends. SMITH stated that one of MORRIS's old girl friends was named DOROTHY FREEMAN, but she has since married a man whose last name is HUNDALL and left the Ferriday area. SMITH said that other than the difficulty MORRIS had had with Mrs. DE LAUGHTER, she had never heard of FRANK being involved with white women. SMITH said that with regard to her relationship with MORRIS, she must admit that MORRIS had tried several times to get her to be his girlfriend but that she refused mainly because MORRIS was older than her.

SMITH said that one other friend of MORRIS that she forgot to mention was a white man by the name of "PAUL" who operates the used car lot next to FRANK MORRIS's shop. SMITH said that PAUL and FRANK were very good friends and would often go to one another's shop. She said that she never heard of the two of them making trips together. SMITH said that she did not know of any business trips or business partners that MORRIS might have had or had made.

SMITH said that with regard to the weeks prior to FRANK's death, she had not heard anything which might have any thing to do with MORRIS's murder. She stated that with regard to the night of the fire she was at home in bed when she was awakened by the sound of a siren; she said that she thought to herself that there was a bad accident and that she would probably be busy the next day at the hospital. She advised that she is maid at the local hospital, having been employed there since July 24, 1964. She said that after a while the sound of the siren grew faint and she thought no more of this until her house was brightened by reddish light.

NO 100-300
TRAVEL

She said that she got up and looked out the window and saw that it was a fire. She stated that she could not tell if it was MORRIS's shop or the house next door to his shop. She stated she got dressed and went to the fire and discovered that it was MORRIS's shop. She added that when she got to the area of the fire there were many people there. She said that no one at the fire seemed to know if MORRIS was still in the house or had gotten out. She added that she later learned that MORRIS had been taken to the hospital.

SMITH advised that later on the same day, Thursday, December the tenth, she reported to work at the hospital. She advised that during the morning as she was about her duties at the hospital she went to FRANK MORRIS's room to pick up the dirty linen. She said that when she was in the room she said to MORRIS, "What happened? Who did this to you?" SMITH stated that MORRIS replied, "I saw two men, two white men. I heard glass break. I got up and went to the front of my shop and the two white men were inside. One had a shotgun, the other had a five-gallon gas can. One held the shotgun on me and the other poured liquid from the can on me, and said 'I want you to see yourself. The man with the can struck a match and threw it, I went on fire. The man with the shotgun ran as did the other man. I ran to the Billups station and the service man sprayed water on me. If he had not done this I would have burnt up.'" SMITH said that MORRIS had some difficulty in telling this story and it took a little while for him to get it all out. She said that after he finished this story she left the room, as MORRIS appeared to be having difficulty breathing.

SMITH stated that on the following day, she went back to MORRIS's room and spoke to MORRIS again. She said that she said to him I am not sure that if it was me that I wouldn't tell someone who did this to you. She stated that MORRIS said "I thought they were my friends, but they weren't; they were [redacted]"

SMITH stated that she asked MORRIS "Why did they do this?" To which MORRIS replied, "They were friends of 'BIG FRANK' meaning FRANK DE LAUGHTER. SMITH stated that MORRIS indicated that it had something to do with the old argument that he had with DE LAUGHTER over DE LAUGHTER's wife.

2
EX 107-176
TME/101

SMITH said that MORRIS said that he thought that the one policeman [redacted] was related to him. SMITH said that at this point MORRIS made her promise not to tell anyone what he had told her. She stated that MORRIS indicated to her that he was going to live and he did not want anything to happen to him or his grandson when he got out of the hospital. SMITH said that MORRIS was convinced that he was going to live. SMITH said that was all the conversation that she had with MORRIS before he died. SMITH said that she was glad to tell this to someone, as it was bothering her to know this and not be able to tell it to anyone. SMITH stated that during the course of both of these conversations with MORRIS, FRANK appeared to be having difficulty breathing, but was able to talk, and did appear to know what he was saying.

She said that she had talked to Mrs. HAWKINS, First Name Unknown, who is a nurse at the hospital and that HAWKINS had told her that FRANK was a very strong individual in that he had walked into the hospital and did not have to be carried in, despite his condition.

SMITH said that a boy who works at the hospital by the name of "GRIMM", First Name Unknown, told her that his father who is a barber, had received a telephone call the day after the fire at FRANK's shop and the individual calling said, "We got FRANK, you are next." SMITH said that when the boy told her this he was very frightened and said that he and his family had moved to a neighbor's house and that his father stayed in the house alone for a few days to see what would happen.

SMITH continued by saying that as far as she knew MORRIS was not connected with any Civil Rights group nor was he involved in any illegal activity. She said that other than the motive that MORRIS gave about FRANK DE LAUCHER, she could not give any reason for the murder.

SMITH concluded by saying she is afraid for her and her seven children and for this reason would not testify

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6
NO 157-3255
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to the information she had furnished. She added that she believed that MORRIS might have told someone else besides her of the identities of the individuals who set the fire, but that these people were afraid to tell. SMITH could not give any reason for this belief, nor did she have any idea as to who else might know the identities of the individuals.

The above information was furnished in the presence of Father AUGUST THOMPSON, a Catholic Priest of St. Charles Roman Catholic Church, Perriday, Louisiana.

2/1/65

DELLA MAE SMITH, 603 South Fourth Street, was re-interviewed and furnished the following information:

The information she previously furnished was true. The first time she talked to FRANK MORRIS was on the afternoon of December 10, 1964, time not recalled. She reiterated that on this occasion he did not mention the identities of the persons he saw at his shop on the morning of December 10, 1964.

On her second visit to MORRIS' room on December 11, 1964, which was a Friday, she encouraged MORRIS to tell her who burned the shop. This was while she was changing linen between 9 and 10 a.m. She recalls she came to work at 8 a.m. It was at this time that he told her the two men responsible were the [redacted]

[redacted] It was also at this time that he said one of these policemen, [redacted] was related to FRANK DE LAUGHTER former policeman and now a deputy sheriff.

She related that to her personal knowledge [redacted] During the last conversation with MORRIS, he also remarked that the burning of the shop was because of the trouble MORRIS had previously encountered with DE LAUGHTER's wife.

SMITH was questioned concerning the condition of MORRIS on December 11, 1964, and she related that he could talk distinctly but had some breathing difficulty. She was questioned whether this was prior to or subsequent to the operation and she admitted she did not know he had an operation other than being taken to the operating room to be "cleaned up." She further stated that he spoke distinctly through Saturday, December 12, 1964.

SMITH was questioned whether she had any conversation with MORRIS after December 11, 1964, and she said she had only casual conversation with him not pertaining to the fire because she had received the answer to what she wanted to know on December 11, 1964, and there was no further need to talk to him about the matter.

1/29/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana File # 157-3255

SA DONALD R. BELMONT and

SA MCINNIS L. WARD /sab

Date dictated 1/31/65

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2

NO 157-3255/sab

In addition to the above, she said MORRIS could in addition to talking on December 12, 1984, drink juices without very much difficulty. She said he did not respond very well on Sunday, December 13, 1984.

She further related that she was told by LAURA SCOTT that the latter and her family, who live on Fifth Street, were among the first persons to arrive at the scene of the fire at MORRIS' shop and at that time saw MORRIS lying on the ground at the Hillups Station and saw him taken to the hospital.

SMITH was questioned whether she had told anyone other than the FBI that she had information regarding the persons responsible for the burning of MORRIS' shop. She stated that she had told no one of this but the FBI and Father THOMPSON. She was confronted with the information that she had told other persons and she said she does not know who these persons might be.

She further related that she was the maid regularly assigned to the ward where MORRIS was located. She said she personally does not believe the [redacted]

[redacted] were the ones responsible for the burning of the shop since she now understands they were [redacted]

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FOIA(b)7 - ()

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1/2/65

1

Mrs. MARTHA BARNES, #4 College Hill, Natchez, Mississippi, furnished the following additional information:

During the four nights she attended FRANK MORRIS at the hospital in Ferriday, after he was burned, the bed was never changed while she was on duty. Apparently the bed was changed after she left in the morning. She remembered seeing a Negro maid in the hospital corridor and in the doorway to MORRIS' room occasionally in the mornings, before she left, but she never saw this maid inside the room. She described this maid as short, in her 30's and wearing a uniform which she believed was blue denim. She did not know the maid's name and did not recognize the name DELIA MAE SMITH.

On Friday morning, after the first night she was on duty at the hospital, she left at about 9:30 AM. MORRIS' step-mother arrived late, explaining that she had had to take care of her husband. The bed had not been changed at the time she left. She remembered that before she left that morning, the doctor came in and looked at MORRIS. He did not say anything, merely shaking his head and leaving. When she came back on duty Friday night, MORRIS had a tube in his throat. When she came on duty Saturday night, he also had a tube in his bladder. After the tube was in his throat, she never heard him carry on a conversation and he would merely say "Uh huh" to questions asked of him. She recalled that on Thursday night and Friday night his breathing was fairly good, although after the tube was inserted in his throat she would occasionally have to suction the mucus from his mouth and from the tube during the night so he could breath better.

She recalled that on one night after she came on duty, two police officers came in to visit MORRIS. She believed this was Thursday night, the first night she was on duty and that it was around 9:00 or 10:00 PM when they came in. She did not know who they were, but assumed they were local Ferriday officers. They were dressed in uniforms

1/30/65 -at Natchez, Mississippi

File # MO 157-3255

SA DONALD R. BELMONT and
SA MC INNIS L. WARD /scr

Date dictated 1/31/65

NO 157-3255/ocr

2

and wore guns. One was about 5'7", the other taller. She could not furnish any further description. She was in the room when they entered, but she left while they talked to MORRIS. Before she left the room she heard one of them say, "FRANK, remember when we brought you in ----." It was at this point the officers looked at her and, feeling they wanted to talk to FRANK in private, she left the room. The officers remained only a few minutes.

1

1/24/65

[redacted] police officer, Ferriday, Louisiana, Police Department, advised as follows:

He was on patrol duty with Officer YIMMY LOFTIN on the night FRANK MORRIS' shoe shop was burned. He was working the 9:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m. shift. He first observed the fire when they reached the intersection of Delacore and 4th Street as they approached the intersection going east on Delacore. This intersection is several blocks south of MORRIS' shop on 4th Street. They immediately drove north on 4th Street to the shop, where he noticed glass on the street in front of the building and flames inside the building. He did not observe anyone in the vicinity of the building at that time. They continued about a half block north on 4th Street to the Billups service station so they could call the fire department. [redacted] got out of the car to make the call, but stopped when he saw FRANK MORRIS running across the empty lot between his store and the service station, coming toward the patrol car.

MORRIS was almost naked, and what little clothing he had on was on fire. His hair was also on fire when [redacted] first saw him. LOFTIN had also got out of the car and reached MORRIS first, and was tearing off the burning remains of MORRIS' clothing, which appeared to consist only of the top band of his undershirt and the waistband of his shorts.

MORRIS told them that two white men had poured gasoline in the shop and had thrown rags on the gasoline, and that one of the men had a shotgun. He told them he did not know the men, and he did not furnish any description of them. He did not go into any more detail about what happened, and they did not have an opportunity to question him further about it, as they immediately put him in the patrol car and took him to the hospital. Before leaving the service station, [redacted] called to the service station attendant and told him to call the fire department.

1/25/65

at Ferriday, Louisiana

File #

NO 157-3253

SA's DONALD E. BELMONT and
DONALD E. CONRY

/smb

Date dictated

1/25/65

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NO 157-3255/hab

2

[] stated he and LOSTIN had passed by the shoe shop some 20 to 30 minutes before the fire and had observed no one in the vicinity of the shop at that time. They did not observe any persons on foot or in automobile leaving the vicinity of the shop as they approached the fire. He noted that immediately prior to arriving at the fire, they had been patrolling the area of town west of 4th Street and therefore any persons fleeing the vicinity of the fire could not have been seen by them if they had fled in another direction.

[] stated he had no knowledge as to the identity of the two men who burned the shop, and he could offer no suggestions as to why they did it. He knew of no incidents in which MORRIS was involved that would be likely to cause anyone to resort to such an act. He said he had heard rumors that MORRIS had been connected with the NAACP at one time. He said he had never heard of MORRIS being involved with any white women, nor had he heard any rumors that he might have been handling dope.

[] said he did not remember seeing anyone other than the service station attendant in the vicinity of the fire or the service station when they arrived at the scene. He did not notice any Negroes standing by Joe's Fruit Stand when he got out of the patrol car; however, he said his attention was directed toward calling the fire department and to FRANK MORRIS, after he saw him, and he could not state there were no people in that location.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

2/3/65

[redacted] Police Officer, Ferriday, Louisiana Police Department, was informed of the identity of the interviewing Agents. He was informed by SA BELMONT that he was not required to make any statement, that he might consult an attorney before making a statement, and that any statement he made could be used against him in a court of law. No force or threats were made to induce him to make a statement. He furnished the following information freely and voluntarily.

