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In May 1970 campuses all across the country erupted in response to the shooting of 13 students at Kent State University. Over 900 colleges and universities closed. Many others experienced significant protests although they remained open. In many cases violence was the rule of the day.

Protests at Grinnell were for the most part nonviolent although no less intense. For me the two weeks following Kent State are among the most memorable events of my life. I entered Grinnell as a typical graduate of a small town Iowa high school. I graduated at the top of my class, but my class was only 104. My father had come to Des Moines to work for the newspaper. Both my parents grew up in St. Louis with roots in the South. My father served as an officer in the Navy during World War II. When I arrived at Grinnell, I quite naturally gravitated to the Air Force ROTC program. I clearly did not see myself serving in the infantry and most definitely wanted to be a military officer. I definitely wanted to be of the class that gave orders as opposed to those that received them. Kent State created a fundamental crises of values.

Prior to Kent State my feelings toward the war in Viet Nam had already become ambivalent. I can recall that initially in '64 and '65 I had supported the war wholeheartedly. But as the frustrating guerilla war worn on I could not escape the comparisons between our own War of Independence and the Viet Nam conflict -only we were the British and they were the Americans. When I arrived at Grinnell, I came in contact with students who were fanatically opposed to the war. Listening to them caused me to further doubt my oversimplistic understanding of the Viet Nam conflict. .

Throughout my four years at Grinnell I struggled with constant ambivalence over the war. One day rooting for the military solution. The next totally questioning of the policies that got us there. I owe this largely to the fact that I was exposed to numerous people on both sides of the issue. It's one thing to abstractly oppose the war; it's totally another to actually talk with people who have fought and even been wounded there.

Kent State changed everything. When I heard that the National Guard had shot and killed four students at Kent State I immediately recognized this as totally unprecedented and a symptom of how deep the damage was from the Viet Nam War. The shock was compounded when I learned that one of the dead was an honor ROTC student (in fact two of the four students killed were not part of the demonstrations). Clearly nobody was safe and all ambivalence ended. From that time forward I opposed the war emphatically.

During the following two weeks I participated in two peace marches - acting as a marshal at one and helping to organize another at Pella Tulip time. I also spoke strongly in favor of the student strike to end classes. Interestingly I also witnessed the seizure of the ROTC building and received my commission in the Air Force secretly south of Grinnell. My view of war has never been the same. In 1975 I took up Transcendental Meditation and one thing that attracted me to that program was His Holiness Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's pragmatic approach to

achieving world peace. Since then I have attended dozens of TM courses aimed at furthering Maharishi's ambition to create a world free of war.

In considering this memorandum I have realized that the bane of history is memory. I have a number of very clear memories of events that happened during the Kent State period, but I have a great deal of difficulty organizing them in time sequence. I have obtained copies of the May 8 and May 15 editions of the S&B. Unfortunately the editors at that time were not much for the four W's and an H (who, what, when, where and how) taught to journalism students. They preexisted neoconservatism but essentially the content of the stories editorialized extensively and had a strong conservative bias. I was able to determine the date of some events but others went unmentioned. I guess these guys had their opportunity to say their piece but for history's sake a little basic news coverage would have helped.

In any case my narrative is a little like Slum Dog Millionaire. I'm not sure they are arranged in the proper order but I am going to relate them as I remember them.

Kent State. On April 30, 1970 the Nixon Administration launched the Cambodian incursion. The purpose of the operation was to disrupt logistical support for North Vietnamese operations in southern Vietnam. This operation involved sending significant formations of US troops into Cambodia. Having learned about the importance of sanctuaries in guerrilla war I initially supported this operation. I happened to be taking a seminar which included a Grinnell professor and a US foreign service officer whose name I forget. He unfortunately elucidated all the reasons why this was a completely stupid idea (completely destabilizing the Cambodian government and expanding the war).

My impression at the time was that demonstrations were pretty muted compared to earlier events. However, at Kent State things got bad fast. On May 1 students buried a copy of the US Constitution on central campus and agreed to have another rally on May 4. The May 1 demonstration was largely peaceful. However, that night (Friday) large riots developed in the town bar district. Some have characterized these riots as typical spring high jinxes, but Al Canfora, a member of the campus SDS and one of the wounded students, made clear recently that there was an organized effort to trash businesses in the downtown area. The Kent, Ohio police were totally overwhelmed and called for the cavalry. In Ohio the cavalry was the National Guard.

On May 2 Governor James Rhodes, who was running for the Senate on a law and order platform, characterized the students as the worst kind of people. He echoed rhetoric of the Nixon administration that had sought to marginalize student protestors by characterizing them as the nabobs of nepotism and those who supported the war as the silent majority.

