



Man accused of shooting George Wallace traveled 7,000 miles in month before attack

Bremer's long road to Laurel

By Donald Zochert and Edmund J. Rooney

Darkness was falling in upstate New York, and state trooper Paul W. Mitchell was making tracks.

His squad car streaked south on Interstate 81. The needle on the speedometer pointed to 75 miles an hour and held steady.

Ahead of him was a blue 1967 Rambler sedan with bright yellow Wisconsin plates. Wisconsin was going 75, 100.

For eight miles Trooper Mitchell kept the pace. Then he realized he was getting close to Binghamton. He reached forward and switched on his siren and flashing lights.

The Rambler slowed down, pulled off to the side of the road, and stopped.

Trooper Mitchell pulled in behind it, the lights of his squad car still flashing. He opened the car door and stepped out. Ahead of him, the driver's door of the Rambler opened slowly.

Arthur H. Bremer stepped out.

IT WAS 6:40 P.M., SATURDAY, APRIL 15, 1972, and Bremer was about to be arrested for exceeding the posted speed limit.

No one knew then where he was coming from, or where he was going. Or why he hurried.

They do now.

In the 12 days since Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace was critically wounded by a grinning, would-be assassin, federal agents have been combing the eastern half of the country for traces of Arthur Bremer's passage.

Through thousands of feet of television newsfilm, through hundreds of still photographs from the now-silent Wallace campaign trail, they have sought a face in the crowd — Arthur Bremer's face.

And they have found it.

EVEN AS BREMER PLEADED INNOCENT this week to the attempt on Wallace's life, the record of his wanderings led agents across the northern border into Canada.

The long, road of Arthur Bremer began in Milwaukee, early in April. It ended in Laurel, Md., in the middle of May.



Arthur H. Bremer at Kalamazoo, (Mich.) Wallace rally.

In between, by the most conservative estimate, Bremer traveled 7,063 miles, searching all the while for the dark proscenium of tragedy.

This is the timetable of that search.

April, they say, is the cruelest month. It found Bremer in Milwaukee, out of work and unrequited in love. He was 21 years old and owned two handguns.

On Tuesday, April 4, he was seen at a Wallace rally in a motel only three blocks from his Milwaukee apartment at 2433 W. Michigan St.

But by the end of the week, he was on the road.

BREMER REPORTEDLY WAS REGISTERED under his

own name at New York City's regal Waldorf-Astoria Hotel on Friday, April 7.

Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey, like Wallace a presidential candidate, was scheduled to make an appearance at the same hotel on Friday. He didn't.

On Saturday, April 8, Bremer reportedly checked out of his room at the Waldorf-Astoria. By the evening of the next day, Sunday, April 9, he was back in Milwaukee. It's a long, but possible, drive.

At 8:10 p.m. on Sunday, the Chesapeake & Ohio R.R. car ferry across Lake Michigan edged away from its dock in Milwaukee and pushed off into the darkness toward Ludington, Mich., 97 miles away.

Presumably, Bremer was aboard — or someone using his ticket.

EARL NUNNERY, TRAIN-MASTER for the ferry, told investigators that he recalled Bremer's purchase — under his own name — of a ticket for the April 9 crossing. It cost \$18.

Records show that Bremer's 1967 Rambler was aboard the ferry. And, said Nunnelly, he clearly recalled that when Bremer purchased his passage, he was accompanied by a swarthy, husky man with whom he was "jubilant about politics."

The ferry arrived at Ludington about 10 minutes after 2 o'clock in the morning on Monday, April 10.

From Monday until Friday, Bremer was out of sight. Then on Saturday morning, April 15, he suddenly reappeared — in Ottawa, Ontario.

Reportedly, he had registered at Ottawa's Lord Elgin Hotel.

He is plainly visible in a photograph taken Saturday morning of a crowd that had gathered around Parliament Hill to greet President Nixon, who was in the Canadian capital on a 40-hour state visit.

That was April 15.

THE SAME EVENING, NORTH OF Binghamton, N.Y.,

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Trooper Mitchell stopped Bremer for driving 10 miles an hour over the speed limit.

