

## **Kent State – “Four dead in Ohio”**

Monday, May 4, 1970

### **Introduction** – *capturing a brief moment in time.*

By most accounts the Kent State shootings took place in only thirteen seconds. [A book entitled “Thirteen Seconds – The original narrative of events that shook the nation” was written by two local newspaper reporters.] The key events leading up to the shootings and the immediate aftermath span less than a week in time. The confrontation and subsequent shootings took a matter of minutes. This makes determining the “ground truth” difficult. The freshness of contemporaneous resources is contrasted with the subsequent detailed investigative journalism and forensic research.

For my primary contemporaneous resources I chose the two local\* Cleveland newspapers: The Cleveland Plain Dealer (morning) and the Cleveland Press (afternoon.) I found a treasure trove in an on-line compilation of the May 5, 1970, edition of the Plain Dealer. I contacted the Special Collections Librarian at Cleveland State University’s Michael Schwartz Library, who was most helpful, but given the growing length of this report and the information already at hand from The Cleveland Plain Dealer and the Kent State University archives, I chose not to delve into The Cleveland Press.

The two major wire services, United Press International (UPI) and Associated Press (AP) also covered the event. Their reporting of the events and their ubiquitous presence in nationwide and worldwide newspapers meant that much of the world saw Kent State through their eyes.

Additionally, within two weeks of the shootings national news magazines such as Newsweek, Time and Life wrote analytic articles about the shootings and about the national atmosphere at the time of the shooting. These articles were most helpful in providing context, reducing chaos and falsehoods, and addressing ambiguities.

### **Organization and Style of this report**

As might be expected there are multiple conflicting narratives of this chaotic event. This report begins with the immediate newspaper accounts published the day after, May 5, 1970. It then reviews what the wire services wrote – the “ground truth” as published in most newspapers worldwide. Lastly, I review relevant news magazine articles for their insights – a total of six different contemporaneous publications.

The articles contain myriad quotations from various students and faculty, as well as military and government officials. I only include names when they are relevant to the story. Rather than “John Doe, a 20 year old sophomore math major from Cleveland, Ohio, said....” Where John Doe is a random eye witness, I provide the student quotation with no specific attribution. However, I do name government officials where appropriate. I use quotation marks when quoting either snippets of an article or verbatim witness statements as quoted in these articles. When the newspaper chooses to put a phrase in ALL CAPITALS, I retain this style.

\* Cleveland, Ohio is about thirty miles from Kent State.

## The Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 5, 1970



## Terror at KSU

Right below the masthead was the iconic John Filo photograph of the shooting. The caption read in part, “A coed\* screams and a classmate lies dead on the campus of Kent State University after National Guardsmen opened fire on student demonstrators, killing four and wounding 10, on the fourth day of rioting.” This picture appeared on the front page of newspapers throughout the world.

Page 10-A of the Plain Dealer was a “picture page” with additional photographs.

\* It was later learned that the “coed” was a 14 year old runaway, Mary Ann Vecchio. The dead body was that of 20 year old Jeffrey Miller. Also, the fence post behind Ms. Vecchio was later removed via airbrushing.

The May 5<sup>th</sup> Cleveland Plain Dealer had 20 (!) articles related to the Kent State shootings. The headline below the above picture read, “4 DEAD, 10 HURT AT KSU” and spanned the entire front page. There were three primary articles describing the events on the front page – each continued in more depth on page 6-A.

### Primary Articles

#### **Plain Dealer May 5, 1970. Article 1<sup>1</sup>: 4 DEAD, 10 HURT AT KSU**

The lead article, by Staff Writer Michael D. Roberts was subtitled, “Campus Is Evacuated.” It noted that by nightfall of May 4<sup>th</sup> the campus was evacuated with only military vehicles patrolling. Recounting the dead and injured, it stated that “troops fired about 50 rounds from M-1 rifles into a crowd of campus demonstrators.” Continuing, the next paragraph noted, “It was the most tragic and bloody campus confrontation in the country since the anti-war demonstrations began to erupt over Vietnam.”

