

Charles Marston

Assistant Superintendent, House Press Gallery

An Unforgettable Day

Charles Marston recalls how he warned others about the violence in the House Chamber on March 1, 1954.

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I was in the next to the last seat in the press gallery where they had benches to write on and Mr. Embly was the far seat nearest the railing there. And I was in training to keep his log. And all of a sudden this firing started. Wasn't sure it was gunfire. I happened to look and there's a girl with a flag, waving it and saying, "Viva la Puerto Rico." I understood her to say, "Viva la Mexico." I didn't know anything about Spanish. And she dropped the flag. Reached in a black leather bag and she pulled out a Luger pistol. I recognized it as a Luger because I owned one. And Dick Embly gave a push at me and said, "Get moving, Marston." And I went out and went into this phone here, picked it up and let it ring. It's the Senate Press Gallery automatically when you pick it up. Howard Dawes answered the phone over in the Senate. He was assistant superintendent over there. And I said to Howard, "Tell the locals they are shooting up the House." I heard him before he hung up the phone. He said, "They're shooting up the House." Needless to say all the reporters that were in the Senate Press Gallery came over to the House, led by Milton Berliner of the *Washington Daily News*. And then I went back in, observed Dr. Judd of Minnesota, a Congressman as well as a doctor. He was bending over Alvin Bentley of Michigan, who was down in the Republican well, part of the well of the House. He was shaking his head like he couldn't get any pulse. Ben Jensen of Iowa got a bullet in the flabby part of his back.