

# Mother of Dr. King Is Slain in Church; Atlanta Deacon Killed; Gunman Seized

## Police Doubt Black Youth Was Part of Conspiracy

By B. DRUMMOND AYRES Jr.  
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ATLANTA, June 30 — Mrs. Martin Luther King Sr., the 69-year-old mother of the slain civil rights leader, was fatally wounded this morning when a young black man went on a shooting spree while she was playing the organ in Atlanta's famed Ebenezer Baptist Church.

A church deacon was also killed and a member of the congregation was wounded by the gunman, who witnesses said began his attack from the "amen corner," cursing and shouting:

"I'm tired of all this. I'm taking over."

As the firing died down, Mrs. King's husband, the pastor of Ebenezer who was not preaching today, rushed across in front of the pulpit to life her from the organ keyboard. Other members of the congregation wrestled the gunman to the floor of the packed church and took two pistols from him.

### Youth From Dayton

The police later identified the man as Marcus Wayne Chenault, 21, of Dayton, Ohio. He was charged with two counts of murder and one count of aggravated assault.

Investigators said there was no evidence that any conspiracy was involved in today's shootings, which came a little more than six years after the assassination in Memphis of Dr. King. The investigators issued this statement:

"Chenault told police he received orders from his god to come to Atlanta and kill the Rev. Martin Luther King Sr. Chenault told investigators the reason he shot Mrs. King was because she was nearest to him. He said he shot the other two persons because they were worshipping a false idol."

The only other official information the police could supply on the suspect was that he apparently arrived in Atlanta yes-



Mrs. Martin Luther King Sr. with son, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and wife, Coretta, in a hospital here in 1958. A deranged woman had stabbed him in the chest.

terday, possibly by bus or automobile.

However, they said privately that Mr. Chenault had told Mrs. King's husband, who insisted on speaking to the suspect, that he had gone on the shooting spree because "Christians are my enemies."

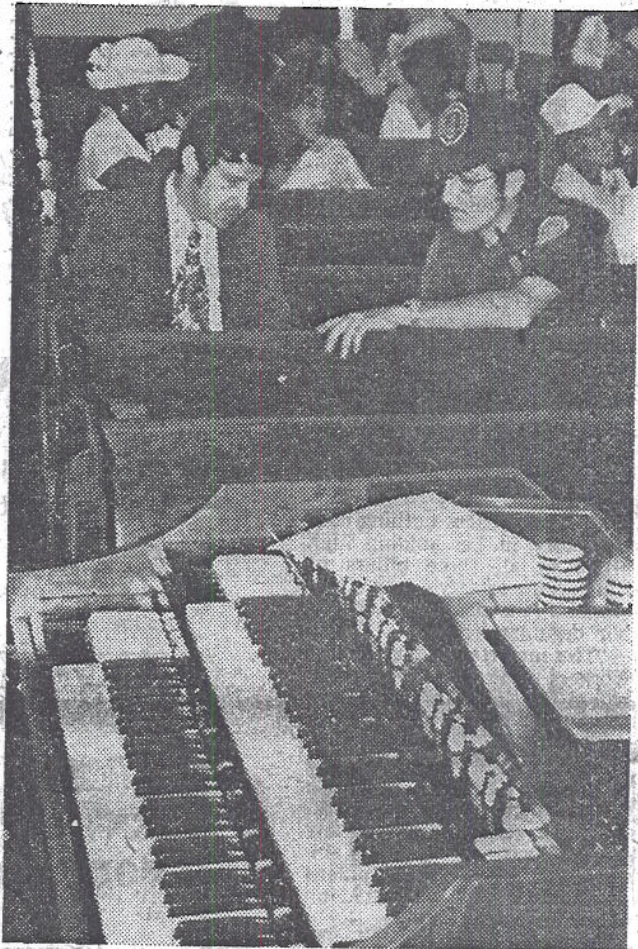
The church deacon who was killed in the fusilade of half a dozen or so shots was Edward Boykin, 50. The wounded person was Mrs. Jimmy Mitchell, 65, who was listed in good condition at a hospital.

The shootings occurred about 11 A.M. At the time, some 400 worshippers filled the church, an 80-year-old red-brick structure about half a mile east of downtown Atlanta on Auburn Avenue, one of the city's main black business thoroughfares.

Dr. King was co-pastor of Ebenezer with his father, known as Daddy King, during the height of the civil rights movement. He is buried in a grassy park a few yards east of the church.

His widow, Coretta, usually attends Sunday morning services at the church. But this morning she was out of town.

Ebenezer Church was founded by the Rev. A. D. Williams, the



Atlanta policemen seek clues near the church organ Mrs. King was playing when the assailant began shooting.

