

AN ASSASSIN'S DIARY

Nixon was leaving. He was driven out a gate just 20 yards or so to my right. The sparse crowd in front of the Embassy ran off to that gate. The SS & cops were in confusion. "Is he coming out?" "That gate?" A garbled voice came over the walkie-talkie I moved close to hear & then he came out. About as far away from the protesters as he could get. The Ottawa cops, SS, & Mounties formed a line to hold back the crowd. I had a good view as he went past me, past me again, the 6th time & still alive.

I knew with the sparse friendly crowd, the protesters making noise & the rain he wouldn't show himself for a successful attempt. Waiting for him to come out that last time I even thought of killing as many SS men as I could. Because I was pissed at them & myself & Nixon. Killing 5 or 6 Secret Service agents would get me on the papers SOMETHING to show for my effort. Killing 'em right in front of Nixon—dig it!? I wasn't sure my flat tipped .38's would go thru the bullet-proof glass. Didn't want to get imprisoned or killed in an unsuccessful attempt. To have absolutely nothing to show—I couldn't take that chance.

Shit! I am thruorly pissed off. About a million things. Was pissed off befor I couldn't find a pen to write this down. This will be one of the most closly read papers since the Scrolls in those caves. And I couldn't find a pen for 40 seconds & went mad. My fuse is about bernt. There's gona be an explosion soon. I had it. I want something to happen. I was soppoed to be dead a week & a day ago. Or at least infamous. FUCKING tens-of-1,000's of people & tens-of-millions of \$. I'd just like to take some of them with me & Nixy.

All my efforts

&
nothing changed

Just another
god Damn
failure

Oh man, I a werewolf now changed into a wild thing. I could give it to the fucking mayor really fuck his little machine. Burn all these papers & what I buried & no one would ever know 1/2 of it.

But I want 'em all to know. I want a big shot & not a little fat noise. I want that god damn

tired of writting about it.

about what I was gonna do

about what I failed to do.

about what I failed to do again & again.

Traveling around like a hobo or some kind of comical character. I'm as important as the start of WWI I just need the little opening & a second of time. Nothing has happened for so long. 3 months. the 1st person I held a conversation

with in 3 months was a near naked girl rubbing my erect penis & she wouldn't let me put it thru her.

FAILURES

Every thing drags on . . . drags on . . . and on . . . It was supposed to be all over now. Don't think I have enought money to pay the rent on the 15th next month & eat that month too. I gota get him. I'm tired, I'm pissed, I'm crasy.

Tired of writting, writting, a War & Peace. Emphasis on the war. I keep throwing my pen. It won't be a nice composed vested suited man—it will be a mad man who kills Nixon & he will kill him—he will be dead.

I go crasy with delight when I hear Jhonny Cash's new record, "You but me Here".

"I shot you with my .38

And now I'm doing time"

I'm back to writting. 10 days have passed since my last entry. And even then I was a week behind in writting things down.

When I came back up untill my last entry, I morned my failures & stayed indoors—back to the exact same existance I had as befor the trip. Every thing was the SAME except I had less money. Much less.

I had to get away from my thoughts for a while. I went to the zoo, the lake front, saw "Clockwork Orange" & thought about getting Wallace all thru the picture—fantasing my self as the Alek on the screen come to real life—but without "my brothers" & without any "in and out." Just "a little of the old ultra violence."

I've decided Wallace will have the honor of —what would you call it?.

Like a novelist who knows not how his book will end—I have written this journal—what a shocking surprish that my inner character shall steal the climax and destroy the author and save the anti-hero from assasination!!

It may sound exciting & fascinating to readers 100 years from now—as the Booth conspricy seems to us today; but to this man it seems only another failure. And I stopped tolerating failure weeks ago.

As I said befor, I Am A Hamlet.

It seems I would of done better for myself to kill the old G-man Hoover. In death, he lays with Presidents. Who the hell ever got buried in 'Bama for being great? He certainly won't be buryed with the snobs in Washington. SHIT! I won't even rate a T.V. enterobtion in Russia or Europe when the news breaks—they never heard of Wallace. If something big in Nam flares up I'll end up at the bottom of the 1st page in America. The editors will say—"Wallace dead? Who cares." He won't get more than 3 minutes on network T.V. news. I don't expect anybody to get a big throbbing erection from the news.

APRIL 24, 1972

MAY 4, 1972

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You know, a storm in some country we never heard of kills 10,000 people—big deal—pass the beer and what's on T.V. tonight.

I hope my death makes more sense than my life.