The information he had previously furnished about where he and FIBBY LOFTIN were just prior to observing the fire at FRANK MORRIS' shoe shop was incorrect. He had not told exactly what they had been doing because they had a friend in their patrol car with them, which they were not supposed to do and he felt they would get in trouble if he had told this. He stated he had felt this would not have assisted the investigation of the fire anyhow, but that now that it was known, he would willingly furnish the full details. He stated he hoped this would not be made known to the Chief of Police and the Mayor.

He advised that prior to the fire he and LOFTIN were in the police patrol car at the corner of 4th and Louisiana Streets. [redacted] drove up in his car, on his way from work. He estimated this was at about 1:00 AM. Shortly thereafter, two girls they knew came out of the lounge of the King Hotel, located at that intersection. They got in a light green over dark green 1961 Chevrolet. [redacted] and LOFTIN, with [redacted] in the back seat of the patrol car, followed the girls out the highway in the direction of Vidalia, with LOFTIN driving. They lost sight of the girls' car, and while attempting to locate their car, LOFTIN drove the patrol car south on the Vidalia Highway past the Midway Lounge. Not seeing the girls' car, they turned around and headed back toward Ferriday. Before arriving in town they turned around again and drove some distance back toward Vidalia, still looking for the girls' car. After a short time, they decided they had lost the car, so they again turned around and returned to Ferriday.

2/1/65 of Ferriday, Louisiana
SA DONALD R. BELMONT &
SA MC INEIS L. WARD/gml

File # 157-3265

Date dictated 2/1/65

As they reached the intersection of Delaware and 4th Street, coming into Ferriday, they saw the fire, and they then proceeded to the scene of the fire and on to the Billups Service Station to call the fire department, as he had previously mentioned. [] stated the information he had previously furnished to what occurred from this point on was correct, except that [] was with them and rode in the front seat of the patrol car when they took FRANK MORRIS to the hospital. [] also returned with them to the fire after they left the hospital. They later dropped [] off several blocks from the police station on their return to the station, so the Chief would not see he had been riding with them.

[] stated he felt MORRIS was in his right mind when he told them about the two white men who set fire to his shop. This information was furnished by MORRIS when they first picked him up and enroute to the hospital. MORRIS told them that two white men were in his shop, one pouring gasoline and throwing rage. When MORRIS stuck his head out they throw a gun on him and told him to get his head back inside. [] said MORRIS did not go into further detail, but he gathered from this that the two men were inside the shop and that MORRIS had been in his room in back of the shop.

[] stated he is not related in any way to FRANK DE LAUGHTER, Deputy for the Concordia Parish Sheriff's Office at Vidalia, Louisiana. He stated he used to be quite friendly with DE LAUGHTER, but no longer associated with him and has little regard for him. [] advised he had never heard of any disagreement between FRANK MORRIS and Deputy FRANK DE LAUGHTER.

[] advised that on the night of the fire he and LOFTIN were dressed in their usual uniforms, white shirt and blue trousers. He stated that he and LOFTIN had nothing to do with setting the fire, and he pointed out that it would hardly be likely that MORRIS would come to them and get in their patrol car right after the fire if he thought they had not the fire. He was unable to suggest anyone who might be involved in starting the fire.

[] emphatically denied that he was involved in any way with the burning of FRANK MORRIS' shoe shop.

107-3234/gml

The following description of [] was obtained through observation and interview:

Race	White
Sex	Male
Age	23
Date of birth	[]
Height	5'11"
Weight	135
Eyes	Hazel
Hair	Dark brown
Build	Slim
Peculiarities	Gold crown upper front tooth
Occupation	[]

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1/26/65

THOMAS SIDNEY LOFTIN, police officer, Ferriday, Louisiana, Police Department, advised as follows:

He was on patrol duty with Officer [redacted] on the night FRANK MORRIS was burned. He had [redacted] on duty at 8:00 p.m. and worked until 4:00 a.m., and [redacted] had come on duty at 8:00 p.m. and worked until 4:00 a.m. He alternates between that shift and the 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. shift.

He and [redacted] first noticed the fire at about 2:40 a.m. on the morning of the fire. He was not certain of the time and could only give an approximation. When they first observed the fire they were at the intersection of 4th Street and Delaware Street, having just patrolled along Mississippi Street to 10th Street, then to Delaware Street to 4th Street. At that intersection, LOFTIN, who was driving the patrol car, saw the fire several blocks north of the intersection on 4th Street. He immediately drove to the scene, pulling up in front of FRANK's shop, which was ablaze. He paused there momentarily, but did not observe anyone in the area. [redacted] told him to drive on to the Billups service station just north of the shoe shop so they could call the fire department. He noted that the radio dispatcher goes off duty at 10:00 p.m. and it was therefore not possible to notify the fire department by radio.

Upon arriving at the service station, [redacted] got out of the car and asked the station attendant if he had called the fire department, and the attendant said no. LOFTIN then got out of the car, and as he did so he observed a group of Negroes standing across the street in front of Joe's Fruit Stand. He estimated there were about eight to ten of them, but he glanced at them only briefly and did not remember who any of them were. Immediately after this he saw FRANK MORRIS running across the empty lot between his shoe shop and the Billups service station, coming toward the patrol car. It was his recollection that one of the Negroes in the group across the street

On 1/25/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana File # MO157-3285

by SA's DONALD R. BELMONT and

DONALD MC GORTY

/bab

Date dictated 1/23/65

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remarked that there was someone on fire, and it was then he saw MORRIS coming toward the patrol car.

MORRIS was practically naked, with only portions of his undershirt shoulder strap and the waistband of his shorts remaining, except for several small particles of clothing stuck to his body. These pieces of clothing were burning and his hair was burning, and LOFTIN ran to him and stopped him just as he reached the street near the patrol car, and he tore off the burning pieces of clothing from MORRIS' body. MORRIS appeared to be badly burned all over his body, and in touching his skin LOFTIN observed it was hard and crusted.

MORRIS told LOFTIN and [] that two white men had been in his shop, that one was pouring kerosene from a can in the shop and that he then threw a rag on the kerosene, while the other man held a pump shotgun. MORRIS told them he told the man to stop pouring kerosene, whereupon the man with the shotgun told him to get back inside or he would blow his head off. MORRIS also remarked that there may have been a third man in a car outside. LOFTIN asked him if the man had poured kerosene on him and he said no. LOFTIN asked him who the men were and he said he did not know and that if he did know he would tell him.

LOFTIN and [] put MORRIS in the patrol car and drove to the Ferriday Hospital. Enroute to the hospital, MORRIS did not elaborate further as to what had happened. LOFTIN noted they were concerned with the immediate task of getting him to the hospital and therefore did not question him further about what had occurred, and the remarks made by MORRIS were not explored further. MORRIS did not indicate where he was when he discovered the men in his shop, and he did not furnish any description of them. When he remarked that there may have been a third man in a car outside, he did not say that he saw the man or the car. MORRIS did not say just where the men were when he first observed them, but he assumed he meant they were inside the shop.

When they arrived at the hospital, [] took MORRIS inside, remaining only some 30 to 40 seconds, during which time LOFTIN called the Vidalia Police Department and asked them to notify the fire department in Ferriday. LOFTIN and [] then drove back to the fire. By this time the fire truck was there and a number of people had gathered, including volunteer firemen.

LOFTIN stated that when they had first approached the scene of the fire, fire was coming out of the windows of the shop. He had no recollection of seeing anyone walking or running away from the scene, or of any car driving away from or in the vicinity of the shop as he had [] first approached it. He estimated they had passed by the shop on patrol not more than an hour before they saw the fire, and he had observed no one loitering around the shoe shop at that time.

LOFTIN stated MORRIS had not told them how the fire was started after the man poured the kerosene. He did not recall observing a kerosene can in the building or vicinity of the building. He stated that after the fire was put out, a case of 14 pints of whiskey, each pint individually wrapped in newspaper, was found in the shop. This whiskey was being retained at the police station.

LOFTIN stated the area covered by the police patrol was restricted to the city limits of Ferriday, and they did not patrol as far as the residential development located outside Ferriday between that city and Vidalia.

LOFTIN stated he could think of no reason why this was done to MORRIS. He was not aware of any trouble between MORRIS and anyone else, either white or colored. He did not know of MORRIS participating in any pro-integration activities.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

2/4/65

THOMAS SHIRLEY LOFTIN, also known as Timmy Loftin, Police Officer, Ferriday, Louisiana, Police Department, was informed of the identity of the interviewing Agents. He was informed by SA BELMONT that he did not have to answer any questions, that he might consult a lawyer before making any kind of statement, and that any statement he made could be used against him in a court of law. No force or threats were made to induce him to make a statement. He furnished the following information voluntarily and of his own free will:

He stated the information he had previously furnished as to when and where he and [redacted] were when they saw the shoe shop of FRANK MORRIS on fire and what transpired after that was correct. However, the information he previously furnished about where they had been just prior to noticing the fire was incorrect, and he had failed to advise there was a third person with them. He stated the following was what had actually transpired before the fire:

Some time before they saw the fire, he and [redacted] were parked at the intersection of Louisiana and 4th Street, a major intersection in Ferriday where they frequently park to observe traffic. They were in a white 1965 Pontiac patrol car. [redacted] who drives a truck for Holman Bakery, came by in his 1961 red Chevrolet Impala, on his way home from work. [redacted] stopped to talk with them, as he frequently does. While he was talking to them, two girls they knew came out of the King Hotel Lounge, located at that intersection. One was ESTHER (Last Name Unknown) and who at one time stayed at the King Hotel, and the other was SARA BRITT, of Jonesville, Louisiana. The girls got in a car by themselves and drove in the direction of Vidalia.

FOIA(b)6
FOIA(b)7 - (C)

2/1/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana
SA DONALD R. BELMONT &
SA MCINNIS L. WARD/gal

File # NO 157-9255

3/1/65

Date dictated

They decided to see where the girls were going, and [redacted] got in the back seat of the patrol car and they drove out the Vidalia Highway looking for the girls' car. LOFTIN was driving the patrol car. They got as far as the Midway Lounge, located about four miles south of Ferriday on the Vidalia Highway. They had passed the girls on the way out there, and they then turned around and drove back toward Ferriday, again looking to see where the girls had gone. They lost track of the girls, so they turned around again and went south on the Vidalia Highway as far as Blackie's Lounge, which is a mile or so past the Midway Lounge. They still did not see the girls' car, so they turned around and drove back to Ferriday.

Upon reaching the intersection of 4th Street and Delaware on the edge of town, they observed the fire ahead of them on 4th Street. LOFTIN at first thought it was the Billups Service Station, but as they got closer he saw it was FRANK MORRIS' shoe shop. As they passed the shoe shop, LOFTIN noticed glass in the street in front of the shop and observed that the fire appeared to be burning throughout the interior of the shop.

LOFTIN stated the information he had previously furnished as to what transpired after they reached the Billups Service Station to call the fire department was correct, except that [redacted] remained with them and got into the front seat after they put FRANK MORRIS in the back seat. [redacted] accompanied them to the hospital and then returned with them to the fire. With respect to the information furnished them by FRANK MORRIS, he stated MORRIS told them this as they were enroute to the hospital. He said that although MORRIS was sort of jumping up and down when he reached the car after coming out from the direction of his shop, he complained about being cold, he talked rationally and appeared to know what he was saying. He stated that although he could not recall the exact words MORRIS used, he got the impression that when MORRIS said he saw the two men in his shop, MORRIS had come out from his living quarters at the rear of the shop and had surprised them, and after he observed someone pouring kerosene and told him to stop, the other man pointed a shotgun at him and told him to get back in, probably meaning to get back in his living quarters.

MO 157-3783/gal

LOFTIN stated he noticed MORRIS was bleeding on his arms and feet from the burns. He said he did not notice whether a portion of one of his fingers was missing.

LOFTIN stated he and [] were wearing their regular police uniforms on the night of the fire, which consisted of white shirts and blue trousers. LOFTIN was not wearing his hat that night, as he seldom wears it. He thought [] had his hat in the car but was not wearing it.

LOFTIN advised he and [] were not involved in the burning, and he had no information as to the identity of the persons who did it. He stated the reason he and [] had not previously furnished correct information about where they were just before the fire was that they knew they would get in trouble with the Chief of Police and the Mayor if it became known they had someone riding with them and that they were following the two girls. He stated inasmuch as they had lost track of the girls before they returned to town, they did not know where the girls had gone, but he suspected they may have gone to visit a boy ESTHER had been running with who lives on the Mississippi River near Vidalia.

