

# One Student's View - point

tion of the rally were distributed, no real attempt was made to notify the general body of students.

As the noon hour approached, professors began letting their classes out — the commotion of the weekend had upset the routine nature of teaching and attending classes. So, as is usual for any university, crowds of students began gathering on the campus Commons. Many were there to eat lunch, others to rest between classes, while some were there to observe the possible rally and, perhaps, to take part in it.

## Riot Act read

The leader of the National Guard drove about the area in a jeep and read the Riot Act. Few people heard him, and even fewer people paid attention. One group of Guards then proceeded to force a section of the students off the Commons, but found instead that they had stupidly backed themselves up against the rear fence of a football field.

At this point eyewitness reports become muddled and contradictory. The Guard testified that while backed up in a corner, they were threatened by a large group of rock-throwing students who were moving closer and closer to them. Photographs, however, all show that none of the students' throwing debris were nearly close enough to hit any of the Guardsmen. Whether in danger or not, several of the Guardsmen apparently feared they were, and they assumed the kneeling firing position. For a tense moment it appeared that the Guards were going to shoot aimlessly into the mass of students. But, instead, they rose again, and began to march cautiously out of their corners. The students parted to let the guards by.

Then, for no apparent reason, (the Guards were now out of their compromising position and had gained the psychological advantage of location), twenty-eight Guardsmen turned and fired. Fifty-five bullets were fired in a thirteen-second period. Four students were killed, nine wounded. The Guard stopped firing at the impassioned command of Major H. Jones, who ran right out in front of the guns and begged his men to stop. To this day, it is not known conclusively whether or not an order was given to fire.

The story of the next few hours is a confusion of panic, horror and anger. A handful of professors were able to convince the most hostile students that any attempt at retaliation would only result in more deaths, and the area was gradually cleared.

## Four dead

Allison Krause and her boyfriend Barry were observing the action when they decided to leave for lunch. As they

turned to go elsewhere the Guard began to fire. They began to run behind a parked car for protection but Allison fell to her knees. Barry began screaming hysterically when he saw blood pouring out from under her arm. Allison Krause died en route to hospital.

A few weeks later Allison's parents received a cheque from the university, refunding the rest of her tuition.

Sandra Scheuer had been standing at the back of the crowd when the firing began. As the bullets flew a nearby student grabbed Sandy and tried to take her to shelter behind a car. He felt her go limp in his arms. Sandra died in the parking lot.

The most famous photograph from the tragedy shows a female student in hysteria, kneeling over the body of a fallen student. That fallen student was Jeff Miller. He had received a gun shot in his head. His face and head were blown apart so badly that his best friend could not positively identify him.

William Schroeder was walking over a hundred feet away from the guards when he was felled by a bullet. He died of massive internal hemorrhaging. A State Senator was to notify Schroeder's parents of their son's death but he avoided the unpleasant task. A telephone operator slipped the news inadvertently to his mother over the phone. A neighbour had told her that her son might be in hospital, and she had phoned long-distance to check. She found out very harshly.

The city of Kent clamped down on all students. Students with longish hair were beaten by gangs of townspeople while police turned away. The university was closed. All the students were ordered to leave Kent immediately and those who did not were arrested. For a week, the town of Kent was a nightmare for students.

Middle America, it would seem, felt little sympathy for the students. Newspapers received letters from thousands of people commending the actions of the National Guard. Letters appeared calling for vigilante mobs to hound students. The other side of the argument was not represented in the papers.

A Grand Jury decision went conclusively against the students. Twenty-five students were indicted while the Guardsmen were not required to appear before the Jury.

## Author's viewpoint

On May 4th, 1970 I was in Grade Nine. Barely conscious of radical politics, the shootings did not appear to affect me very much. But, as I found out later, they had affected me more than I

had realized. How can any university student respect police forces? How can we trust politicians, bureaucrats, and administrators? Prejudice now clouds all my opinions of these people and, whether fair or not, my assessment of them nearly always takes into consideration the events at Kent State. When I came to university in 1973, most other students knew little and cared less about May 4, 1970. Where were they then? Are they not aware of the injustice that occurred? Students have been, and largely still are, viewed as a strange group of over-educated radicals by the outside world.

Student political activism was dealt a severe blow on May 4th, 1970. The Students' Councils and Executives we elect now are selected on the basis of their conservatism and willingness to avoid political issues. Along with

Allison Krause, Sandra Scheuer, Bill Schroeder, and Jeff Miller, the consciences of students were killed on May 4, 1970.

Many think it would be better to forget the events of May 4, 1970. To do this would be to forget our heritage as university students. Without suggesting that every student become a radical, I hope that readers of this article will find it important to become acquainted with the past ten years of student history. What happened at Kent State — an upper middle-class university — could have happened here.

A student at Kent State was asked during the demonstrations this summer if she agreed with the cause being fought. She replied, "I don't think about the past at all. I just like to have fun. Don't you?"

Perhaps it's time we quit running.



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## Soviet poet memorializes Allison Krause

*Don't give flowers to the state, where truth is punished  
Such a state's gift in return is cynical, cruel, and,  
The gift in return to you, Allison Krause,  
Was a bullet that rushed the flower back  
As the President said about you, you are "an idler."  
Everyone dead is an idler, but the fault is not his  
You were a student  
You studied fine arts.  
But there is another art — bloody, terrible,  
That hangman's art too has its geniuses.  
Who was Hitler?  
A cubist of innovative gas chambers.  
On behalf of all flowers  
I condemn your creations,  
Architects of lies,  
Directors of murders  
Rise murdered Allison Krause  
Like an immortal of the epoch  
A thorny flower of protest.  
Allison Krause, you were killed because you love flowers.*