

Gutierrez Home Firebombed; Voter Registration Drive Unintimidated

By Steve Cole

At 3:30 Sunday morning, October 7, a firebomb was thrown through the first floor window of the home of Puerto Rican community leader Luis Gutierrez, in what appears to be another in a series of deadly attacks aimed at intimidating Hispanic self-determination in the city.

Gutierrez, his wife Soraida and their four-year-old daughter Omaira escaped injury and possible death only because Luis had fallen asleep watching TV in the front room and awoke immediately when a brick and "molotov cocktail" type device came through the front room window, engulfing the first floor in flames.

A Bomb and Arson Squad investigation confirmed that the fire, which caused extensive damage to the Gutierrez home at 2245 W. Homer, was caused by a firebomb.

Gutierrez, a Deputy Superintendent in the Department of Streets and Sanitation and a co-convenor of Mayor Washington's Vote With Purpose Campaign in the Westtown Community, believes that his leader-

ship in both the fight for a ward remap in the Westtown community and his publicly announced intention to run for alderman in a newly remapped 26th ward, was the possible "political motivation" behind the firebombing.

Speaking to dozens of supporters in front of his home within hours of the firebombing, the spirited Gutierrez exclaimed, "It's clear we're doing something right, to deserve such an attack." The "something right" Gutierrez was talking about was the 3,000 new voters volunteer deputy registrars signed up in the 26th, 31st and 32nd wards through October 1. "We're going to have a ward remap, bombs or no bombs."

Joining Gutierrez that afternoon were 22nd Ward Committeeman Jesus Garcia, who heads the Commission For Justice for Rudy Lozano, and the Rev. Jorge Morales.

Garcia reminded those who gathered at the Gutierrez home, that it was only a little over a year since Rudy Lozano's murder. "We cannot forget. There is a link between this act



Luis Gutierrez (inset) tells supporters within hours of the firebombing of his house, "Bombs or no bombs, there will be a ward remap. Our community will have justice."

and the act of killing one of the citywide leaders for bringing the people together."

Undaunted by the firebombing, Gutierrez and the other activists of the 32nd Ward Independent Political Organization continued the voter registration canvass that same afternoon, two days before in-precinct registration day. On October 9 these

same activists brought 786 people to the polls to register in 21 precincts.

Although the Police Department investigation into the firebombing and apparent attempted murder, has yet to produce any concrete leads, respected community businessman Daniel Ramos, has raised the possibility that a suspicious fire in one of his moving company trucks a week earlier was connected to the firebombing.

Council Gives Up Demand to Control Contracts

After holding a billion dollars of city projects hostage for three months, the city council majority finally re-

which appeared in the city's major newspapers, and religious and business leaders called on the council

they may appeal the contract first to the city's purchasing department and then to the review board. The review

nessmen indicate they are in agreement with the Washington administration's use of no-bid contracts to

Photos by Richard Stomper