

# Now, Arthur Bremer Is Known

The following article was written by Douglas E. Kneeland and is based on reporting by him, Seth S. King, Agis Salpukas, George Vecsey and Martin Waldron.

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WASHINGTON, May 21— People know now who Arthur Herman Bremer is.

It wasn't always so, even on the streets of his own fading, middle-class neighborhood on Milwaukee's West Side. To most he passed unnoticed with his peculiar shuffling gait, head down, feet pointed outward. To those whose lives he did touch, he was an enigma, often to be somehow pitied, more frequently to be shunned.

Then, shortly after 4 P.M. last Monday Gov. George C. Wallace of Alabama was felled at a campaign rally at a nearby Laurel, Md., shopping center by a burst of shots fired at point-blank

range from a snub-nosed Charter Arms .38-caliber revolver.

Stunned policemen guarding the Governor pounced on a short man with close-cropped blond hair who had worked his way close to the hand-shaking candidate.

The man, who has been charged with the shooting, was Arthur Herman Bremer, the morose 21-year-old unemployed and largely unnoticed bus boy and janitor from Milwaukee.

Now, people know who he is.

And perhaps that is all he ever wanted.

As he was being taken to jail after the shooting, a source close to the investigation said, he turned to his captors and asked:

"How much do you think I'm going to get for my autobiography?"

Arthur Bremer thinks of himself as a writer of sorts.

Not that he ever seems to have mentioned it to the few people who can recall having had conversations with him. But then, he never did say much about anything.

Still, investigators found his one-bedroom, third-floor apartment cluttered with notebooks and papers on which he apparently was constantly scribbling his thoughts, aphorisms or verse.

At the Milwaukee Area Technical College, where he studied photography for a time in 1970 and 1971, he also took a writing course.

And he seems to have felt that he might some day have something worth selling. Both his apartment and his nondescript blue 1967 Rambler Rebel, which the police found in the shopping center's parking lot, yielded copies of

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the 1972 Writers Yearbook, which many authors use as a market guide.

Moreover, he had in recent weeks been giving some attention to tales of assassination. In the car were copies of "R.F.K. Must Die" by Robert Kaiser and "Sirhan" by Aziz Shabab. Both books about Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, the convicted killer of Senator Robert F. Kennedy, were checked out of the Milwaukee Public Library on May 5.

And cryptically among his endless jottings was a line that read "Cheer up, Oswald," an apparent reference to Lee Harvey Oswald, the assassin of President Kennedy.

But what led Arthur Herman Bremer, the silent son of a truck driver, from the decaying Milwaukee neighborhoods where he has spent his life to that shopping center in Laurel and then on to an 8-by-10-foot cell in the Baltimore County Jail at Towson, Md.?

The picture painstakingly pieced together in the week since Governor Wallace and three other persons were wounded by five revolver shots is often murky. Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who are also retracing that puzzling path, have told many potential sources not to talk with newsmen.

What is more, Arthur Bremer is a loner whose steps have left faint imprints if they have been noticed at all.

Still, one thing is obvious. Nearsighted, 5 foot-6-inch, 145-pound Artie Bremer did not have a happy life in the succession of apartments in old wooden frame houses in which his family lived in the grimy working-class neighborhoods dominated by the industrial smokestacks of Milwaukee's South Side.

Born Aug. 21, 1950, at St. Joseph's Hospital in Milwaukee, he was the fourth child in the family.

Attempts to reach his father, William, or his mother, Sylvia, who are being shielded by the police, were unavailing, but his younger brother, Roger, 18, in his fumbling efforts to recall the ages or whereabouts of two older brothers, Theodore and William, and a sister, Gail, provides some indication that the family was far from close-knit.

The son William is under arrest in Florida on a Federal charge of fraud and Gail, who other sources said was Mrs. Bremer's daughter before she married the senior William Bremer, is in California, to the best of Roger's knowledge. Theodore is married and living in the Milwaukee area.

