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TWO MEN INDICTED **IN LASSEN COUNTY CROSS BURNING**

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that a federal grand jury returned a two count Indictment charging KEVIN WILLIAM RIDENOUR, 21, and NICHOLAS EDWARD CRAIG, 18, both of Westwood, California, with engaging in a conspiracy against the victim's civil rights and interference with housing rights, both felonies. The charges relate to the burning of a cross outside the rectory of a Catholic church in Westport, California on March 23, 2007. The Priest who resides in the rectory is from Rwanda, central Africa, and was assigned to Westport by the Catholic Archdiocese of Sacramento in October, 2006.

The case is being investigated by the FBI and the Lassen County Sheriff's Office. RIDENOUR and CRAIG were initially charged with state civil rights offenses in Lassen County. They were arrested on federal charges on April 3, 2007, and are currently in federal custody. They are scheduled to be arraigned on the Indictment on April 18, 2007, at 2:00 pm before United States Magistrate Judge Dale A. Drozd in Sacramento.

According to Assistant United States Attorneys Benjamin B. Wagner and Sean C. Flynn, who are prosecuting the case, a Complaint filed earlier in the case alleges that in the early morning hours of March 23, 2007, RIDENOUR and CRAIG erected a wooden cross approximately 5'6" high and 3'5" in the driveway of the church rectory, doused it with gasoline, and set it on fire. The affidavit in support of the Complaint states that after RIDENOUR was arrested on state charges, he told Lassen County Deputies that the cross burning was "racial" and was intended to emulate "KKK" actions.

The charges are only allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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