

*Shot down by a would-be assassin,
Governor George C. Wallace refuses to
quit. And America learns an unforgettable
lesson in love, devotion, and quiet courage.*

The Man They Just Can't Stop

by Medford Evans

■ SAY ONE thing for the age of assassination. It is teaching intellectuals not to make cheap jokes about candidates for public office. Politics has become a serious business. It takes guts these days to run for President.

If George Wallace is elected — as he well may be — he will be the first President ever to have campaigned with four fresh bullet wounds, and one bullet still in him. Frankly, he will owe his election in part to those wounds. And why not? Nervous commentators have eagerly suggested that Wallace's smashing victories in Maryland and Michigan were due to a "sympathy vote."

Sympathy, hell! People have been looking for a man that will stand up

for America. They figure one who can take four bullets in his belly and keep coming is that kind of man.

George Wallace's phenomenal political and visceral vitality is so far, and conceivably will remain, the main news of the 1972 Presidential campaign. Now the bad news: the next most significant development in this year of decision has been the disturbing discovery that votes can actually be rounded up for George McGovern, whose cunning vapidness of style buffers the most suicidal suggestions ever made to any national electorate.

Who does not share the bewilderment of James Jackson Kilpatrick as he filed his column of May fourteenth

from Detroit? Taking random soundings of opinion in Michigan he had found any number of voters who said they had not made up their minds about the May sixteenth primary. They were going to vote for either Wallace or McGovern, but they didn't know yet which one. How, asked Kilpatrick incredulously, can anyone waver between Wallace, the foremost antagonist, and McGovern, a consecrated devotee, of the cult of busing? How can you leave it to the flip of a coin whether you go for the Alabama advocate of hard work and self-reliance; or the pious pusher of guaranteed income, easy abortion, and help for hippies?

Of course now we know that most in Michigan went for Wallace, but a gaggle of voters in the state still gave McGovern a good deal more than a goose egg. And the paradox remains that many hesitated between the Peking-appeasing busboy and the Dixie diehard American (you said it). The only even faintly plausible explanation is that Michigan Middle America got tired of being put in the middle, and cut out to get off dead center. But it took a weirdo from Wisconsin with a snub-nosed .38 and a quasi prison hairdo to jolt them into heading the right way from zero.

The important thing is that when the shooting started the people took their stand with Wallace. Senator McGovern, first to be heard in the chorus of dismay over the attempted assassination, said, "I'm totally shocked by this savage act . . . I trem-

ble for the future of our nation." Yes, you would believe he was shocked; you'd believe, too, that he trembled — and not only for the future of the nation. No, I don't mean *that*. McGovern is no coward. He trembled to think of the political repercussions of those revolver shots in Maryland. Laurel is a racetrack town. The odds against George McGovern lengthened abruptly at 4 p.m. E.D.T. Monday, May 15, 1972.

That switch was almost independent of whether or not George Wallace survived. Had Wallace succumbed, we could have had a reaction against pinks, punks, and pointyheads that would have savaged McGovern at the polls. Now that Wallace is alive and will get well, he will eclipse McGovern and Humphrey as he has already eclipsed Muskie and Lindsay. I mean eclipse in popularity with the voters.

You could almost feel sorry for Wallace's opponents. (Don't, it's better to gloat.) Here you have the *Washington Post* drooling venomously that Wallace will be paralyzed. At Holy Cross Hospital in Silver Spring, Maryland (Washington's largest suburb), Dr. Joseph Schanno, pressed by reporters to judge the impact of Bremer's bullets on Wallace's ability to campaign, replied with quiet devastation, "If worse comes to worst you could say he'd have the same disability as Franklin D. Roosevelt." (Doctor, how could you? They asked for it.)

Granted that we have a few million voters who don't really know who Franklin D. Roosevelt was (18-year-

olds were born nine years after the great 4-termer died), they all know who Ironsides is. If George Wallace campaigns from a wheel chair, there's not much point in anybody else's running. Look, this guy's real! I remember when Ironsides was Perry Mason.

You know, if they had written this Laurel script in Hollywood, it would have been thrown out as incredible. (Maybe they did write it in Hollywood, but if so the actors flubbed their performance; the way the thing turned out no director would have released the take.) A guy pushes through the crowd up to Wallace — you saw it on television, not live like Jack Ruby and Lee Harvey Oswald, but videotape on the news — puts a .38 into the man's belly and fires five times at I *mean* point-blank range! How is he going to live?

