

Dr. King, Negro Leader, Stabbed By Woman in a Store in Harlem

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who organized the Negro bus boycott in Montgomery, Ala., in 1956, was stabbed by a Negro woman in a Harlem department store yesterday.

Dr. King was taken to Harlem Hospital where his condition was described as good. He was stabbed in the upper left side of his chest with a steel letter opener.

At 6:30 P. M. he underwent an operation to remove the letter opener. The operation lasted two and a quarter hours and was performed by Dr. Aubré de L. Maynard, chief of surgery at the hospital.

Dr. Maynard said the operation was a success and "there is every indication that Dr. King will be all right." He said Dr. King would remain at the hospital about two weeks.

His attacker was arrested at the store, L. M. Blumstein, Inc., at 230 West 125th Street. She

was identified as Mrs. Izola Ware Curry, 42 years old, of 121 West 122d Street.

Governor Harriman went to the hospital from his East Side home. He was joined by a number of Negro leaders.

Mr. Harriman said that Police Commissioner Stephen P. Kennedy had told him Mrs. Curry appeared to be "deranged" and that she was making many "incoherent" statements.

The stabbing occurred at 3:30 P. M. on the ground floor of the department store, which is between Seventh and Eighth Avenues.

Dr. King was seated at a desk in a roped-off rear area autographing copies of his book, "Stride Toward Freedom; The Montgomery Story." The book was published last week.

Several persons were seated near Dr. King at the time of the stabbing, including Arthur

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DR. KING STABBED IN HARLEM STORE

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B. Spingarn, president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and Mrs. Anne Hedgman, a member of Mayor Wagner's staff.

An honor guard of girl student from Wadleigh Junior High School stood at either side of the desk. Twenty persons were waiting in line to get books autographed.

The police said Mrs. Curry, who was not in the line, stepped through a narrow opening leading to the desk, leaned over and asked, "Are you Mr. King?"

Dr. King nodded. Mrs. Curry, the police said, then pulled the letter opener from her bag and stabbed Dr. King.

She was quoted as saying: "I've been after you for six years. I'm glad I've done it." Detectives said she also made derogatory remarks about the N. A. A. C. P.

Walter Pettiford, an advertising representative of The Amsterdam News, a Negro newspaper, grabbed Mrs. Curry, pinning her arms to her side.

The store's chief security officer, Clifford Jackson, and Harry Dixon, a store guard, who were also in the area, ran over and Mr. Jackson hand-



The New York Times

VICTIM OF ATTACK: The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who was stabbed by woman in Harlem store.

cuffed Mrs. Curry. She did not resist.

Soon the ambulance from Harlem Hospital arrived. Dr. King, still seated in the chair, was carried into the ambulance.

News of the stabbing spread quickly through the neighborhood and attracted 1,500 persons to 125th Street, one of Harlem's main thoroughfares.

Forty persons went to the hospital to offer blood.

Others at the hospital, besides Governor Harriman, were Roy Wilkins, executive secre-

tary of the N. A. A. C. P.; A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; Hulan Jack, Manhattan Borough President; and Robert Mangum, Deputy Hospitals Commissioner.

Dr. Maynard said the blade of the letter opener, seven inches long, had "impinged on the aorta, a blood vessel near the heart." He said a puncture of the aorta would have caused "instant death."

Detectives said a fully loaded .25-calibre Italian automatic was found inside Mrs. Curry's dress. She said she had purchased the automatic last year in Daytona Beach, Fla., while she was working there as a domestic.

Mrs. Curry was taken to the hospital by police where she was identified by Dr. King. She was then booked on charges of felonious assault and violation of the Sullivan Law. She was to be arraigned this morning in Felony Court.

Inspector John Sexton, in charge of Manhattan East detectives, quoted Mrs. Curry as saying she did not know Dr. King was in the store when she went there.

He said she suffered from a "persecution complex." Mrs. Curry, according to the inspector, said she stabbed Dr. King because then "he would listen to my problems because I've been followed in buses and people have been making me lose my job."

Dr. King arrived here sev-

eral days ago for lectures and to promote his book. He had planned to return to Alabama at 5:15 P. M. yesterday.

Dr. King, Mr. Harriman and Nelson A. Rockefeller, Republican candidate for Governor, were among the speakers Friday night at an outdoor Harlem rally at 125th Street and Seventh Avenue.

Mr. Rockefeller, in Albany for a campaign appearance, said there last night:

"I was shocked to learn of this tragic occurrence. I fervently hope that his injury will not prove serious and that he soon will be able to resume the important work he has been doing."

The Montgomery bus dispute won prominence because of a 385-day boycott in which most of that city's 50,000 Negroes, under Dr. King's leadership, refused to ride under the traditional separate seating arrangements.

The boycott ended Dec. 21, 1956, when the United States Supreme Court ruled that the city's transport segregation ordinances were unconstitutional.

Dr. King is 29 years old. He is married and has a daughter.

He is a soft-spoken scholar of Hegel and Kant, a Doctor of Philosophy and a Doctor of Divinity. He is pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery and president of the Montgomery Improvement Association, organized to lead the boycott.