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Bremer Trial Bjt 3rd NL 460

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UPPER MARLBORO, Md. AP -Two witnesses to the attempted assassination of George C. Wallace identified Arthur Herman Bremer on Monday as the man who fired the shots that partially paralyzed the Alabama governor and wounded three other persons. Three other witnesses to the shooting failed to identify Bremer.

The identifications came in the opening day of Bremer's trial on state charges. He has pleaded innocent by reason of insanity.

Defense attorney Benjamin Lipsitz said he would present expert testimony to paint "a picture of a boy who was weird from the day he came on this earth."

After three of the first prosecution witnesses could not identify Bremer, Mabel K. Speigle walked among the trial spectators where the defendant had been placed for the identification process, reached out and touched him.

Bremer, who faces 17 state charges in connection with the May 15 shooting at a campaign rally in Laurel, Md., was flanked by two plainclothes sheriff's deputies. He looked only at Mrs. Speigle's hand.

After she returned to the stand, Mrs. Speigle said Bremer looked different from the way he appeared the day of the attempted assassination because he had longer hair now and had grown a beard.

The three earlier witnesses included Mrs. Speigle's husband.

Mrs. Speigle and four other witnesses told of shots being fired as Wallace moved among the crowd at a shopping center after a speech on the eve of Maryland's presidential primary, which Wallace won.

After Mrs. Speigle, Cpl. Michael Landrum of the Prince Georges County police force also identified Bremer as the gunman.

The next to last of 13 prosecution witnesses Monday was Richard E. Duby, a salesman at the Casanova gun shop in Milwaukee, who identified Bremer's signature on a gun sales receipt dated Jan. 15.

Duby also identified a federal firearms purchase form containing Bremer's driver's license number.

The salesman said that when he sells a handgun he checks the purchaser's driver's license for his description and signature.

He said he did not specifically remember Bremer purchasing a gun, and the prosecution did not tie the .38-caliber revolver retrieved at the shooting scene by a secret service agent to the gun sold in Milwaukee.

The trial was adjourned at about 6 p.m. until Tuesday.

In his opening statement, Lipsitz said he didn't know whether Bremer shot Wallace and added: "I'm not sure even Arthur Herman Bremer knows."

He told the six men and women empaneled earlier in the day in Prince Georges County Circuit Court: "We're going to present evidence about the short, unhappy life of this young man."

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Lipsitz indicated he would contest prosecution eyewitnesses testimony to the wounding of Wallace and three others May 15, but he devoted most of his 20-minute statement to projecting psychiatric testimony designed to support Bremer's plea of innocent by reason of insanity.

Bremer, a 21-year-old former busboy and school janitor from Milwaukee, is accused of assaulting the four victims with a .38-caliber revolver carried in alleged violation of Maryland gun laws.

Lipsitz, who also is defending Bremer against federal charges arising out of the shooting, said he would call psychiatrists and a clinical psychologist who had examined Bremer for the defense.

"All three people will tell you there is a good chance Mr. Bremer was sick from the day he was born, perhaps before he was born," the lawyer told the jury as his client sat at the defense table, frequently turning and smirking at spectators.

Bremer's hair has lengthened since his last public appearance early in July and he has grown a beard and a moustache since that time. During a recess, he remained in the courtroom and laughed while talking with sheriff's deputies guarding him.

Lipsitz said witnesses would testify that Bremer is a schizophrenic who "is pretty sick and has been for some time."

The lawyer said that Maryland law deems a defendant insane if he lacks "the substantial capacity" to either appreciate the criminal nature of an act or to stop himself from committing such an act.

"The doctors will tell you Arthur Bremer doesn't know the difference between reality and fantasy. I don't know whether Arthur Bremer shot Gov. Wallace and three others May 15, and I'm not sure even Arthur Herman Bremer knows," Lipsitz said.

Regarding the facts of the attempted assassination, Lipsitz said the FBI laboratory was unable to say that the revolver recovered at the Laurel, Md. shopping center was the source of the bullets partially paralyzing Wallace and wounding the others.

Lipsitz also said the FBI laboratory was unable to find any traces of gunpowder on paraffin "lifts" taken from Bremer's hands by county police shortly after his arrest at the shopping center.

The prosecutor spent only five minutes with his opening statement, telling the jury that Bremer is presumed sane unless proven otherwise. He said he would "show you Mr. Bremer was one of the first people at the shopping center and had all the opportunity to find a place in the crowd to carry out the attempted assassination."

The opening prosecution witness was Laurens W. Pierce of Danwoodie, Ga., a CBS news cameraman who recorded 16 millimeter sound footage of the shooting. The film was shown to the jury.

While Pierce said he had seen Bremer at an earlier political rally that morning in Wheaton, Md., he said he was unable to recognize Bremer through his camera viewfinder as he made pictures of Wallace on the ground and the "total confusion."

Pierce was able to pick Bremer out of the estimated 100 persons in the courtroom. To arrange such identifications, the prosecution moved Bremer from the defense table to a fourth row seat flanked by deputies.