

Blood, Tears and Screams on Campus

By Kathy Lilly

Written for Chicago Daily News Service

KENT — Screaming hysterically, tears running down her cheeks, Ellen Mann ran from the Kent State University Commons, the blood from a student dripping from her hands.

Behind Taylor Hall, Scott Romans fled from the horror of seeing his classmates fall to the ground, pierced by bullets.

He sped across the green grass in the bright spring day — a day that looked just like any other on a Midwestern campus — until you saw the bits of blood and brains spattered on the ground.

Drawn by Excitement

Ellen, 18, of Munroe Falls, Ohio, is a student at Kent State University High School, but after a bomb scare yesterday turned students outside, she was pulled toward the excitement on campus to see what was going on.

Shouts of "Kill the pigs" and "Pigs go home" drew her closer until she was caught up in the frantic moments that followed.

"There was some rock throwing, but all of a sudden, without warning, the Guardsmen fired two or three shots in the air, then some in the the ground, and then into the crowd," she recalled with a shudder.

Drops to Ground

Then just a few feet from her a boy dropped to the ground. Panicky students scattered in every direction, some falling to escape bullets, others wounded.

"I just couldn't believe it. I started crying," said Ellen.



Student waving a black flag stands before line of National Guardsmen who aim their rifles at demonstrators. They did not fire on this occasion, moving back. Later, however, they shot — and killed.

—AP Photo

"Then when that guy fell I couldn't think. He was all white and looked like he had a three-inch hole in his hip."

Ellen ran to him, shocked into unawareness of the gunfire around her.

"He just screamed, 'Oh my God.' Later he said it hurt, and he asked how bad it was," she said.

Taken by Ambulance

An ambulance took him away and Ellen ran to her car, past a line of Guardsmen.

"I was running and screaming with blood dripping from my hands, like a crazy woman," she said.

"As I ran by, the Guardsmen were smiling. One of them pointed a gun at me. 'Why don't you shoot me too,' I yelled."

She said rock throwing and window breaking was wrong, but it did not justify shooting.

Sees More Trouble

"I think there's going to be a lot more trouble. I don't want to go back. The whole campus is messed up. They're shooting anyone who looks like a hippie," she said.

Her brother, Jack Mann, a bearded Kent State freshman, said he tried to withdraw from the university yesterday.

"What's the sense in going to a military institution," he said. "It's no longer a campus, it's prison."

He termed the Guardsmen a "bunch of trigger happy kids" who were taken from home, put on a campus where they didn't want to be

and became irritated and trigger happy.

Trained to Fight

"They are trained to fight other soldiers, not civil disobedience," he said.

He said the Guardsmen had a right to disperse the students but they didn't handle it properly.

Romans, a graduate student in English, said he planned to withdraw from the university too.

"It's hard to tell if anyone will finish out the quarter," he said.

He said he heard no warnings shouted before the Guardsmen began firing.

Gathered to Talk

"All it was was a group of people gathered to talk and rap. The best way in the world to radicalize people is to lob pepper gas at them," said Romans.

"We saw great big splotches of blood behind Taylor Hall," he said. "It looked like someone had gotten their brains blown out. There were fragments of brains and blood in a 10-foot area."