On May 3 1200 National Guardsmen arrived on campus. Some very intense and in some cases very unprofessional interactions began. A Captain from the campus ROTC unit was told by a Guard officer that someone was going to get shot. There were several instances of students

being bayoneted. One whole dorm of students was not allowed to cross the street to their dining hall.

Radical student groups managed to set the ROTC building (which was already slated for demolition) on fire. This set up the confrontation on May 4th.

The popular belief about Kent State is that the Guardsmen opened fire spontaneously after intense provocations by students throwing rocks and shouting obscenities. Guard authorities absolutely denied that an order to fire was given. However, there were 28 soldiers on Blanket Hill that day. Among them was a general, a Lt Colonel, a major, several captains and lieutenants and some sergeants. Photographs show General Robert Canterbury within 10 feet of the men who initially opened fire. Almost all eyewitnesses including some military veterans reported that the firing commenced simultaneously (called "volley fire"). The firing lasted 13 seconds and involved 67 rounds. Neither the photographs nor eyewitness accounts show any effort by the numerous officers and NCOs to stop the firing.

As a military veteran I can say that generally soldiers fire under orders. I can also say that soldiers are scared to death of generals and would be unlikely to fire spontaneously with a general so close by. Recently Al Canfora found a recording in the Yale archives where the order to fire can be heard.

In the months following the government charged eight soldiers in the deaths. However, a federal judge dismissed the charges (with prejudice). No one has ever admitted that someone in the guard hierarchy ordered the shootings).

For most Americans the urban myth of Kent State is that a bunch of poorly trained kids after two days of provocation completely lost it and blasted away with their M1s. However, the controversy over what actually happened at Kent State does not change what happened in their aftermath and the effect it had on American history.

May 5th. After returning home from Grinnell I organized a group discussion at my church involving students from three different colleges. A student at the University of Iowa reported that upon hearing of the shootings his entire dorm emptied out and went downtown in Iowa City and smashed every window in sight. Today it might be hard to imagine something like this happening, but this was the explosive quality of the news from Kent State.

Nothing like that happened at Grinnell, but by the next day things really began to cook. The morning of the fifth I can recall spending a fair amount of time reading the newspaper accounts of the killings. I was particularly impressed by the death of Bill Schroeder the ROTC student. Although the papers did not say how he was killed, I assumed he was simply watching the demonstration (as I had done many times) when the firing started. As it turned out apparently he was going to class and was shot in the back at a distance of 350 feet.

I had a lot of work to do. My recollection is that I was fairly far behind with my final semester's work. As I had done so many times, I headed for the library. When I arrived there, I found two individuals chained to the door of Burling Library. They effectively blocked ingress. This was the first time I sensed this Kent State situation was going to be really different. With all of the demonstrations that had occurred in the previous four years nothing like this had occurred at Grinnell. One of the individuals was Nick Russo who ironically had scored the lone ROTC touchdown in the SDS-ROTC touch football game. He of course had dropped out of ROTC (pronounced ROT-C) by then, but I have no idea what brought him to the door of the library. I do not remember the other student's name.

Fortunately for us still trying to graduate types the College had opened a side entrance where we could enter. However, my attempts at studying were not completely sincere in that I took a position on the balcony so I could see the action at the front door. It wasn't long before a couple (male/female) walked up to the front door insisting on their right to enter the front door. An argument in-sued and I believe I heard the phrase they, "deserved it." At that point an explosion of anger occurred. Had not Nick's friend been chained to the door I believe I would have seen the first physical assault while at Grinnell. This was how high the emotions were running.

After a while I determined that studying wasn't going to work. I spent the rest of the morning talking to people in front of the forum (it was a marvelously sunny day). I don't remember most of these conversations or what happened most of the rest of the day. However, the atmosphere was supercharged. The only other experience that I have had that completely engrossed people was 9/11 and I am not sure which one was more intense. Certainly Kent State had more direct impact on me.

Seizure of the ROTC Building. From my own memory I cannot date the seizure of the ROTC building. However, the S&B reported that the seizure occurred on Tuesday the 5th. Apparently there was a meeting of 300-400 students in South Lounge to discuss how to proceed. There were also meetings of the faculty. The general intention was to end business as usual to protest the killings. The S&B reports that the meeting was adjourned to witness the seizure of the building. Unfortunately the S&B whose editors strongly disagreed with almost everything that occurred after Kent State didn't provide much detail as to who planned to seize the building and how it was organized.

