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THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1974

Chenault Sentenced to Die Nov. 8 in Church Murder of Mrs. King

Special to The New York Times

ATLANTA, Sept. 12.—Marcus Wayne Chenault, 23 years old, was convicted today and sentenced to die in the electric chair for the murder last June 3, of Mrs. Martin Luther King Sr., mother of the slain civil rights leader.

The jury deliberated an hour and 15 minutes before convicting Mr. Chenault in the death of Mrs. King and a church deacon, who were shot during services at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. The husband of the slain woman is pastor there.

Mrs. King, who was 770, died from a gunshot wound in the back. Mr. Boykin died of a chest wound. Mr. Chenault blew kisses to

the jury after it recommended the death penalty and pointed his finger, gun-like, at the prosecutor and judge.

Mr. Chenault's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Marcus Wayne Chenault Sr., were present when the verdict was given. They bowed their heads and wept softly.

Earlier during a recess, Mrs. Chenault asked permission to be alone with her son for a few minutes. Mr. Chenault refused. He told a deputy sheriff that if his mother got close to him, he would spit on her.

The defense for Mr. Chenault, a college dropout from Dayton, Ohio, contended that he was not guilty because of insanity, but during the trial the prosecutor, Lewis Slaton, elicited from two psychiatrists

who examined the defendant the statement that he knew right from wrong when he opened fire in the church last June.

Randy Baycota, Mr. Chenault's principal defense counsel, pleaded with the jury to spare his life, asking for compassion.

Mr. Slaton insisted on the death penalty. He said that Mr. Chenault calmly and with

malice had plotted to murder Mrs. King.

Judge Luther Alverson sentenced Mr. Chenault to die on Nov. 8. The verdict will automatically be appealed.

Mr. Chenault, who like both victims is black, was given two death sentences in the double slaying in addition to being sentenced to 10 years in prison for wounding a church member.

The last time a person was executed in Georgia for a capital offense was in 1964.

After the United States Supreme Court decision in 1972 that ruled out capital punishment as it was then applied in the nation, Georgia reinstated the penalty for specific crimes. An appeal challenging the constitutionality of the new statute is pending before the Georgia Supreme Court.