

Mystery Gunman Fires 5 Shots, Slightly Wounds Sen. Welcome

Assailant Seen 'Just A Crank' By Legislator

Police launched a city-wide search today for a mysterious gunman who shot State Senator Verda Welcome as she stepped from her car at her home a little after midnight.

Two of five bullets superficially wounded the Fourth district legislator in the lower back and left heel.

Senator Welcome said she knew of no reason for the assault. "I'd rather feel that it's just a crank," she said.

Police broadcast a description of a man who attempted to break into the Senator's house March 26 in daylight.

Mrs. Welcome told investigators at the time, that after trying to force his way in, the man fled when she screamed and slammed the door in his face.

Hair Tinted Red

The senator said she thought the stranger, a slightly-built Negro with his hair tinted red, was a would-be thief.

Mayor McKeldin issued a statement this morning saying "I am determined that there shall be no November 22's of any kind in Baltimore," referring to the assassination of President Kennedy.

"Police Commissioner Bernard J. Schmidt has assured me that everything possible is being done to bring the would-be assassin (of Senator Welcome) to justice," the Mayor said.

The shooting broke out after Mrs. Welcome parked her car on Holmes avenue, at the side of her home in the 2100 block Liberty Heights avenue.

Picking Up Posters

Police said she told them she was bending over the seat of the car picking up posters.

"I'll never forget that bang, bang, bang," Mrs. Welcome said. "The fifth shot came a little later."

The first bullet shattered the left rear window of the automobile, according to police report. Another ripped through the right rear window.

The senator, a 48-year-old former school teacher, threw herself on the front seat and began screaming.

"I knew I had been struck, but I thought it was just flying glass," she said. "It felt like cold rain."

Does Not See Gunman

"I have a vague recollection of a car moving away after the shooting—I thought it was a car."

Mrs. Welcome said, however, she did not see the gunman.

Following the shooting, Senator Welcome said she ran to her house and the arms of her husband, Dr. Henry C. Welcome, who treated her wounds at home.

Police called to the scene discovered five empty shell casings from a .32-caliber revolver about 4 or 5 feet behind her parked car.

Police said the gunman could have been sitting in another car

or standing on the sidewalk when he fired at Mrs. Welcome.

The senator, long a strong supporter of civil-rights bills in the Legislature, said she did not think the shooting had any connection with the racial issue.

"I'm doing no more than anyone else working for equal rights," she explained.

Senator Welcome also brought about a Legislative investigation when she charged that some automobile insurance companies were charging "exorbitant rates" on policies sold to high-risk drivers on the installment plan.

Early last night Senator Welcome had attended a quadrennial conference of the A.M.E. Zion Church at the Lord Baltimore Hotel.

Eve. Sun Went To Headquarters

She said from the dinner she went to campaign headquarters of the Fourth District Democratic Organization of Baltimore City at Pennsylvania and North avenues. Later she drove back to the hotel for a few moments and then went home.

Mrs. Welcome is the only Negro woman ever elected to the Maryland Senate.



Eve. Sun

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WHERE IT HAPPENED—Senator Verda Welcome shows the position she was in, reaching into the back of the car to get papers,

when fired on by an unseen gunman. Both rear windows were shot out, shattering glass.