

A SPECIAL Investigation of November Incidents REPORT

On November 17 and early morning of the 18th a series of violent acts caused extensive property damage and personal injury to 27 persons at the University of Oklahoma. The most serious of the acts was a fire bombing on the fourth floor of Walker Tower, a 12-story dormitory. The floor had been unoccupied most of the year; on the evening of the 17th, however, bankers attending a conference at the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education were staying in the rooms and were among the 27 injured.

Fire alarm systems in Walker Tower were functioning, and the building was quickly evacuated with only minor injuries occurring. The majority of injured were smoke inhalation, and the None of the injured were firemen and policemen. of hospitalization.

The first incident was a gun shot through a front door window of Wazuri House, the home of the Black People's Union. This act occurred at 1:55 a.m. on November 17. Subsequent acts occurred in the early morning hours of November 18:
12:15 a.m. - A fire bombing incident at the University of Oklahoma Police Department;
2:30 a.m. - Vandalism at Bizzell Memorial Library;

4:27 to 5:00 a.m. - The three major fires at Walker Tower, Wilson Center Cafeteria and Building 8 on the South Campus.

The investigation process began immediately. President Sharp emphasized in a press conference on the afternoon following the fires that OU Chief of Security Bill Jones had been authorized to employ all appropriate law enforcement support available. He also announced the establishment of a \$1,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of any person or persons who perpetrated or have conspired to perpetrate any of the recent acts of violence."

PROGRESS REPORTED

At press time, the investigation had involved the checking of 36 major leads with as many as 14 investigators working in a coordinated effort at one time. A total of 252 individuals had been interviewed in relation to the crimes, and many of these had been contacted a second time in the effort to explore new sources of information. Well over 1,000 man hours had been expended in the investigation.

Investigative agencies in addition to the University's Police Department include the Cleveland County Sheriff's Office, Cleveland County Sheriff's Office, Norman Police Department, Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation and the Oklahoma State Fire Marshal's Office. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has served as an investigative liaison.

In reporting the initial progress of the investigation, Chief Jones noted that 62 separate items of physical evidence had been obtained and forwarded to the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and private laboratories for analysis. The items included the expended bullet found at the Wazuri House, samplings of volatile substances used in igniting the major fires and numerous latent fingerprints which had been lifted from damaged items.

"The physical and circumstantial evidence and the time sequences of the three major fires and library vandalism indicate a probable conspiracy involving approximately six persons," said Jones. "Because all of the acts of violence occurred during early morning hours," he said, "it has been possible for members of the investigative teams to gather the nature of incriminating evidence necessary to present to the Cleveland County District Attorney for his action in issuing warrants of arrest. It is the consensus of the investigative teams that new information and evidence must be uncovered before charges can be brought."

Because there was no apparent attempt to ignite the incendiary device placed near the OU Police Department headquarters, investigators feel this was merely an attempt to harass campus enforcement officials.

MAXIMUM PENALTIES

The crimes involved could result in charges of arson in the first degree with maximum penalties of 20 years in prison and a \$25,000 fine (in the cases of the Wilson Center and Walker Tower fires), and arson in the second degree, with maximum penalties of 15 years in prison and a \$20,000 fine (in the case of the south base building fire).

The investigation is continuing, and investigative agencies are meeting periodically to review the cases while seeking information to review persons who may have information of any type pertaining to the crimes. A break in the investigation is most likely to occur in this form.