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father of the woman killed there today. On Auburn Avenue, known as Sweet Auburn in the days when business was better, Mrs. King was called "Momma" King and it was said that she was the most important member of the King family, the hidden, matriarchal force behind her son and her husband.

She was not the permanent organist at Ebenezer, having retired from that position years ago. She was playing this morning out of postalgia.

Some former choir members were in town and they had joined together one last time for a morning of joyful singing. The regular organist and the regular choir were seated out in the congregation. The guest preacher was the Rev. Calvin Morris, an aide to Mrs. Coretta King.

**No One Paid Attention**

According to those who attended the service, no one paid any attention to the young man, dressed in a tan suit, who took a seat in the amen corner next to Mrs. King. For that matter, no one had paid any attention to him an hour earlier, when he showed up for Sunday School.

The church where Martin Luther King Jr. preached is a famous one and there are many visitors every Sunday.

Mrs. King and the choir had just finished a rendition of the Lord's Prayer when the shooting started. Mrs. Lillian D. Watkins, a member of the old choir, recalled later:

"I looked toward the organ to see what we would do next. I saw movement and I saw her grab her face and start to fall."

The chief usher, Fred Brookins, was in the balcony. He recalled:

"There was a disturbance and a noise and I looked down and saw this man jumping out of the amen corner and into the pulpit. He had two guns. I don't know who got shot first or why."

**Headed for Choir**

Mrs. Watkins said that when the man got into the pulpit area, he headed straight for the choir, which was sitting to the rear of the pastor. She added:

"He yelled something about 'taking over' and then pointed the gun at me and said, 'I'm going to shoot you, too!'"

The gun did not fire.

At that point, Mr. Brookins said, the gunman started to fumble with the pistols, apparently trying to reload them. Several members of the congregation—most had ducked to the floor when the firing started—jumped up and wrestled him to the red-carpeted floor of the church.

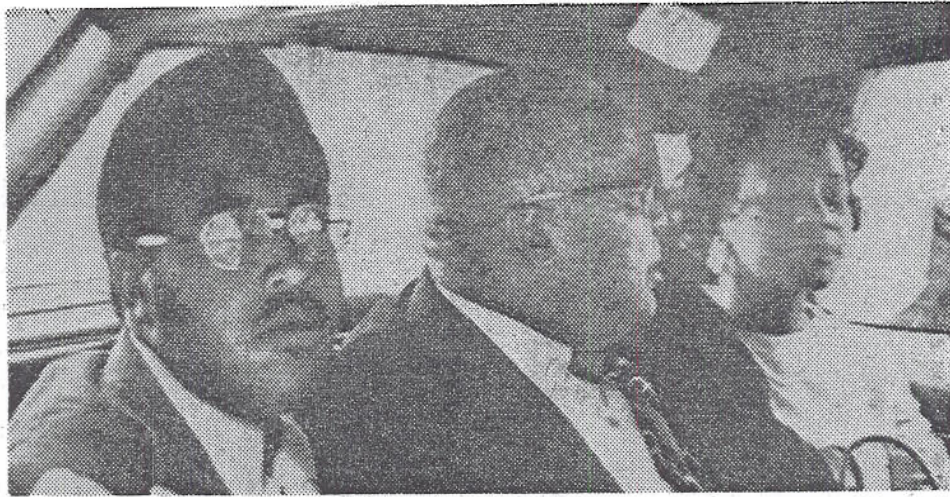
The police arrived a few minutes later.

Mrs. King, shot in the right side of her face, was taken to nearby Grady Hospital. She died shortly before noon.

**Shot in Neck**

Mr. Boykin, who had been sitting in the rear of the amen corner, was dead on arrival at the hospital. He had been shot in the neck.

Shortly after the shootings while the congregation was



United Press International  
The Rev. Martin Luther King Sr. leaving hospital in Atlanta where his wife died. With him are an aide from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, left, and a friend.



United Press International  
Mrs. Christine Farris, Mrs. King's daughter, talking to newsmen.



United Press International  
The Rev. Calvin Morris, who was in pulpit at time of the shooting, comforts a girl after the attack.

still milling around in shock and confusion, the city's Mayor, Maynard Jackson, arrived. He expressed his sorrow, and then urged calm.

For the last 10 days, tension has been rising in Atlanta's black community because of a dispute between Mr. Jackson, the city's first black Mayor, and the white police chief, John Inman.

Blacks have been putting pressure on the Mayor to replace the police chief, who, they contend, runs a racist force. The Mayor has dismissed the chief, but the chief refuses to leave office, pending a review of his case by the Georgia Supreme Court.

Apparently with the possibility in mind that today's

shootings might exacerbate the tension already present in the black community, police officials stationed heavily armed men around police headquarters after the shooting.