As a ROTC cadet word reached me somehow that something was afoot to take over the building. So I wandered over to the ROTC building on Park Street to see what was going on. I found a number of other cadets sitting on the porch who apparently had heard the news as well. At some point Bill Peters the Grinnell Police Chief arrived. He notably did not have his gun, mace or club. Basically he was unarmed. We were all told that we were not to get involved. They need not have worried; none of us had the slightest intention of dying for our country on a college campus.

In fact a kind of carnival atmosphere prevailed. It is hard to say why, but I recall a lot of joking

around.

At one point Andy Loewi the student body president came up to us and wanted to know what we planned to do. I think we mostly thought that was stupid question because we didn't plan to do anything. We wanted to see the seizure like everyone else.

Andy had a couple people with him and one was acting as lookout at the corner of ARH (I am not sure why) and yelled here they come. A large mob then rounded ARH heading for the ROTC building. I can remember distinctly that the crowd moved with a hurky-jerky motion. I figured out later that they were scared which caused them to walk stiffly, but at the time it just looked weird.

At that point we departed the porch and stood on the lawn North of the ROTC building. The crowd proceeded to confront Chief Peters on the porch. I remember scanning the crowd to see if I recognized anyone I knew. I concluded that most of the crowd were underclassmen. I did not know anyone in the crowd.

Chief Peters stood in front of the door and began engaging the leaders of the crowd in dialogue mostly telling them the obvious that it was illegal to seize the building. While this was going on someone climbed onto the roof of the porch and entered the second floor breaking a window in the process. At the time I assumed the window was broken deliberately in order to open it. But the urban legend of Grinnell now reports that it was broken accidentally in the process of illegally entering the building.

Chief Peters thus outflanked retreated from in front of the door. The holiday atmosphere continued. Pictures show Chief Peters rapping with students later in the day. I can remember Foster Acton the Corps Adjutant joking, "I wonder what they would do if they knew I had the key."

Years later I would remember the seizure of the ROTC building with some resentment. But at the time there was this holiday atmosphere that is almost unexplainable. I can remember visiting the building that night and talking with some of the students there. They had cookies, juice and all sorts of junk food scattered all over the place. Never one to pass up free food I'm pretty sure I helped myself.

There was a sense of inevitability about the whole thing. I guess it was better a nonviolent seizure than what happened at a lot of other campuses. Its a hallmark of the Grinnell community that we were able to stand within 10 feet of the crowd seizing the building and not be attacked ourselves. Chief Peters was utterly defenseless and we were greatly outnumbered. I cannot ever remember being afraid.

I know of at least one ROTC cadet who was blinded in an attack at the University of Buffalo. Grinnell's emphasis on reason and the fact that we all knew each other helped keep emotions within some semblance of normalcy.

Herrick Meeting. On Friday, May 8th the student government held a referendum on whether to end the school year. The S&B reports that the College in fact ended the school year on that date. My memory is pretty foggy on the exact sequence of events here. However, prior to the all campus vote a meeting was held in Herrick Chapel to discuss the possibility of the strike.

The S&B contains no mention of this meeting although it mentions meetings on the 5th by students and faculty. My recollection is that during the week very rapidly a consensus was forming among both students and faculty that the academic year should end. I remember the phrase that business as usual could not continue.

The Kent State shootings hit American campuses like a thunderclap. The response was immediate and very spontaneous. Nobody had to be told that something unprecedented in American history had occurred. I think some of the Guardsmen actually think they made some kind of a statement. However, within a matter of days over 900 colleges and universities closed effecting 4 million students

One fairly constant complaint heard during those days came from radical students. So many heretofore moderate students (such as myself) who had not been involved in protesting the war prior to Kent State became totally activated that the radicals had a hard time working there agenda. The only other event that even approaches this period is the period immediately following 9/11. Even there most of us were passively watching the TV watching reruns of the disaster. In the case of Kent State thousands of students participated in protest marches and engaged in other political activities designed to protest the war in Vietnam or the shootings at Kent State.

The importance of these events is exemplified by statements by H.R. Haldeman (Nixon's Chief of Staff) that the descent into Watergate began with Kent State.

This phenomenon was illustrated by the Herrick meeting. Piecing it together I believe this meeting was designed to discuss the vote to end classes and probably occurred on Thursday the day before the vote. My memory is that it occurred in the late afternoon or early evening. Andy Loewi student body president chaired the meeting. The crowd absolutely packed the Chapel. Not only were there students but interested faculty and staff. The idea of the strike was opposed by a small but significant minority of the students so there was a need get opinions out in the open.

Andy called on students with the intent of creating some balance in the discussion. The problem was that he relied on his perceptions of students past political orientation to decide who to call on. He apparently called on me thinking I would oppose the strike. I was a well known member of the ROTC unit and attended the meeting wearing my letter jacket.