President Nixon said he would order a Justice Department investigation if the state requested it. I believe this is a subtle point regarding either states rights or deference to a fellow Republican, Ohio Governor James A. Rhodes, who independently requested an FBI investigation.

The article continues by naming the four killed and includes photographs of three of the four hapless victims. The multi-day KSU demonstrations leading up to the confrontation are reviewed, National Guard Brigadier General Robert H. Canterbury noted that 150-200 gas grenades previously had been fired to disperse the crowd. “CANTERBURY SAID NO order was given to shoot.” but added, “A military man always has the option to fire if he feels his life is in danger. The crowd was moving in on the men on three sides.” “The shooting lasted about two or three seconds, Officers at the scene immediately called for a cease-fire” BG Canterbury continues that they know how much ammunition each individual soldier had and would investigate re: how many rounds were fired by each. He said an immediate investigation into the shooting would determine which guardsman fired first, who fired and actually hit students, how many guardsmen actually fired and how many rounds they expended.

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<sup>1</sup> Roberts, M. D., “4 Dead, 10 Hurt at KSU”, The Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 5, 1970, pp 1-A & 6-A.

Rumors among the students that the Guardsmen were firing blanks were quickly dispelled. Another rumor was that there were snipers who shot at the Guardsmen. BG Canterbury would not comment, but the Ohio National Guard Commander, S.T. Del Corso, who far away at headquarters in Columbus, Ohio, said, “a sniper opened fire against the guardsmen from a nearby rooftop.” This was false but nonetheless reported by the wire services and other news media.

Two other articles appeared on the front page, both sharing a headline: *Campus War*. One by a KSU journalism major, John P. Hayes, had a header “‘Victory Bell’ Called Crowd.” The other had the header, “Troops ‘Lost All Their Cool’” Both of these articles then continue in detail on page 6-A of the paper.

**Plain Dealer May 5, 1970. Article 2<sup>2</sup>: ‘Victory Bell’ called the crowd**

This is a rather chaotic play by play of events immediately preceding and following the shooting. The article notes that prior to the shootings, after tear gas had dispersed a crowd of students, the “Victory Bell” normally rung to celebrate athletic victories was rung and the crowd then reassembled. It spoke of students being chased by soldiers, one being struck with a Billy club. The article continued as an event summary: “By 1 p.m. everything seemed peaceful. Students were just sitting there.” At 1:10 PM Dr. Martin R. Baron, Chair of the Psychology Department was talking to them, and by 1:30 PM, 5,000 students having gathered. An estimated 1,000 guardsmen and State Police were present. “The National Guard troops were in a straight line across the bottom of the hill ... near the art building and in front of the ruins of the burned Army ROTC building.” After the shootings Professor Glen Frank, head of the Geology Department and recently honored as Distinguished Professor of the Year was heard saying, “We don’t want any more dead.”

After these events, the campus was closed and students ordered to leave. Some didn’t have funds with them. They were told to borrow from friends. Busses then took students to airports and to neighboring communities. Overall, this article attempts to describe a fluid, uncertain situation and provides both an overall picture of the goings on and poignant individual vignettes.

**Plain Dealer May 5, 1970. Article 3<sup>3</sup>: Troops ‘Lost All Their Cool’**

This article is an unflattering portrait of the Ohio National Guard soldiers who were present. The guardsmen had rocks and brick thrown at them, and were surrounded by students yelling “Off the Pigs.” In turn before the shooting, guards were pointing their rifles taunting them with “Come on, come on.” A number of students each recount what they saw. The article names and identifies each (age, home town, major, etc.) I will dispense with this and include only relevant quotations which help paint the picture. I capitalize as the article does.

