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Ohio Governor's Mood at Kent

Cleveland

Former Ohio Governor James A. Rhodes was in an "inflammatory" mood before the Kent State University shootings in May, 1970, and referred to student anti-war demonstrators as "Brown Shirts," a witness told a federal grand jury here yesterday.

(Brown Shirts was a term applied to the paramilitary organization of the Germany Nazi party before World War II.)

Michael Delaney, a former public information officer for the Ohio National Guard, testified yesterday in the investigation by the jury into the May 4, 1970 killings of four Kent State students by Ohio guardsmen.



AP Wirephoto

MICHAEL DELANEY
'Pretty inflammatory'

Delaney said Rhodes met briefly in a Kent fire station the day before the Monday shootings with university officials, the local fire chief, police chief, a member from the county prosecutor's office and a representative from the city mayor's office.

"He was a politician," said Delaney. "He was in a pretty inflammatory mood. He used the term 'Brown Shirts' a couple of times. He told the guardsmen to use whatever force necessary (apparently including firing their weapons), although the specific point of when they should fire was not discussed, as I remember."

"He didn't get into when they should fire. He didn't spell it out. That's in the (National Guard) manuals," added Delaney.

"The prosecutor suggested that the school should be closed, and Rhodes said, 'No, that's just what they want,'" Delaney said.

Delaney said Rhodes gave guardsmen the right to make arrests during campus demonstrations against the U.S. incursion into Cambodia. In instructing them to break up groups of students, Delaney quoted Rhodes as saying: "I don't want to see two students walking together."

Delaney said he was asked about the role of Terry Norman, to whom Delaney had issued a press pass.

A campus policeman told him, Delaney said, that Norman worked for the FBI and was taking pictures on contract. "Issuing a pass to him was an evaluation I finally made so he could come and go on the campus," Delaney said.

Delaney was present when Norman ran down a hill about the time the students were shot, and a gun was taken from him.

"Norman said there was something he had to do, and they were trying to kill

him," Delaney said. "He was pretty incoherent at that time."

Norman is now a Washington policeman.

The grand jurors also asked about the possibility of collusion among guardsmen to fire upon the students, Delaney said.

"I think it's a definite possibility — one of many," he said. "The only thing you could exclude is the original defense of self-defense."

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