

SFChronicle

AUG 30 1975

# A Movie Convinced Kent State Juror

## Cleveland

Juror Richard Williams says an amateur movie showing a rush of anti-war demonstrators toward Ohio National Guardsmen moments before the troops fired convinced him to vote for the guardsmen in the recent Kent State civil damages trial.

"I figured the guard panicked," Williams said in an interview. "According to the law, if they fear for their lives, they can fire."

Williams was a member of the jury that absolved Governor James Rhodes, former state Adjutant General Sylvester Del Corso, former Kent State University President Robert White and 26 current or former guardsmen of liability for the May 4, 1970, shootings during which four students were killed and nine wounded. The civil trial asking \$46 million in damages stemmed from those shootings.

Williams was one of the few jurors who would comment about the trial.

Williams said the deliberations left all the jurors emotionally drained. "We had to hide our emotions," he said. "We had to follow the law rather than use sympathy."

The film he described was 8-mm footage taken by Christopher Abell, then a Kent State student, from his fifth-floor dormitory window 1600 feet from the site of the gunfire.

Although the poor quality made it "hard to see," he said, "you could see this run up the hill toward the guard. According to the film they were fairly close.

"That's what convinced me," he said.

He said there were about 70 guardsmen and that "they were outnumbered quite a bit," though he couldn't tell how many demonstrators there were.

"I wasn't completely convinced until the end," he added.

Williams said the deliberations involved "quite a bit of soul-searching."

*Associated Press*