- “THEY LOST ALL their cool: they completely panicked.”
- “Many persons didn’t take cover because they were under the impression blanks were being fired.”
- “20 or 30 guardsmen walking away from the students, then suddenly turn around at them and open up.”
- “I SAW THOSE GUYS turn and get on their knees after I heard the officer order them to fire.”
- (A National Guard spokesman later denied there had been an order to fire ....)
- “Saw an officer with a .45-caliber pistol shoot first. After that the others opened up.”
- “There was no warning of any kind. We never expected them to shoot.”
- “I went up to the roof to see and there were two policemen there. The two policemen told me there was no sniper.”
- “A girl was walking behind Taylor Hall. The girl was walking away slowly. She had about four books in her arms. She was not in a part of the demonstration. Suddenly a shot ripped through her jugular vein and the bullet came out her eye. She fell to the ground and I saw her lay in a pool of blood.”
- “IT LOOKED LIKE the guard probably panicked because of the large number surrounding them.”

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<sup>2</sup> Hayes, J.B., “‘Victory Bell’ called the crowd”, The Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 5, 1970, pp 1-A & 6-A.

<sup>3</sup> Eszterhas, J., “Troops ‘Lost All Their Cool’”, The Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 5, 1970, pp 1-A & 6-A.

These were the three main Cleveland Plain Dealer articles discussing the previous day's events. There also were many ancillary articles worth noting as they supplied more information and insight. These are grouped by theme, arbitrarily numbered, with the headline quoted verbatim, and then briefly summarized.

### More on the victims

#### **Plain Dealer May 5, 1970. Article 4<sup>4</sup>: *Bullets unselective in Claiming 4 lives:***

>Allison Krause. "Allson (sic) was somewhat of a celebrity on campus because of an unusual stand she had taken against the National Guard on Sunday. SHE PUT A FLOWER IN THE barrel of one guardsman's gun, explaining "flowers are better than bullets."

>William Schroeder. "SCHROEDER WAS AN ROTC member and wasn't too happy about the burning of the Army ROTC building the night before." "[an] all-American boy and Kent State track team star. He died in a puddle of his own blood."

>Sandy Scheur. "Sandy Scheur died too. ANOTHER ATTRACTIVE girl with long brown hair, she lived for a few moments after being hit by the high powered shell. ...a nurse bending over Sandy giving her mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and attempting to stop the flow of blood from her neck.

>Jeffrey Miller. "Nobody knows much about Jeffrey Miller of Plainview, N.Y."

#### **Plain Dealer May 5, 1970. Article 5<sup>5</sup>: *Coed was Safe Sunday: Slain Yesterday at KSU:***

More on Allison Krause – A short color piece was included. "She hated the SDS. She was just not the type to get involved with that." Her father said.

#### **Plain Dealer May 5, 1970. Article 6<sup>6</sup>: *Hospitals List Dead, Wounded Students:***

A county news bureau review giving the names and home addresses of each of the dead and wounded.

#### **Plain Dealer May 5, 1970. Article 7<sup>7</sup>: *Objector to War is Felled by Shot***

"Doug Wrentmore was classified by his draft board as a conscientious objector last week. Yesterday he was shot in the leg in the violence at nearby Kent State University." "I was several hundred yards away...." Wrentmore fell behind a car after he was hit and two unidentified students drove him to the hospital.

### More on Kent State University

#### **Plain Dealer May 5, 1970. Article 8<sup>8</sup>: *Member of KSU Faculty Tells of Quiet, Then Panic:***

Mrs. Charles Lavika gives a description of events from her vantage point. "There was no reason for the soldiers to open fire," she added. The article also includes descriptions of events leading up to the shootings by Donald b. Tuson, Jr., a KSU Junior and David E. Rau, a campus "visitor."

#### **Plain Dealer May 5, 1970. Article 9<sup>9</sup>: *Activism at KSU Began in 1968:***

This article recounts the history of SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) and BUS, Black United, Students related to campus disruptions that took place in 1968. It also recounts the previous weekend's rioting

#### **Plain Dealer May 5, 1970. Article 10<sup>10</sup>: *Court Order Bars Students and Faculty from Kent State U.***

##### ***Campus:***

Simply a court injunction closing the campus. Students were locked out – and needed to wend their way home.