Mrs. Bremer has been described by her neighbors as

withdrawn like her son Arthur. But their similarity apparently did not make for bonds between them.

## 'He Hated My Ma'

"He hated my Ma," Roger said of Arthur. "He never liked her."

Roger concedes that he did not get along very well with Arthur himself. "We'd fight a lot," he said. "I was a lot smaller, but I'd win. I'd call him a nut. Maybe now, looking back, it was better for him to know. But he'd get mad. I'd be eating. He's come in and get on me for no reason. We're not much alike."

However, he said that he thought his brother had respected their father, who is known, as are many of his neighbors, as a man who takes some pleasure in shooting pool and drinking beer in the noisy taverns of the South Side. "But they'd fight, too," he added.

Milwaukee social workers who have had dealings with the Bremers have described the family as "dysfunctional."

In school, Arthur Bremer's grades were average or below, and when he graduated from South Division High in January, 1969, he took a job as a bus boy at the Milwaukee Athletic Club. A few months later he got part-time work as a janitor at Story Elementary School.

He also took the course at the technical college, where no one remembers much about him.

"He was a nondescript little guy," said A. Joseph Gradian, assistant dean, who is in charge of photography majors, "a quiet little guy."

It was always like that, or worse, it seems, for Arthur Herman Bremer.

At the Prisma Pizzeria on Wisconsin Avenue, a block from his apartment, Deborah Tillerman, a young waitress, remembers him, although she did not know his name until last week.

"He used to come in by himself," she said. "Never with anybody. He'd point to what he wanted on the menu; he didn't say a word. You know when you're waiting on tables, you like guys to talk to you. You like to meet people. But a guy like that really turns you off. He just stares and points. He'd order a meatball or sausage hero. Never a pizza."

Kay Johannes, 19, a student at the technical college who did recall him, said, "We all decided that we were going to stay away from him, because there was something wrong with him."

Stephan Wasche, 17, whose brother, Tony, is superintendent of the three-story, gray-

painted-brick apartment house where Arthur Bremer lived, tried several times without success to talk with him.

"He's very to himself," Stephan said. "He was always smiling. He was not like nor-



Associated Press

Joan Pemrich, 16, of Milwaukee, dated Arthur Herman Bremer briefly.

mal people. He was to himself."

The only friend of Arthur Bremer's that neighbors could recall was Thomas Neuman, who shot and killed himself in front of his sister on May 22, 1971, while playing Russian roulette.

But last fall, Arthur Bremer, who among his writings made notes about trying to improve himself and impress other people, apparently decided to broaden his horizons.

Although he is described as frugal by his brother Roger and some who worked with him, on Sept. 14 he paid \$795 in cash for the blue Rambler.

Then on Oct. 15, he left his parents' home at 1300 South 15th Street and moved into the \$138.50-a-month apartment at 2433 West Michigan Avenue in a community that is a mixture of old people, some students from nearby Marquette University, nurses and floaters in the hippie drug scene.

#### Purchases Revolver

Sometime in the same period he also bought a Charter Arms .38-caliber, snub-nosed, five-shot revolver for about \$80.

But despite his new life away from home, all was not going well for him.

In November he filed a complaint with the Milwaukee Community Relations Commission contending that he had been discriminated against by the Milwaukee Athletic Club be-

cause he had been given different work in the dining room and was working fewer hours.

Fred E. Blue Jr., the commission's program planner, investigated and determined there had been no discrimination. He said Mr. Bremer's superiors at the club had told him that some guests had complained of his idiosyncracies, including whistling and marching in time to music being played in the dining room.

In a Nov. 8 report, Mr. Blue wrote that "Mr. Brenner [sic] is a young man who is rather withdrawn—appears to bottle up anger but will sometimes let it go."

"I assess him as bordering on paranoia—at the same time conscientious in doing his job," he continued. "Has little communications with his family—very much needs a friend (also professional help). In talking with him suggested that if there are times he would like to talk to come to my office or call me."

