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(912 words)

On April 30, 1970 President Nixon announced his decision to invade Cambodia. Due to these events many college students across the country stood up in protest. Tom Grace was one of the students to protest the expansion of the Vietnam War at Kent State University. On May 4 around noon a demonstration he attended turned deadly when the National Guard fired into the crowd killing four and wounding nine. Tom Grace was one of the wounded, suffering a shattered foot from a gunshot wound.

OT - Tom Grace's story tells of the events that lead him to be at that May 4th demonstration. It was just an average day for him, as average as it could get in the midst of all the chaos. He recounts getting ready to take a history exam with his girlfriend, Nancy. Because of the vast amount of distractions his professor excused anyone that felt unprepared, so Nancy went back to her dorm, leaving Tom to take his exam. After remembering that there was a noon day demonstration, Tom ~~breaks~~ his promise to Nancy to meet her directly after he finished his history examination and attends the demonstration instead.

The events experienced by Tom Grace marked a turning point for him personally, sparking a fire in him that lead to a greater involvement in protesting the war in Vietnam. Tom Grace says "I honestly can't say that the Kent State shootings altered my political perspective. But it did reinforce an existing one and the anger I felt about it was my political fuel. It really kept me going." (Appy, pg388-389) These events motivated him to not only be a part of more demonstrations but to be more actively involved by handing out pamphlets, making speeches, running meetings and writing handbills and eventually becoming more involved in politics even after the war.

like Tom Grace's recount of the Kent shootings gave insight into an excellent example of a turning point not only for him personally but for many other college students around the country as well. In an earlier story by Deirdre English she states "...Kent State happened, and a whole new atmosphere of seriousness took hold. We began to wonder if the government was not only at war with the Vietnamese, but would go to war with America's own youth." (Appy, pg31) Like Tom Grace many of the anti-war protesters used the Kent State shootings as fuel for their anger. Not only was America attacking the North Vietnamese but they were starting to attack its youth as well, and many saw this as a sign that things needed to change, something needed to be done, and the violence needed to

their own

end. In America's Longest War Herring writes "More than 100,000 demonstrations gathered in Washington the first week of May to protest Cambodia and Kent State. Students at 350 colleges and universities went on strike, and 500 schools were closed down to avert further violence. The Kent State killings provoked outbreaks even at normally conservative and placid institutions." (pg293) The effects of the Kent State shootings went far and wide throughout the country, causing some to change their political views of the war and reinforcing already held political views like those of Tom Grace.

Soon after the incident at Kent State in 1970, the Pentagon Papers were published. Leaked by Daniel Ellsberg, who started to photocopy the documents in 1969, and published by news papers such as the New York Times in 1971, these papers brought to life the reality of Vietnam policies of past presidents, Kennedy and Johnson. "...a history of decision making in Vietnam based on secret Defense Department documents ... The Documents confirmed what critics of the war had long been arguing, among other points that Kennedy and Johnson had consistently mislead the public about their intentions in Vietnam." (Herring, pg299) Daniel Ellsberg tells of his moral dilemma of choosing between loyalty to his government and the best interest of the people that the government serves. He explains all the events leading up to his decision to leak the papers as well as Nixon's paranoia that eventually lead to the Watergate break in and ended his presidency. As another interviewee of Appy, Alexander M. Haig JR., claims "Certain elements of Watergate- like the Pentagon Papers leakage- led Nixon to undertake protective measures which, when added to the break-in of the Democratic Campaign Headquarters in 1972, really proved fatal in the long run." (pg 402)

Being labeled "The most dangerous man in America" by Kissinger to Nixon (Appy, pg 432), Daniel Ellsberg was one of the few to actually read in its entirety, seven thousand pages, the Pentagon Papers. In his interview with Christian Appy he says it "stripped away all legitimate rationales for what we were doing" in Vietnam (pg432). With the publication of these papers it opened up many eyes to the pointlessness of the United State's involvement in the Vietnam War, and the deception of past presidents to keep us there for political gain. They demonstrated the extent past presidents have gone to, to ensure their reelection and the sacrifices of American, as well as South Vietnamese lives to achieve their, seemingly meaningless, political goals. Not only were the Pentagon Papers the beginning of the end of Nixon's presidency but it was the end of America's acceptance to sacrifice their sons, brothers, fathers, and husbands, to what was widely believe as a pointless war.

So you did try to write part 2 on the real end of the war? ... but you did a excellent job. One of the best & ~~well~~ well cited papers I've read this time
* excellent Art