

Sue,

Well, I hope you are coming along well with your book. What else is happening there?

Nothing much happening here, a few riots, murders, and fires. The whole situation here has been a farce. I'm certain you've read about it extensively.

As to what happened the first day I know very little. On Saturday night I wandered up to the Student Union to get a bite to eat. I learned at that time they were going to have a rally on the commons. I saw the crowd gathering as I enjoyed my repast. Having finished my cigarette & meal, I went out to see what the crowd was bent on doing. By the time ~~the~~ I approached the corner of the Union, the crowd started my way from the commons & started stoning the ROTC building.

They passed the ROTC building and came to the end of the Union to glance at the Police Station. No police were coming out, so they returned to the commons, regrouped and stoned the building again and paused for the police to arrive. No police, so some of them threw warning flares at the windows. No police, so some of them lit newspapers, ran to the building and tried to set the drapes on fire. Still no police, and the crowd started gathering closer to the building. At this time someone soaked a rag in gasoline which was extracted from a motor cycle parked at the ROTC parking lot, lit it, and threw it into the building. This started the drapes on fire and the crowd cheered, and moved closer to the building breaking more windows. Still no police, so I ran into the Union and advised my friend who worked there to get his car out

of the lot, as the crowd was swelling in pitch and in size. So, we both went outside went between the building and the crowd and started to remove his car when the fire truck approached. He drove his car out the Satterfield entrance, to Lincoln Street, and up Main Street to Tinker Funeral Parlor. From Tinker we ran (would you believe trot) back to the Union, still no police. Then they came wearing there riot helmets with face shields and the firemen approached the building with the hose and started putting the fire out. Then the students started stoning the police & firemen, and the police started dispersing tear gas and backing the crowd away from the building. The crowd dispersed in different directions, and cut the fire hose and started the athletic shack on fire by the tennis courts. I heard the National Guard was coming so I decided to get off

campus and was standing on Lincoln Street across from the Library when they arrived and started surrounding the entire campus. One squad of Guard marched past me and others who were standing nearby, and one of the guard pointed his 45 pistol at us and remarked "I ^{would} like to shoot one of those bastards." After about an hour of observing the guard I went home.

Sunday night, I heard helicopters flying overhead ^{and sirens} and went out to see them. They were equipped with large lights which covered a 100 square yard area on the ground. I went over to Lincoln Street and saw the crowd formed down by the campus gate, about 500 kids, 200 of which were sitting in the street. By the Dog House, 60 policemen or sheriffs were gathered. One helicopter hovered overhead with his light focused

on the main gate, while the two other choppers were going around the campus and neighborhood looking for other crowds which might have assembled. The guard came and formed a solid rank from the Library across Main Street and cleared the Library. The police or guard kept announcing the curfew and told the crowd to return to their dorms and for the people on the street to go back to their homes. Kris was with me Sunday night on the street and about 15 minute intervals we would circle over to Willow Street to make certain we were not being surrounded. It was like part of "1984." The police asked two of the kids sitting in the street to act as spokesmen for the crowd. The kids got up, talked to the police then back to the crowd, etc. Finally it was announced for the crowd to move back up on campus and Mayor Satrom & President White was coming

to hear their demands. At this point I felt the crowd was being molded into a political faction and started to go home when I heard the yelling and saw that the crowd was being attacked by the police & guard. Some of the police were coming in our direction so we ran home.

What happened Monday I am certain you are aware. Someone had stolen explosives from Ravenna Arsenal about 6 weeks earlier and the police were stationed in and about the ROTC buildings during the 6 weeks. Where they were Saturday still remains to be solved. At least 30 minutes passed between the first stoning and the Police arrival. I cannot but help wondering if this whole thing was political, but my patriotism keeps telling me "no."

Sir,

In reference to campus unrest, I offer my testimony regarding the May incidences with respect to the University, the Kent community, and Law enforcement.

May 1: I have no personal knowledge as I was working at the time.

May 2: I was dining at the Student Union at 7:45 P.M. and was told by the supervisor that there was going to be a demonstration on the Commons at 8:00 P.M. I finished my dinner at approximately 8:05. Went outside. As I started around the Union towards the crowd they were passing the ROTC building - pelting it with rocks - and started approaching me. I stepped from the sidewalk and stood against the building to let them pass and also examine their mood. They passed the Union and stood in the street focusing their attention towards the police station. The crowd was rather ^{small and} quiet at this point - waited about 5 minutes - no police came out - so they returned to the commons - waited approximately 5 more minutes - several students ^{throwing} would throw an occasional rock. Still no police. They approached the building en mass - threw more rocks - returned to the commons - waited - the mood becoming louder and more excited - then two emergency flairs were ignited and thrown towards the building landing near the building - the crowd cheered - burning the building in effigy - waited another 5 minutes - still no police. An individual lit a newspaper - ran to the window - and set the drape on fire - dropped the newspaper inside the building -

