

“Blast Rocks Residence of Bus Boycott
Leader,” by Joe Azbell

31 January 1956
Montgomery, Ala.

At 9:30 P.M., 30 January, a single stick of dynamite exploded on the King family's porch; Coretta Scott King and a friend, Dexter member Mary Lucy Williams, had been in the living room when they heard an object land on the front porch. They bolted to the back room, where Yolanda was sleeping, just as the dynamite exploded, ripping a hole in the porch floor, shattering four windows, and damaging a porch column. King arrived home about fifteen minutes later to find a large and boisterous crowd—many

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apparently armed—gathered outside and refusing to obey police orders to disperse. When he walked onto the porch, one onlooker reported, “the people let out with cheers that could be heard blocks away. With the raising of his hand they became quiet to hear what he had to say.”¹ In his remarks, King asked the crowd to go home peacefully. Police Commissioner Clyde Sellers and Mayor W. A. Gayle addressed the crowd next, promising to investigate the bombing and to defend the King family against future attacks. King spoke to the gathering again, urging them to be calm. The crowd then broke into spontaneous song, including hymns and “My Country, ‘Tis of Thee,” before finally dispersing at 10:45 P.M.” The following comments by King were quoted in the Montgomery Advertiser article by Joe Azbell published the next day.

“We believe in law and order. Don’t get panicky. Don’t do anything panicky at all. Don’t get your weapons. He who lives by the sword will perish by the sword. Remember that is what God said.² We are not advocating violence. We want to love our enemies. I want you to love our enemies. Be good to them. Love them and let them know you love them.³ I did not start this boycott. I was asked by you to serve as your spokesman. I want it to be known the length and breadth of this land that if I am stopped this movement will not stop. If I am stopped our work will not stop. For what we are doing is right. What we are doing is just. And God is with us.” [*quotations from Gayle, Sellers, and Sheriff Mac Sim Butler omitted*]

The Rev. King addressed the crowd again saying “go home and sleep calm. Go home and don’t worry. Be calm as I and my family are. We are not hurt and remember that if anything happens to me, there will be others to take my place.”

PD. *Montgomery Advertiser*, 31 January 1956.

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1. Willie Mae Lee, “The Bombing Episode,” 31 January 1956.
 2. Matthew 26:52 and Revelations 13:10.
 3. Matthew 5:44.