

Innocent Pleas In King Slaying



AP Wirephoto

The Rev. Martin Luther King Sr. (left) greeted a friend outside his residence.

Atlanta

A short, smiling man who said he was on a divinely ordained mission that had been only "partially accomplished" was arraigned and held without bail yesterday on charges of murdering Mrs. Martin Luther King Sr. and a church deacon.

Marcus Wayne Chenault, 23, of Dayton, Ohio, stood silently before City Judge Ed Brock as murder and weapons charges were read and his attorney made formal pleas of "no contest" to each.

Brock told the attorney that no-contest pleas would not be allowed and entered innocent pleas for him.

Chenault demanded to be heard.

"My name is Servant Jacob," he said. "I am a Hebrew. I was sent here on a mission and it is partially accomplished."

Chenault, who stands 5-foot-3 and weighs 150 pounds, appeared calm and often smiled during the arraignment. He is black.

The specific charges against Chenault were two counts of murder, one of aggravated assault, two of carrying concealed weapons, two of carrying weapons without a license, and two of discharging firearms within the city limits.

Attorney Randy Bacote, a member of any church, but proclaimed himself a Hebrew, said that his client is not a brew through "revelations."

He said he assumed that by "partially accomplished" mission, Chenault meant that he had not killed the Rev. Martin Luther King Sr., the father of the slain civil rights leader, who police said was the gunman's prime target.

At his 20-minute arraignment, Chenault said he recalled going to the Rev. Mr. King's Ebenezer Baptist Church Sunday morning, but not the shooting that killed Mrs. King, 70, and deacon Edward Boykin, 69, and wounded a member of the congregation, Mrs. Jimmy Mitchell, 65.

"I assume that I have," Chenault said when Assistant District Attorney Calvin Cole asked him if he had shot anyone. "I assume that I shot someone. I am not sure."

Bacote, a local attorney, refused to say who had retained him to represent Chenault. He declined to say whether he was contemplating an insanity plea for the suspect.

During a brief stroll with another minister and a member of the church, the Rev. Mr. King told visitors, "Our lives are a tragedy. I don't know when this will end or who will be next, but I know we've got to make it."

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The Rev. Mr. King's son, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 for his civil rights leadership in the South, was assassinated in Memphis on April 4, 1968. His other son, the Rev. A.D. William King, drowned in a swimming pool about 18 months later.

Funeral services for Mrs. King were planned for tomorrow at 11 a.m. at the Ebenezer Church.

United Press



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Slaying suspect Marcus Chenault (right) in custody before his arraignment