Corpus Christi building that included a Reproductive Services killing center after being destroyed by fire.

UP IN SMOKE!

Corpus Christi mill leveled in fire

by Cathy Ramey

Corpus Christi, TX — A "suspicious" blaze at Reproductive Services — an abortuary — destroyed the building and contents valued at over $500,000 dollars. The two-alarm fire brought out both state and federal experts who began sifting through the rubble on February 15 to determine the cause.

Mary Esther Guerra, a local attorney and neighbor to the mill, turned in the first 911 call to report the blaze. The call was made after hearing sounds "like the breaking of glass at 12:30 a.m." Her fourteen-year-old daughter, who was just going to bed, heard the sound of a car door slamming.

Guerra went to wake her husband up to investigate and saw the mill through her patio window. "I could see vapors surrounding the roof area of the building," she said, "and I could see the glow."

Another neighbor, Jessie Freeman, was wakened by her dogs barking. "I tried to get them to come back to their bed away from the door, but they wouldn't," she said.

Hearing a loud noise that "sounded like something had hit the back of my fence," Freeman stated, "I woke my husband up and he came down and saw the flames."

Fire crews worked for over an hour to bring the blaze under control, and then continued working on-site to put out smoldering debris for another six hours.

Within 24 hours of the blaze, fire investigators had determined that the fire had broken out in the lobby of the abortion facility. A flammable liquid was used in the arson effort according to Jerry Robinson, assistant special agent in charge of the Dallas office of the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

"We are calling it an incendiary fire, and obviously that means it was deliberately set. We have collected samples of what we suspect are combustible materials, which have to be analyzed" Robinson told reporters one day after the mill was destroyed.

Amanda Stukenberg, a Planned Parenthood executive, became involved in the investigation early on as her office routinely refers women, wishing to have a child killed, to Reproductive Services.

Stukenberg cited a Supreme Court decision and political gains as proof that the pro-life side of the abortion war "have no hope of achieving what they want." However, she also stated,"There's a great fear that this type of [activity] is accelerating all over the country,"

Her hope is that "the response from the community will be clearly horrified." But, despite some defensive posturing by local prolifers, leaders like Donald Treshman (Katy TX) and Joseph Scheidler (Chicago IL) believe that the destruction of a facility used for aborting babies will not horrify most.

Scheidler, who has testified before the Senate and does not advocate terminating death-camps by bombs or fire, stated that it "may be a relief" to those in the community that the abortion facility is gone.

Treshman of Rescue America dismissed concerns over the destruction of the facility stating, "We must be intolerant of abortion," and "should feel no loss over mere mortar and brick" at a site where thousands of children have been killed.

Although investigators have been careful to point out that they have no suspects, abortion industry profiteers like the National Abortion Federation (NAF) began issuing press statements calling the abortuary fire the most damaging "incident of anti-choice violence" yet to occur.

NAF was the organization that sponsored a training seminar in 1992 on a new technique for killing older unborn children. The technique involves jamming blunt-tipped scissors into the skull of a living child and aspirating the brain tissue through a suction tube (see Feb. 93 Life Advocate).

"There just isn't a comparison," stated a woman who requested that she not be identified when asked about the accusation of violence. "Burning a building where they kill children only seems humane. It is especially ludicrous to take the accusation seriously when it comes from a group that butchers children and harvests their brain tissue. No, I don't think the informed community could be horrified."

One-time pro-life leader Rex Moses suggested that among other suspect groups are 'disgruntled employees,' 'a burglar,' or even "a father of one of the babies who was aborted there."

The mill had been the site of Christians protesting against child-killing during 1990 and 1991 when Moses exploded on the scene and led area Christians in a few much-reported rescues. He later resorted to an arrest-free type of presence at the mill. Since 1991 there has been little active protest outside of Reproductive Services.

Abortuary administrator, Rachel Vargas, has indicated that plans have been made to refer women to another of the abortuary chain facilities until the mill has been reopened elsewhere. Only 48 hours after the fire Vargas claimed that another multi-tenant building was a prospective site. However, many property owners in Corpus Christi are opposed to risking an investment by leasing to what one landlord termed "a slaughterhouse."

Vargas became a high-profile figure in the abortion industry in 1990 when she was excommunicated from the Roman Catholic church for her involvement in killing children.

She claims that the mill will need at least $50,000 in the near future in order to realize their plans to relocate. And for the immediate, with appointments suddenly cancelled by fire, there is no revenue coming in.

"When I left (the abortuary) on Saturday, I had 15 or 16 [clients] scheduled for Tuesday," Vargas said. No report was given of the number of babies saved from abortion on Monday.

In addition to the abortuary, four other businesses were demolished. All businesses were aware that their offices were located in a complex with a child-killing facility. ■

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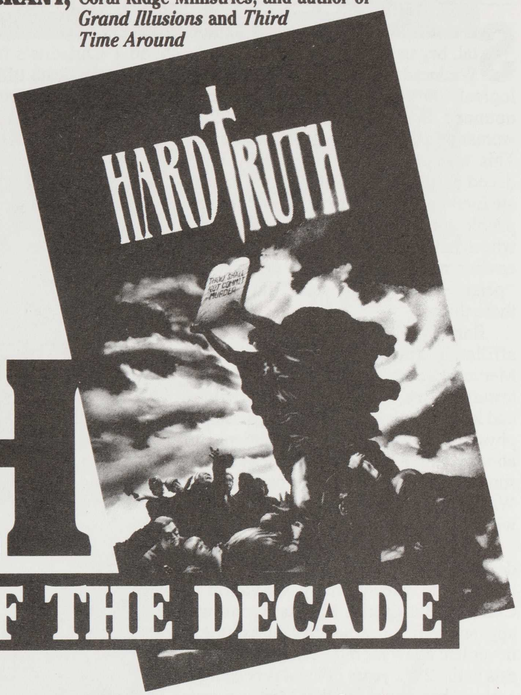

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