Unfortunately for the balanced discussion I was wired to the ceiling with anger over the

shootings. I stated that the shootings were a watershed moment in American history (I learned that term in political science courses) and that the vote on the strike had to be a referendum on what one thought of the shootings. Obviously I thought they were totally unacceptable.

Linda Cutler, a member of my class, told me at our last reunion that she spoke just after me (I do not remember this. I was so emotionally wired that for a while after I spoke I lost track of what was being said). She like I is from Iowa and was regarded as pretty conservative. She also spoke in favor of the strike. She told me that after she spoke someone said if Linda Cutler and Bob Asbille support this it ought to pass.

Loewi was actually criticized for calling on too many students who supported the resolution. However, someone spoke up in his defense that he had called on a number of students he expected to oppose the resolution only to have them support it. In fact about 80% of the Grinnell student supported shutting down the school.

One of my more significant memories of that week occurred the evening of the Herrick meeting. I was walking downtown and happened to pass Coach Connie Kimble on the street. I did not know Coach Kimble personally since I didn't play football. He came up to me and thanked me for what I had said. He appeared quite emotional about it. Coach Kimble was an All-American lineman at Indiana University. He was also African-American. I can only imagine what brought him to say that to me. But to this day it is one of my prouder moments.

Pella Tulip Time. The College allowed us to stay on campus until May 13th. At some point the call went out for volunteers to assist with activities at other college campuses. Apparently students from Central College requested help. I remember gathering in the parking lot east of Cowles (I don't think it is still there) to take cars to Pella. I was standing with a group of other moderate students like myself waiting for the cars to leave and a couple from the Grinnell SDS walked up and stopped within 10 feet of us. They seemed to survey us and then walked away. As I noted campus radicals seemed to have trouble dealing with the involvement of all the moderate students. I am not in a position to explain why. But I can remember discussion of that fact at the time.

When I arrived in Pella, I discovered that two of the lead organizers at Central College were a girl from my high school and her boyfriend.

I can't remember actually doing anything other than constantly talking about the situation in Pella (I think we actually did some work but just can't remember what). I remember accounts of Central College students being caned while passing out peace literature at the Third Dutch Reformed Church (or maybe it was the Second Dutch Reformed Church). The whole thing was a little ludicrous because these kids had supported the peace movement most of their college career. I actually became a leader of some sort even though I had joined the peace movement three days before. The funny thing was we were regarded as the pros from Dover (a line from the movie Mash) because guess what: WE WERE FROM GRINNELL. So in one

week I had gone from being a supporter of the Cambodia incursion to being an OUTSIDE AGITATOR.

My recollection was that we drove down to Pella twice. The first time to help organize a demonstration and the second time to actually participate. The Pella Tulip Festival runs the whole weekend but my best guess is that the demonstration occurred Saturday May 9th. It was very well planned and a lot of students participated. Pella has the classic town square. The center square is a park with a big monument to Tulip Time at the corner. On Friday and Saturday there are a series of parades occurring in the afternoon and evening. My high school band participated in the parade on a number of occasions. I can remember lining up in front of Wyatt Earp's boyhood home. Yes, he was Dutch.

May 9th was rainy and cold. Each student carried a candle and they ringed the entire square. I remember this as one of the most beautiful sights I ever saw. The darkness of the day just made the light of the candles more striking. I can remember running around like an infantry officer encouraging his troops into battle. Old habits die hard. At times I feel a little embarrassed by this since I had little to do with the planning. But somehow I was at the center of the organizing effort.

I sensed that the town was a little affronted by this. Pella is a very conservative community and Tulip Time is the heart and soul of that town. But seeing all those students ringing the town square was worth the price of admission.

Since then I have contemplated the irony of disrupting a festival designed to celebrate flowers. However, those were different times. War has a way of altering even the most normal of human activity.

Eventually we all had to go home. The members of our class did not have a commencement. We got our diplomas in the mail. One of the great disappointments of my life was losing that feeling of energy that had motivated me for a couple of weeks. It seems naive now but I really thought we would take the world by storm and peace was just around the corner.

I would not feel the same sense of euphoria until I started TM in 1975. The war lasted another five years. A close friend of mine was killed in 1971. I am not sure what we learned from the experience. I learned that war does not bring peace. Unfortunately Iraq and Afghanistan show that as a country we still believe that we can still export democracy through violence.

I do know that for thousands of students Kent State represented a turning point in their lives. I for one have never been the same. One of the web sites carrying photos of the shooting is entitled, "Lest we forget the fruits of war." Really nothing needs to be said beyond that.