A few days ago I felt sick—a slight fever & hot feeling in my chest, sides, & back. A sharp pinprick moving pain in left temple. Headache. Weakness in my heart. And a feeling like a cool wind was moving in my hands. The pain in my temple stayed a few days.

Yesterday I went to see the Milwaukee Technic College Photography Department's show at Capital Court, ignored the shops. Unexpectedly, I felt such a sharp pinprick moving pain in my left side, I thought I would fall to my knees & then fall some more. I stood still & then walked slowly—like an old man—with only a hint of the pain left. The rest of the day, I took it easy. WHAT THE FUCK WAS THAT!? In my left side above my lower ribs.

It helped, I think, to hold my breath & then take only shallow breaths.

Still feel—and have for a while—a general weakness in my heart.

Soda water radio commercial says, "You gotta lot to live." My answer, "Yeah, about a week."

Just got back from seeing "Z.P.G." & "Such Good Friends" (by Otto Preminger). Probably the worst picture he ever made. Jennifer O'Neil was great but the female lead was serious during the jokes & jokeous during the heavy parts. Z.P.G. had a piece that should of been shortened (an endless boat ride thru a sewer), but really hit home with people playing with dolls, paste-food, super-smog, etc.

"Good Friends" was as bad as "Vixen" by Russ Mayer. Dog shit with a plastic flower in it.

Funny . . . I've got nothing to say.

Have I ever said anything?

In three brief but reflective entries written between May 4 and May 13, Bremer describes his following President Nixon from Ottawa to Washington. He remembers taking pleasure in the warmth of the sun on the journey south, and he blames himself for missing yet another chance to kill Nixon. The President had appeared among tourists one day in front of the White House, but Bremer already had left for Milwaukee.

He again reviles himself for his repeated failures, and his mood wavers between exuberance (at one point he writes: "Hey World! Come Here! I wanna talk to ya!") and passages of depression in which he searches the newspapers for accounts of murder and suicide.

On May 7 he remarks that he considered Mc-

Govern as a victim, and he wonders about the unfortunate men in prison who threatened to kill the President but never received any large publicity. That thought leads him to the following speculation:

"Maybe what they need is organization. 'Make the First Lady a Widow, Inc.' 'Chicken in Every Pot and Bullet in Every Head, Com., Inc.'"

He extends the speculation to the notion of a national convention held for the purpose of choosing a public executioner, the choice to be decided by the best essay submitted on the theme, "How To Do A Bang Up Job Of Getting People To Notice You," or "Get It Off Your Chest; Make Your Problems Everybody's."

The final entry in the diary, dated May 13, appears to have been written while Bremer sat in his car across the street from the National Guard Armory in Kalamazoo, Michigan. At last he has roused himself from his torpor, and for three days he has been pursuing Wallace at political rallies in Dearborn, Cadillac, and Lansing, Michigan. It is raining.

MAY 13, 1972

Well I made it across the Lake. Ship left about 4 A.M. Didn't sleep too well. Got out of bed to see us sail past the break water & in to the sunrise. Arrived about noon. Was stopped on Highway 10 (all cars were) by a cop for "vehical inspection." He looked at my driving lincense and said, "Expires in 1972." That was my inspection.

Ate in Saginaw and read its paper. Wallace was allready in the state for a few days. Next rally—Dearborn that night at 8:00. It was near 3 pm when I left. Finally found Dearborn. Pulled in for a can of oil and changed into a suit & tie. It was about 5:30. Loaded my .38. Couldn't find the belt for my pants. "Excuse me sir, is this your gun?" Adjusted the gun many times that night.

Arrived at Dearborn Youth Center at 15 after 6. Was lucky to find a parking place on a "Not Thru Street."

The hall was packed & 1,000 or so waited outside ahead of me. Papers said 3,000. I say 2500 inside; 2,000 outside. The speaker said a second rally might be held at 9:15 if enought people remained. Later I read they had done this in Flint & another city. Wallace talked till 9:35 & no second rally "Since the sound outside was so good." Yeah they had speakers. I did the best I could. Asked a cop sargent ordering all the other cops around were we could get in for the 2nd show, "which door do we use."

"Second show tonight? No, I don't think so."

If I couldn't be 1st in line for the second show, I'd be near the entrance door for Wallace. There were windows on the sides of the hall & some people the lucky ones, had a view into the hall to see what they could hear. You had to stand up

on a ledge to see. A make-shift "backstage" area was formed by blue curtains separating the back door from the inside audience. People at the 2 window panes closest to the door could, however, see all unobstructed. "Allways somewhat careless," I thought of the S.S. The thin glass was weakly reinforced with wire mesh. But no trouble for a bullet at all. That was my plan.