LOFTIN stated he had not noticed the time when they first observed the fire, but he had previously thought it was after 2:00 AM. He stated as best he could recall, about 15 to 20 minutes transpired between the time they left the intersection of Louisiana and 4th Street following the two girls and the time they returned to town and observed the fire. He advised he had no recollection of observing any automobiles leaving the vicinity of the fire as they approached it on their way back into town.

LOFTIN stated he and [] did not return to the hospital to see or talk to MORRIS after they first took him there. LOFTIN emphatically denied that he was involved in any way with the burning of FRANK MORRIS' shoe shop.

The following description of LOFTIN was obtained through observation and interview:

NW 34210

DocId:31396151

4
NO 157-3255/gml

Race	White
Sex	Male
Age	24
Date of birth	June 28, 1940
Height	Hattiesburg, Mississippi
Weight	5'8"
Eyes	177
Hair	Blue
Complexion	Reddish blond
Build	Ruddy
Marital status	Medium
Occupation	Married
	Patrolman, employed since
	October 15, 1964

1

2/2/65

[redacted] age 23, bakery truck driver and resident of [redacted] furnished the following information:

[redacted]

On the night of December 9-10, 1964, after he had completed his truck route, he drove to town and saw THOMAS LOFTIN and [redacted] parked in their patrol car near the King Hotel. Both were on duty and in their usual uniforms consisting of white shirt, black tie and blue trousers. As he frequently does, he got in the back seat of the patrol car and began talking with them. He estimates this was sometime between 12:30 a.m. and 1 a.m., December 10, 1964. Sometime thereafter two girls, ESTER, last name unknown, and SARA BAILEY came out of the lounge at the King's Hotel, got into their car and drove toward Vidalia, Louisiana. At this point LOFTIN and [redacted] decided to follow them to see where they were going, so drove out the Vidalia highway. Some distance out LOFTIN, who was driving the patrol car, decided to pass the girls and after doing so they lost sight of their headlights. LOFTIN turned the patrol car around at the Midway Lounge on the Vidalia highway and proceeded back toward Ferriday in an effort to again locate their car. Before they reached the Ferriday city limits, they decided they had again missed the girls so again turned around and traveled at a high rate of speed back in the direction of Vidalia. This time they drove to Blackie's Lounge before they decided to quit looking for the girls. LOFTIN again turned the car around and drove at a high rate of speed back toward Ferriday. He had slowed the patrol car down and as they reached the intersection of Delaware Avenue at Fourth Street, they all saw a fire ahead. From the angle they were approaching, it appeared the Billups Service Station on Fourth Street was on fire, but as they got nearer, they saw it was FRANK MORRIS' shoe shop.

They pulled up in front and stopped momentarily.

62

On 2/1/65 at Ferriday, La. File # NO 157-3255
 by SA DONALD B. BELMONT
 SA EC IRENE L. WARD :ch Date dictated 2/1/65

MO 157-3256

WMS:JLS:ch

2

During this time he observed the front window of the shop had blown out into the street and fire seemed to be burning all over the interior of the shop. As they pulled off towards the Hillaps Service Station to call the fire department, he observed a man trotting and stumbling toward the service station. This man was about ten yards from the burning building and crossing the vacant car lot situated between MORRIS' shop and the service station. The man appeared to be on fire and small pieces of something afire were dropping off him onto the ground. Whether this was particles of clothing or burning flesh and skin, he does not know.

By the time they reached the service station, the car on fire had reached the station, and LOFTIN and [] ran to him and assisted him into the back seat of the patrol car. He, [] had moved up the front seat of the patrol car. Before getting in the car, MORRIS was sort of jumping up and down. He was no longer burning and it was not necessary for anyone to and no one did put water on him.

He looked at the man one time and realized it was FRANK MORRIS. The sight of him in this condition, bleeding with skin dangling from his body, made [] sick and he did not look at him again.

They proceeded toward the hospital and en route MORRIS was saying "Oh, Lord" and half praying. He also said something about some white men pouring something but did not name anyone. [] was too upset over the incident to clearly recall what was said. He did say something about two boys being back there in the fire. He does not recall him saying anything about seeing a car. He presumed the two boys MORRIS mentioned were [] and CHIFFIN.

After reaching the hospital, [] assisted MORRIS into the emergency room and returned. The three of them drove back to town and dropped [] off. [] went to the fire at which time he observed a number of persons were at the scene by this time, and the fire department was fighting the fire.

Among those whom he saw at the fire was [] employee at the paper mill, who was drunk and attempting to

DocId 31196111

NO 187-3335

MEM:ALB:ab

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assist in the fire fighting. Fire Chief WOODLIE ran [] off as he was getting in the way. [] is a white male, about six feet, slender build, approximately 32 years of age and has balding blond hair. FOIA(b)(7) -

He does not recall seeing anyone on the street at the time they first discovered the fire and saw WOODLIE running to the service station. He also did not see any car proceeding toward Vidalia, Louisiana, as they were returning to Fortiday just prior to seeing the fire.

[] said he was wearing his truck driver's uniform at the time of above incident which consists of white shirt and blue trousers.

[] is a white male, age 29, 5'9", 145 pounds, black crew cut hair, gray eyes and ruddy complexion.

He does not know who was responsible for the fire and has no further information concerning the fire.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

February 4, 1965

was advised of the identity of the interviewee for agents. The following information was furnished by [redacted]

He advised that FRANK MORRIS and he have known one another all of the latter's life. They have had some social life together.

MORRIS took one or two trips a year. He had accompanied [redacted] to Houston in 1953 when the latter had to go to Texas on business. On that occasion MORRIS stayed by himself in the Ajapo Hotel. [redacted] believes that the purpose of most of the trips taken by MORRIS was to observe how other shoe shops operate. MORRIS returned to Ferriday with [redacted]

[redacted] saw MORRIS between 8:30 and 9:30 p.m. on the night of the fire when MORRIS came to [redacted] store to buy groceries. [redacted] left Ferriday for Natchez via his home immediately after MORRIS left the store.

[redacted] did not observe anything that he considered unusual or suspicious around MORRIS' store the night of the fire. He recalled that MORRIS' red and white GMC or Chevrolet was parked on the vacant used car lot next to MORRIS' shoe shop during the fire.

At approximately 1 a.m., December 10, 1964, [redacted] left Natchez enroute to Ferriday in his stake-body truck. When he was approximately two miles out of Vidalia towards Ferriday, driving 35 to 45 miles per hour, he noticed a car coming towards him from the direction of Ferriday at a high rate of speed. As it passed him he noticed that it was a white Pontiac. He continued to observe it through his side mirror after it passed him. [redacted] knew that it wasn't Deputy Sheriff's FRANK DE LAUGHTER's car, but he observed what appeared to be a red light on the top of the car.

Shortly before [redacted] reached the end of the four lane highway near Ferriday, he saw headlights coming from behind him. At the time [redacted] was driving at a

5/65 at Natchez, Miss. File # NO 157-3255

SA THOMAS MC GUINNESS JR and

SA WILLIAM GUACKENBUSH

/s/it

Date dictated 1/29/65

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speed of 35 to 40 miles per hour. This car passed him and almost immediately thereafter had to slow up because of the narrowing of the highway. There were no cars coming from the opposite direction and [redacted]'s headlights illuminated the inside of the car. He concluded that it was the white Pontiac used by the Ferriday Police Department and that there were three occupants. [redacted] was driving.

[redacted] was in the passenger side and an unknown white male wearing a blue levi jacket was sitting on the back seat. [redacted] was wearing his police officer's uniform but the other policeman was not.

Approximately five minutes elapsed from the time [redacted] observed this car going toward Vidalia and its return to the above point of contact.

At approximately 1:25 or 1:30 a.m., [redacted] approached the Ferriday city limits. As he reached the last curve before Ferriday he noticed a red glow in the sky. His first thought was that WILL HANEY's place was on fire. He parked his truck [redacted] across from the used car lot. There were two white men standing [redacted] and near a late model car not further described. He recognized one of these men as a past boy friend of OPHIE GRAVELLE and a resident of Natchez. He asked those men what had happened and they replied "Some old nigger was walking out of that building that didn't seem to be in his right mind. They had to take him to the Billups station to put him out."

The identities of "they", the persons who had taken him to the Billups station were not known to [redacted]. [redacted] had the impression that these two men had seen MORRIS go or be taken to the Billups station.

When [redacted] arrived at the scene, MORRIS' building was still standing and no one, other than the two white men above, and the attendant at the Billups station were in sight. It appeared to [redacted] that there had been an explosion of some kind before his arrival due to the fact that there was broken window glass in the street some distance from the building.

The next person to come into view was a Negro woman who came out of the house adjacent to MORRIS' building and ran across the street with what appeared to be clothes. Shortly thereafter other people started to leave their homes.

ME 1-1-1977/6/1

3

At this point the same police car, described above, came into view from the "open white section" of Perryday. It pulled across the street blocking the traffic from the Perryday-Victoria Highway. The driver, [redacted] ran to the billups gas station and made a telephone call.

After the arrival of the police car, the fire truck appeared. JIMMIE HARP was driving the fire truck and it did not seem to be in a hurry although it may have used its siren and red light.

After fighting the fire for about five minutes, with both [redacted] and the other police officer helping with the hoses, the side of the building fell out. At no time while [redacted] was present was there an explosion.

[redacted] has no knowledge as to why the fire was started or by whom.

MORRIS had not been living with any particular girl at the time of his death. One of his former girl friends was very jealous of him because "young girls were in his store." FRANK FLEMING, who used to shine shoes in MORRIS' shop, used to talk about different women that MORRIS took into his back room. He has had two or three women in the past 3 to 5 years. The last one was MATTIE, last name unknown. Another one was MARY, last name unknown. In addition to his wives he had a sweetheart who was a young girl named MINNIE.

Colored people in the area talked about one phase of MORRIS' relationship with white women that could "get him into trouble." When white ladies drove up to his shoe store, instead of taking the shoes through the car window, he inserted his head into the window on the driver's side, or entered the car on the passenger side and sat next to them on the front seat while they discussed the needed shoe repair.

When pretty white women came to his shop with shoes to be repaired and were not in cars, MORRIS covertly stared at them and winked at [redacted].

MORRIS' best friend in the white community was LLOYD PAUL. [redacted] does not know why they were such good

NO 157-3255/sjt

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FOIA(b)7 - (C)

friends. It was rumored that MORRIS had borrowed money from PAUL and vice versa. PAUL visited MORRIS' shop two to three times per day. Also, MORRIS was permitted to borrow any car of PAUL's that he wanted. The two of them went to Monroe, Louisiana, frequently ostensibly to buy used cars. MORRIS drove some of those cars back to Ferriday for PAUL.

MORRIS also visited Natchez frequently. [redacted] noted that MORRIS had relatives living in Natchez.

[redacted] added that he could not recall seeing any other car coming from Ferriday as he approached Ferriday, but that it was very possible that one or more cars did come from the direction of Ferriday without him recalling them.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1/28/65

JAMES J. SIMOLKE, 119 Grape Street, Ridgcrest Development, furnished the following information:

He is employed from 6:00 PM to 6:00 AM at the Millaps Gas Station located approximately 1/2 block from MORRIS's shoe shop. SIMOLKE had been on duty by himself on the evening of December 9, 1964, when the fire occurred.

On the night of December 9 - 10, 1964, it was very quiet. Immediately before the fire no one was observed on the street, a condition normal for that time of night. At no time, prior to the fire, did any police officer appear at the station.

At, or shortly before 2:00 AM, December 10, 1964, SIMOLKE heard an explosion that sounded like a pistol shot, from the vicinity of MORRIS's shoe shop. Almost immediately after this explosion a car came out of the alley next to MORRIS's Shoe Shop, turned left on South 4th Street and headed towards Vidalia - Natchez. The car was going very fast but SIMOLKE did not hear the tires squeal. This car was dark in color, possibly black, and was a sedan. SIMOLKE could not furnish any further description of it.

Moments after the car left, MORRIS came running towards the gas station from the direction of his shop. He was not "on fire" at any time but SIMOLKE could see when MORRIS approached the gas station that he had been badly burned. MORRIS was totally naked except for the neck band and waist band of his underwear.

At almost the same moment that MORRIS arrived at the gas station two Ferriday City Policemen drove into the station. They came from the opposite direction from MORRIS's shop. One of them was tall and always wears a hat. The other was short and never wears a hat.

No one else was present at this moment and no one threw water on MORRIS. The latter's only words spoken to the two policemen were "take no bone".

