

Bremer Got a Gun After Tiff With Girl

By Jim Mann
Washington Post Staff Writer

On Jan. 13, about 5:30 p.m., the telephone rang in the home of Alfred Pemrich, a serviceman with a heating firm in downtown Milwaukee. The caller was Arthur Herman Bremer, and he wanted to talk with Pemrich's 15-year-old daughter, Joan.

"If that's Artie, I'm not home," Joan told her family. The message was promptly relayed to Bremer.

Within a short time, Bremer called several more times. Finally, Joan came to the phone and said emphatically, "I don't want to see you, Artie."

"But why don't you want to see me?" Bremer responded. "I just want to talk with you." Joan remained firm and the call ended.

Bremer called back one more time. Now, Mrs. Pemrich picked up the phone and talked to Bremer. "Artie, Joanie doesn't want to see you. She doesn't want to talk to you any more. If you persist, I'm going to have to do something about this."

At that point, Arthur Herman Bremer gave up and the phone calls stopped.

It apparently was trivial—the stuff of which teen-age

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magazine romances are ended. Yet that phone conversation perhaps was an important antecedent to an event of profound implications: An assassination attempt on a major American political figure.

A few hours later, according to the available evidence, Arthur Herman Bremer went to Casanova's Gun Shop near his parents' home

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in Milwaukee and bought a .38-caliber revolver.

Within a month, Bremer quit both of the two jobs that had occupied his time from early morning to early evening. He began to appear at political rallies, first in Milwaukee and then in a number of other cities.

On May 15 in Laurel, Md., Bremer was arrested and charged with using that .38 caliber revolver to shoot Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace, who now lies in a Silver Spring Hospital, paralyzed from the waist down with a bullet lodged in his spine. The chances for the Democratic presidential candidate ever to walk again are not good.

Three other persons were wounded in the shooting. Arthur Herman Bremer is in jail, under a total \$400,000 bond on state and federal charges stemming from the shootings.

Here is a reconstruction of the events of Arthur Bremer's life in the months preceding his May 15 arrest, drawn from interviews with his family and acquaintances.

BREMER FIRST MET
Joan Pemrich last fall while both were working at the Story Elementary School.

Bremer had been working 3 hours each weekday as a janitor at Story since the fall of 1970, his wages gradually climbing from \$2 an hour to \$2.70. In the summer, he worked full time at the school.

It was not enough work and not enough money, and on Oct. 1, he added another job. Every Sunday since 1969, he had been working as a busboy at the Milwaukee Athletic Club. Now, he asked for and received permission to work there full time at a salary of \$1.75 per hour.

The jobs were menial and the wages low, but for Bremer such things were not new. His father, Milwaukee-born and of German descent, was a truck driver, and his family as a whole was neither wealthy nor worldly.

The high school that Bremer attended, South Division, had for years served the white working-class of Milwaukee's south side; today, it is more than 80 per cent white with a Spanish population of 15 per cent. Less than a fifth of its grad-

uates go on to college, and some of these, like Arthur Herman Bremer (who graduated 76th in a class of 171), start at Milwaukee Area Technical School and drop out before they finish.

With the income from two jobs improving his financial situation, Bremer was able to move out of his family's home. On Oct. 15, he rented for \$138 a month a furnished two-room apartment near Marquette University. Bremer took a number of mementos with him, including even old grade-school report cards.

He moved out without telling his parents his plans. It was several weeks before his mother regained contact with him through his job; even then, Bremer refused to give her his new address.

Bremer's father never saw him again until after his recent arrest.

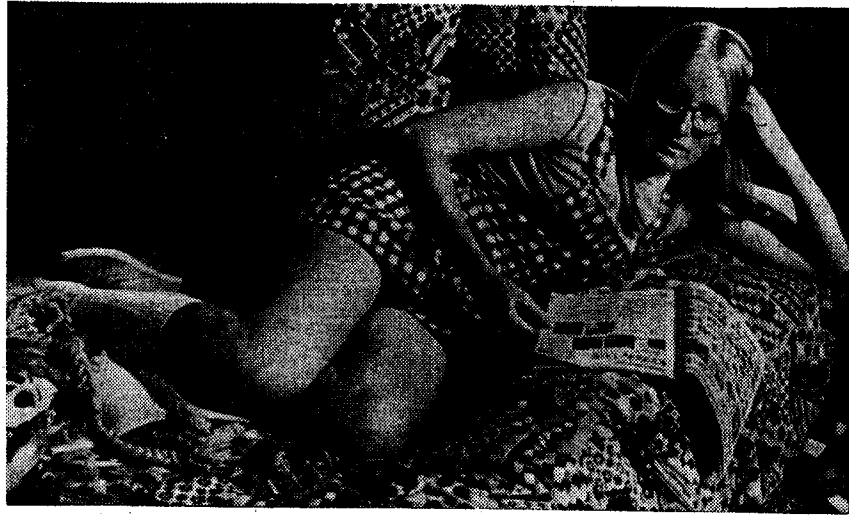
Bremer, the fourth of the Bremers' five children, was now 21 and taking his own apartment was not unexpected. His major possession by then was a blue 1967 Rambler auto, for which he had paid \$795 in mid-September, 1971.