Well, for one thing Secret Service agent Nicholas Zorvas, Alabama state trooper Captain E.C. Dothard, and Wallace campaign worker Miss Dora Thompson absorbed or had diverted to them three of the bullets. Wallace may have been saved by the very crowd in which the assassin merged for protective coloring. Bremer, said one eyewitness, "was roughed up pretty bad." With less roughing up his arm would have been steady long enough to do what he evidently came for.

Even so, Wallace was hit four times. If his wounds were not so deep as a well nor so wide as a church door, you would think that, like Mercutio's, they were enough. That bullet the *Washing-*

ton Post is trying to have paralyze him was more likely to have killed him. Into and through the abdomen and lodged by the spinal column! I knew a Golden Gloves champion like Wallace could roll with a punch. But with a .38 slug not two feet out of the gun muzzle? Many hands in that friendly crowd reached instantly out to save George Wallace. But you've got to



Cornelia Wallace shielded her fallen husband.

believe that the hand that counted was the hand of Providence. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. For thou art with me." You know He was with George Wallace.

And she was, too.

The French philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville, whose perdurable perspicacity never ceases to amaze, wrote in 1835 concerning Americans, "If I were asked . . . to what the singular prosperity and growing strength of that people ought mainly to be attributed, I should reply: To the superiority of their women."

So you see, some things never change.

When the beautiful Cornelia Wallace was in Indianapolis with her husband in April, she went naturally to the Speedway, home of the Indy 500 auto racing classic, and drove a pace

car round the track a few laps, but never exceeded 90 m.p.h., because it made George nervous to watch this Diana-like wife of his do dangerous things. (It made *him* nervous to watch *her* do dangerous things? What about — ? That's different. Women are supposed to watch their husbands take chances.)

Teenage Cornelia had been a drum majorette, a professional water-skier, the 1956 runner-up for Miss Alabama — competitive in all things of grace, skill, and beauty — spiced with danger.

And from childhood a political campaigner. Her Uncle Jim Folsom was a 2-term Governor of Alabama. At nineteen, Cornelia became a Wallaceite, no doubt not dreaming then she'd ever marry such a distinguished older gentleman — a judge and all — yet who knows what girls and women dream? She wrote a song for his race for the governorship in 1958. He didn't make it then, but came back in 1962 and made it. (Story of his life.)

Cornelia has always made music — piano, saxophone, church organ, vocal groups — all ways, always. Composes, too, words and music. Was once a student with Gian-Carlo Menotti in New York. (You never believed all that stuff about George and his being a simple redneck, did you? Or maybe the thing is that rednecks are not simple after all.)

And somewhere she learned to drive racing cars. She knows not fear, and as the military say she will go toward the sound of the guns.

Was her whole life a training for the

Monday afternoon in May when in a shopping center in Laurel, Maryland, she came out of the bank building near the edge of the outdoor political crowd and heard the (unfortunately *not* incredible) deadly and detestable spitting of a pistol at her husband?

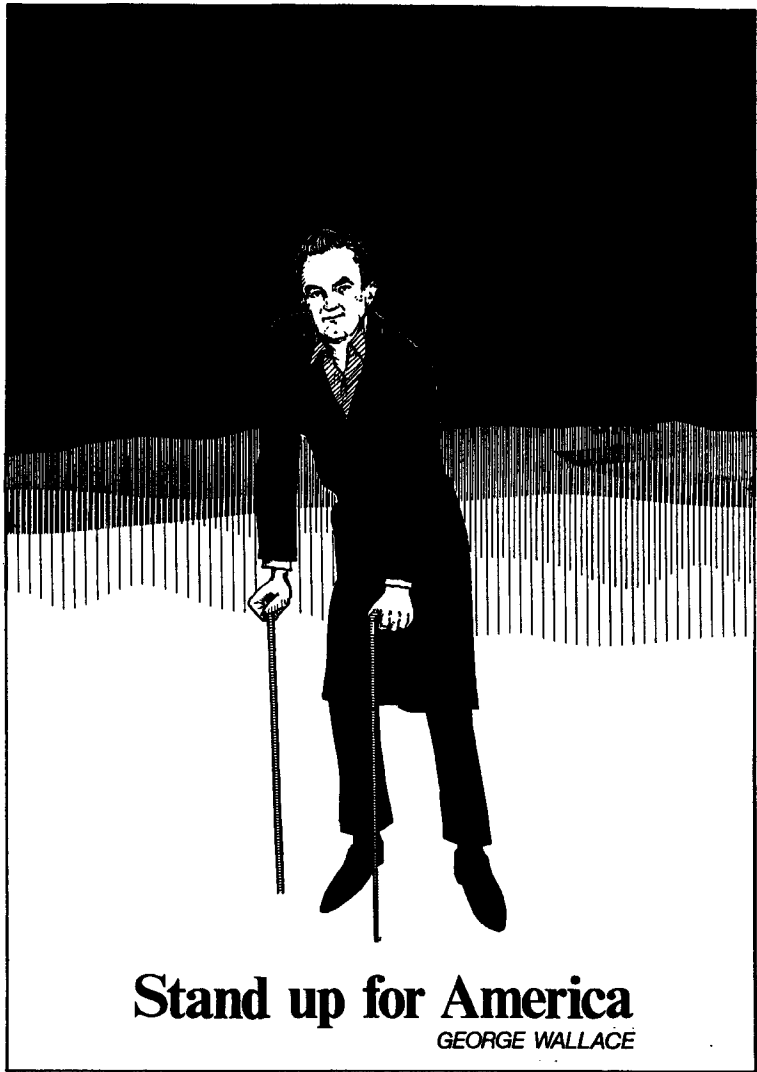
She flew to him, fallen in blood. Who said she never knew fear? But her fear was for him, and she moved swiftly to him, not away from him. With no least look to see if the gunman was yet restrained — bullets had perhaps stopped flying, perhaps not — she dropped to shield with her body the stricken man she loves.

