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Slayers of Negro Leader Are Hunted in Seattle

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SEATTLE, Jan. 27—A search was intensified here today for two youthful gunmen who killed Edwin T. Pratt, 38 years old, executive director of the Seattle Urban League who had been offered a similar position in Westchester County.

No clear motive was established by the King County sheriff's office. It was disclosed that the victim, a Negro, had received a number of threatening messages recently.

Mr. Pratt was shot about 9 P.M. yesterday at his suburban Seattle home. An autopsy today disclosed that he was struck in the mouth by a shotgun slug that had fragmented.

The gunfire blast greeted Mr. Pratt as he opened his front door to investigate a noise. Just as he opened the door, his wife, Bettye, peering through a window, saw two figures crouching behind an automobile in the Pratt carport. It appeared one had a rifle. She cried out a warning to her husband at about the time he was shot.

Long Firearm Seen

The Westchester offer was made public today by Whitney M. Young Jr., executive director of the Urban League.

A neighbor of the Pratts, Don Anderson, saw two youths running after he heard the shot. Mr. Anderson said he believed the youths were white, although the King County sheriff's office today said the assailants could have been light-skinned Negroes.

Mr. Anderson reported that one youth carried a long fire-



Associated Press

Edwin T. Pratt

arm. They ran to where an automobile waited, engine running.

Another neighbor, Keith Kirkeide, also saw the assailants running. He described the wait-

ing car as resembling a 1968 Buick Skylark, cream with a brown vinyl top. The car sped away, although there were several inches of fresh snow on the ground. It was believed that a third youth waited in the car.

Neighbors reported that there never had been any racial trouble in the predominantly white community since the Pratts moved in about seven years ago.

Mr. Pratt was known as the least controversial of all of the Seattle Negro leaders. He had won two community awards for civil rights work.

"This is a real tragedy for the community and the state," Gov. Dan Evans declared. "He was a man of real understanding."

"Seattle has lost a valiant and valuable citizen," Mayor J. D. Brennan said. "Ed Pratt served all of us by fighting for equality. His death can only serve those ugly forces which would keep us a divided city and a divided people."

Benjamin E. Weeks, immediate past president of the Seattle Urban League's board of directors, told sheriff's deputies

that Mr. Pratt had recently told him about receiving threats.

"He was a great guy," said Mr. Weeks, president of a Seattle steel fabricating company. "He's done so much for the human rights cause in this town for so many years that this is just unbelievable to me."

Mr. Pratt worked in Urban League offices in Cleveland and Kansas City, Mo., before coming to Seattle in 1956. He became executive director in 1961. He had a master's degree from Atlanta University.

County Detective Sergeant Gordon Hartshorn reported that Mr. Pratt was shot from a distance of about 20 feet. After the shooting, Sergeant Hartshorn reported, the sheriff's office received an anonymous telephone call that provided "certain information." He did not elaborate.

In New York City, Mr. Young said he was shocked by Mr. Pratt's murder. He said the Westchester position offered to Mr. Pratt was one of the most important for the Urban League in the nation.

Besides his wife, Mr. Pratt leaves a daughter, 5 and a son, 18.