1/31/65 Ferriday, Louisiana

FD 157-3268

SA's THOMAS MC GUINNESS, JR., and

WILLIAM QUINN

dated 1/28/65

NO 157-3235/hap

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The two policemen looked genuinely stunned. Neither policeman said anything. One of them opened the door to the back of their car and MORRIS entered their car of his own power.

SIEOLKE asked the policemen if they know the telephone number of the Fire Department. The tall one immediately recited this number.

SIEOLKE noted that MORRIS was bleeding profusely and left tracks of blood everywhere he stopped. The policemen made no effort to protect the interior of their car from blood stains indicating to SIEOLKE that their only concern was to take MORRIS to the hospital.

At no time, prior to the departure of the police car did anyone else appear in view.

With reference to the shoe shop, SIEOLKE stated that it was very bright inside "as if there was a large light on". Then fire came out only through the roof and not the windows. Moments after the police left there was an explosion in the shop. SIEOLKE observed that he had handled dynamite in his youth and this explosion sounded like two pounds of dynamite going off.

SIEOLKE called the Fire Department number given to him by the policemen but there was no answer. He then called the operator and asked her to contact the Fire Department. Approximately 10 or 15 minutes later the Fire Department arrived.

MORRIS was well thought of in Ferriday and did not have any enemies known to SIEOLKE. He was not known to associate with any white persons away from his business including the man who operated the used car lot next to MORRIS Shoe Shop. SIEOLKE did recently overhear the owner or manager of a local Negro restaurant talk about a white man in a VA Hospital, believed to be in Alexandria, Louisiana. Comments made by this individual indicated to SIEOLKE that this white man had taught MORRIS the shoe business and MORRIS was sending him money and cigarettes every week.

SD 157-3253/bag

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SIMOLKE has lived in Ferriday since October, 1964. He has never been asked to join the Ku Klux Klan and has not heard of any KKK activity in the area. SIMOLKE explained that he is a Catholic and could not therefore be approached by KKK members.

After the two policemen had taken MORRIS to the hospital they returned to the gas station for the purpose of cleaning out their car. Neither at this time nor at any time since did anyone from the Ferriday police department question him about his knowledge of the fire.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date: 2/4/65

[] age 13, Morningstar Alley, Ferriday, Louisiana, was advised of the identities of the interviewing Agents. He advised that he and his brother [] on the evening of December 9, 1964, worked in the shoe shop of FRANK MORRIS sweeping and cleaning the floor. They started this work some time after dark and finished some time between 9:00 and 10:00 PM.

He advised that his brother, [], swept the floor and that he, [], mopped the floor with coal oil. He stated that he purchased \$.25 worth of coal oil at Roosevelt's Store on 8th Street. He stated that he carried this oil in a can that was in MORRIS' shop and the can held about one gallon. He stated that he put about one half of the coal oil in a pan and used this amount in mopping the floor.

[] stated that he and his brother had worked for MORRIS for about two weeks for about one or two hours each evening cleaning the shop. He stated this was the only time they had used coal oil cleaning the floor.

He advised that while he and his brother were in the shop on that night, no one came into the shop, nor did MORRIS receive any telephone calls.

[] stated that he did not recall seeing a large oil or gasoline can in the shop on that night or at any other time. He stated that on the nights and his brother were cleaning the shop "Mr. Morris looked like something was going to happen". When asked about this [] stated "He seemed happy about something".

/28/65

Ferriday, Louisiana

157-3255

NEW 34210

DocId: 31396151

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date 2/4/65

[REDACTED] Age 13, Morningstar Alley, was re-
contacted and shown a five gallon can found in the ruins
of a fire at Frank Morris' Shoe Shop. He advised that he
could not recall seeing this can or one similar to this
in MORRIS' shoe shop at any time insofar as he could recall.

FOIA(b)6

FOIA(b)7 - (C)

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 2/4/65

[] age 11, Morningside Alley, Ferriday, Louisiana, was advised of the identities of the interviewing agents. He advised that about two weeks before the fire at the shoe shop of FRANK MORRIS he and his brother, [] started working for MORRIS for about two hours each night cleaning up the shop. He advised that on the evening of December 9, 1964, the evening before the fire in the shop he and his brother began cleaning the shop some time between eight and nine PM. He stated that FRANK FLEMING, the shoe shine boy, was still at the shop when they started.

He advised that there was no one else in the shop other than MORRIS and no one else came into the shop while they were there cleaning. FLEMING left the shop prior to the time they finished cleaning the shop. MORRIS told them that they should sweep the floor and then clean the floor with coal oil. He advised that [] had to go to Roosevelt's grocery and get some oil as there was none at the shop. He stated that he thought [] got about a gallon of oil. [] poured the oil into a pan and then used a mop and mopped the floor with the oil. He thought that [] used about half of the oil in mopping the floor. When the mopping was finished the mop was hung in the shop near the rear wall. He advised this was the only time they cleaned the floor with coal oil.

[] stated that on that night he thought that FRANK MORRIS "looked funny like he was going to cry". He stated "Mr. Morris didn't talk much, like he usually did".

[] advised that he and his brother left the shop at about 10:00 PM and that while they were in the shop MORRIS did not do any drinking. MORRIS did mention to him that he was tired and did not say anything about expecting anyone to visit him.

He stated that he did not ever recall seeing a large oil or gasoline can in the shop. He stated that when he and his brother left the shop he did not see any cars parked in the alley next to the shop nor did he recall seeing any one in the area of the shop.

On 1/26/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana

File # 157-3255

SA ELMER B. LITCHFIELD &
SA WILLIAM QUACKENBUSH/sel

Date dictated 2/1/65

NW#: 34210

DocId: 31396151

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

2/4/68

Date

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[redacted], Age 11, Morningstar Alley, was recontacted and shown a five gallon can that had been found in the ruins of the fire at FRANK MORRIS' Shoe Shop. He advised that he had never seen a can like that as large as that in the shoe shop at any time while in the shop.

FOIA(b)6

FOIA(b)7 - (C)

2/4/65

JOHN LEE, JR., owner of the Pic & Pac Store, South 4th Street, Ferriday, Louisiana, was advised of the identity of the interviewing agents. The following information was furnished by JOHN LEE, JR.

He advised that he has known FRANK MORRIS all of his life, in that he was born and raised in Ferriday, Louisiana. He stated insofar as he knew that MORRIS was well liked by the people of FERRIDAY, both white and Negro. He added that if there was any one thing that could be said against MORRIS was that MORRIS "had a lot of girlfriends."

LEE continued by saying that he had heard from the people who frequent his store that many of the young Negro girls who live in the area were afraid to go into MORRIS' store as he would be quite blunt in his conversation with them in regard to sex. In addition to this, LEE informed that MORRIS was also known to have had sexual relations with Negro women in the back of his shop. He stated that he had not heard of MORRIS being involved with any white women. But that it was not unusual for MORRIS to come out of his shop and talk to white women customers who would drive up in front of his store. LEE said that MORRIS would come out of the shop when a white customer would drive up and depending on the direction in which the customer's car was facing would either put his head in the driver's window, or lean on the driver's side of the car and talk, or if the car was facing the other direction, MORRIS would open the passenger side of the car and get in and sit along side of the driver presumably to discuss the repair of shoes.

LEE continued by saying that in addition to the shoe shop, MORRIS would also express an interest in church work, and had made many trips out of town, allegedly in furtherance of this church work. LEE stated that MORRIS would average one or two trips a month for this church work. LEE added that many times after these trips MORRIS would tell him that he had gone to a shoe shop in one of the cities

8

1/65 - at Ferriday, Louisiana

File # NO 157-3255

THOMAS MCGUINNESS, JR.

SA WILLIAM CHRISTENSEN ASH

Date dictated 1/22/68

he had visited and they did or did not have better equipment than he had. LEE said that he knows of two specific trips that MORRIS made, one was to Houston on July 11, 1962, and the other was to Windsor, Ontario, on November 9, 1964. LEE stated that the reason he knows of the Houston, Texas trip was that his father, JOHN LEE, SR. died in Houston and FRANK MORRIS had told him that he had seen his father before he died.

In regard to the Windsor, Ontario trip he, LEE, received a post card from MORRIS, postmarked Windsor Ontario, on November 9, 1964, the post card said that MORRIS was seeing a lot of old friends and that he was having a good time. LEE did not know of any friends of MORRIS in Canada and MORRIS never identified them. LEE said that MORRIS would make these trips by train or would drive in his car or truck. LEE said that he believed that the trips were financed by profits from MORRIS's shop, as MORRIS had no other source of income that he knew of.

LEE stated that in addition to the trips MORRIS also acted as an announcer on local radio programs on Sunday mornings. LEE said that MORRIS would dedicate religious records to the various friends of his in Ferriday, both white and Negro. LEE stated that he did not know of any one objecting to these programs.

LEE stated that MORRIS had told him on one occasion that he considered himself to be training to become a religious prophet. LEE said that he did not discuss this with MORRIS any further, but that MORRIS had told LEE that when he was young he was wild but that he had grown a little older and a little wiser.

LEE stated that one of MORRIS' good white friends was LLOYD PAUL, who operated the used car lot next to MORRIS' shop. He, LEE had heard that at one time PAUL loaned MORRIS

money and later MORRIS loaned PAUL money. LEE said that was the extent of his knowledge concerning MORRIS and PAUL's friendship. LEE noted that as far as money was concerned MORRIS commented to him when he received some new equipment for his shop, that he was broke. LEE advised that he believes that this was approximately three months prior to the fire.

With regard to any individual who expressed any opinion as to the possibility of violence in connection with the Civil Rights problem, EZZIE RIAL, a white barber had said that when any Civil Rights movement starts in the Ferriday area, that any of the "nigger troublemakers" whose identity was learned, would probably be frightened into leaving Ferriday and this would stop any Civil Rights movement. LEE said that he did not give much thought to this statement at the time he heard it in that RIAL and a companion of his (FNU) BATEMAN would come into LEE's store on many occasions and sit and drink beer.

LEE stated that with regard to the apparent reluctance of the majority of the Negro population to discuss the killing of MORRIS, he was of the opinion that this was due to various superstitions that the Negro has regarding death and violence, and they were afraid that something bad would happen to them if they became involved in something which was not any of their business. In addition to their fear of bodily harm, they are also afraid of losing any benefits they might be receiving such as welfare checks.

LEE advised that with regard to the evening preceeding the fire, December 9, 1964, he closed his store at about 10:00 PM, he noticed nothing in the area which was unusual or suspicious. He advised that during the early morning hours of December 10, 1964, he was awakened by a loud banging on the door of his residence which is located in the rear of the store. He answered the door and was told by IKE HARTFORD that there was a fire across the street.

NO 157-9255/mh

4

LEE said he ran around to the front of his store and saw that MORRIS' store was on fire. He ran back around to his house, hooked up a garden hose, and came back to the street, and proceeded to wet down the front of his own store. He said that later on the fire engines came and that he did not recall anything else other than the fact that MORRIS' shop was on fire and the excitement which resulted.

LEE said that he does not have any idea as to who might have started the fire, nor why it was started.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

2/9/65

Mr. THOMAS J. HART, 402 South 6th Street, Ferriday, Louisiana, furnished the following information:

He has known FRANK MORRIS for over twenty-five years and considered MORRIS one of his best friends. He did not know any reason for anyone to harm MORRIS or burn his business and has not heard any talk as to why someone did this. Although he was a good friend of MORRIS he did not know any thing of MORRIS' business affairs nor did he know of any problems that MORRIS may have had with anyone.

About two weeks after the fire HART was in the yard at his home and a white male in a 1962 Ford Galaxie, black, stopped and asked him if he were FRANK MORRIS's brother. HART told him that he was not but had been a good friend of MORRIS. The white male told HART that it was a shame that someone did MORRIS like they did and asked HART if he knew why someone would do such a thing. HART told the man that he did not know who did it nor did he know why they did it. HART described this man as a white male, about 35 years old, 5'10", 165 pounds, wearing khaki colored clothing. HART believed he had seen this person before in Ferriday but did not know who this person might be. HART did not know why this man asked him if he were MORRIS' brother or for what reason this person thought he was a relative of MORRIS.

HART did not have any knowledge of any threats to anyone in the Negro community. He stated that he had no information regarding any Civil Rights movement in the Ferriday area.

1/27/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana

File # NO 157-3255

SA's ELMER B. LITCHFIELD and

WILLIAM QUACHETRUH

/bab

Date dictated 1/27/65

1/26/65

EDWARD BLAIR, employee, Richardson-Sims Funeral Home, 4th Street, Ferriday, Louisiana, advised he has worked there since about the middle of December, 1964, taking the place of JOHN EDWARD BECKWITH, who had quit his job and had left town. He said he understood BECKWITH had left town within several days after FRANK MORRIS' shop burned, after BECKWITH had received some threatening telephone calls. He did not recall where he had heard this and did not know what the threat consisted of.