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas, J., "Bullets Unselective in Claiming 4 lives", The Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 5, 1970, pg 11-A.

<sup>5</sup> Portage County Bureau, "Coed Was Safe Sunday, Slain Yesterday at KSU", The Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 5, 1970, pg 11-A.

<sup>6</sup> Portage County Bureau, "Hospitals List Dead, Wounded Students", The Cleveland Plain Dealer, 5, 1970, pg 11-A.

<sup>7</sup> McCann, W.D., "Objector to War is Felled by Shot", The Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 5, 1970, pg 12-A.

<sup>8</sup> Plain Dealer Special, "Member of KSU Faculty Tells of Quiet, then Panic", The Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 5, 1970, pg 12-A.

<sup>9</sup> Koshar, J.L., "Activism at KSU began in 1968", The Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 5, 1970, pg 12-A.

<sup>10</sup> Ellers, R.G., "Court Order Bars Students and Faculty From Kent State U. Campus", The Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 5, 1970, pg 11-A.

## Government Officials Speak

There were articles highlighting both the President and Vice-President's comments as well as calls for investigations by a representative and by the governor. In the interest of space, I will only list these.

### **Plain Dealer May 5, 1970. Articles 11-14:**

11. *Nixon Sees Tragic 'Reminder' at Kent* (President Richard M. Nixon) President Nixon is quoted, "when dissent turns to violence it invites tragedy." Presidential Press Secretary Ron Zeigler noted that the President "shares the sadness of the parents of these young people ...."
12. *Kent Predictable: Agnew* (Vice President Spiro T. Agnew) "in several recent speeches I have called attention to the grave dangers which accompany the new politics of violence and confrontation ...."
13. *Taft Seeks Probe* (U.S. Rep. Robert Taft, Jr.) "I am horrified by the tragic events at Kent State and extend deep sympathy to the parents and families of the deceased."
14. *Rhodes Asks FBI Probe in Kent Deaths* (Governor James A Rhodes.) The governor requested an FBI investigation and an aide released a statement from the Ohio Adjutant General claiming "a sniper opened fire against the Guardsman from a nearby rooftop."

## Reaction at other college campuses

### **Plain Dealer May 5, 1970. Articles 15-20:**

Additionally, there were six articles relating to protests at other Ohio universities and nationally:

15. *End War Involvement, 29 College Chiefs Urge* – "The presidents of 29 colleges and universities urged President Nixon on yesterday to 'demonstrate unequivocally your determination' to end promptly the U.S. military involvement in Southeast Asia."
16. *Wooster Curtails War Protest* – Students stayed away from class in protest, but canceled an all night vigil.
17. *Oberlin Plans mourning Day; Shutdown eyed* – The Oberlin College President said the college would shut down this morning for the four students killed, and would meet with a student-faculty committee to consider ending the semester early. Classes were scheduled to end on May 19<sup>th</sup>.
18. *CWRU Students Stage "Funeral" for KSU Victims* – Students staged a massive sit-in, blocking traffic. Governor Rhodes put the Ohio National Guard on Standby
19. *Unrest Stirs 8 Ohio Campuses* – Highlights the protests at 8 other Ohio campuses.
20. *2,000 OSU Marchers Protest KSU Killings* – the students marched in protest and the Ohio National Guard and State Highway Patrolmen guarded the administration building.

A small campus map was included on page 11 of the newspaper. It showed the various buildings, but did not map activities onto this map.

There also was a brief insert that 4,400 National Guardsmen would be excused so they could cast their ballots, May 5<sup>th</sup> being primary election day.