Mr. Blue said that he tried three or four weeks later to call Mr. Bremer, but could not reach him.

On Nov. 18, Arthur Bremer's troubles multiplied. He was sitting in his car in a no-parking zone in Fox Point, a northern Milwaukee suburb, when a policeman who approached to question him noticed two boxes of pistol ammunition on the seat beside him.

Asked if he had a gun, he said he did and the policeman found the .38 in his inside pocket. He was arrested on a concealed weapons charge.

Although the policeman described him as incoherent, Dr. Paul Purtell, the court psychiatrist who questioned him the next day, found him sane enough to stand trial.

Since Mr. Bremer had no previous criminal record, the charge was reduced to disorderly conduct. He was convicted and paid a \$38.50 fine.

Mr. Bremer told the court that he had used the pistol, which was confiscated by the police, for target practice at the Flintrop Arms Company in Milwaukee.

In spite of his problems, November and December may have been among the happier times in Arthur Bremer's gray life. He met a girl.

Joan Pemrich, recently turned 16, is tall, gangly, light-skinned with light blond hair, one of eight children of Alfred and Marge Pemrich, who live at 3002 West State Street in an old high-ceiling house across from Concordia College.

She was a hall monitor at a recreation center at the Story school, where Arthur Bremer was a janitor. They met last October, but he first visited her

house the Saturday before Thanksgiving.

Then they had a date in downtown Milwaukee, walking around, looking at Christmas decorations. He gave her a bouquet of roses, a box of candy and a handkerchief for Christmas. She gave him a handkerchief and a Christmas card.

"He put the card on the top of the refrigerator in his apartment," she said. "I think it was the only one he got."

She gave candy to her family and a small piece to her gerbil, Freedom, she recalled.

"Artie hated the gerbil," she said. "He said I gave more at-

tention to the gerbil than to him."

Although he had a car and an apartment, neither Joan nor her mother had the impression that Arthur Bremer had much money. Most of the time, he just dropped over to the house after calling first.

But once he did take Joan to the Milwaukee Arena to see Blood, Sweat and Tears, the rock group.

"He embarrassed me," she said. "He started yelling like crazy and stamping his foot to the beat and clapping his hands."

Joan went to his apartment once briefly on Dec. 28, where she got the impression of clutter and that he lived on a cold-cereal diet.

Early in January, she decided she did not want to see him anymore.

"He was driving me up a wall," she explained. "He'd cross-examine me. He asked me what I meant every time I said anything. Then he'd ask me why I never asked him questions. He was weird."

#### Told to Stop Calling

When he kept calling her by phone, Joan said she would motion to her mother to say she was not home. He persisted. About Jan. 12 or 13, as Mrs. Pemrich recalls, she told him not to call anymore.

"Look, Artie, Joan doesn't want to see you," she said she told him.

The bad times returned for Arthur Bremer.

On Jan. 13, he bought from Casanova Guns, Inc., a second Charter Arms .38-caliber revolver, a duplicate of the one the police had confiscated in November.

Apparently that day or the next he shaved off all his medium-length hair except for sideburns. At a dance the night of Jan. 14 at the school the youngsters teased him.

"He looked funny," said Tim Burns, the head janitor at the school. "He said he looked funny. He said he took three razor blades to do it. He said: 'If

my girl doesn't like short hair, let's see how she likes no hair." "He told me he fought with Joan. The kids started to get on him about his hair and right after that he quit."

Actually, he worked two more weeks, quitting on Jan. 31.

The next day he purchased a 9-mm. Browning automatic pistol from the Flintrop Arms Company for \$114.50. (The Prince Georges County, Md., police found it concealed in his Rambler when they dismantled the car. The .38-caliber revolver he bought Jan. 13 was found on the ground after Governor Wallace was shot.)