BLAIR said that before he took the job, he had consulted with the Mayor of Ferriday about it, as he was concerned over what he might be getting into, in view of the circumstances under which BECKWITH had left. He was unable to determine whether the job had anything to do with the threatening calls BECKWITH had reportedly received. BLAIR said he did not know where BECKWITH was now living.

BLAIR said he did not know FRANK MORRIS well. He said he, BLAIR, had resided in Ferriday for 36 years and had never had any trouble with the law. BLAIR at first stated he knew nothing about the fire or the identity of the persons responsible for it. Subsequently, he suggested that JOHN GRIFFIN, employee of FRANK MORRIS, be talked to, and also JAMES WHITE, a cousin of MORRIS. When asked what GRIFFIN would know, he said he had overheard a conversation between GRIFFIN and a man whom he declined to identify, about a week after the fire, in which GRIFFIN said FRANK knew this was going to happen and who did it, and that FRANK had received a telephone call before it happened. He stated GRIFFIN also told the unidentified man that FRANK had asked GRIFFIN to stay with him at the shop that night, but GRIFFIN had refused. BLAIR said he understood FRANK had been, prior to the night of the fire, staying at Clayton, Louisiana, a short distance from Ferriday, at night. BLAIR claimed he did not know why MORRIS spent the night of the fire in his shop or why GRIFFIN had refused to stay with him. He claimed he did not know who had made the alleged telephone

1/26/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana File # RD 157-3255

SA's JAMES M. SCHRYVER and
DONALD R. BELMONT

/s/ Date dictated 1/27/65

NO 157-3256/bab

3

call to MORRIS or what was said. Upon further questioning, BLAIR said he was not positive GRIFFIN was referring to the night of the fire when he said MORRIS asked him to stay with him at the shop.

BLAIR said he overheard the conversation between GRIFFIN and the unidentified man "down the street". He refused to state just where the conversation had taken place, and again refused to identify the other party to the conversation.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

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3/1/65

ELLIE HAYES, 610 Carolina Avenue, who is employed as a teacher, furnished the following information:

On a Tuesday in December, exact date not recalled, which was the day following the death of FRANK MORRIS, he went to Scott's Grocery Store at the corner of Carolina Avenue and 5th Street, sometime after 5:00 PM. When he walked into the store, DELLA MAE SMITH, a maid at Concordia Hospital, was talking with Mr. and Mrs. SCOTT who operate the store. The conversation was concerning the death of MORRIS, and HAYES commented he certainly would like to know who was responsible. At this point DELLA MAE SMITH said she knew who burned the shop because MORRIS had confided in her while still alive at the hospital but had made her promise not to divulge the information. She further said she would not mention it now, but that she was "about high" and did not care. HAYES noted she appeared to have been drinking.

SMITH stated she had been previously interviewed by six FBI Agents about the matter and had told them nothing, but would now tell them if she was recontacted about the matter. She then told how MORRIS had told her that the persons responsible were officer [redacted] and FRANK "de Law", the name commonly given to FRANK DE LAUGHTER, a Deputy with the local Sheriff's Department.

She did not state any reason why these persons were alleged to have burned the shop. She indicated the FBI Agents had interviewed her the day of MORRIS' death.

HAYES did not believe SMITH and discounted her statements as untrue. Several days later the Fire Chief at Ferriday and two fire marshals from Alexandria, Louisiana, came to see him and asked him about what SMITH had said. He repeated the above statement to them and assumed from conversation with these men that SMITH was telling the story all over town while she was drinking. He has since that time heard from a number of sources that she has been repeating the above statement to anyone she meets on the street.

1/28/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana
SA's DONALD R. BELMONT and
MCINNIS L. WARD/bap

File # NO 157-3255

Date dictated 1/31/65

He was acquainted with FRANK MORRIS, having met him on occasions when he stopped by the Negro Catholic Church in Ferriday. MORRIS was not Catholic, but stopped by occasionally to chat with Father THOMPSON. He did not go by the hospital to see him after he was burned.

Regarding the fire, he was awakened by what appeared to be an explosion the night of the fire, December 10, 1964. He looked out of the window of his home and saw flames against the sky toward town. He did not get up and the next day he heard MORRIS' shop had burned.

Various rumors from unknown origin have circulated since the fire. One rumor was that MORRIS had been intervening between men and women of mixed races. Another rumor was that he was an official of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

He is aware that MORRIS had a radio program on Sunday mornings and has heard him make dedications of religious music to his friends, both Negro and white. He has heard dedications to white couples, white males and white females. He feels it is possible that someone objected to this practice.

The only girl friend of MORRIS he ever knew was HATTIE MAIDEN, an employee of Binney's bar.

GEORGE TAYLOR, who lives behind the fruit stand on 4th Street, is alleged to have seen something on the night of the fire, but he does not know the details.

[redacted], who was a student at the school where HAYES is a teacher, after the fire, related that when he awoke the night of the fire, he heard MORRIS outside telling someone, "I thought you were my friends". He did not talk to [redacted] further but because of the above, believes he knows more than he told.

He has no additional information regarding the matter.

FOIA(b)6

FOIA(b)7 - (C)

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

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2/3/65

DAVIS LAWRENCE, residing in the first home towards South 4th Street, in the alley along side of FRANK MORRIS's shoe shop, furnished the following information:

In the early morning of December 10, 1964, he had been watching television until he had gone to bed at approximately 1:30 AM. He stated he did not recall hearing any cars or people in the alley while he was watching television. He had just started to drop off to sleep when he heard a loud explosion. He jumped out of bed and ran to his kitchen window which faces South 4th Street and from which he could see FRANK MORRIS' Shoe Shop. He observed the shoe shop in flames. He then ran to his front door. From this position he saw a man come out of the back door of MORRIS' Shoe Shop. This man was on fire both in the upper and lower portions of his body. The flames were easily distinguishable as he ran from the shoe shop across the alley and to the vacant car lot located across the alley. This man was yelling "Oh, Oh, Oh." LAWRENCE could observe this man running to the car lot and during the entire time the flames on his body were visible.

At no time prior to or during the time that DAVIS stood in the door did he see or hear a car or any other person. He did not observe any lights on in any other house in the area. At no time prior to this incident did LAWRENCE notice any cars or persons in the area under suspicious circumstances or conditions that might arouse his curiosity.

On 1/29/65 at Portiday, Louisiana
by SA's ELMER B. LITCHEFIELD and
WILLIAM QUACKENBUSH/bap

File # NO 157-3255

Date dictated 1/29/65

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date 2/5/63

JUNIOR COTTON, 1013 Louisiana Avenue, furnished the following information:

He is employed as an attendant at the Coast Service Station, South Fourth Street, Ferriday, Louisiana, and works from six in the evening to six in the morning.

He had worked the above hours on December 9-10, 1964. He advised that his station is located about two blocks from FRANK MORRIS' shoe shop towards Vidalia.

On that particular evening, he did not hear any explosions nor was he aware that MORRIS' shop was on fire until he was told about it by a Negro, name unknown, whom he believes is employed as a watchman at a local sawmill.

He did not see anything unusual that evening and could not recall seeing or hearing a car drive past his service station at a high rate of speed. However, he noted that he usually reads when he does not have customers and does not pay too much attention to activities on the outside.

COTTON did recall that at sometime prior to learning about the fire he observed a white car enter South Fourth Street from the side street across from the Coast Service Station and proceed towards downtown Ferriday. He did not know if this car was a police car. It proceeded at a normal rate of speed.

COTTON advised that no one was with him at the station and he did not recall seeing anyone else on the street during the early morning hours.

1/31/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana

File # 157-3255

SA ELMER B. LITCHFIELD and

SA SYLVAN OCHSNEIDER

Asst

Date dictated

2/1/65

NO 157-3255/ser

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On January 29, 1965, the following persons, all residents in the Ferriday area near the scene of the fire at FRANK MORRIS' shoe shop, advised SA ALVIN B. LITCHFIELD and SA WILLIAM QUACKENBUSH that they did not see or hear anything or anyone on the night the fire occurred. None of these people had any information relative to FRANK MORRIS or to possible suspects in this case:

MARY LAWRENCE, 413 South 3rd Street

FREEMAN WASHINGTON, 1 Georgia Avenue

GRACE MULLEN, 419 South 4th Street

LETTY DIXON, 300 South 3rd Street

CORA WREN, 412 South 2nd Street

JIM BROWN, apartment building in alley next to shoe shop, Apartment 13

MAHIE SMITH, 313 Georgia Avenue

TOM DEMERY, 313 Georgia Avenue

Mr. and Mrs. SAM JOHNSON, 311 Georgia Avenue

GLADYS KNOTEN, 307 Georgia Avenue

AMILE DORIS RAY, 305 Georgia Avenue

MARTIN SMITH, 305 Georgia Avenue

FRANK FLEMING, 214 1/2 North 2nd Street, Ferriday, Louisiana was advised of the identities of the interviewing agents. Fleming stated that he was employed by Frank Morris as a shoe shine boy and worked in the shop each evening after he got off from his regular employment and would work in the shop from about 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 or 8:00 p.m. He would work all day on Saturdays and had been working in the shop for about five years.

FLEMING advised that on the night of the fire in the shoe shop he came to the shop at about 5:00 p.m. and believes he left between 7:00 and 8:00 p.m. He remained in the area of the shop on Fourth Street talking to friends and going into some of the "joints" and went home about 8:30 or 9:00 p.m. FLEMING stated that while he was in the shop on that night there were not any customers in the shop. JOHNNY GRIFFIN left the shop to get some wine and the only persons in the shop besides MORRIS and FLEMING were two small boys, who were cleaning and oiling the floor. FLEMING stated he did not know the names of these boys. They were sweeping the dirt and trash up and mopping the floor with "coal oil" to clean the floor.

FLEMING stated that when he left the shop MORRIS and the two young boys were the only ones in the shop. MORRIS' grandson [redacted] was in the rear shack watching television. FLEMING stated that MORRIS discussed things with him and he believes that if MORRIS had received any threat from anyone MORRIS would have told him. He stated MORRIS did not mention any threat or problem and seemed to be his normal self when he, FLEMING, left the shop.

MORRIS was staying in his room to the rear of the shop and had been staying there at night for a week or two prior to the fire. He advised that MORRIS usually had a "woman friend" he stayed with at night and had been going to Clayton, Louisiana and staying with a woman there. He believed this woman went to visit relatives out of state and this was the reason MORRIS was staying at the shop. He advised that MORRIS had several different Negro "women

FOIA(b)6

FOIA(b)7 - (C)

On 1/28/65 at Ferriday, La. File # NO 157-3255

SA ELMER B. LITCHFIELD and
SA WILLIAM QUACKENBUSH /ajt

Date dictated 1/29/65

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friends' from time to time but to his knowledge never had an affair with a white woman. He advised that MORRIS would give the white women customers best service, go out to their cars and get their shoes so the women would not have to come into the shop. He stated he had never seen MORRIS get into the car with any white woman and did not know of any trouble MORRIS had had with any customer or anyone.

FLEMING stated that MORRIS from time to time would go out of town to hear a gospel group sing and that he went on these trips alone. MORRIS had a radio program on Sunday morning and he would give advertisements for some of the local businesses and would sometimes receive letters with a contribution from some of the people whose business he talked about. MORRIS would use this money to pay for the radio time. FLEMING said that he listened to the radio program of MORRIS and had never heard MORRIS say anything on the program to offend anyone.

He advised that MORRIS was a good friend of LLOYD PAUL and that PAUL operated the used car lot next to MORRIS' shoe shop. PAUL would let MORRIS use a car from time to time and MORRIS would recommend that people buy cars from PAUL. He stated that Mr. PAUL was friendly to all the people that worked in the shoe shop and never said or did anything to hurt or offend anyone working in the shop. He advised that PAUL and MORRIS went to Monroe, Louisiana together once; PAUL to pick up a used car and MORRIS to attend a gospel sing and to drive one of the cars back to Ferriday.

FLEMING stated that MORRIS was not engaged in any illegal activity and MORRIS had never been active in any civil rights activity.

FLEMING stated he did not know of the fire and injury to MORRIS until the morning after the fire. He stated he did not know how the fire started and had not heard any talk as to the cause of the fire. FLEMING stated he did not know of any one, white or negro, that MORRIS had trouble with and did not know of any reason why any one would harm FRANK or his business.