## **Additional Sources**

Appendix A – United Press International (UPI) - May 5, 1970

Appendix B – Associated Press (AP) – May 5, 1970

Appendix C – Newsweek – May 18, 1970

Appendix D – Time Magazine – May 18, 1970

Appendix E – Life Magazine – May 15, 1970

## **Bulleted Summaries of these Additional Sources – and my brief commentary**

**Appendix A** – United Press International (UPI) - May 5, 1970

- ✓ 1,500 students, 300 Guardsman
- ✓ Guardsman had exhausted their supply of tear gas
- ✓ Students surrounded Guardsman on three sides
- ❖ (Per State Adjutant General) “A sniper opened fire against the Guardsman from a nearby rooftop.”
- ✓ “All of a sudden some of them [guardsmen] turned around, faced the crowd of students and started firing.”
- ✓ Identified the four dead students and their home towns.

This was a reasonable account of the events but for the critical falsehood regarding a sniper firing at the troops.

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**Appendix B** – Associated Press (AP) – May 5, 1970

- ✓ Four Dead, two girls (sic) and two young men
- ✓ National Guard officials said the civilian soldiers fired in defense of their lives when student crowd closed in throwing rocks and chunks of concrete.
- ❖ Guard public relations officer said Ohio Highway Patrol helicopter spotted a sniper on a nearby building.
- ❖ (Per State Adjutant General) “troops began firing ... after a rooftop sniper had shot at them.”
- ✓ Troops turned in unison as if responding to a command and fire into the crowd
- ❖ (Per General on scene) “No order was given to shoot.”
- ✓ (Per General on scene) An investigation will follow to determine which guardsman fired first....
- ✓ The shooting climaxed student demonstrations and disturbances which began Friday in the wake of President Nixon’s address to the nation Thursday night on sending U.S. troops into Cambodia.

Again this was a reasonable account of the events but for the critical falsehood regarding a sniper firing at the troops. Also the question of whether the troops fired on order is unresolved. The article provides meaningful context noting President Nixon’s speech re: U.S. troops to Cambodia as a catalyst for further demonstrations.

Restating for emphasis: Both the United Press International (UPI) article and Associated Press (AP) contained a critical error as both repeated the false narrative asserted by the Ohio National Guard Adjutant General, S.T. Del Corso, that the guardsmen were being fired upon by a sniper from atop a nearby building. This changed the entire context of the confrontation that led to this tragedy. Given the worldwide scope of these two wire services, the damage to truth was incalculable.

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## Appendix C – Newsweek – May 18, 1970

The opening two paragraphs depict a bucolic campus shattered by National Guard gunfire.

Kent State University, in the rolling green hills of northeastern Ohio, seems the very model of a modern, Middle American university. Until last year, the most vicious outbreak of violence there was a 1958 panty raid launched against two women's dormitories, which resulted in the prompt dismissal of 29 students. Recently, the radical spirit had begun to drift over the 790-acre campus—but only a fraction of the school's 19,000 students was affected. Antiwar rallies attracted no more than 300 people at best, and even the appearance of Jerry Rubin of the Chicago Seven drew only about 1,000.

Given the setting, the sudden volley of rifle fire from National Guard troops that killed four Kent State students and wounded 10 others last week echoed even more loudly than it might have at one of the capitals of campus protest such as Berkeley or Columbia. The bloody incident shocked and further divided a nation already riven by dissent over the war in Indochina. More than that, the shots fired at Kent State were taken by some as a warning that the U.S. might be edging toward the brink of warfare of sorts on the home front.

- ✓ Describes Kent as a mild, not too political campus, unlike Berkeley or Columbia.
- ✓ Notes that President Nixon's Cambodia speech may have been the catalyst for protest
- ✓ The burning down of the ROTC building
- ✓ Governor Rhodes quickly calling out the National Guard AND showing up in person – insulting students as worse than “brownshirt” and Communist element and night-riders.
- ✓ Says Rhodes all but took personal command of the guard – something not noted anywhere else
- ✓ At 11:25 a small detachment of troopers thought they heard a shot and 16 or 17 guardsman fired 35 rounds.
- ✓ Students thought they were firing blanks.
- ✓ 4 dead 10 wounded, “ignoring cries for help, the guardsmen marched away.”
- ✓ Ohio guard brass obdurately defended the conduct of their men. They quickly whisked away the troops who fired the fatal rounds.
- ❖ Contended the volley was not ordered
- ✓ Relied on extraordinary Ohio National Guard regulation that permits and individual soldier to fire if they feel their life is in danger.

