

Condition Is Serious

Sen. Stennis Shot By Two Robbers

Youths Wound Him Twice Outside His Washington Home

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Washington

Senator John C. Stennis, 71, a Mississippi Democrat who is one of the most influential men on Capitol Hill, was shot and seriously wounded early last night after two black youths robbed him outside his upper northeast Washington home.

The Senator, chairman of the Armed Services Committee, was shot in the left side of his chest and

left thigh by two youths who approached him after he had parked his car in front of his \$70,000 house at about 7:40 p.m. (EST).

He was taken by ambulance to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, where many of the most prominent men in Government gathered as he underwent surgery.

"He was in shock when he came in but he is doing pretty well now," said Colonel Theodore B. Drotning, the hospital's executive officer, at 9:30 p.m. in a news release.

CONDITION

After six hours of surgery, Senator Stennis was taken from the operating room at 3:15 a.m. Medical officials had continued to describe his condition as "stable."

The bespectacled, white-haired Senator, elected first in 1947, spent the day at work in the Capitol, then left about 6 p.m. to attend a reception held nearby by the National Guard Association.

After driving home alone and parking in front of his house, as was his custom, he stepped out of the auto and was approached by two men



JOHN STENNIS
Mississippi senator

in their late teens, according to police accounts.

While he was standing in the roadway, the robbers demanded money. The Senator turned over his wallet, his watch and a 25-cent piece.

"Now we're going to shoot you, anyway," the youths were quoted by the Senator.

Two shots were fired. The

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Senator fell to the ground and the youths fled.

One bullet struck Stennis high on his left thigh, struck the bone and disintegrated. The other entered his chest, to the left of and just below the left nipple. It traversed the body, left to right, and lodged in the right side of the back.

Ed Jussely, Stennis' press

secretary, said that he understood that the bullet passed through the stomach, the pancreas and the colon before lodging in the back.

PERSISTENCE

The senator struggled to his door, negotiating first a ten-foot sidewalk, then four concrete steps, then 20 more feet of sidewalk, three more steps, and a six-foot landing.

Finally, and unaided, he entered the house.

"He walked into the house," Senator Henry Jackson (Dem-Wash.) later quoted Mrs. Stennis as saying.

Fully conscious, the senator told his wife to call Walter Reed and the police.

Stennis was taken to Walter Reed in Fire Department Ambulance No. 2, driven by Private William J. Taylor and assisted by Private Robert S. Adams.

"When we arrived, the senator was on the couch in the living room. He was conscious," Adams said.

STORY

The senator told the policeman that he had parked his car, a white Buick Electra, at the curb in front of the house and was stepping out when "two men jumped from the shadows and said it was a robbery."

Adams and Taylor, 26, said they heard Stennis describe his assailants as "two teen-aged boys, about 18 or 19."

While the senator lay on the operating table, many prominent figures joined the senator's wife, Coy Hines Stennis, at the hospital. Many others issued statements.

President Richard M. Nixon spoke to Mrs. Stennis at the hospital by telephone. Secretary of State William P. Rogers visited with her.

CAREER

A former judge and prosecutor, from De Kalb, Miss., Stennis came to the Senate after winning a special election in 1947 to succeed the flamboyant, outspokenly segregationist Theodore Bilbo.