The routine became this: each day Bremer would arise in his new apartment; drive his car to the Milwaukee Athletic Club in time to start serving breakfast there at 6:45 a.m.; work there until 2:30 p.m.; and then drive to the Story Elementary School for three hours of janitorial work, usually finishing between 6:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. It was not an easy life.

JOAN PEMRICH was also working at Story last fall—as a \$1.60-an-hour hall monitor assigned to keep order in the corridors after school hours when Story was used as a recreation center. Margaret Pemrich, Joan's mother, was president of the Story PTA and Joan's younger brother, Tommy, 14, was a \$1.60-an-hour movie projectionist at the school.

Joan, a thin girl with blonde hair, was the third-oldest of the Pemriches' eight children and their oldest daughter. She was six years younger than Arthur Bremer, but the two of them apparently had something in common: neither had ever been out on a date before.

One afternoon early in No-



Associated Press

Joan Pemrich told Bremer just after Christmas she didn't want to see him any more

vember, Bremer approached Joan Pemrich and started a conversation. It began awkwardly: Joan Pemrich recalls Bremer asking her, "Are you guarding the door good?" Bremer was much older than most of the boys Joan knew; he owned a car; and, she says now, she thought he might be more "mature" than boys her age.

The two began to talk at school, and about two weeks later, Bremer asked Joan for a date. Mrs. Pemrich allowed her daughter to accept the date for Nov. 20 on the condition that she be home by 9 p.m.

Mrs. Pemrich remembers distinctly that Bremer first asked her daughter out on the Thursday before Thanksgiving, Nov. 18. The day is of some interest, because late that night Arthur Bremer was arrested for the

first time in his life. Around 9:45 p.m. that night, a policeman in Fox Point, a luxurious suburb miles from Bremer's home or the Story Elementary School, found Bremer inside his car in a no-parking zone with a .38-caliber revolver and ammunition in the front seat.

Bremer was booked for carrying a concealed weapon and kept overnight. When he was brought before Judge Christ J. Seraphim the next day, the policeman said he seemed incoherent at the time of the arrest and the judge ordered a mental examination. Bremer was examined briefly by a doctor, found competent to stand trial, and released.

He called Story Elementary School that day to say he would not be able to work that afternoon.

(A few weeks later, Bre-

mer, who told Burns he knew Judge Seraphim from the Milwaukee Athletic Club, had the case transferred to another judge. The charge was reduced to disorderly conduct, a misdemeanor, and Bremer paid a \$38 fine. The revolver itself was confiscated by the police.)

That Saturday, Bremer took Joan Pemrich into downtown Milwaukee to see a movie but arrived in the middle, and went instead to an art museum and then for a walk along Lake Michigan. Obeying her mother's orders, Joan was home at five minutes to nine.

FOR THE NEXT MONTH, Arthur Bremer and Joan Pemrich saw one another often at the Story school. In addition, sometimes Arthur would call her during the day from the Milwaukee

Athletic Club, and sometimes he would call her at night from a pay telephone in the laundry room near his apartment. Occasionally, Mrs. Pemrich recalls, Arthur would ask Joan for a date on weekdays, and she would refuse to let her daughter go.

When Christmas vacation began, the two were apparently seeing one another almost daily, and it seems likely that Bremer believed his romance was going well. On Dec. 23, when a group of 20 to 25 youths from Joan Pemrich's teen center went to a Blood, Sweat and Tears rock concert at the Milwaukee Arena, Joan invited Bremer.

But there were signs of trouble, too. Joan Pemrich says she was beginning to notice what she now says was Bremer's strange behavior. At the rock concert, she says, he suddenly ran up to a girl wearing hot pants, kissed her hand and exclaimed, "Baby, I like your hot pants!"

Also during Christmas vacation, Joan's brother Gordon, 20, came home on leave from the Navy. According to Mrs. Pemrich, after Gordon first met Bremer, he asked his sister, "Where'd you pick up a goof like that?"

On Dec. 28, the pair went out on a date and wound up at Bremer's apartment. Joan recalls that "I asked him if I could see the apartment," and says vaguely that after they arrived there, "We had some fun." She says Bremer proceeded to say things she didn't like that were in the nature of making advances. She demanded that Bremer take her home, she says.

A few days later, Joan fell ill and, for several days

running, Bremer called and asked to be allowed to see her, but Mrs. Pemrich refused.

Finally, on Saturday, Jan. 8, while Joan was still home sick, Bremer surprised the family by appearing at the door with two yellow roses, a toy kaleidoscope and some candy. He stayed for several hours.

