



MARCUS W. CHENAULT
... accused killer

Chenault News Talk Canceled

By Austin Scott

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ATLANTA, July 5—Less than half an hour before it was to start, Fulton County District Attorney Louis Slaton canceled a scheduled telephone news conference call between Marcus Wayne Chenault, the accused killer of Mrs. Martin Luther King Sr., and a half dozen news organizations.

Slaton said he canceled it "to insure a fair disposition" in all aspects of the case.

"We're doing everything we possibly can to insure a fair trial," he said. Asked if the news conference would have jeopardized a fair trial, he said, "That's a possibility . . ." Chenault would have spoken from the Fulton County Jail where he is being held without bond for grand jury action.

Randolph Bacote, Chenault's attorney, said he was "dismayed" at the cancellation. "I think the district attorney should have contacted me," he said.

Mary Ann Sharkey, a reporter for the Dayton, Ohio Journal Herald, Chenault's hometown paper, had set up the call.

The other news media participating were to be The Washington Post, The New York Times, Atlanta Constitution, Atlanta Voice, Atlanta World and United Press International.

In an interview earlier in the day, Bacote said Chenault "wanted . . . everything known as to motivation, purpose and the why the trial had to be

done."

Asked whether his god, Yahweh, who Chenault says instructed him to kill Dr. King Sr., had said Mrs. King would be an acceptable substitute, Bacote said: "No . . . We can presume he didn't adhere to the instructions. His instructions were to kill Dr. King."

Bacote revealed that Chenault, who says he is "servant Jacob," had spoken to one of his victims, Mrs. Jimmie Mitchell, moments before he shot her. She was wounded, but is now in satisfactory condition.

"She was sitting right next to him," Bacote said. "He asked, 'Where is Martin Luther King Sr.?' and she said, 'He's over there, but that's his wife at the organ,' and almost instantaneously he started shooting. I asked him, 'Did you know you had killed her?' He said no."

Bacote said he thinks Mrs. Mitchell and Deacon Edward Boykin, who was killed, were "innocent bystanders," victims of wild shooting rather than being in the line of fire.

Asked if Chenault was in control of his own actions when he began shooting, Bacote smiled and said, "No comment." He said he has discussed that point with Chenault.

"We can say he acted," Bacote said. "Whether or not he thought it was futile is not known . . . From what we've discussed, I think the inflicting of pain and suffering on Dr. King Sr. as a punishment is satisfactory to him, that seems to be kind of the drift of his satisfaction."

Bacote said Chenault told him no one else knew what his purpose was, not even Haniah Israel, who took credit in interviews two days ago for helping Chenault come to believe that Christians are hypocrites.

"Israel clarified and gave him understanding as to what the Bible meant," said Bacote "made him more aware what the direction was. His god gave him directions and purpose. No one knew his purpose, not even Israel. It was more or less his god gave him a directive for no one else. He obeyed."

Bacote also said Chenault feels he has been used successfully, "that his god's will has been carried out. The ultimate purpose in carrying out the acts we know of was to make black people aware of the hypocrisy of Christianity."

Asked whether Chenault adhered to any portion of the Black Muslim faith, Bacote said, "He told me he'd studied it, but he said, 'I don't want no part of that. This is my god.'"

Bacote will not say whether he himself is Muslim. Posters from the Black Muslim newspaper "Muhammad Speaks" cover one wall of his office.