When Wallace appeared behind the curtain we "supporters" went wild. Crys of, "I see him. I see him. There he is. He's right here." He delighted in "our" enthusiasum. Came over to wave hellow twice. Then came over to ask if we could hear the singers over the outside speakers. He used sign language. Exposed himself 3 more good times for this—a glorified Junior High School Audio-Visual Aid. He took the podium. We at the window could see him thru a crack in the curtains.

A teen age girl behind me said she could shoot him thru the curtain crake. She was joking about her intentions. A guy said some thing against Wallace. I was going to ask him who he would want to be President but decided to forgo the philosophy decusion and wait for my opening. Half a dozen kids watched in nearby trees.

He talked & talked. The ranks outside thined. Not even many at the windows. I cursed. I wanted him to wave at us and come close as he left. He gave a couple cinema men some good "Wallace & supporters" shots. I wanted my shot to. Did the Secret Service men really think a piece of glass was a deterent? Not to me! I was all set. Jacket opened. A still cat befor he springs. Waiting . . . Waiting . . . He's left the podium!

He took less time to wave good-bye then he did to wave hellow. And he didn't come right up to the glass. 15 feet instead of 5 feet away.

Two 15 year old girls had gotten in front of me. Their faces were 1 inch from the glass I would shatter with a blunt-nosed bullet. They were sure to be blinded & disfigured. I let Wallace go only to spare those 2 stupid innocent delighted kids. We pounded on the window together at the governor. There'd be other times.

I was low on money & wanted a cheap place to spend the night. Drove past a place called the Capital or the Congress Motel. The name sign must of cost 'em 3 thousand dollars alone. Too expensive. Drove on down the street. No other places. Drove back to the Congress Inn.

Asked a reporter, as easy to spot as a SS, "You got big doings around here?"

He was bored, "Governor Wallace is staying here," as if to say, "no nothing big."

Jackpot!

The cop was stationed right outside a room, curtains open, full of his strategy people in conference.

No vacantcies. Got a reservation at another joint. Asked the sergent at the door how to get

there. Good directions. A good cop. I like a good cop.

Got tired of driving the 6 miles to the place thou & stopped at a cheaper joint. Thought I was lost againt but was 7 blocks from my reservation. The girl who took my reserption never told me the name of her motel. All I had was a street corner. So I said fuck it & stopped at Allen Town (a city I think) & slept there.

Morning paper said he'd be in Cadillac, Michigan at 8 that night. Drove back the way I had come twice befor. 1) Nixon & 2) Wallace in Dearborn & stopped in Clare to eat a big lunch. My last meal as a free man I thought. Really serprised myself that I left 1/2 of everything on my plate. Veal cutlet-mashed potatoes-applesauce (I ate all of that)-& apple pie a lâ mode-milk (all of it). Took a couple asperin. Tried on a pink pullover sweater to see if it would cover the .38. It didn't. Wanted to wear something different than I wore in Dearborn. All the wail Wallace talked, his SS men, the ones behind the curtain goofing off smoking a pipe (a dark serious guy) & a couple others downing sodas, got good looks at me. And Caddilac is a long ways off from a Detroit suberb. On my way out saw a couple Detroit cops frisk down a couple guys in the road. Thought for sure if the SS saw me in Cadillac, they would feel justified in asking me a few questions "Following us?" "I just wanna see the Governor, sir."

Arrived in Caddilac well ahead of time. Found out were the High School gym was from a drive in. The local paper & the radio told me to look for the gym. Except for some unpaved streets (on hills mostly), I liked the town. I guess with snow & ice unpaved streets are best on hills.

In Dearborn a kid pointed out "Police Chief O'Riley." A nice looking guy. I imagined myself apologising to him & cheering him up with, "Don't blame yourself for the lack of surcurity blame the Secret Service." I would of told him that had I been sucesful.

I would see plenty of local big wigs in Cadillac. It was a really beautiful day. I drove around the gym & parked near a lake. Layed down & relaxed with a paper over my face. Had to piss. Had plenty of gas. Had plenty to eat. Where to go? A bar. Had 2 Manhatins. Drank 2 glasses of water. The drinks didn't bother me much at all. Except financialy. A buck each. Nice little bar. Good bartender. I thought of Sirhan. He had 4 drinks & was, he claimed drunk, when he did his thing. One of the songs the female organist sang touched me. Forgot what it was.

The mayor or some political bigshot came in & all rised their glasses to him. He said he introduced Wallace to all the local big shots & took plenty of time doing it. Wanted to be on the local T.V. that much longer. "I never knew I was

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a ham!" He broke up the crowd. That was at the airport. Two hours ago. On the news that night I watched as he shook hands with every one & his brother over the airport fence. A fence is surcurity? I would be relaxing in jail & not running all around trying to catch him now if I was at the airport.