MICHAEL ALBERTY, commonly known as "Trick", Negro, age 40, a resident of the rear of Henry's Place, 4th Street, furnished the following information:

He has known FRANK MORRIS for many years and for a period of 3 or 4 years lived in MORRIS' shoe repair shop on 4th Street. During the period of time he lived in the shop, he kept the premises cleaned up and MORRIS permitted him to sleep on a cot in the building. He moved out of the shop and into his present living quarters several months ago, date unknown.

He always knew MORRIS as a fair man with his customers, both Negro and white, and knows of no problems he had with any of them.

MORRIS was friendly with a white man named PAUL who operates the used car lot next door to the shoe shop. PAUL would come over to the shop and drink whiskey with MORRIS. He knows no association other than a drinking session occasionally. They would sometimes leave the shop together, but he does not know where they were going. He presumed these were business matters. He knows nothing of MORRIS being involved with PAUL and women.

MORRIS on occasions drank a lot of whiskey and while he would get drunk, he has never known him to pass out. He does not know how much whiskey MORRIS kept on hand and never knew him to sell whiskey or dope.

MORRIS had several girl friends, names not recalled other than EDNA BROWN and someone named "ARTIE" or "ARCHIE". He never knew MORRIS to get involved with any white women and has not heard anything that would indicate he ever made any advances toward any women or visa versa.

During the time he worked cleaning out the shop, MORRIS also employed FRANK FLEMING and JOHNNY GRIFFIN as

1/27/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana

File # NO 157-3255

SA THOMAS MC GUINNESS and
SA MC INNIS L. WARD /scr

Date dictated 1/30/65

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DocId 31396151

DocId 31396151

NO 157-3255/scr

2

shoe repairman.

He knows of nothing that would have motivated anyone to burn MORRIS' shop. The latter was not engaged in any racial activity.

MORRIS occasionally went out of town in connection with church matters but he knows nothing of these trips. MORRIS also had a local radio program dealing with religion.

Mrs. FRANK MORRIS, 38 Washburn Street, Natchez, Mississippi, advised as follows:

She is the stepmother of FRANK MORRIS. On the day FRANK was burned in the fire at his shoe shop, she was notified of the fire by EDNA BROWN, FRANK's ex-wife. EDNA telephoned her between 5:00 and 6:00 AM that morning, saying FRANK's place had exploded and that FRANK was in the hospital, badly burned. EDNA said she had already been to see him at the hospital.

Mrs. MORRIS arrived at the hospital in Ferriday, sometime between 8:00 and 10:00 AM. There were two men with him in his room when she went in, but she did not know their identities. FRANK was conscious but apparently in great pain. When she asked him what happened he said, "They threw gasoline on me and set me afire." She asked him if he could identify who did it, and he said no, but that they were two white men. The only other thing he said that she could recall was the remark, "I didn't think I had a white enemy."

She remained with FRANK at the hospital all that first day, which was Thursday, and they hired a nurse named MARTHA BARNES to stay with him at night. Mrs. MORRIS returned to stay with him on Friday and she remained all day. FRANK was fairly calm by then but was swollen and was unable to carry on a conversation. He was conscious, and appeared to know her, but did not talk much. Mrs. MORRIS also stayed with him during the day on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, and MARTHA BARNES stayed with him again Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights, and she came back again Monday night but he had died by then. He died about 7:30 PM, and Mrs. MORRIS was with him at the time. He did not say anything to her at the end, and he had apparently been in a coma on Sunday and Monday.

Mrs. MORRIS stated they had another woman, BESSIE ROLLINS, a practical nurse, stay with FRANK on Friday, from Noon until 7:30 PM.

1/23/65 at Natchez, Mississippi File # NO 157-3255

SA DONALD R. BELMONT/lap

Date dictated 1/24/65

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NO 157-3255/bap

2

Mrs. MORRIS stated she and her husband had not had frequent contact with FRANK lately, and they saw him only about once every two months. She knew little about his associates. She said she knew of no reason why anyone would want to do this to him, and added she had no knowledge that he had ever been active in any civil rights movements or that he had ever been involved in any controversy or any activity that might cause friction with the white population.

She remarked that she had been informed by EDNA BROWN, FRANK's ex-wife, that after his death EDNA began having all his mail forwarded to her, EDNA. Mrs. MORRIS could not understand why she did this, as she is married to another man. In addition, she said the doctor at the hospital had cut FRANK's ring off his finger and had given it to her, Mrs. MORRIS, but EDNA came to her house and took possession of it.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date 1/29/66

Mr. SULLIVAN MORRIS, 36 Woodlawn Street, Natchez, Mississippi, advised he is the father of FRANK MORRIS. He said he visited FRANK three times in the hospital after FRANK was burned, but FRANK was never able to talk to him. However, his wife, ETHEL MORRIS, who is FRANK's step-mother, visited FRANK every day in the hospital, and she informed him FRANK had told her the people who started the fire were two white men, who threw something on him that exploded, that he then ran to a filling station where two white men put out the flames. He stated his wife informed him that FRANK said he did not know who the men were who burned him.

Mr. MORRIS advised that his son, FRANK MORRIS, was born in Vidalia, Louisiana, but he does not know his birthdate. FRANK's mother, CHARLOTTE JAMES MORRIS, died when FRANK was about three years old, and FRANK thereafter lived a large part of his growing years with his paternal grandmother and her husband, ELLEN MOODY and NATHAN MOODY, in Vidalia. This grandmother died about three years ago. FRANK attended Bloomfield High School, and Mr. MORRIS subsequently taught him the shoe repair business, which has been Mr. MORRIS' occupation until he has had to give up the active business due to his age. He estimated that prior to his death, FRANK had been in the shoe business for almost 40 years.

Mr. MORRIS stated FRANK had never been in any kind of trouble to his knowledge, that he was well liked and never participated in any civil rights movements, and he had no idea why anyone would want to hurt him.

1/23/66 - Natchez, Mississippi

... NO 157-1224

SA DONALD E. GILBERT

1/24/66

2.4.00

Mrs. ELMER BROWN, 520 South 4th Street, advised that she and MORRIS were married in 1939 and divorced in 1948 or 1949, for incompatibility. They continued to be close friends after the divorce up to the time of his death.

She stated MORRIS showed signs of abnormality in his personality that prompted BROWN to recommend to him that he see a psychiatrist. For example, she stated he, MORRIS, would become moody and use physical violence on those closest to him. He struck her on a number of occasions. His treatment of other family members was the same.

In addition, it appeared to Mrs. BROWN that MORRIS could not be satisfied with normal sexual intercourse. He had never asked Mrs. BROWN to have abnormal relations with him but she heard rumors that he had been having such abnormal relations with other women both during their marriage and after their divorce. When she discussed this with him, he did not deny it, nor did he admit to such activity.

Mrs. BROWN stated that one of the women that MORRIS had been dating was a PAULINE HAYES, who lives next to Hayes Cafe. She stated she did not know what the exact relationship was.

Mrs. BROWN did not know of any major involvement that MORRIS had with white women, however, he was the type of person who, if an opportunity for an affair with a white woman presented itself, he would take advantage of it without thinking about the consequences.

In 1947 or 1948, he, MORRIS, was arrested by the local police for insulting the white wife of the Billups gas station owner. Mrs. BROWN did not know what this insult consisted of but he was kept in jail in Vidalia, Louisiana, for two or three weeks. He was then released on the condition that he stay out of town until told by the local police that he could come back. She stated she did not know any other details or the final outcome.

HAL MONROE, now deceased, told Mrs. BROWN that

1/26/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana File # 157-3255

SA ELMER B. LITCHFIELD &
SA WILLIAM QUACKENBUSH/gml

Date dictated 1/26/65

2
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In 1963, MORRIS had this disturbing incident over the telephone to the wife of [redacted] and that [redacted] pulled a gun on MORRIS. When Mrs. BROWN heard about this, she immediately called MORRIS to her home to question him about it. MORRIS told her that there was nothing to it, that [redacted] was crazy and that he, MORRIS, had a witness to the telephone call and that he was not in the telephone booth that long. He neither admitted nor denied that [redacted] had pulled a gun on him.

There has not been any other known trouble between [redacted] and MORRIS or between [redacted] and other Negroes to Mrs. BROWN's knowledge.

MORRIS was always going out of town on trips partly to follow gospel singers, and partly for reasons unknown to Mrs. BROWN. When his trips were connected with gospel singers he often went with a JONAS PRAETER, the nephew of MATTIE MAIDEN. In May or June, 1964, he went to Atlanta, Georgia. In September, 1964, he went to Detroit, Michigan and to Canada. He had also gone to New Orleans, St. Louis and Houston, at various times. Mrs. BROWN stated that about two weeks before the fire, he was scheduled to go to Chicago, but did not go. She did not know why this trip was cancelled. Mrs. BROWN did not know how he financed these trips, but did not believe that he could have afforded it based only on his income from his shoe store, although she knew of no other source of income that MORRIS had.

MORRIS also sponsored and was the announcer of a radio program, at the local radio station. However, partly the cost of this program was defrayed by donations solicited by him from businesses which he advertised on the program. Mrs. BROWN informed that MORRIS had a substantial amount of insurance on his building, plus a number of small policies on his own life. His aunt, now deceased, and his grandson, were the two beneficiaries of these policies. He also had savings accounts in two local banks, in his grandson's name. Mrs. BROWN stated she did not know the total amount of insurance nor the amount in the bank.

³
NO 157-3235/gml

Mrs. BROWN informed there was no indication that he was despondent or afraid before the fire. On the day before the fire he had purchased a used pick up truck, believed to be from the International Harvester Company for which he gave them a check for \$50.00 or \$75.00. This company reclaimed the truck after his death and returned the check.

Mrs. BROWN stated that MORRIS' close association with LLOYD PAUL, a white man, was very unusual for this area. She explained that she talked to MORRIS about this and asked him to stay away from PAUL. His answer was "you have to do it to make it". PAUL and MORRIS went out of town together frequently. Why or where was not known to Mrs. BROWN. Usually they returned the same day or the next day.

Mrs. BROWN had discussed MORRIS' death with many of the local Negroes. However, no one has been able to provide a reason for it.

SA JAMES WHITE furnished the following information after being advised of the identity of the interviewing agents:

He and FRANK MORRIS had grown up together and considered themselves good friends.

MORRIS went out of his way to be nice to white people and depended upon them for a substantial part of his business. With reference to his personal life, MORRIS was divorced from EDNA BROWN who now resides in Ferriday, Louisiana. In recent times, until at least five months ago, a girl known to WHITE only as MATTIE, and who works for WILL HANEY, was the mistress of MORRIS. This relationship ended due to the fact that MORRIS considered her to be jealous. MORRIS had been living with MATTIE until he ended the relationship and moved back to the living area in his shop. WHITE knew of no other women, white or colored in MORRIS' life.

WHITE advised that he was home on the night of the fire and did not hear about it until the next morning. He visited MORRIS frequently in the hospital before the latter died. MORRIS claimed that he did not know who the men were who caused the fire, but WHITE believes that their identities were known to MORRIS. There are rumors around Ferriday, that the refusal of MORRIS to identify these men was due to MORRIS's fear for the life of his grandson. WHITE could not furnish the names of the sources of this rumor or of the persons who had repeated it.

MORRIS stated that JOHN GRIFFIN and EDNA BROWN said that they were with MORRIS on the morning of his first day in the hospital and MORRIS made the remark, "I didn't think they were going to do anything to me. I thought all white men were my friends."

1/29/65 at Ferriday, Louisiana File # NO 157-3255

SA JAMES M. SCHEFFER

SA WILLIAM QUACKENBUSH/dcs

Date dictated 1/25/65

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WHITE had no explanation or opinion as to the significance of the above remark. There have not been any recent serious incidents that created friction between MORRIS and the white community. WHITE stated that he did hear that last summer MORRIS had called the local police and asked them to chastise his grandson for staying out late. As a follow up to this request a local policeman, not further identified, went to MORRIS' shop, some sort of argument followed and the officer pulled a gun on MORRIS. HARRISON JOHNSON, a Deacon in a church in Jonesville, Louisiana, was supposed to have been present in the shop when this incident occurred.

WHITE informed that he was sure that MORRIS knew all of the local police officers by name and would be able to identify them by sight. WHITE stated that there was a rumor among the Negro people that police officers were involved in the burning of MORRIS' shop, but no one apparently had anything to back up this rumor.

With reference to the burning, MORRIS explained to WHITE, during one of his visits to the hospital, that he had heard glass break after which he rushed into his shop from the living area. WHITE was not sure but had the impression that MORRIS placed the responsible men inside the shop. MORRIS specifically denied that either man had a shotgun. He did say that there was gasoline on the floor and that there were flames all over after one of the men waved his hand or threw something.