On Feb. 15, Arthur Bremer left his job at the athletic club, where he had worked full-time or part-time for three years, without saying anything to anyone and never returned.

Neither his neighbors nor others seem to recall any changes in his habits after he stopped working, but then they never paid much attention to him before.

Probably no one but he knows when or why he developed an interest in Governor Wallace. He was not political, according to those who knew him. His father, who favors Senator Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota, has said that in the past he thought his son had been a Humphrey supporter, if anything.

#### Puts Up Wallace Stickers

Nevertheless, earlier this year he pasted Wallace stickers on his car and on the door of his apartment.

There were also references to Governor Wallace in his writings, such as:

"Happiness is hearing George Wallace sing the National Anthem, or having him arrested for a hit-and-run accident."

While some persons have read that as ambivalent, others have noted that it could be consistent for an admirer of the Governor, who in past campaigns has indicated that he would run over any demonstrators who lay down in front of his car.

A Milwaukee Sentinel reporter has said that he thinks he remembers having seen Arthur Bremer at a meeting of Wallace supporters on March 1. Some members of the Wallace campaign staff who were in Wisconsin for the April 14 Democratic Presidential primary have also said that they thought they recalled a man of his description at a Milwaukee rally.

Still, no one could be found who seemed to know for sure what Arthur Bremer was doing in March. Although his neighbors said that they had never known him to make long trips, he did take some in April.

On April 7 and 8, he stayed at the expensive Waldorf-As-

toria Hotel in New York City. The F.B.I. has seized the hotel records and told employees not to discuss the matter, so how much his bill was or how he paid it was not available.

Senator Humphrey was scheduled to be at the Waldorf April 7, but the trip was canceled.

Earl S. Nunnery, trainmaster for the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway's rail-auto ferry, confirmed today an Associated Press report that records of names and license plates, which must be given for reservations, show the suspect took his automobile from Milwaukee to Ludington, Mich., on April 9 and May 9. The news agency also said that he made a return trip from Ludington on April 28.

The records show that Mr. Bremer was alone in his car for the 8:15 P.M. departure on April 9. The time of his departure led to speculation that he must have flown to and from New York if he stayed in the Waldorf the night of April 8.

Mr. Nunnery said that Mr. Bremer, in an earlier visit to try to make reservations, had been accompanied to the ferry's ticket window by a well-dressed man about 6 feet 2 inches tall and weighing 225 pounds, with heavily sprayed curly hair that hung down over his ears.

#### Mention of Political Campaign

He said that the man had talked excitedly in what he took to be a New York accent about moving a political campaign from Wisconsin to Michigan.

Mr. Nunnery said that the visit would have been a day or two after the April 4 Wisconsin primary, but that neither the other man nor Mr. Bremer, whom he identified from photographs, had mentioned the name of the candidate they seemed to be working for.

He said that he had been curious enough to look at their car as they left to see if it had a political bumper sticker, but it had none. He added that he had seen a third person with long hair, who could have been a man or a woman. He said that the car was not the one registered to Mr. Bremer, which he apparently took on the ferry trips to Michigan.

The next concrete evidence of Mr. Bremer's whereabouts that The New York Times was able to uncover came when on April 15 he received a speeding ticket for driving 75 miles an hour in a 65-mile-an-hour zone as he headed south at 6:40 P.M. on Route 81 about 15 miles from Binghamton, N. Y.

During that period, Governor Wallace was doing most of his campaigning in Indiana, Louisiana and Texas, far from any place that Route 81, which runs from Canada to Tennessee, would logically have taken Arthur Bremer.

"When I heard about Bremer," said Lieut. Blake Muthig, zone commander of the New York State Police in the Binghamton area, "I talked to Trooper [Paul F.] Mitchell [who issued the summons]. He said there was nothing unusual about the man. He was very quiet, very polite. The gentleman said he would pay his fine. You have to have more facts other than speeding to justify searching the car."