Mitchell told his superiors later that Bremer had been "polite and courteous." He told the trooper that he was "just passing through."

"I'm not a college student," Bremer said.

He took the summons, and his car was not searched. It was 29 days, 18 hours and 25 minutes away from the shooting of Wallace in Laurel, Md.

Once again, Bremer dropped out of sight.

Federal agents in Indiana have been conducting an extensive investigation throughout that state — in Indianapolis, Terre Haute, South Bend, Gary, Fort Wayne, Bloomington and Columbus — anywhere that Wallace visited in his campaign for the May 2 primary.

The results of the investigation are not known, although an FBI spokesman reported there were a number of "possible" but unconfirmed sightings of Bremer in Indianapolis preceding the primary.

On Friday, April 28, nearly two weeks after Trooper Mitchell stopped him in New York, Bremer recrossed Lake Michigan on the car ferry from Ludington, Mich., to Milwaukee.

One week later, on Friday, May 5, Bremer checked two books out of the Milwaukee Public Library. Both concerned Sirhan Sirhan, the young Arab nationalist who assassinated Sen. Robert Kennedy in 1968.

In Maryland, George Wallace was on the campaign trail.

SOME WALLACE SUPPORTERS RECALL seeing Bremer at a rally in Cumberland, Md., on Saturday, May 6. These sightings are not impossible, but not certain.

Mrs. Janet Petrone, a Wallace campaign worker in Maryland, reportedly has told authorities that Bremer appeared at the campaign headquarters in Silver Spring, Md., early the next week, and that she chatted briefly with him at that time.

But in the middle of the week, on Tuesday, May 9, Bremer once again was on the Chesapeake & Ohio R.R. car ferry from Milwaukee, headed for Ludington, Mich.

The ferry left at dawn, 5:37 a.m.

It was only 6 days, 7 hours and 28 minutes to Laurel. On Thursday, May 11, Arthur Bremer reportedly was observed at a Wallace campaign rally in Frederick, Md. This sighting is unconfirmed.

But the next day, Friday, May 12, Bremer definitely was in Kalamazoo, Mich. So was Wallace.

The Reid Hotel stands at 345 N. Burdick, at Kalamazoo,



A man resembling Bremer (arrow) in a crowd outside Canadian Parliament in Ottawa, where President Nixon was speaking.

seven stories high. You can't miss it. No bar, no bellhops.

At 1 p.m., Arthur Bremer checked in. It was raining.

He paid \$8.32 in advance for Room 702, the last single with a bath. He carried two pieces of luggage — a suit bag with two handles and a smaller bag similar to a shaving kit.

He checked out at 9 a.m. Saturday morning. Saturday afternoon, Kalamazoo police received an anonymous telephone complaint that a suspicious-looking man was sitting in his car near the National Guard Armory.

It was Bremer. He told Patrolman Edward Gooding that he was waiting for the Wallace rally to begin in the armory. Gooding had no reason to doubt him: Bremer was wearing a Wallace campaign button.

THAT EVENING, BREMER SAT IN the 11th row on the aisle, grinning. He wore a red, white and blue shirt. He was listening to Wallace give 'em hell.

The next day, Sunday, May 14, Bremer hit the road again.

for the last time. He headed east. The Rambler was beginning to show the strain.

Monday morning, the 15th of May, Wallace was back on the campaign trail. The place was Wheaton, Md.

Before Wallace spoke to the milling crowd, television cameras swept the audience, picking out faces.

One of them was Arthur Bremer's.

SHORTLY AFTER NOON, WALLACE HAD LEFT Wheaton, grabbed a quick lunch, and headed for another rally in nearby Laurel.

Once again, the television cameras swept the crowd.

Once again, Bremer was there. Wallace delivered his speech with gusto. Despite the burning sun, the crowd loved it. They stomped and shouted and clapped.

They were George Wallace's kind of folks.

He stepped out from behind the podium, and down to the asphalt. He snucked his coat and rolled up his sleeves.

And over to his left, someone shouted out:

"Hey George! Come here! Ain't you gonna shake my hand?"