To fall in battle is to be ever young. But Cornelia knew, as the heart knows, that her warrior was not dead, and would not die, that he would rise to fight again and win. Her knowledge of this was not distinct from her love. With love and knowledge she quickly knelt over him as he lay, her arms on either side supporting her slender weight against the slightest pressure on his wounded body, but close enough to shelter him, close enough that the blood stained her dress — close enough that the next bullet fired at the man would have hit the woman.

America saw this daring and beautiful loyalty.

No man can *deserve* such devotion from a woman (angels come only by God's mercy), but the man to whom this loyalty is given, more fully receives the trust he merits on his own from the rest of us.

There was a Roman lady named Cornelia, and her sons were political



Stand up for America
GEORGE WALLACE

leaders. She called them "Cornelia's jewels." America now would say, *Cornelia is a great jewel.**

But why did they try to kill him? (Who are "they"? Well, now, if we knew that we would really know something, wouldn't we? But whom would we tell?)

They did it for the same reason they tried and did kill the Kennedys and King — this is surely the only thing George Wallace has in common with those three, but thank God for the difference in outcome. The reason: they wouldn't any of them deal with the organization. The Kennedys and King did so for a long time; Wallace never did. (Maybe *that's* why he got out alive. Nonsense, *they* tried just as hard. Yes, but the Lord — oh well.) At the end the Kennedys and King apparently wanted to go it alone. Wallace was always independent.

At first, though, he didn't bother them much. When he proclaimed himself a segregationist on his first inauguration, when he stood in the schoolhouse door at Tuscaloosa in the summer of 1963, nobody took a shot at him. When he ran for President in 1968 on the American Independent Party ticket, nobody took a shot at him. He was heckled, but hecklers

*You Conservative students of ancient history who wish I would not compare George Wallace with the Gracchi or Franklin D. Roosevelt — the three of them have been compared with each other as demagogues of the plebeians — be assured that I compare them all only as men of destiny. If this be populism, make the most of it.

don't shoot. The governing attitude in those days was, *Let the man have his regional and factional fun.* Nobody thought he could ever be President of the United States. (You and I did, but they wouldn't listen to us then.) They had their own fun, enjoying their own wit at, they thought, Wallace's expense. For a time there in September and October 1968 they took him seriously enough to smear him seriously with the "hard hats."

Seriously, but not permanently. Wallace's defeat in November 1968, like the attempted assassination in May 1972, only revealed his extraordinary political vitality. Sixty-four was the end for Goldwater; sixty-eight was the beginning for Wallace. He was as popular after defeat as before.

George Wallace lacked only one thing to go to the top — an established national organization. They were pretty sure he would never have one. His enemies were confident, his friends afraid, that there wasn't time to get the American Independent Party really rolling. (Maybe it will get rolling any day. Flash floods come, but then you don't plan on them.) Despite heroic efforts, the new party, as of the beginning of election year 1972, could not be called an established national organization. And so on January 13, 1972, George Wallace, reared a Democrat, decided to go for the nomination of the party of his fathers.