WHITE advised that there were many visitors to the hospital and that Reverend ROBERT SMITH from Clayton, Louisiana, stayed with MORRIS the first day at the hospital. He had a nurse whose last name was BARNES stay with him every night. During the day, MORRIS' step-mother, ETHEL MORRIS, stayed with him in the hospital. WHITE stated that he never got the impression that any of the visitors were just attempting to determine if MORRIS had named the persons responsible for the burning, but believed they were all merely concerned with MORRIS's condition.

MORRIS' closest friends included CATHERINE JOHNSON, her daughter, THOMAS HAIT and WILLIE HANEY, all colored people living in Ferriday. One LLOYD PAUL, a white man in the used car business in Ferriday, was also a close friend of MORRIS.

With reference to a "finger" found in the alley next to the burned shop, WHITE explained that this was the skin and fingernail from one of MORRIS' fingers. WHITE purposely examined MORRIS' hands after hearing about the finger and disclosed that the skin and fingernail was missing from one finger. He could not recall the exact finger.

In spite of this close relationship, WHITE did not believe that MORRIS would confide in him with reference to any personal problem, nor would WHITE necessarily know about any possible affair MORRIS may have had with a white woman. WHITE did recall that many years ago, possibly in the early 1940s, MORRIS had a close relationship with the owner or operator name not recalled, of the Billups Station, up the street from his shop and the white wife of this man.

There were rumors at that time that MORRIS was having an affair with this woman. He stated that this was the wife departed Farri day many years ago and he, WHITE, did not believe there was anything to this rumor.

MORRIS used to take trips out of town and out of State as often as twice a year. At least once he went to New York City. MORRIS told WHITE that when he arrived in those out of town places he went to the biggest shoe repair shop in town, looked for new ideas in shoe repairing and at times, brought ideas back to Farri day to put into operation in his own shoe shop.

WHITE stated he could think of absolutely no reason anyone would want to harm MORRIS. He stated that MORRIS was not involved in any illegal activity. WHITE informed that he was in MORRIS' shop most every day and by this, does not think it possible that MORRIS could have been doing anything illegal unless he, WHITE, knew of it and he knew of nothing along this line.

WHITE was shown a five gallon can which was located in the ruins of the fire of MORRIS' shop. WHITE stated he had been in MORRIS' shop many times but had never seen a five gallon can or container of any kind.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 2/1/65

1

C. W. PHARIS, Louisiana State Deputy Fire Marshal, furnished the following information:

He advised that he was called by Ferriday Fire Chief NOBLE at about 4:00 A.M., on December 10, 1964, concerning the fire which had occurred at FRANK MORRIS' Shoe Shop. NOBLE told him that a terrible thing had occurred and inasmuch as he did not get along too well with the Fire Marshal assigned to the area, he wanted him, PHARIS, to do the investigation. PHARIS advised him that it would have to be OK'd by his supervisor. PHARIS stated that about ten minutes later he received a call from his supervisor, Mr. JOHNSON, who told him to proceed to Ferriday and conduct the necessary investigation. PHARIS then proceeded to Jonesville and picked up W. A. KENDRICKS, also a Deputy State Fire Marshal, and then proceeded to Ferriday, arriving at the scene of the fire at about 7:00 A.M.

NOBLE advised PHARIS that the alarm was called in at about 1:45 A.M., December 10, 1964. NOBLE also told PHARIS that he had heard that the victim had stated that two or three white men had set the fire, one of the men allegedly held a shotgun on MORRIS while the fire was being set.

PHARIS stated that in conjunction with FBI Agents, he interviewed JOHNNY GRIFFIN, [redacted] and the victim, FRANK MORRIS. He then made an examination of the debris and secured some samples which he requested be examined by the FBI Laboratory. Further investigation revealed that the fire originated in the interior of the shop; however, a determination as to a particular location within the shop could not be made due to the extensive damage to the entire structure. The estimated value of the building was \$8,000, and the estimated value of the contents and machinery in the shop was \$12,000. The victim had the following insurance: \$6,600 on the building and \$5,000 on the contents.

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1/27/65

Alexandria, Louisiana

EO 157-3256

SA DONALD J. MC GORTY/lrs

1/27/65

During subsequent investigation PHARIS stated he spoke to JAMES SIMOLKE. He stated that SIMOLKE was the night attendant at the Billups Service Station. SIMOLKE advised PHARIS that he had not seen nor heard the fire until the police car drove up, at which time he noticed the fire and the victim running toward the service station. However, he told Pharis that about ten minutes prior to the time he noticed the fire, he saw a black sedan car pull out of the alley next to MORRIS' shoe shop and head toward the Vidalia area at a high rate of speed.

PHARIS went on to state that JUNIOR HARP, who is a fireman in Ferriday, gave him the names of two individuals who were suppose to be in the Ku Klux Klan. These individuals were LEWEE CLARK and RAY WILLIAMS. PHARIS also stated that LEWEE CLARK, who resides somewhere between Ferriday and Vidalia, was seen by Ferriday City Policeman KNIGHT or MC KNIGHT, at the scene of the fire while it was being fought during the early morning hours. PHARIS also learned, from JOHNNY GRIFFIN, that the victim had only one visitor on the night prior to the fire. This individual was FRANK ASHFORD, who operates a service station in Ferriday. ASHFORD is a Negro and allegedly was in MORRIS' shop for five or ten minutes somewhere between 8:00 P.M. and 9:00 P.M.

The following information was obtained by PHARIS from EARLY HAYES on January 7, 1963:

HAYES is a teacher in the Negro high school in Ferriday. HAYES advised him that FRANK MORRIS' cousin, DELA MAE SMITH, told him that MORRIS had told her that three white men and one Negro had set the fire. She stated that MORRIS said that two of the white men were [redacted] and DE LAUGHTER. HAYES further advised PHARIS that at the time SMITH gave him this information, she was drunk. HAYES also stated that he has heard "street talk" that MORRIS used to set up dates for men and women at his place. PHARIS stated that HAYES inferred that these dates were for both white and Negroes. HAYES further advised PHARIS that a [redacted] Negro male, 17 years old, had talked to other boys at the high school, telling them that his uncle had seen or heard MORRIS arguing with two

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MO 157-3226

NEW 34210

DocId:31396151

MO 157-3856

3

white men in front of his shop on the night of the fire. There was allegedly a Negro who was acting as a look-out for these two white men.

PHARIS advised that he had not spoken to LLOYD PAUL, who runs the used car lot next to MORRIS' shop. However, he added that the business is partly owned by one CHARLES HUFFMAN, whom PHARIS described as a "bad egg." PHARIS stated that HUFFMAN was also the part owner of a bar-dance hall, that recently burned down in the City of Ferriday.

PHARIS further stated that his department's efforts to locate JOHNNY BECKWITH have been negative to date. He has learned that BECKWITH is supposed to be presently living somewhere in Jonesboro, Louisiana.

NOLAN MOUELLE, Fire Chief, Ferriday Fire Department, furnished the following information:

He was not feeling well on the evening of December 9 - 10, 1965, and sometime after midnight he got out of bed and went to the bathroom. After he returned to bed but was still awake, he received a telephone call from Mrs. "JUNIOR" HARP of the Fire Department who advised him FRANK MORRIS' shop on 4th Street was on fire. He immediately dressed and went to the fire. Upon arrival the entire inside of the building was blazing but the walls had not collapsed, other than the front window, which had been blown out into the street. He felt at the time and still feels the heat that had built up inside the building caused the front window to blow out.

FRANK MORRIS had already been taken to the hospital and JOHNNY GRIFFIN and [redacted] had already left the area. There was a crowd of persons which had accumulated in front of the shop watching the fire.

The fire was burning with intense heat and during the fighting of the fire, the roof and walls collapsed. Chief MOUELLE was almost hit by the front wall when it fell. After the fire was out he went to the Concordia Hospital to see MORRIS. He estimates this was about an hour or more after the fire had started. MORRIS related to him that someone pointed a gun at him and told him to get back into the shop or he would blow off his head. He said the fire then started. He could not understand everything MORRIS was saying, but understood him today at one time there were two white men and another time there were three white men. He never described them but mentioned he thought they worked at the paper mill or tire plant in Natchez, Mississippi. One of the first things MORRIS said was to ask Chief MOUELLE how bad his building was burned and whether JOHNNY GRIFFIN and [redacted] got out alright. MORRIS never mentioned anything about a car.

He again talked with MORRIS around 8:00 or 9:00 AM.

1/30/65 - Ferriday, Louisiana

File # 50-157-3255

SA's DONALD R. BELMONT and

WILLIAMS L. VANDERBILT

Date dictated 1/30/65

and he repeated substantially the same thing. He added nothing new to the version of what had happened.

He also was present when MORRIS was interviewed later that day in the presence of other officers, including Agents of the FBI.

He doubts that MORRIS knew what he was saying during any of the interviews as he repeated the same thing over and over and doubts that he was completely rational.

He knows MORRIS would on occasions drink heavily and it is his opinion that MORRIS was drunk when he went to sleep and somehow the fire accidentally originated. He feels that MORRIS awoke after the fire was burning intensely and by the time he could get out, had been badly burned. He does not know, however, if this is the case, why MORRIS was not overcome by smoke and fumes to the extent of suffocating and dying inside the building. He discovered the suitcase containing half pints of whiskey which were individually wrapped in pieces of newspaper which makes him believe MORRIS might have been doing some "bootlegging" on the side. In addition, he noticed 2 or 3 empty half pint whiskey bottles on the floor of MORRIS' living quarters. The latter is one reason why he suspects MORRIS was drinking the night of the fire.

He feels the fire started in MORRIS' living quarters because that area was badly burned. He was unable to determine the origin of the fire, however, through his investigation. He could not detect a gas or kerosene smell in the building during his investigation.

He recalled that many years ago, MORRIS had a shoe shop located in someone else's building and that building also burned. He does not recall the details of this fire and does not know an approximate date.

About two or three weeks before the fire on

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December 10, 1964, he inspected MORRIS' Shoe Shop and the building was up to standards. He noticed that MORRIS had a number of extension cords lying about the floor and had plugged in several of his shoe repair machines to these cords. He told MORRIS the cords might get overloaded so to do away with them and get a safer arrangement installed. He does not know whether MORRIS corrected this or not.

MORRIS was the type person who knew everyone and would yell a greeting to anyone he knew on the street, both Negro and white. He was sort of a "mouthy" individual, but no one paid any attention to this as he was not disrespectful in this respect. He had the radio program on Sundays and Chief MOUELLE has heard him dedicate religious music to his friends, both Negro and white. Chief MOUELLE never heard anything he would consider objectionable or in poor taste on the program.

With respect to the five gallon can found inside the building, he recalls that MORRIS recently bought an old truck and feels he might have had the can for gas or oil for this truck.

He has heard that MORRIS had several Negro girl friends, but does not know their names and knows of no trouble MORRIS might have had in connection with women. He has never heard of MORRIS making any advances toward white women.

The Fire Department is composed of volunteers with the exception of Chief MOUELLE and JUNIOR HARP.

During the fire, he recalls that a white man named [redacted] drove by, stopped, and attempted to direct traffic. He was drunk, nearly fell into the fire and was getting in the way so they ran him off.

Since the fire, he has heard a rumor from un-recalled source that a cook in Emey's bar was alleged to have seen a car drive by on the street just after the explosion.

Also, ERLIE HAYES, Negro school teacher, told him

DocId:31396151

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NO 157-3255/bap

4

that DELLA HAE SMITH, Negro maid at the hospital, had information as to who burned the shop, but he discounted the story because SMITH is a common drunk and cannot be considered reliable.

He has developed no additional information and has no suspects in this matter.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

2/3/65

Mrs. AGNES SCOTT, Clayton, Louisiana, was advised of the identities of the interviewing agents. She advised that she lived with FRANK MORRIS in a common-law marriage relationship from May 1964 to November 1964. She knew MORRIS for about 10 to 12 years and last saw MORRIS on November 2, 1964. On that date she left for Chicago, Illinois, to stay with her daughter and did not return to Clayton, Louisiana, until about January 10, 1965.

About one week before the fire at MORRIS' shop she telephoned MORRIS and he stated that he might come to Chicago to see her. She advised that no definite plans were made regarding his coming to Chicago, and she did not know of the fire and his death until a friend wrote her about the incident and then she read something in the newspapers about the incident. She stated that she had not heard anything about the matter since her return to Clayton as none of the people seemed to want to discuss the matter.

She advised that from July 1964 until she left for Chicago, MORRIS and his grandson would come to her home every night when he completed his work and they would sleep at her place and then return to Friday in the morning to MORRIS' shop. SCOTT stated she did not know anything of MORRIS' business affairs or personal affairs and stated she had only been in his shop on one occasion.

