

Arthur Bremer: The Enigma of a Loner

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People now know who Arthur Herman Bremer is.

It wasn't always so, even on the streets of his own fading, middle class neighborhood in Milwaukee. To most people he passed unnoticed, with his peculiar shuffling gait with head down and feet pointed outward. For 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, Governor George C. Wallace of Alabama was felled at a campaign rally at a Laurel, Md., shopping center by a burst of shots fired at point-blank range from a snubnosed .38-caliber revolver.

Stunned policemen guarding the governor pounced on a short, close-cropped blond man who had wormed his way close to the handshaking candidate.

The man, who has been charged with the shooting, was Arthur Herman Bremer, a morose 21-year-old

unemployed and largely unnoticed busboy 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. However, he never seems to have mentioned it to the few people who can recall having had conversations with him. But then, he never did

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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 poetry.

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

COPIES

And he seems to have felt that he might someday have something worth selling. Both his apartment and his car, which the police found in the shopping center's parking lot, yielded copies of 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.

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 a suburb of Washington, D.C., and then on to an 8-by-10-foot cell in the Baltimore county jail at Towson?

The picture pieced painstakingly together in the week since Wallace and three other persons were wounded by five revolver shots is often murky. FBI agents, who are also retrac-

More Wallace news
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ing that puzzling path, have found many potential sources not to talk with newsmen.

What is more, Arthur Bremer is a loner whose steps have left faint imprints.

LIFE

Still, one thing is obvious. Near-sighted, 5-foot-6-inch, 145-pound Arthur Bremer did not have a happy life in the succession of apartments in old wooden frame

houses in which his family lived.

He was the fourth child in a family, which was apparently far from being close-knit.

His brother, William, is under arrest in Florida on a federal charge of fraud and a sister, Gail, whom other sources said was Mrs. Bremer's daughter before she married William Bremer, is in California to the best knowledge of Roger, another brother.

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," Roger said of Arthur. "He never liked her."

Roger concedes that he didn't get along very well with Arthur himself. "We'd fight a lot," he said. "I was a lot smaller, but I'd win."

However, he said he

thought his brother 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. "But they'd fight, too," he added.

GRADES

In school, Arthur Bremer's grades were average or below.

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

"He was a nondescript little guy," said assistant dean A. Joseph Gradian, 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 didn't 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."

STUDENT

Kay Johannes, 19, a stu-

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

The only friend of Bre-

Bremer's Mystery Companion

MAY 22 1972
Milwaukee SFCronicle

A Milwaukee ferry manager says Arthur H. Bremer appeared with a swarthy, well-dressed companion to arrange the first of three mysterious trips Bremer made across Lake Michigan in the weeks preceding the wounding of Governor George C. Wallace.

Bremer, 21, is charged with shooting Wallace on May 15.

Mounting evidence indicates he followed the Alabama governor for more than two months.

Records of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad in Milwaukee show that Bremer took the C&O ferry from Milwaukee to Ludington, Mich., in April 9 and May 9. Records in Ludington show he made the 97-mile trip in the opposite direction on April 28.

The C&O ferry-trainmaster, Earl S. Nunnery, said he recalled that Bremer and a man who appeared to be of Greek descent made arrangements for the ferry trips.

A third person was traveling with the men but did not enter the ferry office, Nunnery said.

This was the first report that Bremer had companions in the weeks preceding the shooting. Acquaintances have described him as a solitary, virtually friendless figure.

FBI agents questioned Nunnery and examined ferry records following the ferry manager's interview but continued to decline comment on its investigations.

Associated Press

mer's that neighbors could recall was Thomas Neuman, who shot and killed himself 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 September 14 he paid \$795 in cash for the blue Rambler.

Then on October 15, he left his parents' home and moved into the \$138.50-a-month apartment in a community that is a mixture of the elderly, some students from Marquette university, nurses and floaters in the hippie - drug scene.

Sometime in the same period he also bought a .38-caliber snubnosed, five-shot revolver, manufactured by the Charter Arms Corp., of Bridgeport, Conn., for about \$80.

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

In November, he filed a complaint with the Milwaukee Community Relations Commission contending that he had been discriminated against by the Milwaukee Athletic Club because 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 was no discrimination. He said Bremer's superiors at the club had told him that some guests had complained of his idiosyncracies, including whistling or marching in time to music being played in the dining room.

In a November 8 report, Blue wrote that "Mr. Bremer (sic) is a young man who is rather withdrawn — appears to bottle up anger but will sometimes let it out."

"I assess him as bordering on paranoia."

POLICE

On November 18, Bremer's troubles multiplied. He was sitting in his car in a

no parking zone in 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 yes and the policeman found the .38 in his inside pocket. He was arrested on a "concealed weapons charge.

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

The pistol was confiscated by the police.

In October, Bremer met Joan Pemrich, recently turned 16.

She was a hall monitor at a recreation center at the school where Arthur Bremer was a janitor.

They had a date in downtown Milwaukee, walking around, looking at Christ-

mas decorations, and exchanging gifts.

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.

MONEY

Early in January, she decided she didn't want to see him anymore.

"He was driving me up a wall," she said. "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."

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

The bad times were on Arthur Herman Bremer again.

On January 13, he bought from Casanova Guns, Inc., another .38 caliber revolver, a duplicate of the one the police had confiscated in November.

Bremer quit school on January 31.

PISTOL

The next day he pur-



ARTHUR BREMER
At Wallace rally May 13 in Kalamazoo

chased a 9-millimeter Browning automatic pistol from the Flintrop Arms Co. for \$114.50. Police found it in a door panel of his Rambler when they dismantled the car. The .38-caliber revolver he bought January 13 was reportedly found on the ground after Wallace was shot.

On February 15, Bremer left his job at the Athletic Club where he had worked full or part time for three years without saying anything to anyone and never returned.

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

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

There were also references to 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."