

Crawled Ledge to Safety

JAN 10 1973

Honeymooners Tell of Terror

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — "The guy was really a good shot," said Carolyn Strecker, a bride of three months who with her husband almost was gunned down by a sniper in New Orleans.

Mrs. Strecker and her husband, Raymond, told Tuesday how they crouched in terror on the balcony of their 11th floor room at the Howard Johnson Hotel as the sniper fired over their heads.

"We were out on the balcony because our room was filled with smoke," Strecker told the Philadelphia Bulletin by phone. "The hose from the firemen's snorkle was making a tremendous noise and there was a lot of shouting. Apparently what happened was the sniper kicked in the door of our room.

"He fired two shots pretty low right through the window. We had been sitting up before and if we still were sitting when he fired he would have hit us."

Strecker said he and his wife, both 21, scaled a railing and crawled along a ledge to the balcony of an adjoining room.

Mrs. Strecker said she, her husband, and the couple in the next room sprawled on the floor between the beds for several hours as the sniper battled police.

"A little while after we got into the other people's room, we heard someone breaking the window of our room with something heavy. A little

while later there was a tremendous gun battle. The man apparently opened fire on the people below from our room," she said.

The Streckers, of Philadelphia, were married Oct. 8 and were on a deferred honeymoon. They said they smelled smoke in their room about 10:30 a.m. Sunday. They tried to flee through their door, but were driven back by thick smoke.

"We were on the balcony when the fire trucks arrived and put up a ladder to the fire which was on one of the top floors," said Mrs. Strecker, whose parents live in Lock Haven.

"Then the firemen started up the ladder. The first one was about three-fourths of the way up when a volley of shots rang out and the fireman started back down. That was the first time we really knew anyone was shooting.

"After that the police and a lot of firemen were crouching and hiding," she said. "We saw several men shot and dropped. As they ran out into the open they'd get picked off. The guy was really a good shot."

The Streckers, along with other hotel guests, later were evacuated to the lobby where they remained for about 24 hours. They eventually were transferred to a bus that took them to other hotels.

"I've never been through anything like this in my life," said Strecker.