

NOTES

My primary source was the May 4 Collection at the Kent State University Library, an impressive archive of all things concerning the 1970 tragedy. Of particular value were the oral histories—first-person recorded accounts by participants and witnesses of the events of May 1–4. There are over one hundred of these in the May 4 Collection. An additional fifty oral histories were available (but have since been taken down) from the Kent State Truth Tribunal, a project spearheaded by Laurel Krause, Allison’s sister. I listened to every one of these recordings. It was a real luxury to have all of these interviews readily available—some with people no longer alive, since the project was started in 1990.

There is also a May 4 Visitors Center at Kent State, located on the ground floor of Taylor Hall, devoted to the shootings. This is separate from the May 4 Collection.

I also used materials from the Kent State Collection at Yale University. This consists of seventy-six boxes of legal documents, letters, film, and memorabilia from 1970. Established in 1977, this large archive was donated by the lawyers and families of the four slain students, as well as by several authors who wrote books on the shooting—the families did not want the material kept in Ohio or at Kent State.

I interviewed some key student activists and other contemporaries. A huge thank you to Chris Butler, a friend of Jeff Miller’s, who has detailed memories of the events of all four days; Steve Drucker, Jeff’s roommate and also a former boyfriend of Sandy Scheuer; Neil Phillips, a close friend of Jeff’s at both Kent State and in high school on Long Island; Thomas M. Grace, the leading expert on student activism at Kent State; and Alan Canfora, an activist and archivist of all things May 4. Grace and Canfora were also two of the nine students shot and wounded on May 4.

There were several official investigations into the shootings of May 4, 1970. The first, by the FBI in 1970, is remarkably frank, considering the politics of the era and the FBI’s obvious involvement in the tragedy. Nixon also ordered a formal investigation, which became known as the Scranton Commission. Its report was issued in September 1970. Both are found in

the May 4 Collection and the Kent State Collection at Yale University (which I refer to as the Yale Collection going forward).

There were three trials. The first was a short federal criminal trial against eight guardsmen in 1974. All were acquitted. A civil trial, brought by Arthur Krause, Allison’s father, and joined by the other parents of the dead students and by the wounded students, occurred in 1975. A jury ruled in favor of the State of Ohio, but that verdict was tossed out on appeal and a new trial was ordered in 1978. The second civil trial ended just as it convened in January 1979, in a settlement. These trials were the only time that state officials, officers, and guardsmen were publicly questioned under oath, or in many cases, questioned at all. Their transcripts are a treasure trove of information and are also found in the May 4 Collection and the Yale Collection.

I also relied on several of the (many) books written about the shootings. The best of these is *Thirteen Seconds: Confrontation at Kent State* (Dodd, Mead, 1970) by Cleveland reporters Joe Eszterhas and Michael D. Roberts. These gentlemen covered the event for the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* and knew the lay of the land and the players involved as only local reporters can. They wrote their book because they were unhappy with the paper’s bungled coverage of May 4 (an editor decided protests at Kent State weren’t worth covering, so there were no reporters on campus on May 4 or on the days leading up to it, and the paper had to scramble when the shootings happened).

An ebook in the May 4 Collection by Charles A. Thomas, *Blood of Isaac* (1999), provides an excellent timeline of events, with footnotes referencing the original source material. This saved me a lot of legwork, so a big thank you to Charles.

The most famous book on the shootings is James A. Michener’s *Kent State: What Happened and Why*, written by the star author and his team of investigators in the months after the shootings and rushed into print by Random House in April 1971. It’s more a political period piece than accurate history, and is full of ridiculous communist plots involving secret radical SDS (Students for a Democratic

Society) cells. Some of it is outright bullshit. But it does contain much useful information. At the time, *Thirteen Seconds* was a counterpoint to Michener's book, when controversy about the shootings still raged. In fact, according to *Blood of Isaac*, there was an infamous on-air shouting match between Michener and Eszterhas and Roberts during a segment on the *Today* show on May 4, 1971.

Kent State: Death and Dissent in the Long Sixties by Thomas M. Grace (University of Massachusetts Press, 2016) is the go-to resource on the history of student activism at Kent State.

The Kent State Coverup by Joseph Kelner and James Munves (HarperCollins, 1980) is a detailed summary of the civil trial of 1975. Kelner was the lead attorney for the plaintiffs.

Mayday: Kent State by J. Gregory Payne (Kendall Hunt Publishing, 1981) is full of wonderful accounts from family and friends of the victims.

The Truth About Kent State: A Challenge to the American Conscience by Peter H. Davies (Farrar Straus Giroux, 1973).

I used news accounts from 1970, particularly those of the *Akron Beacon Journal* (ABJ), which won a Pulitzer for its coverage. The *Beacon* published the most detailed (at the time) account of the events of May 4 and the days leading up to it, in a multiple-story special report, "The Tragedy at Kent State," in its May 24, 1970, issue. The report was written by an ABJ team and other reporters and editors from Knight Newspapers. Breaking news stories are tricky as resources, because the facts come out piecemeal and are often mixed with spin and falsehoods. This was especially true at Kent State, as the Guard, state authorities, and law enforcement concocted all sorts of wild claims and outright lies to justify the shootings. It would be many years before these fabrications were either abandoned or debunked. Some still aren't. On the other side, student activists, many facing indictments and fearful of government retaliation, either vanished, went silent, or purposely misled the media. That's not a criticism of the reporters—it's just the nature of breaking news. But with careful reading, breaking news stories can produce useful details, and the *Beacon's* coverage was excellent throughout, and was the first media to question the official narrative that

the students were solely to blame. Owner and publisher John S. Knight often recounted how many subscriptions the paper lost for its reporting of May 4.

