

O. H. SHORT 4TH FONTANA VICTIM DIES

Lacked Interest In Recovery

FONTANA—O'Day H. Short died at 10:00 o'clock Monday night, fourth victim of the mysterious fire that engulfed the family's home on Sunday, December 16, here, two weeks after the receipt of threats of physical violence delivered in the name of a local band of vigilantes.

The body has been removed to the Ingold Funeral Home, in Rialto. Hospital authorities advised Mrs. Carrie Morrison, sister-in-law of the dead man, that an autopsy would be held there.

After lingering between life and death for a little over five weeks, Short finally succumbed to the third degree burns that had seared more than half of the entire surface of his body. At first doctors had given him a fifty-fifty chance to live, providing all news of the catastrophic fate of his wife Helen and his two children, Carol Ann and Barry, all of whom died immediately after the fire, was withheld from him.

'WANTED TO DIE'

Visitors to the sick room scrupulously observed this precaution for the first ten days. First time that Short heard of the loss of his family came during an interview with District Attorney Jerome B. Kavanaugh of San Bernardino county, who questioned him regarding the causes of the fire. Kavanaugh asked him at that time if he knew who was responsible for the deaths.

From this time on, according to Short's attorney Ivan Johnson, the sick man showed no desire to live. "The district attorney," Johnson told the Sentinel, "let the cat out of the bag. From that time on, Short just stopped fighting. The news had killed his spirit. I think he wanted to die."

Johnson also stated that Superintendent Mills, who is in charge of the Southern Permanente Hospital, where Short was being treated, said that since Kavanaugh's visit, Short had shown little interest in his recovery.

'WANTED AWAY'

He had been refusing food for some days, Johnson, who visited the injured man on Sunday, reported. The attending physicians were feeding him intra-venously, and had planned to start grafting

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Lack

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skin over some of his worst burns.

On Sunday, Johnson said, Short was incoherent. Although he recognized his attorney, his sister-in-law, Mrs. Carrie Morrison, and his close friends Mr. and Mrs. John Bean, who also were visiting him, he was able to do little more than mumble a few disconnected words. By then he had wasted away until he was terribly emaciated, and, according to Johnson, was little more than skin and bones.

Meanwhile, the NAACP is preparing for a thorough-going investigation of the fire that caused the deaths. A committee in charge of the investigation has stated that they are definitely of the opinion that the fire was of incendiary

origin.

BEFORE GRAND JURY

This opinion was based upon the findings of arson expert Paul T. Wolfe, who rejected the theory that the fire was caused by explosion of kerosene, and asserted that

"some highly inflammable or explosive substance other than kerosene was present."

The NAACP has been informed by the San Bernardino district attorney that the case, including the findings of the arson expert, have been turned over to the Grand Jury.

R. B. Hood, special agent in charge of the Los Angeles office of the FBI, has submitted the facts to U.S. Attorney-General Tom Clark in Washington, to obtain an opinion as to whether or not the FBI can intervene. No word had been received from Washington up press time.

REPORTED THREATS

The fire in the Short home occurred on the afternoon of December 18. Two weeks previously Short had reported to his lawyer, the FBI and the Los Angeles Sentinel that he had been warned of physical violence if he did not vacate the home he had built and was living in, since it was in a "white"

neighborhood.

At the coroner's inquest into the deaths of Mrs. Short and the two children, held following widespread publicity in the Negro press and following initial reluctance on the part of the authorities to investigate, no information was permitted regarding the vigilante threat.

Likewise no information was per-

mitted regarding warnings delivered to Short by deputy sheriffs, who, according to the sheriff's report immediately following the fire, had advised him that "neighbors" had complained of his presence, and had further told him that he was "out of bounds."