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Why Cornelia Bugged Phone Of Wallace

Montgomery, Ala.

Governor George Wallace's wife, Cornelia, is quoted in a magazine article as saying she bugged her husband's telephone because their marriage was threatened by "destructive" rumors and she wanted to stop them.

"I wanted to find out who my accusers were," Mrs. Wallace was quoted as saying in an interview published in the February issue of Ladies Home Journal.

And it turned out, the governor's wife continued, that "some of them were women who would like to be in my place ... who hate me and would like to see me gone."

Mrs. Wallace was not available for comment on the magazine interview.

The governor said at a news conference four months ago his telephone conversations at the governor's mansion had been tape-recorded. He declined to elaborate, calling it a "domestic matter."

In the magazine interview, Mrs. Wallace was quoted as saying, "Somebody tells him (George) everything I do. I'm never totally sure who it is."

She accused one of the governor's brothers, Gerald, of spreading stories about her. She said in the article she had been asking her husband since 1973 about such rumors but "George kept saying it wasn't true, that Gerald hadn't been saying those things."

Mrs. Wallace said in Ladies Home Journal that Gerald "spread rumors that I have slept with every state trooper around." And there have been stories seeking to link her with other men. But, she said, "they've never come up with anybody because there isn't anybody."



CORNELIA WALLACE
She felt a threat

Gerald Wallace denied emphatically that he ever made any derogatory remarks about his sister-in-law.

He told the Associated Press the statements attributed to him were "the most false thing ever written about me. I have never made a statement to anyone about Cornelia that was bad. If I couldn't say something nice about her, I would keep my mouth shut."

Because of rumors circulated about her, Mrs. Wallace said, "For all practical purposes my marriage was gone. Any rewards or closeness were just totally destroyed because of all that had been said."

Despite the domestic difficulties, Mrs. Wallace said she still "cherishes" the concept of a home and marriage. And she admitted some degree of uncertainty about what she could do on her own.

"I had a great deal more confidence when I went into this marriage than I do now," she said.

Associated Press