I left for the rally. Arrived at 6:15 behind a crowd of 125 or so. I knew I was late when I left the bar. Smalled talked with the shit head next to me.

The same singers. The sane songs. Two SS men flank the stage on each side as Wally talks, center stage behind his usuall high bullet-proof podium. More agents flank the crowd & the stage entrence. Bored gargoyles. Unmoving. Unemotional. Searching. One with a coat on his lap. Rifle inside? I am, at the very most, 35 feet from my target. In the 5th row. Too far to risk. I am the most enthusiastic hand clapper for the songs & the speak. Want him to feel comfortable. The crowd isn't as responsive as in Dearborn.

I want to get closer. "Shake Hands. Shake Hands," I cry. No. He has to go to New York from here tonight & with the time zone change & yak yak. At the end of the speech, I try to push the people in front of me & in my row forward or out of the way so I can get close. No luck. A dozen big shot behind Wallace were introduced as being for him—mayors of hamlets & other guys. Yet why was't this crowd responsive? I DID THE MOST HAND CLAPPING, ALL THE SHOUTING, & WAS GOING TO START 3 DIFFERENT STANDING OVATIONS BUT FELT THE CROWD WOULDN'T FOLLOW ME. I bet HE didn't want to shake hands with them! No cheers or speech interruptions! A great disappointment for him I bet. Poor guy. What would he have done without me?

I walked to my car swearing, swearing, swearing. Spent the night in Caddillac. Amost 10 o'clock. Too late to drive. Too tired. Too pissed.

He'd be back in 3 days to cover Jackson, Kalamazoo, & Lansing—the capital of Michigan.

Drove to Lansing. Read its papers. Drove around it. Drove right out. Demonstrators again! Shit! Against the mining of N. Vietnam. Shit! If it wasn't for demonstrators 4 weeks ago . . . No mining.

Remember Ottawa! TRA-TAAAA!

When I heard that 1/2 of the states votes were in the Detroit area, I decided right then to go to Kalamazoo & meet him there. I stayed at a hotel overlooking the Kalamazoo National Guard Armory where he'd talk. Watched it carefully. Wanted everything perfect. Paper said 10% chance of rain Sat., today, afternoon. I'm checked out of my room & sitting in my car now & writing & its raining like a son-of-a-bitch. Will this spoil everything?

He drew 4-6,000 in '68 at a near by city Park. Read the paper in the beautiful mall area of

town. Listened to rock music in a park. A small ineffective protest is planned today.

Wanted to be the 1st in line. Thought I saw people standing in front of the place at 9 this morning. They moved on. Rain is letting up slowly now. It's about 1:30. He isn't in Warren yet. But I'll soon be on the front steps of the Kalamazoo Armory to welcome him. Got a sign from compaing headquarters here. To shield the gun.

Is there any thing else to say?

My cry upon firing will be, "A penny for your thoughts."

Two days later, Arthur Bremer shot George Wallace in Laurel, Maryland. He was wearing sunglasses and a red, white, and blue shirt decorated with Wallace buttons. At least one witness remembered that as Wallace left the speaker's rostrum, behind which he had been shielded by bulletproof glass, Bremer cried out: "Hey George! Hey George! Over here!"

Later that same day the newspapers reported that a search of Bremer's room in Milwaukee had uncovered, among his other possessions, a Confederate battle flag, a gun catalogue, and a pornographic comic book. He apparently had no friends. The few people with whom he had been acquainted described him as being timid and withdrawn. Somebody said he had wanted to become a writer or a commercial photographer; somebody else remembered that his mother had refused to let him try out for the high-school football team. Otherwise the record remained pathetically incomplete, the blank spaces suggesting the vast loneliness of a life condemned to impotence and failure.

When the judge pronounced sentence, Bremer, in response to the traditional question as to whether he had anything to say, remarked: "Looking back on my life, I would have liked it if society had protected me from myself." On August 4 of last year he entered the Maryland Penitentiary in Baltimore. He has appealed the verdict of the state court, and he awaits trial in a federal court on various charges of interfering with an election and violating George Wallace's civil rights. □

Harper's Magazine Press will publish the full text of Bremer's diary as a book, available in bookstores next month for \$6.50. As a service to our readers, Harper's will reserve copies at a special publication price of \$4 for all orders received before February 1. Make checks payable to Harper's Magazine and send to "Bremer's Diary," Harper's Magazine, 2 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016.