That day Arthur Bremer bought a .38 snub-nosed revolver in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Not that anybody could be so quickly sure he would need it. He

might never get the word. If Muskie had run as predicted, if Reubin Askew had had any real clout in Florida, if Lindsay had found his charisma negotiable, maybe George Wallace would be safely sidelined in Montgomery today. But primary after primary revealed that the Democrats really have nobody to compare with Wallace except Humphrey and McGovern — two not very notable exceptions.

When it became predictable that Wallace was going to win in Michigan of all places — that immemorial haunt of Big Labor leaders and other “Liberals,” of Walter Reuther, Soapy Williams, and (even now) Philip Hart — then clearly something had to be done. Democrats who wanted the party to win were liable to decide that Wallace was the one, and the only one. More important Democrats, those who can rise above party to bipartisan conspiracy, certainly would not want the party to win if Wallace were the nominee. Was the fact that he could very likely beat Nixon in November the crucial reason why his nomination must be prevented at all costs? You answer that one.

What kind of man is the suspect? Assuming that the right man is in custody — and it is hard to assume otherwise, considering the number of eyewitnesses to the assault — he is perfectly cool, perfectly remorseless, and perfectly sure in his own mind that he will get no stiffer sentence than his compensation, whatever it may be, is worth. He is probably wrong about that, as his employers,

whoever they may be, would surely like to see him dead, especially since he didn't accomplish his mission.

But why should I add my own ignorant speculations about the suspect's psyche to the endless ones you have already seen in the daily press,



George Wallace took four bullets and kept coming.

and will undoubtedly see soon in magazines and books? I don't know whether Arthur Bremer, Sirhan Sirhan, James Earl Ray, and Lee Harvey Oswald do or do not have all the same type of personality. I do know that the published psychiatric analyses of all of them are stereotyped.

Typical is an Associated Press story of May seventeenth, datelined New York, beginning: “A quiet young man, a loner with few friends and alienated from his family, Arthur H. Bremer has many things in common with Lee Harvey Oswald and Sirhan B. Sirhan.” Cited is Dr. David Abrahamson, psychiatrist and (naturally) author: “These people have a very low level of frustration. They have to act out their impulses whenever the possibility is there.” But if every quiet loner with a sense of frustration is an assassin, then nobody is safe. You might as well say, All these young men have two arms and two legs. Most studious young men are considered loners by their

more extroverted associates. What are you going to do, raid the public libraries every day or so? Associated Press reports, by the way, that "Abrahamsen has never seen Bremer or personally examined Oswald or Sirhan, though he has studied their cases." Sounds to me like the doc is a quiet loner.

The transparent reason why the media are loaded with these stupid psychiatric diagnoses of identified assassins is to take your mind off the unidentified assassins. If you will puzzle long enough over the inner life of the trigger man, you may forget to wonder who put him up to it. Who paid his way for the weeks on end that Bremer is reported to have stalked Wallace, reportedly staying at such rich hostleries as the Waldorf-Astoria? By the way, Arthur Bremer's father, William Bremer, was reported as saying of his son, "He could have done it, but he probably wasn't alone." There's an intelligent analysis by a man who knows his subject.

X Early wire service reports of the atrocity in Laurel said flatly that more than one suspect was involved, and that Maryland and Pennsylvania state police had an all-points bulletin for a 1971 light blue Cadillac, driven by a white male with light blond hair, about six-foot-two, wearing striped pants, a light blue shirt, and a yellow tie. He was seen near Savage, Maryland, across the Patuxent from Laurel, changing Georgia for Maryland plates on the car. This sounded like a hot lead, and made it a bad night for blue

Cadillacs between Baltimore and Washington, but journalistic silence on the subject has, since those first reports, been deafening. Maybe you'll know all about it, though, by the time you read this. Maybe not.

It will be many a day before we find out all that's behind the American political assassinations and attempted assassinations of the past nine years. One thing we found out immediately, however, from the attack on Governor Wallace — one enormously encouraging thing. That is, that the American people, demonstrably in Michigan and Maryland, palpably everywhere, are *not* psychologically sick. Nothing could be wider of the mark than pious clichés that "we" — meaning the American people — must repent of our wicked ways because a political leader has been shot. The people of Maryland did not shoot Governor Wallace. They helped save him, and apprehended the man who did shoot him. That man was from Wisconsin, but the people of Wisconsin are not guilty. The people of the United States are not guilty.

So far are the American people as a whole from being responsible for the crime, that they reacted at the polls and elsewhere by demonstrating their admiration for the courageous candidate and his courageous wife.

From its own point of view, the Conspiracy against America may have made its biggest blunder. George Wallace lives! And, whatever the doctors say, he will have his chance to Stand Up for America. ■ ■