ran back to the crowd - the burning drape went out and was smoldering - the fire to the newspaper consumed itself. The crowd became more boisterous and started nearing the parking lot of the ROTC building. At this point I ran inside the Union looking for Jim Randall, the janitor on duty that evening. He was on the bottom floor talking to the custodian of the book store. I informed them that the crowd was getting tense and boisterous and advised them to move their vehicles from the parking lot. We went back to the crowd - examined their mood - Lou Copeland, one of the caterers from the Union was standing at the rear of the Union. Jim asked him if he thought he should move his truck. Lou said no, they wouldn't bother it. Someone from the crowd took off his shirt - went over towards a motor cycle parked in the lot - saturated the shirt with gasoline from the cycle - picked up a branch - stuck the shirt on the end of it and ignited it - walked towards the building and threw it inside. Several students broke from the crowd - approached the building - and broke more windows - ran back to the crowd. The custodian from the bookstore ran to the lot and drove his vehicle away - again I advised Jim to move his truck - he seemed hesitant - we heard sirens - he asked me where he should move his truck - I advised him to get it off campus - he asked me to come with him - we started towards the truck - the students started picking up more rocks and approached the lot - we met them and told them we were going to move the truck - got inside and drove away - the fire truck passed us towards the fire as we were driving off campus. I told Jim to drive around to Tinker Funeral Parlor and he

could park his truck there. He said he was glad he moved his truck. I told him that I could not understand why the university police did not appear and that they had been watching these buildings at night since the dynamite was stolen from Ravenna Arsenal. I told him I had talked to one of the ~~kids~~^{students} who ran every night for exercise and that he was stopped three times during the past week in the area of the commons. I expressed to him that the police must be letting them burn the building. We parked the truck at the funeral home's parking lot. Jim said "let's trot." So we trotted back to the Union - as we reached the rear of the Union - the firemen were attempting to put the fire out but the students were throwing stones at them. Then the police made their appearance with riot helmets and night sticks - ~~the~~ students were still throwing rocks now at the police - the firemen pulled their hoses away - and drove away.

Sir,

In reference to campus unrest, I offer an abbreviated testimony regarding the incidences that occurred at Kent.

I am a [↑]senior at K.S.U., 32 years old, a veteran of the U.S. Army with two years experience in the Army Reserves, and 7 years experience ~~as~~ a draftsman at Timken Roller Bearing Company.

I observed the incidences of May 2 thru May 4. and have the following comments:

~~May 2~~, it was known on campus that there would be a rally on the commons at 8 P.M. The mood of the demonstrators was light May 2, I am positive that the University authorities let the students burn the building for the following reasons:

1. The demonstration or rally at 8:00 P.M.

was announced at least 30 minutes in advance.

2. From the time that the dynamite was taken from the Ravenna Arsenal, the buildings were under security or surveillance at night. I knew a student who was stopped and questioned at least 5 times previously during that week. Yet, on Saturday night the police did not confront the students on any of the preceding incidences that night - first, after the initial stoning of the building - secondly, after the building was stoned again and burned in effigy by throwing flares against the building - thirdly, not after the building was set on fire - but finally after the firemen arrived on campus.

3. The police station is a 1 minute walk to the commons.

The point to be mentioned is if the demonstrations were believed to be in opposition to the military action, ^{in Cambodia} why bring in military forces which would only heighten the opposition?

I was standing off campus on Lincoln street to observe the guard's appearance. One rank passed myself and other students standing there and said "I would like to shoot one of those bastards" and pointed his 45 in our direction. This was the first time that I became alarmed by the guards presence.

May 3 - Having been alarmed by the tone of the guard the night previously, I went to campus about noon and was convinced by most of the guards interaction with students that they were not hostile towards students in general. - Later that evening I heard the helicopters flying overhead which served not only as a reconnaissance for the law authorities but as an advertisement of the ensuing conflict. What may have been a small crowd soon swelled in size to a crowd of over 2,000 by this indigenous advertising and incitatory action of the helicopters. After nearly two hours the police authorities asked several of the students to get up and represent the crowd. These students acted as mediators between the crowd and the police authorities.

After approximately 10 more minutes, we heard from a bullhorn something to the effect that Mayor ^{of Kent} & President of the University were coming to hear the student demands and to get out of the street and get back on campus. At this point I started to go home since I then believed someone was in control of the students and the crowd had become political. I walked about 20 yards when students started running past me and said the police were attacking. This led to the bayoneting and clubbing of the students. The irony of this is that the first time the students obeyed or acquiesced to an ^{adult authority} order they were punished thereby.

