

Kent Student Suggests Officer Gave Signal to Shoot

By JOHN KIFNER

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KENT, Ohio, Aug. 21—A Kent State University student told the President's Commission on Campus Unrest today that he had seen a National Guard officer give what appeared to be an order to fire and then shoot his pistol just before the rifle volley that killed four students here last May 4.

The testimony by James Woodring, a 19-year-old freshman, contradicted the account given by guard officials who have said that individual guard men fired their weapons without orders because they feared for their lives.

But it could account for the distinct single shot heard a split second before the steady rattle of the burst of gunfire.

"There was a lieutenant or some kind of an officer with a pistol," Mr. Woodring said. "He aised it above his head, then brought it down and fired point blank into the ground."

"In my opinion," Mr. Woodring said, "he gave some sort of hand signal to fire."

The student, who was watching from the porch of Taylor Hall near the line of guardsmen, said that he could not hear whether the officer said anything because of the noise in the area.

Pistol Shot First

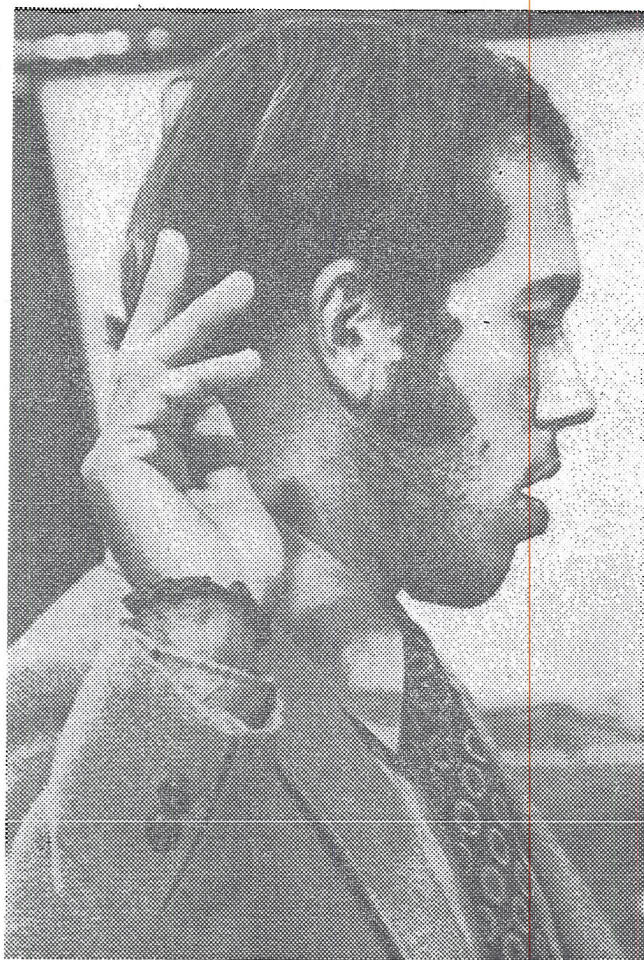
Mr. Woodring was asked whether the single shot from the pistol came before the rifle volley.

"A fraction of a second, yes," he replied.

In testimony yesterday, Brig. Gen. Robert Canterbury, who was in command of the guard in Kent, said that immediately after the shooting, "We canvassed all officers to determine whether anyone had given orders to fire. The answer was negative."

General Canterbury said that after his troops had broken up the noon rally that Monday, they were assaulted by rock-throwing students as they moved back up the hill. The guardsmen, armed with loaded M-1 rifles, had standing instructions that they might fire if they felt their lives were in danger, he said.

In the hours immediately



Associated Press

James C. Woodring Jr. tells of officer raising his pistol

guardsmen had fired a minimum of 54 shots in 11 seconds from the crest of the slope known here as "blanket hill."

The commission concluded its third day of public hearings shortly after noon today, and its chairman, former Gov. William W. Scranton of Pennsylvania, said the group would now devote its efforts to preparing the report, which is due in September.

Tomorrow, however, the com-

mission will hold a "working seminar" in Washington with a group of campus security officers, police officials and National Guard representatives to seek recommendations on the planning of law enforcement efforts without injuries during campus disorders.

Meanwhile, the Kent State University president, Robert L. White, rebutted the testimony yesterday of General Canterbury that Dr. White had asked

the guard not to allow the noon rally.

"From past history, all know that my response would have been affirmative to a rally," the president said. HE contended that the guard had been in charge and had banned all gatherings.

Subversive Element Blamed

Kent's Police Chief, Roy Thompson, told the commission today, "In my opinion this whole thing was started. It was well planned and it was subversive elements that caused it."

He explained: "on May 1, this writing started on the walls — 'Get Out of Cambodia' — and there were speakers on the campus." He added that "reliable informants" had told him there would be trouble.

He said that he was uncertain as to the names of the outside organizations involved, but that the "majority of them are a splinter group of the Communist party."

The final witness was Robert Stamps, a student who was wounded in the shooting as he stood on the sidewalk below the parking lot and watched the activity and mostly, he admitted, watched the girls.

He said that he felt that Ohio Governor, James A. Rhodes had "played politics with the students of Kent State to try to win a [United States Senatorial] primary he had coming up."

Asked what President Nixon could do to stop campus disorders, Mr. Stamps said:

"Stop any repression, which is already being readied. Remove all the troops from Southeast Asia as soon as he can. Clean up our lakes and rivers without fooling around before we all die and give the poor people and the black people in this country a chance."

after the shooting, Maj. Gen. Sylvester T. Del Corso, the guard's Adjutant General, and other officials issued statements saying the troops had fired at a rooftop sniper. Later, after no evidence of a sniper had been found, it was said that individuals had fired on their initiative for fear they would be "overwhelmed" by the students.

George arren, a commission staff investigator, testified today that the Federal Bureau of Investigation had "concluded that no other person than a guardsman fired a weapon" at Kent State.

He said that the ballistics evidence indicated that 29