

Bremer Guilty in Shooting Of Wallace, Gets 63 Years

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UPPER MARLBORO, Md., Aug. 4—Arthur H. Bremer was found guilty and sentenced to 63 years in prison today for the shooting of Gov. George C. Wallace of Alabama and three other persons at a political rally in Laurel, Md., May 15.

The jury of six men and six women took only 90 minutes to find that Bremer was sane when he fired the bullets that paralyzed Governor Wallace and forced him to end his campaign for the Democratic Presidential nomination.

The defense had raised the question of Bremer's sanity, and that was the main issue of this speedy five-day state trial.

Bremer, a 21-year-old bus-boy and odd-job worker from Milwaukee who had stalked President Nixon before making Mr. Wallace his prime target, heard without emotion the jury's verdict and—30 minutes later—the sentence imposed by Judge Ralph W. Powers.

His father, William Bremer, a truck driver who lost an eye at the age of 9, was standing against the wall in the rear of the courtroom. He had been coldly ignored by his son, but he flushed with anger over the verdict.

"The boy was sick," he said, and he added bitterly, "Probably if he was a black, or some Communist agitator, he'd be free."

When the jury was dismissed, Judge Powers asked Arthur Bremer if he had anything to say. Standing beside his attorney, Benjamin Lipsitz, Bremer said in a firm, clear voice:

"Well, Mr. Marshall [State's Attorney Arthur A. Marshall] tells me he'd like society to

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be protected from someone like me."

There was a long pause, and then Bremer continued:

"Looking back on my life, I would have liked it if society had protected me from myself. That's all I've got to say."

Judge Powers called a brief recess while he considered the sentence. When he returned, he gave Bremer another chance to speak. Bremer said, "I suppose I have a world of words to say."

There was another long pause during which Mr. Lipsitz muttered, "Don't be afraid, speak up."

"I think what I have to say would run longer than the transcript of this trial," Bremer then said. "So I won't say anything at this time."

Sentence Is Imposed

"Very well," said Judge Powers, and he gave Bremer the maximum sentence of 33 years on three counts in the shooting of Governor Wallace—15 years for assault with intent to murder; 15 years for use of a handgun in a crime of violence, and three years for illegally carrying a handgun.

He also gave him 10 years each for assault with intent to murder the three other victims: Nicholas Zarvos, a Secret Service man; Mrs. Dora Thompson, a Wallace campaign worker, and Capt. Eldred Cole Dothard of the Alabama State police, a Wallace bodyguard. That gave a total of 63 years.

In addition, the judge sentenced Bremer to 10 years each for the use of a handgun on Mr. Zarvos, Captain Dothard and Mrs. Thompson, but he said that these sentences would run concurrently with the 10-year sentence for assault with intent to murder those victims.

State's Attorney Marshall said at a news conference that Bremer could apply for parole after serving one-fourth of his sentence—15 years and nine months.

Mr. Marshall discounted the possibility that Bremer had conspirators in his stalking of Mr. Nixon during the President's three-day state visit to Ottawa in April.

In his diary, Bremer lamented that the President's motorcade had passed him six times, and that he had never got to fire the 38-caliber revolver in his pocket. Nowhere in the diary was there any hint of an accomplice.

"I'm convinced that no one acted with him," the State's Attorney said.

The reading of Bremer's



United Press International
Arthur H. Bremer at a rally in Wheaton, Md., the day Gov. George C. Wallace was shot.

diary by the defense counsel, Mr. Lipsitz, may have insured the guilty verdict. Some of the jurors, instead of finding Bremer's account of his assassination plans bizarre and irrational thought that the document was coherent and not a bit insane.

"The diary was one of the factors that swayed me toward the opinion that Bremer was sane," said the jury foreman, Vincent M. Telli, a civilian employe at the Washington Navy Yard. "If he can write something like that, he must be coherent."

Another juror, Jack Goldinher, a maintenance man at the Library of Congress, was similarly impressed.

"A lot of guilt ran through that diary," Mr. Goldinher said. "He couldn't get Nixon, so he picked Wallace. I don't think it made much difference to him as long as it was somebody famous. As for sanity — he might have been a little withdrawn, but he wasn't insane or crazy."

Mr. Telli, the jury foreman, said that he polled the jurors at lunch (the jury received the case at 12:42 P.M.) and found instant unanimity.

"I polled them first on criminality, and they were unanimous he was sane. I polled them twice on sanity to make sure. No one hesitated."

The defense counsel, Mr. Lipsitz, besides arguing that Bremer was insane at the time of the shooting had also tried

to raise doubts in the jurors' minds as to whether his client had actually shot Governor Wallace.

He stressed that the ballistic tests had been unable to prove that the bullets had come from Bremer's gun. Bremer's fingerprints were not on the gun, and a paraffin test of Bremer's hands disclosed no gunpowder residue.

But the jury had been shown a television film of the shooting, and there was Bremer pointing a gun and Governor Wallace falling to the pavement of the Laurel shopping center. The jurors had the film in the jury room, but they did not ask for a rerun.

And, finally, there was crushing evidence of guilt in Bremer's own written narrative. His vivid account of his failure to kill President Nixon in Ottawa and of his decision to stalk Governor Wallace apparently removed any lingering doubts about his guilt in the minds of the jurors.

'So Many Big Words'

Both sides had called psychiatrists to testify to the sanity or insanity of Bremer, but the testimony seemed to carry little weight with the jurors.

"They used so many big words," Mr. Telli said. "They couldn't agree. They were so evasive. You had to use horse sense."

Mr. Telli's "horse sense" was that Bremer "didn't seem too bad to me, he was reserved and restrained."

Bremer was taken to Maryland State Penitentiary in Baltimore wearing a bullet proof vest. Mr. Lipsitz had 30 days to appeal.

The attorney said that he could make no comment because of Bremer's pending trial in the United States District Court in Baltimore on charges of shooting Mr. Wallace and the Secret Service bodyguard. The Federal trial has been postponed indefinitely.

In his closing statement to the jurors, Mr. Lipsitz tried to assure them that if they found Bremer not guilty by reason of insanity, there was no danger that he would run free.

"He's not going anywhere," Mr. Lipsitz said. "The law provides for his commitment to a state institution to determine if he's a danger to himself and others."

"If he ever gets out in my lifetime, I don't expect to see it. He's a really new curious kind of bug to the psychiatrists. They'll have a party with him for 100 years."