The Enigmatic Assailant

By FRED BARNES
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The accused assailant of Gov. George C. Wallace is an unusually taciturn young man from a working-class background in Milwaukee who was given to bursts of eccentric behavior in recent months.

Arthur Herman Bremer, 21, a high school graduate and one-time photography student, had shaved his head — all except the sideburns — last January after his 16-year-old girl friend broke up with him. He worked steadily for many months at two jobs — one as a busboy at the Milwau-

kee Athletic Club and the other as a janitor's helper at an elementary school. Then he quit both by simply not showing up for work any more.

In the last month, he had, in effect, disappeared — until yesterday afternoon.

Friends and relatives said he had never shown much interest in politics, but FBI agents yesterday found his apartment strewn with paraphernalia and newspapers of the Wallace campaign.

They also found some enigmatic poetry and scribblings. Among them:

"Cheer up, Oswald." "Happiness is hearing George Wallace singing the National Anthem or having him arrested for a hit-and-run traffic accident."

Bremer paid the $138.50-a-month rent regularly for his apartment — across from his parents' home — until just over a month ago, when he disappeared.

His departure came shortly after the April 4 Wisconsin primary, in which Wallace finished second.

Neighbors said Bremer had a Wallace bumper sticker on his Dodge car and apartment door, but they disappeared shortly after the Wisconsin primary. The building manager told Milwaukee reporters that at that time he also noticed Wallace buttons in Bremer's trash.

Others who knew him said Bremer was an unusually quiet and calm person.

And Bremer "never had a gun to my knowledge," said his 59-year-old father, William. But, authorities said, Bremer purchased a .38-caliber revolver in Milwaukee last fall.

They said it was the same weapon seized when

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Bremer was wrestled to the ground at the Laurel Shopping Center yesterday after Wallace, two of his bodyguards and one campaign worker were shot.

Milwaukee police said Bremer was arrested on a charge of carrying a concealed weapon Oct. 28 and was subsequently convicted of disorderly conduct.

Bremer's life took some unexplainable turns in recent months. His upbringing in Milwaukee's blue-collar South side appears to have been normal and quiet.

His father is a truck driver who has worked for the same firm for more than 30 years. Besides Arthur, the Bremer family includes three other sons: Theodore, 34; William, 23; and Roger, 18.

Members of his family agreed that Bremer was an exceptionally quiet person — and often a puzzle to them.

"Nobody could talk to him," said Roger. "We never knew much about him."

School Record

Arthur Bremer went to South Division High School, where he tried out for football but apparently didn't make the team. He graduated in 1969.

A report card dated January 1969 showed two C's and two D's. In conduct, he had two A's, 2 B's and one C.

After high school, he enrolled at Milwaukee Area Technical College, taking a photography course. He re-

mained at the school through last fall, working the two jobs all the while.

Bremer, a sandy-haired youth of average height and stocky build, was "the quietest kid there," recalled a fellow photography student, Gary MacDonald, 24. "He seldom talked to anyone. He never asked a question in class."

The Bremer family had lived in several houses in the south side over the years before moving last fall into their present home, a wood-frame duplex. It was about the time of the move that Arthur Bremer moved out, getting an apartment alone on the west side of the city.

The Girl

It was about that fall that Bremer dated Jean Pemrich, 16, a high school student whose mother works as a crossing guard at the grade school, Story Elementary, where Bremer was employed as a janitor's helper.

The girl's mother, Mrs. Margaret Pemrich, told Milwaukee Sentinel reporter Alida John that she had known Bremer for several years and found him "strange."

"I would say hello to him every day," she said, "and he would never say hello back to me."

Mrs. Pemrich said Bremer's relationship with her daughter was never a serious romance.

But shortly after Jean Pemrich broke off with Bremer, he showed up for work at the athletic club with his wavy hair shaved off.

The head waiter at the club bold reporters that Bremer explained that he had encountered troubles with his girlfriend and shaved his head in hopes of getting back in her good graces. A few days later, Bremer stopped coming to work, the head waiter said.

Wouldn't Go Home

Bremer had few visitors at his three-room apartment, said Stephen Wasche, who lives with relatives who run the apartment building. "He stayed pretty much to himself and didn't talk much," Wasche said.

"He had only one visitor I know of — his mother," said Wasche.

Bremer's father told newspaper that Mrs. Bremer had tried to talk her son into returning home, but he refused.