



JUST FOR THE RECORD

by Dennis Barker



Crosby Stills Nash & Young *OHIO*



In 1970, I was dodging the war in Viet Nam and hiding from Dick Nixon's draft board, in of all places, the Marine Corps Reserves. As it turned out, most of my fellow weekend warriors were doing exactly the same thing. With the exception of a handful of guys who had done a tour and were finishing their enlistment in our unit, we were mostly a motley assortment of middle class kids, who, for one reason or another couldn't find another deferment. We wore wigs to hide our long hair, and spent much of our "drill" time drinking, playing poker, and trying to look invisible. Any real training or discipline we had acquired during active duty had long disappeared. No, we were not the kind of guys that would be your first choice to send in to an unpredictable, explosive situation. Especially with live rounds. My assumption is that things were about the same in the Ohio State National Guard. However, Ohio Governor Jim Rhodes did exactly that.

"They're the worst type of people that we harbor in America. I think that we're up against the strongest, well-trained, militant, revolutionary group that has ever assembled in America."

Ohio Governor, Jim Rhodes



Subsequently, on May 4th, 1970, members of the Ohio National Guard, were inadvisably ordered to the Kent State campus to squelch what was a peaceful gathering of students, exercising their constitutional right to protest the draft, US incursions into Cambodia, and the continuing American involvement in Viet Nam. Guardsmen, as disorganized as the protesters they faced, and finding themselves unable to disperse the demonstrators with gas, inexplicably turned, fixed bayonets and fired their M1 Garand rifles into the crowd. The volley would expend 13 second and 67 bullets, and brutally extinguish the lives of four students, wounding 9 more. Of the four students killed, only *Allison Krause* and *Jeffrey Miller*, had participated in the protest, two others, *Sandra Scheuer* and *William Schroeder*, were merely walking from one class to the next at the time of their deaths.



The killings at Kent State would provide the momentum that would inexorably turn the American middle against the war. Photo's of the event would set off an unprecedented series of student strikes and protests, reinforcing the country's anti-war sentiments. Students at NYU hung a banner that read "they can't kill us all", and folk rock band Crosby Stills Nash & Young released a record that would rally the youth movement.

*"What if you knew her and found her dead on the ground? How can you run when you know?".....There are few worse stains on the psyche of Americans coming of age during the 1970's, than the blood stained ground of the Kent State campus, and the senseless murder of American citizens by the US military. Crosby Stills Nash & Young's "Ohio", marks one of America's darkest moments during the Viet Nam war, and the song's rhythmic chant of "Four dead in "O-hi-o" would become an anthem for a nation angered by what had happened at Kent State, and the government suppression on the anti-war movement. Written by band member Neil Young, after seeing photos of the occurrence in Life magazine, the song was quickly recorded, and along with *Find The Cost of Freedom*, a Steven Stills war protest composition, was rushed into production and would be on the air within weeks of the event.*



"Ohio" would solidify CSN&Y's place as spokesmen for the war resistance movement, and earn them a distinctive place among American youth. PEACE, BABY!

Crosby Stills Nash & Young: *Ohio*

Atlantic # 2740 (RELEASED JUNE 1970)

Goldmine record album price guide values original copies of *Ohio*, with original picture sleeve, in near mint condition, at \$12.00

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