Bremer kept calling her, and the conversations became more heated. On Jan. 12, Joan remembers, Bremer threatened to break up with her. Joan says she was delighted and hung up, but that he called back to say he was sorry.

On Jan. 13, came the series of phone calls in which Joan last spoke to Bremer. Bremer purchased his .38-caliber revolver that day, apparently shortly after his final rejection by Joan Pemrich.

Two days later, Bremer appeared at Story with his head shaved, telling his supervisor, Burns, "My girl doesn't like long hair, so I'll see how she likes no hair at all." Burns says Bremer had nicked himself two or three times in shaving his head.

FOR THE REST of January Bremer continued to work at his two jobs. Occasionally, he would ask Joan Pemrich to come see him, but Joan avoided him. When she learned this, Mrs. Pemrich approached Bremer at the school and told him, "You leave Joan alone, so that you can keep your job and she can keep hers."

On Jan. 31, a Monday, Bremer, who almost never missed work at Story, failed to appear. He did not call Burns, and he did not send any message; he never showed up again there.

On Feb. 1, records show, Bremer purchased a 9-mm., 14-shot Browning automatic pistol for about \$115 at Flintrop's gun shop in Milwaukee. The weapon was discovered by the Prince George's County police this month when they dismantled Bremer's car after Wallace was shot.

After Feb. 16, Bremer failed to appear for work at the Milwaukee Athletic Club, too, again failing to call with an explanation for his absence.

The next week, Bremer's mother called the club looking for him. Since his moving from home, she occa-

sionally delivered clothing, mail and food to him at the club, keeping some contact with her son.

Mrs. Bremer called the school and found that her son had stopped work there two weeks earlier. "I kept bugging them (the two employers)," Mrs. Bremer says, finally, she was given Bremer's home address, which her son had refused to give her. She went there, but her son opened the door a crack, said he didn't want to see her, and refused to let her in. Mrs. Bremer says she thought he looked pale and sick. She went back several more times but he refused to let her in.

THE DISAPPEARANCE from the two jobs was Bremer's last contact with the world in which he had been living. His whereabouts for the month of March are almost completely unknown, except perhaps to law-enforcement authorities. Wallace campaigners believe he attended one or two organizational meetings for their candidate in Milwaukee.

The only other known sign of his existence in March is a newspaper article, clipped from a mid-March edition of a Milwaukee paper and found in Bremer's apartment this month. Its headline: "Candidates' Security Frustrates News-

ACLU Charges Media Has Harmed Bremer

The American Civil Liberties Union has accused the news media of "irresponsible conduct" in covering the case of Arthur Herman Bremer, who is charged with shooting Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace.

A statement released by the ACLU's national headquarters and Maryland and Wisconsin branches charged the Bremer coverage is reminiscent "of the old 'yellow journalism'—digging up bits of information on his life, interviewing relatives, friends and acquaintances only too ready to say derogatory things about him."

The ACLU particularly criticized the entry by newsmen into Bremer's Milwaukee apartment, with permission of the building manager, which it said was "the most serious violation of his privacy."

Bremer's Activities During April, May

The following is a chronology of Arthur Herman Bremer's known activities during the months of April and May:

March: Answered constituents' questionnaire from Rep. Henry S. Reuss (D-Wis.) and wrote at bottom in part: "... Cut the god-damned military spending . . . If I rob a bank of \$25,000, I would go to prison for 20 years. But if the generals do it, they don't . . ."

April 3: Applied for copy of birth certificate from Mil-

waukee health department.

April 4: Attended victory rally for Alabama Gov. George Wallace in Milwaukee.

April 7-9: Stayed at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City. Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey was originally scheduled to stay at the Waldorf on April 7, but his plans were changed.

April 9: Took evening ferry from Milwaukee to Ludington, Mich.

April 13-15: Stayed at the Lord Elgin Hotel in Ottawa.

President Nixon was in Ottawa during those three days, and Bremer was photographed in a crowd that the President passed.

April 15: Received a speeding ticket near Barker, N. Y., while driving south on Rte. 81 about 20 miles from the Pennsylvania state line.

April 15-18: Registered at the Sheraton Inn at New Carrollton in Prince George's County, about 20 minutes from the Laurel Shopping Center where Wallace was shot a month later.

April 28: Took evening

ferry from Ludington, Mich., to Milwaukee.

May 5: Took out copies of "RFK Must Die" and "Sirhan Sirhan" from the Milwaukee public library.

May 9: Again took the ferry from Milwaukee to Ludington, Mich.

May 12: Stayed at Reid Hotel in Kalamazoo, Mich.

May 13: Spent the day at a Wallace rally in Kalamazoo.

May 15: Arrested following the shooting of Gov. Wallace in Laurel.

—JIM MANN