In the latter part of April, neighbors recalled having seen Mr. Bremer in Milwaukee. And sometime during the first week of that month he joined the Milwaukee chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, paying \$10 for a basic membership. When he was arrested, he asked for an A.C.L.U. lawyer, but after investigating, the Baltimore chapter decided there were no indications of violations or constitutional rights on which to represent him.

Jerry Stone, an attendant at Aldo's Standard Service, a filling station near Arthur Bremer's apartment where Mr. Bremer used to buy gasoline and occasionally fuss with his car, recalled that late in April or early in May he had seen the suspect.

Mr. Stone said that another young man with a mustache and long dark hair held by a headband had been with him and that they had rolled in some tires to get them put on rims.

Then on May 5, Mr. Bremer checked out the two books on the Robert F. Kennedy assassination from the public library.

Except for one neighbor who thinks she may have seen him May 8 or 9, most people do not

recall his having been in Milwaukee after May 5.

If he did leave the city then, he apparently spent most of the next 10 days driving his old Rambler Rebel, which he had fitted out with blankets, pillows and most of his belongings, over the highways between Michigan and Maryland.

In the days since the shooting, a number of persons have said they thought they saw Arthur Bremer at Wallace rallies in Maryland or Michigan during that period.

While most of the sightings have not been confirmed, he was in Kalamazoo, Mich., for the rally there May 13.

He checked in at 1 P.M. Friday, May 12, at the Reid Hotel, an old, narrow eight-story building about a block and a half from the armory where the rally was to be held. He was alone and paid \$8.32 cash in advance.

Hotel personnel believe he left the building about 2:30 P.M. and did not return until 9 P.M. He checked out at 9:30 A.M. the next day.

About 4 P.M. he was questioned by the Kalamazoo police after a parking lot attendant reported that a man had been sitting in his car in the lot across from the armory all day. The policeman checked his license, when Arthur Bremer said he was waiting for the rally, he was not questioned further.

John Bleeker and his wife were among several persons who said they had seen him at the rally. Mr. Bleeker said that Mr. Bremer had applauded vigorously during the country music warmup before Governor Wallace spoke but "he didn't applaud once during the speech."

He also said that he had seen Mr. Bremer get up before the rally and talk for about three minutes with a slim, attractive young woman who was with some "hippie types" who were distributing anti-Wallace leaflets signed by the Young Workers Liberation League of Grand Rapids, Mich.

Mrs. Janet Petrone, the Wallace state women's coordinator in Maryland, has said that Mr. Bremer came into the campaign headquarters in Silver Spring sometime early in the week of May 7 and chatted with her. Other witnesses have said that they thought they saw him at

rallies in Cumberland and Hagerstown, Md., on May 6 and at one in Frederick on May 11.

After leaving Kalamazoo, Mich., late Saturday or early Sunday, May 14, he made the long drive to Wheaton, Md., in time to be filmed there by television crews at a noon rally on Monday, May 15.

A few hours later his odyssey was over as he was seized as Governor Wallace lay bleeding on the ground at the shopping center in Laurel.

How did the former bus boy and janitor, who earned \$3,016 last year, according to a Federal income tax form found in his apartment, support himself during his unemployment and manage to buy the guns, tape recorder, portable radio with police band, binoculars and other equipment he was carrying, as well as finance his travels?

His father has told the Federal Bureau of Investigation, a source said, that his thrifty son, who had a savings account at the Mitchell Street State Bank in Milwaukee, had withdrawn substantial sums in recent months and had been living off the money. Bank officials declined to discuss the account.

Other sources close to the investigation said that the suspect had said after his arrest that he was down to his last \$2, that he had not eaten for several days, that he had been sleeping most recent nights in his car and that the old Rambler had broken down repeatedly on the trip from Kalamazoo.

By the time he reached Laurel, as the source said, Arthur Herman Bremer appeared to have reached "the end of his rope."