She advised that she did not know any of the people that MORRIS associated with either white or Negro as she stayed close to her home in Clayton and did not get to Friday often. She stated she knew that JOHNNY GRIFFIN worked for MORRIS in the shoe shop and that a Negro woman by the name of "Speedy" cooked for MORRIS at the shop. She stated she did not know "Speedy" by any other name and does not know where "Speedy" lives.

SCOTT advised that she did not have any information as to the reason MORRIS' shop burned. She stated she did not know of anyone he was having any problems with or anyone that might be mad at him.

1/27/65 at Clayton, Louisiana

File # NO 157-3255

SA's ELMER B. LITCHFIELD and

WILLIAM QUACHETBUSH

Sub

Date dictated 1/30/65

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[redacted] advised that she had known VERTIE MORRIS since 1951. [redacted] and MORRIS lived with him in a common law marriage for about five years. They terminated this common law marriage in the summer of 1956. She went to the shoe shop owned and operated by MORRIS one day and learned that MORRIS was in the rear of the shop with a woman. [redacted] last name unknown and MORRIS had a wife and MORRIS called the police. The police came and told them that since they were living in a common law relation the best thing for them to do was to split up and to leave each other alone. MORRIS moved his belongings from her home.

[redacted] advised that MORRIS had a girl friend at Clayton, Louisiana, whom he went to see during the time that he was living with her. This girl friend, AGNES, last name unknown, was not known to [redacted], however, [redacted] advised that she had heard AGNES went to California prior to the death of MORRIS and she did not know if AGNES had returned to CLAYTON. She never mentioned to MORRIS that she knew of AGNES as MORRIS was paying none of her bills.

[redacted] advised that MORRIS, during the time they lived together, never had intercourse with her, but would bite her and hit her savagely with his fists, and engaged in unnatural sex acts. She advised that even though he caused her pain at these times, she stayed with him as she did not have any relatives or anyone else to assist her.

During the time that [redacted] and MORRIS were residing together, Mr. PAUL, a white man, who had a used car lot next to MORRIS' shop would come by the house to get MORRIS. MORRIS never explained to [redacted] as to where they were going or what they were going to do. [redacted] stated that Mr. PAUL would often go into the shoe shop and that PAUL and MORRIS seemed to be alone. On the occasion when she, [redacted], went to the shop and found [redacted] there with MORRIS, Mr. PAUL came to the shop and offered to take her home and told her to leave and to leave MORRIS alone.

[redacted] advised that to her knowledge MORRIS had - -

1/26/68 at Ferriday, Louisiana File # NO 157-3235
SA ELMER B. LITCHFIELD
SA WILLIAM QUACKENBUSH /sgr Date dictated 1/27/68

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NW 34210

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NO 157-3255

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2

never done or said anything to offend anyone, white or Negro. She stated that none of the Negroes in the community have talked to her regarding the death of MORRIS and no one has indicated to her that they have any information regarding his death.

The night of the fire she was in her room at [redacted] buildings on Fourth Street and the shoe shop is not visible from this room. [redacted] stated that on the night of the fire, MORRIS' grandson came to her door and told her that MORRIS had been burned in the fire and wanted to know if he could stay with her. She let him in and put him to bed. She did not realize how bad MORRIS had been burned. She thought he had burned his hands and the grandson would not tell her anything except that he wanted to stay with her. The grandson did not tell her anything about the fire except that his grandfather had been burned.

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FOIA(b)7 - (C)

implicated in any way with bootlegging, narcotics or fencing stolen goods.

MORRIS' radio program had religious overtones. It invited people to attend church services, mentioned names of out of town visitors, advertised local business establishments, and dedicated songs to local residents, both white and colored.

LLOYD PAUL was one of MORRIS' closest friends. Occasionally he came into MORRIS' shop while JOHNSON was there and PAUL and MORRIS went outside to talk. Occasionally, PAUL allowed MORRIS to borrow one of PAUL's used cars to go to Clayton, Louisiana.

When MORRIS was mad at his woman in Clayton, he stayed in the back room of his shop.

MORRIS' grandson was a problem to him due to the fact that the grandson would not stay home when needed. MORRIS mentioned to JOHNSON that he was going to call the police to get his grandson straightened out. JOHNSON does not know if he ever did this nor does JOHNSON know of his own personal knowledge of a policeman or other white man ever having come to MORRIS' shop to talk to him about this problem. JOHNSON never saw a policeman or a white man "pull a gun" on MORRIS. At one time a colored woman, possibly MAHEL, last name unknown, also known as "M.B.", asked JOHNSON about such an event. JOHNSON, in turn, repeated the story involving someone pulling a gun on MORRIS, to MORRIS. He laughed and said "people sure carry anything don't they."

JOHNSON had also heard unspecified people talk on the street about the "gun pulling" incident that had allegedly occurred about one year ago.

A Negro man, named RIT or RICK, had worked for and lived with MORRIS until two or three months ago. He and MORRIS had an argument, believed to be over rent payment, and this man moved out.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date 2/4/65

Mrs. [redacted] was advised of the identity of the interviewing agent. The following information was furnished by [redacted]

She advised that she is the former wife of [redacted]. She stated that they were married June, 1963, in Natchez, Mississippi, and were separated in August of 1964, and divorced November, 1964. She added that even though she is legally divorced she continues to use the name [redacted]

She advised that her former husband use to have a girl friend by the name of OPAL, last name unknown, who resided in Ferriday, Louisiana. She stated that as far as she knows this girl still resides in Ferriday, but believes she is now married. [redacted] advised that she does not believe that her former husband was seeing OPAL while she was married to [redacted]

Mrs. [redacted] continued by saying that she believes that [redacted] is now residing at Route 1, Union, Mississippi, where he operates a chicken farm. She stated that she saw her former husband over a year ago in Natchez when he was driving a 1963 Bel Air Chevrolet red and white in color. She added that she does not know if he still has this car.

Mrs. [redacted] advised that to the best of her knowledge her former husband did not belong to the Ku Klux Klan, but did belong to an organization similar to the White Citizens Council. She stated that [redacted] would attend a weekly meeting of this organization. She advised that she does not know the name of this group.

Mrs. [redacted] advised that when she was married to [redacted] he was employed at Jones' Lumber Mill in Natchez, Mississippi. Prior to his working at the mill, [redacted] was employed as a butcher at Jitney Jungle Market and at National Food Store, both in Natchez, Mississippi.

1/31/65 - of Natchez, Mississippi

File # 157-3265

by THOMAS MC GUINNESS, JR. /aab

Date dictated

2/1/65

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NO 157-3255/sab

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Mrs. [] advised that the name FRANK MORRIS is completely unfamiliar to her nor did she ever hear her former husband talk of any FRANK MORRIS. She advised that she had not heard of [] being around Natchez, Mississippi, around December of 1964.

NO 137-3255/bab

On February 4, 1965 [redacted] was interviewed at which time he advised that he is the father of [redacted] who is also known as [redacted]. He stated that his son had formerly gone with a girl from Ferriday, Louisiana, who was a beauty shop operator and operated her own beauty shop. As a matter of fact, [redacted] had brought the girl to the family farm on a couple of occasions but has not been going with this girl for two or three years. [redacted] could not recall the girl's name, only the fact that she ran a beauty shop.

[redacted] according to his father, has been working in the Natchez, Mississippi, area and also in Louisiana, just across the stateline. He believes that [redacted] was in Louisiana around December 10, 1964, leaving there just after the first of the year. He returned to Union and remained for a couple of weeks after which he returned to either the Natchez area or back to Louisiana to seek employment. [redacted] said that his son told him that he would write and let him know when he obtained employment and was settled but to date, has not done so. [redacted] drives a 1961 red and white Chevrolet with Mississippi tags, probably from Adams County.

[redacted] advised that if and when he receives any word whatsoever concerning his son, he will immediately notify the local Resident Agency of the FBI and in the event his son returns home, will have him contact the FBI office in person.

On January 30, 1965, Mr. and Mrs. ZEKKE MOORE, Gilbert, Louisiana, were interviewed. Both stated they have not heard from BECKWITH in approximately three months and his current whereabouts is unknown to them. Mr. MOORE advised that BECKWITH's mother is CHARLOTTE MOORE, also known as "COOT" and resides in Jonesboro, Louisiana. Both Mr. and Mrs. ZEKKE MOORE said that it is possible that BECKWITH may have gone to his mother's place. Both state the address of CHARLOTTE MOORE in Jonesboro is unknown to them.

The following investigation was conducted by SA's GERALD A. THOMPSON and DEAN S. LITTLE on February 3, 1965 at Gilbert, Louisiana:

Mr. and Mrs. ZEKKE MOORE were contacted and advised they could furnish no further information concerning the whereabouts of CHARLOTTE MOORE or JOHN EDWARD BECKWITH, also known as "BRIGHT BOY", "BUEBA". The MOORE's suggested Mrs. LETTIE WHITLEY be contacted for further information.

Mrs. LETTIE WHITLEY, General Delivery, Gilbert, Louisiana, was contacted and advised that CHARLOTTE MOORE was living in Jonesboro, Louisiana, with her (CHARLOTTE's) sister, BOOKER ANDERSON who lives with a man named LEON SMALL, and that she (CHARLOTTE) is working in a white woman's home as a cook. She added that CHARLOTTE has used in the past the last name of BETHLEY. She could furnish no further information regarding CHARLOTTE MOORE's present whereabouts.

Mrs. WHITLEY stated that she knows JOHN EDWARD BECKWITH as "BUEBA" and that the last time she could recall BECKWITH being in Gilbert, Louisiana, was on December 6, 1964 when he attended to a funeral in connection with his work with the Richardson Funeral Home in Ferriday. She stated that a few days after that it was rumored BECKWITH had left Louisiana and was going to Texas. She said she could not furnish the source of this rumor.

Mrs. WHITLEY, advised that her daughter, JOSI B. WHITLEY, age 18, who is a resident housemother (Dean of Girls) at Grambling College, Grambling, Louisiana, had talked to

NO 157-3255

2

one EARNEST CURTAIN of Gilbert, Louisiana, and that CURTAIN advised her that BECKWITH had told him, (CURTAIN), that he was leaving Ferriday, where he was living, because his, (BECKWITH's), life had been threatened. The threat was in the form of a note placed on BECKWITH's door at his residence in Ferriday, warning him that he would be the next to die. This note was found by BECKWITH a few days after the burning of FRANK MORRIS, who had been a friend of BECKWITH.

Mrs. WHITLEY stated that EARNEST CURTAIN, who allegedly informed her daughter, JOSI B. WHITLEY, of the threat made on the life of BECKWITH, died and was buried on January 31, 1965. She said she could furnish no further information regarding this matter.

Mrs. WHITLEY stated she has a sister, HEDDIE BROOKS, 3411 Avenue "M", Galveston, Texas, and that BECKWITH might possibly have contacted her in Galveston. She advised she knew of no one else who had any further information about the possible whereabouts of BECKWITH.

Mrs. EARNEST CURTAIN was contacted and advised that her husband, who died of natural causes, had been a good friend of BECKWITH, but that her husband had never discussed anything with her regarding any threats to BECKWITH or BECKWITH's present whereabouts, and that she could furnish no further information in this matter.

Mr. and Mrs. ZEKE MOORE, Gilbert, Louisiana, were recontacted and advised that they had heard nothing about BECKWITH going to Texas and knew nothing of any threats made on BECKWITH's life and could furnish no further information.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1Date 2/10/65

Mrs. CHARLOTTE BETHELEY, General Delivery, Jonesboro, Louisiana, telephone 4683, in care of BOOKER ANDERSON, Gin Quarters, was advised of the identities of interviewing Agents. She stated that she is the mother of JOHN EDWARD BECKWITH, who formerly resided at Ferriday, Louisiana. She stated that her son visited her at Jonesboro, Louisiana, on January 17, 1965, and at that time he told her he had received telephone calls at Ferriday soon after the Negro man was burned in his shop at Ferriday around December 10, 1964 and that he was told he was to leave Ferriday at once or he would be next. Mrs. BETHELEY stated that her son told her that he left Ferriday immediately after receiving the telephone calls. She stated that she did not know where he was until he arrived in Jonesboro on January 17, 1965. She stated that he left Jonesboro the same day he arrived there to return to the Lone Star Funeral Home, 3626 Spring Avenue, Dallas 10, Texas, where he had been employed since shortly after he left Ferriday. Mrs. BETHELEY stated that her son had told her that he had been a close friend of FRANK MORRIS, who had died from burns received at Ferriday, Louisiana, around December 10, 1965, but according to Mrs. BETHELEY, her son made no mention of knowing anything regarding the circumstances of the burning of MORRIS' shop or knowing who might have been responsible for the burning of the shop.