The digital archive of the *Daily Kent Stater* (DKS) was a source I used repeatedly, both for accounts of events leading up to May 4, but also for details on student life, and campus and local events in 1970. Ditto the digital archive of the *Chestnut Burr*, the university yearbook.

The settings in this book are based on live sketches I made at Kent State. I coupled these sketches with reference photos and maps from the day to re-create both the 1970 university and the town. Photos came from the DKS digital archive, the *Chestnut Burr* yearbook archive, and the photo archive at the Kent State University Libraries—as well as from the voluminous personal collection of Jason Prufer, a senior library associate there, who deserves special thanks.

PROLOGUE

Pages 1–7: The account of the Teamsters strike is pieced together from my own recollections, the oral histories in the May 4 Collection of two guardsmen who were on duty, and news accounts from the ABJ. My otherwise quaint hometown had a dozen ugly truck depots on the southern edge of the village, built on former farms. The depots moved in when two major interstates were carved through town in the early sixties. Town leaders tried to keep them out, but the trucking industry, considered vital to the nation by Congress, enjoyed immunity from local zoning laws. The Guard was dispatched to Richfield, Ohio, on Wednesday, April 29, 1970.

Page 5: The Terry Point Inn was one of two raucous trucker bars in this part of town, the Clearview Inn being the other, along Cleveland-Massillon Road. The teamsters spent the day inside, boozing it up, until one of their posted watchmen alerted them that a truck convoy was leaving the depots. They would then pour out and leap in their pickup trucks to intercept the convoy. The Guard quickly figured out if they just surrounded the bars, the teamsters would be hemmed in.

Page 7: The account from Guardsman Frank

Karlovic comes from a lengthy oral history and an earlier written account, both in the May 4 Collection. Karlovic is a fake name. In the archive, he is listed only as “Anonymous Guardsman.” It wasn’t hard to figure out his real identity, but I’ve left it masked out of respect for his willingness to talk.

The two oral histories are the only detailed day-to-day accounts of the experiences of a shooter during this event. Most refused to speak following May 4, and have refused to speak since. Karlovic’s account of the Teamsters strike in Richfield, and of the events of Saturday and Sunday, are wonderfully descriptive and ring true to my research.

Karlovic exaggerates about the student protestors, however. His tales of “bags of urine and feces” being hurled at guardsmen were refuted by the FBI in its report, and by historians and reporters. The National Guard insisted they were pelted with feces for three days, yet could not produce a single scrap of evidence. It didn’t happen. This was a common charge leveled against the “dirty” radicals of the era. He’s bit of a braggart, too, and his descriptions of the Guard’s prowess and efficiency are clearly disputed by the debacle of the Kent State action and by the comments of other Guardsmen.

I realize using the Anonymous Guardsman’s account is controversial. Nevertheless, most of his account, outside of the shooting itself, is remarkably detailed and blunt. I really had no choice here. None of the other Guard on Blanket Hill have broken their silence to this extent. I felt it was vital to show this perspective.

Pages 8–9: Sources for Nixon’s speech: Transcript from the Nixon Library; network TV schedule for 1970.

FRIDAY, MAY 1

Page 12: The transcript of this protest on the Commons is available from several sources.

The Victory Bell was donated to the university by the Erie Railroad in 1950. An architecture student designed the brick structure. Source: Kent State website.

Page 14: Bill Schroeder’s views on the war. Sources: “A Boy Who was Just There Watching It and Making Up His Mind” by John Pekkanen, *Life* magazine, May 15, 1970; Gene Pekarik account, *Lorain Journal*, May 5, 1970;

Lou Cusella account, *Communication Quarterly*, 1982; Payne, 1981.

Sources for summary of the Cambodia Invasion: “Nixon Authorizes Invasion of Cambodia, April 28, 1970,” by Andrew Glass, *Politico*, April 28, 2015; *New York Times* (NYT), May 1, 1970.

Page 15: Flyers calling for the torching of ROTC began appearing around campus at this time. Source: William A. Gordon, *The Fourth of May* (Prometheus Books, 1990).

Terry Norman’s cover as a yearbook photographer. Sources: The first detailed profile of Norman, by Janis Froelich in the *Tampa Tribune*, “Kent State: A New Look,” April 30, 2006; “Does Former Informant Hold the Key to the May 4 Mystery?,” *Plain Dealer*, December 19, 2010; *ABJ Special Report*; Butler, 2017; Drucker, 2017.

Norman was a recognized informant. In a letter to DKS in 1969, Norman complains of being ejected from an SDS meeting. “I would like to know what the SDS had to hide,” he writes. Source: DKS, May 9, 1969.

A few days later, Chris Butler writes a letter in rebuttal. “I cannot conceive how Terry Norman cannot see SDS’s paranoia, when he told me and others on two occasions that he is working as an informer for campus police.” Source: DKS, May 15, 1969.

Page 16: This excerpt comes from the DKS, May 1, 1970 (the last issue that would be published that academic quarter). The DKS published Tuesday through Friday in 1970, so there was no edition for Monday, May 4. Once the university was closed that afternoon, the paper could no longer publish. Source: DKS digital archive.

Pages 17–18: Source of poll: DKS, May 1, 1968. The history of the university comes from the Kent State University website and the *ABJ*, May 24, 1970.

The black squirrels were imported in 1961 from Canada by the head groundskeeper, per the Kent State website.

Page 20: Sandy’s house on East Summit Street is still standing. Her nickname, “Sandy Beach,” was given to her by Steve Drucker and used by friends and colleagues. Many phone messages to Sandy at the Speech Lab are addressed to “Sandy Beach” or simply “Miss Beach.” Sources: