

Martin Luther King's

Mother Is Slain

Sadness and Anger Over The Slaying of Mrs. King

Atlanta

Mrs. Martin Luther King Sr., 69, mother of the slain civil rights leader, was shot to death in church here early yesterday by an apparently crazed gunman.

Two other persons were wounded in the outburst of gunfire at the Ebenezer Baptist Church near downtown Atlanta. One of them, church deacon Edward Boykin, 69, died not long afterward. The third victim, Mrs. Jimmie Mitchell, 65, was said to be in satisfactory condition with a chest wound.

Police arrested Marcus Wayne Chenault, 21, a black student who said he arrived in Atlanta by bus on Saturday. In Columbus, Ohio, police searched Chenault's apartment and said they found a worn Bible and a list of civil rights leaders marked for death.

Atlanta police said they had no evidence anyone else worked with the gunman. One spokesman, when asked about Chenault's motivation, said flatly: "He's crazy."

Three black civil rights leaders said they were convinced Mrs. King's death was part of a conspiracy. Columbus police later disclosed that these same three men — the Rev. Ralph Abernathy, the Rev. Jesse Jackson and Hosea Williams — were on the death list found in Chenault's apartment.

Chenault's acquaintances at Ohio State University described him as a man who became increasingly preoccupied with religion and said Christianity had nothing to offer the black man.

A spokesman for the Atlanta police department homicide division told reporters there was no evi-

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dence that Chenault was engaged in any sort of conspiracy or acting on behalf of anyone but himself.

A heavy guard was thrown around Atlanta police headquarters where several telephone threats on the prisoner's life were reportedly received. Also given police protection was Coretta King, widow of the murdered civil rights figure.

Unconfirmed reports indicated that Chenault under questioning by the Atlanta police and FBI agents, said he had been ordered by his God to come to Atlanta and kill the Rev. Martin Luther King Sr.

Dr. King, pastor of the church, was present at the time of the shooting but was not injured. Late yesterday he was reported to be in shock and under sedation.

Witnesses said the shootings occurred at 10:45 a.m., not long after church service began. The gunman reportedly rose during recitation of the Lord's Prayer and waving two small caliber pistols, shouted:

"You must stop all this, I'm tired of all this."

Others present said he added, "I'm going to kill everyone in here."

Firing wildly, he emptied both guns. Mrs. King was shot as she sat at the organ. She died shortly before noon. A hospital spokesman said she had been hit three times in the head.

Members of the congregation subdued the gunman and held him until the arrival moments later of several police officers. One witness said the assailant, while under restraint, urged repeatedly:

"Don't hit me. Please don't hit me. They did it to

me during the war."

No one in the congregation appeared to know the gunman or to have seen him before yesterday morning. One said that before the service he had asked to have Dr. King and his wife, Alberta, pointed out to him.

A woman who greeted Chenault as he entered the church described him as neatly dressed, quiet spoken and well mannered. He carried a brown briefcase in which the two pistols were concealed.

Atlanta's black mayor, Maynard H. Jackson, told reporters the shooting had produced a "time of great sorrow."

Mrs. King was described as a quiet, devout woman who kept out of the limelight during the years her son preached nonviolence.

She was born in Atlanta in 1904, the daughter of Rev. A.D. Williams, who founded the Ebenezer Baptist Church where her husband was pastor and where she was shot to death yesterday.

She was a graduate of Hampton Institute in Virginia and met the man she later was to marry following the death of her father.

Jackson said he would decree a period of official mourning to continue until after Mrs. King's funeral. No date for the funeral had been set by late yesterday.

Mrs. King's son, Martin Luther King Jr., was shot to death in Memphis, Tenn., on April 4, 1968. James Earle Ray, 44, pleaded guilty to the murder and is serving a 99-year sentence in the state prison at Nashville. Ray has recently asked for a new trial on grounds that he did not act alone but was involved in a complex conspiracy.

Los Angeles Times

New York

There was sadness and anger among Americans yesterday over the fatal shooting of Alberta King, 69-year-old mother of slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

President Nixon was told of the shooting, which killed Mrs. King and a deacon and wounded a parishioner in the Ebenezer Baptist church in Atlanta, after a boating trip in Yalta. "The President was saddened by the tragic and senseless act," White House spokesman Gerald L. Warren said.

The Rev. Martin Luther King Sr., who saw his wife slain while she was playing the organ during the Lord's Prayer, said sobbing, "She went home while serving the Lord."

Coretta King, widow of the civil rights leader who was assassinated April 4, 1968, at the age of 39, was not at the church. She called at her father-in-law's home several hours later.

Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson said he found "singing . . . great moaning and crying, almost uncontrollable" at Ebenezer church shortly after the shooting. "Atlanta is in a time of great sorrow because of the loss of a woman who truly must be one of the great women of history," he said.

United Press



AP Wirephoto

ALBERTA KING
Shot in church