

GUARDS UNSHAKEN BY BREMER DIARY

Secret Service Planning No
New Security Measures

The Washington Star

WASHINGTON, Aug. 4—The Secret Service is not particularly shaken by Arthur H. Bremer's disclosures in his diary that he tried to assassinate President Nixon in Ottawa last April.

"Our security measures remain uniform," said John W. Warner Jr., assistant to the director of the agency responsible for protecting the President. No new security measures are being weighed, he said yesterday.

Mr. Warner declined to discuss details of the diary read at Bremer's trial on charges of shooting Gov. George C. Wallace of Alabama and three others at a shopping center in Laurel, Md. But he indicated that the Secret Service was convinced that the diary testified to the effectiveness of the measures employed to protect the President.

He said that accounts of the diary reported that Bremer had been frustrated at every turn because he had not been able to get close to Mr. Nixon.

The implication was that Secret Service planning, and not just coincidence, had thwarted the assassin.

For example, Bremer was not able to get beyond the gates at the military airport where Mr. Nixon landed on his visit to Canada April 13 because he did not have credentials to get past the guards.

At another point, Bremer wrote, he missed a chance to shoot at the President along his motorcade route because the Presidential limousine whizzed by before he realized it.

Bremer also wrote that he was not sure that bullets from his pistol would have gone through the bulletproof glass of the Presidential limousine.

There are times, particularly in an election campaign, when the President—or Presidential candidates such as Mr. Wallace—are exposed without the protection of speed or bulletproof glass. Mr. Wallace was shot May 15 while shaking hands with members of a crowd. There can never be perfect protection in such circumstances.

Whenever the President does go into a crowd of strangers, he is pretty well surrounded by Secret Service men prepared to throw their own bodies between the President and any assailant.

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The Bremer Verdict

The diary of Arthur H. Bremer, read to a jury in a Maryland court, is the story of a man who wanted desperately to shoot President Nixon but, failing that, was willing to settle for Governor Wallace, Senator McGovern or even a couple of Secret Service men. The jury nevertheless found him sane, and therefore legally accountable for his abominable assault on the Alabama Governor.

People will have their doubts as to the soundness of that verdict, but in Bremer's narrative they have one more proof that national figures—especially Presidents—can no longer afford to plunge in and out of crowds as though they were all Sunday school picnics. He didn't shoot at Mr. Nixon, Bremer complained, only because he couldn't "get close to him." And he wrote vividly, if dejectedly, of his failure to realize his hopes of pulling off a major assassination.

It is awesome to think of how many Bremers may be sitting in lonely rooms right now, reading and re-reading the story of the Wallace shooting at Laurel, Md., and dreaming their own sick dreams of achieving similar notoriety. Until a way is found to reduce the incidence of such aberrant behavior, whether or not juries find it technically sane, the nation has no choice but to go much further than it has in the direction of gun control and to keep its leaders well out of range.