This article pretty much vilifies the governor and the Ohio National Guard. It portrays a serene campus and the big bad governor.

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## Appendix D – Time Magazine – May 18, 1970

Similarly, the opening paragraph sets the tone.

It took half a century to transform Kent State from an obscure teachers college into the second largest university in Ohio, with 21,000 students and an impressive array of modern buildings on its main campus. But it took less than ten terrifying seconds last week to convert the traditionally conformist campus into a bloodstained symbol of the rising student rebellion against the Nixon Administration and the war in Southeast Asia. When National Guardsmen fired indiscriminately into a crowd of unarmed civilians, killing four students, the bullets wounded the nation.

- ✓ Tired guardsmen weary from five nights of duty, dealing with a wildcat Teamsters strike arrived with fully loaded M-1 semiautomatic rifles.
- ✓ Governor Rhodes ordered them to campus – While he ran unsuccessfully for Senate.
- ✓ Tired young guardsmen flirted with leggy coeds under the tall oaks and maples.
- ✓ Leaderless -- Guardsmen ran out of teargas and were partially surrounded. “No single designated leader.”
- ✓ BG Canterbury (in civilian clothes) said “I was there – but I was not in command of any unit”
- ✓ Witness noted that an officer was brandishing a swagger stick and “the moment he dropped it, they fired.”
- ✓ Students thought they were firing blanks.
- ✓ A journalism professor who saw action during the Korean war had a damning quotation: “They were organized, it was not scattered. They all waited and they all pointed their rifles at the same time. It looked like a firing squad.”
- ✓ 4 dead 10 wounded. None of the four was a protest leader or a radical.
- ✓ Relied on extraordinary Ohio National Guard regulation that permits an individual soldier to fire if they feel their life is in danger.
- ❖ (Per State Adjutant General) “troops began firing ... after a rooftop sniper had shot at them.” He later backed away from that story.
- ✓ Guards had joined the guard to avoid the draft and Vietnam.
- ✓ Ill trained – “Some in my platoon have never handled a rifle and hardly know how to load it.”
- ✓ Serious doubts about their professionalism and the wisdom of the decision to deploy them.
- ✓ No warning shots fired.
- ✓ Per BG Canterbury a small detachment of 16 or 17 guardsmen fired 35 rounds.

This article also vilifies the guard, its training and the decision to deploy the guard.

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**Appendix E – Life Magazine – May 15, 1970**

This appendix is a May 4, 2015 summary review of the May 15, 1970 Life article. In short, Life condemned the Ohio National Guard and the choice to deploy it.

This is the cover which Life published in May 1970.



## **Analysis – strengths and weaknesses of contemporaneous reporting**

Contemporaneous reporting is, of course, subject to errors due to the fog of the situation, people misconstruing events or viewing them through the prism of their biases. Worse yet there are people either bending the truth to suit their needs or telling outright lies. It is also subject to errors of omission. Sometimes this omission misleads and deprives history of appropriate context.

To me the most egregious omission was distance. Reading the contemporaneous sources one would think that those tragically killed by the Ohio National Guardsmen were fast approaching, in their face, so to speak. Although two of the wounded were 60 feet away, those killed were about a football field from the Guardsmen!<sup>11</sup> The images provided by the various narratives do not portray that those senselessly slaughtered were essentially random victims, far from the action. The effective range of an M-1 rifle is 500 yards.

Four Kent State students died as a result of the firing by the Guard. The closest student was Jeffrey Miller, who was shot in the mouth while standing in an access road leading into the Prentice Hall parking lot, a distance of approximately **270 feet** from the Guard. Allison Krause was in the Prentice Hall parking lot; she was **330 feet** from the Guardsmen and was shot in the left side of her body. William Schroeder was **390 feet** from the Guard in the Prentice Hall parking lot when he was shot in the left side of his back. Sandra Scheuer was also about **390 feet** from the Guard in the Prentice Hall parking lot when a bullet pierced the left front side of her neck.<sup>12</sup> [From Appendix F. My **bold** emphasis.]