May 4, I have very little to report other than that I knew the crowd would be extreme in its resistance because of the lack of trust and respect ^{in law authorities} caused by the previous evening. One other ^{prior to the killings} important point is that, there were 5 guardsmen to the rear of Taylor Hall, one of them beating a student with his club. The dazed student walked away from the guardsman and after he was thirty feet away turned around and ^{again} approached the guardsmen. The guardsman fired a tear gas cannister at the student at this range and of course the tear gas landed well behind the student. The student's intention seemed to be only to pass the guardsman and when he neared the guardsman again he was clubbed until he passed the guardsman. When the student got to

the door at Taylor Hall and started to enter. Again the guardsman fired tear gas at blank range and the tear gas landed inside the building. ~~A few~~ Seconds later I heard the barrage of fire on the other side of the building. Are these ^{previous} the ^{shots} shots ^{heard} by the guardman at the front of the ^{building} reported ~~shots~~ ^{the} heard reported ~~to~~ sniper fire?

I must conclude that I do not blame the guardsmen individually but blame their leaders. You know as well as I that these troops are not disciplined units and have limited training. I would not ask them to behave like seasoned troops nor ^{have} sent so few against so many when other support was available to surround these students ^{to ensure} and proper arrests, could ~~be made~~ ^{have been} made.

Many of these guardsmen have never ~~even~~^{or fist fight} been in a gang fight and it is common in most conflict situations to react with the maximum weapons available. I am certain behind those gas masks which must have been fogged up by their body heat that too much was demanded of them.

May 6, I visited Akron University and milled with the students there to check their reaction to the incidences at Kent. I overheard one of the students there whom I recognized as a member of the past S.D.S. chapter of Kent telling several of the students "to throw rocks and push some of the students into the police, then get the hell out of there."

May I conclude that I am certain we had some outside agitators on campus but to conclude that they were the cause of the conflict is naive, but that they serve to push ^{or direct} a conflict situation is plausible. I must support peaceful demonstrations as they are the visible attitudes of many of the silent majority. ~~Any new~~

Any new body of knowledge is dangerous if it is not directed or acted upon for constructive purposes. We have had tremendous ^{numbers} amounts of commissions, but what action has resulted from the knowledge thereof?

With deep concern,

James W. Geisey
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AGENCIES

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

August 3, 1970

Mr. James W. Geisey
209 South Willow
Kent, Ohio 44240

Dear Mr. Geisey:

Thank you for writing to me concerning your observations during the trouble at KSU. I appreciate the information.

Many who write me refer to the usefulness of commissions, apparently having accepted at face value some rather loose statements to the effect that government commonly disregards the recommendations of special study groups. This is not the case. It is true that government or Congress does not and certainly should not enact into law any and every recommendation made by groups like the Kerner or Eisenhower Commissions. However, many of the recommendations of both are reflected in new law and all of their recommendations have been studied, have shed new thinking on difficult problems and are continually under review. The same will be true of whatever the Commission on Campus Unrest may offer.

Sincerely yours,



Frank T. Bow, M. C.

B:gm

WILLIAM B. SAXBE
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COMMITTEES:
AERONAUTICAL & SPACE SCIENCES
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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

August 7, 1970

Mr. J. W. Geisey
209 South Willow
Kent, Ohio

Dear Mr. Geisey:

Thank you for your recent communication in regard to the violent dissent on our college campuses, occasioned by President Nixon's commitment of American men and arms to destroy enemy sanctuaries in Cambodia.

Although this endeavor may prove a valuable tactical maneuver, the President apparently did not realize many Americans - especially the young - would so vehemently oppose his position.

Violence, however, is not the answer. When violence is unleashed, the only answer is more violence. We should see revolution for what it is - revolution. There is a place for disagreement, a place for dissent, and a place for demonstrations. But there is no place for violence in organized government.

On May 20, I introduced a concurrent resolution expressing that it was the sense of Congress that the President should establish a commission to examine the recent events at Kent State University. Subsequently, the President established such a commission. I am looking forward to an objective report.

Best regards.

Sincerely yours,

Wm B. Saxbe
WILLIAM B. SAXBE
United States Senator

WBS:mge

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

1 August 1970

Mr. James W. Geisey
209 South Willow
Kent, Ohio 44240

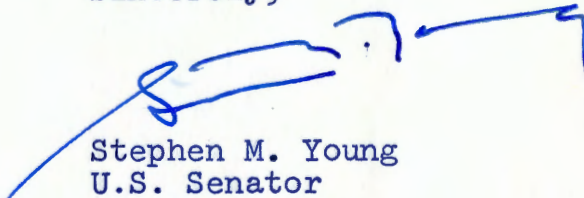
Dear Mr. Geisey:

Thank you very much for the
statement you wrote me.

I am very glad to have this.

With every good wish to you.

Sincerely,



Stephen M. Young
U.S. Senator

Y/g