



Gov. Wallace Has Another Close Call

A bullet from Arthur Bremer's gun knocked George Wallace out of the 1972 race for President, and he has been convinced a conspiracy was involved in the shooting.

But a mysterious fire almost took the feisty Alabama governor's life last year about the time he started yearning up his drive for a presidential race in 1976.

The fire broke out on the second floor of the governor's mansion in Montgomery — during the afternoon at a spot where Wallace ordinarily would have been.

GEORGE WALLACE recently had a close call when his governor's mansion caught fire. Had he been in it at the time .. and he almost was .. he would have had a difficult time escaping the flames in his wheelchair. Recently, Wallace said he is convinced there was a conspiracy to assassinate him when Arthur Bremer gunned him down in 1972.

INSTEAD, WALLACE happened to be at a speaking engagement at the time.

"Ordinarily I would have been upstairs in my room at that hour of the day," Wallace told reporters after the fire.

"I'm usually up in my room at that time making phone calls. If I'd been there when the fire broke out there would have been doubt that they could have gotten me out.

Firemen doused the blaze, but smoke damage caused the mansion to be closed for several months for repairs.

WALLACE SAID he had almost decided not to attend the business luncheon speaking date.

"A fire is a horrible thing, especially when you can't walk or run to save yourself," said the governor who was paralyzed from the waist down when Bremer shot him down in a Maryland shopping center.

"There's no way I could have gotten down the stairs myself. I usually stay up there pretty much

alone and make the phone calls. The fire broke out rather suddenly."

Cause of the blaze hasn't been definitely determined. Adding to the mystery is the fact the fire alarm warning system didn't work.

A MANSION GUARD called the fire department after seeing smoke pour from the building.

"It's a nightmareish thought to imagine yourself in a wheelchair in an upstairs of a house when it's on fire," shaken Wallace said.

Wallace is convinced a conspiracy exists to take his life.

Repeatedly, Wallace has contended that Bremer did not act alone in the assassination attempt.

THE GOVERNOR HAS questioned where Bremer obtained funds to travel around the country following Wallace's campaign, even staying at the Waldorf Astoria in New York.

As a dishwasher, Bremer rarely made enough money to keep him in hot dogs.