A second major point, misrepresented by the wire services was that there were snipers who fired at the Guardsmen. This was based on the testimony of Ohio's Adjutant General, the Ohio National Guard Commander, S.T. Del Corso – who was not even on the scene. Similarly, there was confusion as to who was in charge. It appears that National Guard Brigadier General Robert H. Canterbury was in charge, but some accounts indicate that although he was present, he was in civilian clothes and not in charge. Lastly, did someone give an order to fire, if so, who. One article even claims that Governor Rhodes took direct command.

## **Conclusion**

Briefly, fresh news can be error prone. Reporters do not have the luxury of vetting sources. When purposely false statements are made these can be propagated worldwide.

Some people cannot stand the truth! I came across a 2010 article in the right wing "Washington Times"<sup>13</sup> in observance of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kent State shootings. The article claims that there *was* a sniper, and that there were "hard-core" radicals involved in the rioting.

"Yet the declassified FBI files show the FBI already had developed credible evidence suggesting that there was indeed a sniper and that one or more shots may have been fired at the guardsmen first."

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.kent.edu/may-4-historical-accuracy>

<sup>12</sup> The May 4 Shootings At Kent State University: The Search For, <https://www.kent.edu/may-4-historical-accuracy>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/may/04/new-light-shed-on-kent-state-killings>

## Epilogue – My intersections with the Kent State Shooting

(In somewhat chronological order.)

1. I graduated from a suburban Cleveland high school, Charles F. Brush High School in 1964. Many of my friends and classmates went to Kent State University. It had a well deserved reputation as a party school. “If you can’t go to college, go to Kent.”
2. During the Summer of 1966 I worked on the Western Reserve Campus handling the logistics for a summer reading program. (Case Tech, my alma mater, and Western Reserve University shared adjoining campuses.) The Ohio National Guard was called out during the Hough Riots of 1966, they slept in the dorms across the way from my building. Since theirs was night duty, they spent much of their day relaxing and sunning themselves out in front of their dorms. This was much to the delight of our secretary who found many reasons to walk past them while doing errands. (Prior to their arrival, one would be hard pressed to get her to move.) I learned that for the most part these were young men who avoided the draft by joining the National Guard, and now they were unhappily away from both their family and their jobs.
3. I was a graduate student at the University of Michigan for the Fall 1969 and a high school acquaintance and I shared a two bedroom apartment. He left after the fall semester to join the Ohio National Guard in order to avoid the draft. He was and is a good, loyal friend – but among other things had physical issues. I won’t elaborate here but his 6 weeks of basic training took 6 months (the legal limit) as he kept getting sent back to start over with another unit at week 1 (“recycled”). I never had warm fuzzy feelings for the Ohio National Guard, especially their training, discipline and competence.
4. On May 4<sup>th</sup> 1970, I raised my right hand, took a step forward and was inducted into the United States Army. (I was drafted.) That day after taking our oath in downtown Cleveland, Ohio, a group of us went via public light rail to Cleveland Hopkins Airport in route to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, for Basic Combat Training. The airport was a zoo with bewildered students trying to fly home. Kent State had been closed down.
5. Nearly fifty years later, I still remember how a city kid who had never fired anything more lethal than a Roy Rogers cap gun, could within a few days hit 300 meter targets and how rapidly an M-16A1 rifle could fire.
6. For the next 6 weeks of BCT I heard virtually nothing of what happened at Kent State – BCT was all consuming and we were pretty much cut off from the outside world.
7. I learned that one of the wounded (see article 6) was “ROBERT STAMPS, 19, of 4093 Harwood Road, South Euclid, Ohio; satisfactory condition, wounds of the left buttocks.” I grew up a few doors away at 4065 Harwood Road. His older sister Penelope, “Penny” Stamps was a high school classmate.