

Charlie Company, exposure and investigation, public reaction, and culpability for the action. The majority of these selections are drawn from the Peers Commission report and they document the vagueness of military orders for sweeping the village, as well as providing specific accusations against Capt. Ernest Medina and Lt. William Calley. Sworn statements from members of Charlie Company and surviving Vietnamese villagers offer more than a story of frustrated and frightened soldiers overreacting to an ambiguous situation; testimonies reveal organized rapes and calculated murders. Efforts at the highest military levels to conceal the crime tarnished the army's image and made further pursuit of wartime goals even more difficult. The punishment of Lt. Calley exacerbated the debate when critics labeled him a mere scapegoat who was used by superiors to protect their own careers and the reputation of the U.S. Army.

Despite the obvious evil associated with the My Lai Massacre, editors Olson and Roberts do an excellent job of assembling important documents to generate new lines of thoughtful discussion. They especially direct reader attention to issues of culpability and the fundamental question about the "rules of conduct" in a guerrilla war where identities of friends and enemies often blur. The book is user-friendly and is aimed primarily at college students, but it can also be utilized in high school classes and can be read with interest by a broader adult audience. Courses in Recent America, Military History, Ethics, and even American History survey classes serve as a logical forums for adoption. The editors provide a list of twenty-one questions for reader consideration, as well as an authoritative list of suggested readings and a detailed index. Teachers hoping to generate provocative classroom discussions and those who wish to assign short writing assignments on controversial topics should strongly consider this book. It stands as one of the best volumes in the rapidly expanding Bedford Series.

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**William A. Gordon.** *Four Dead in Ohio: Was There a Conspiracy at Kent State?* Laguna Hills, CA: North Ridge Books, 1995. Pp. 301. Paper, \$13.95; ISBN 0-937813-05-2.

The title of William A. Gordon's book about the 1970 tragedy at Kent State University clearly indicates to the reader the author's approach to the topic. Born near Kent, Ohio, Gordon attended Kent State and this obviously sparked his interest in the topic. While it is apparent that he spent much time researching the events of May 1970, his lack of historical expertise presents a clouded view of the tragedy. Gordon's authorship of two Hollywood tour guides are his only other listed credentials. He claims that no history professors at Kent State would even discuss the tragedy with him. As Gordon explains the roadblocks he encountered in writing this book, the

reader only becomes more convinced that the author failed to accurately analyze the evidence and only pursued avenues that would support his belief of a conspiracy. In other words, the lack of evidence to prove the innocence of those involved means that they are all guilty--hardly the conclusion of someone sifting through all the facts and not just the ones that support his hypothesis. Gordon's unclear citations make it even more difficult for readers to follow the trail of evidence.

Having pointed out these major weaknesses of the author's approach, the book has some merit for students because of the primary source material included. The chronology of the "four days in May," the photographs of National Guardsmen and students, interview transcripts, and the annotated bibliography provide a good starting point for those wanting to investigate the Kent State tragedy. It is also a good opportunity to teach students how to detect an author's bias and the limitations of having a closed-minded approach to a topic. The author's writing style, however, is short and choppy, and this limits the analytical aspect of the text. In other words, evidence is presented and the author expects the reader to automatically agree with his assertions without further explanation.

So, while the author presents a good deal of information, the poor analysis limits its usefulness. This book should only be assigned to graduate students and some upper-level undergraduates. Any professor could easily cull some good information from this book for lectures since he or she will have the historical background to adequately evaluate the evidence. In Part One of the text, Gordon discusses the actual events of May 1970, the search for "smoking guns," and asks "Who Burned ROTC?" In Part Two, the author follows up the events with information about the "early cover-up," the "struggle for justice," and reopening the investigation. Gordon then explains his view of the prosecution of the National Guardsmen, the civil trials, and then presents some final thoughts for the reader. The appendices include excerpts from interviews with John Ehrlichman, President Nixon's chief domestic advisor, and Colonel Fassinger, the commander of the National Guard troops at Kent State. Approached with caution, this book can be useful for professors and some of their students who are interested in the Kent State tragedy.

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