

Where Are the Vicious Vandals of Yesteryear?

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Abstract

On March 15, 1970, a group of 45 professors on the faculty of the State University of New York at Buffalo (SUNY/Buffalo) – *ad hoc* activists – held a sit-in in the Hayes Hall offices of the President of the University. The objective of the sit-in was to convince the acting president to reverse his action bringing City of Buffalo police onto campus to control student demonstrations opposing the Vietnam War. Although the Faculty 45 failed in this objective, their arrest helped educate them on the measures of surveillance, control and intimidation available to governmental and institutional authorities to discourage conscience-driven activism in support of their students.

Introduction

This is an account of an activist group with fluid membership that arose spontaneously in response to fast-moving events, with scarce concern for or access to measures for privacy and secure internal communication.

The events at the heart of this story unfolded over just four days culminating in the arrest on charges of criminal trespass of forty-five faculty of SUNY/Buffalo, a major U. S. university. We will endeavor to present concisely elements of the background – historical and immediate – that provide context for what occurred.

Historical Background

When, in 1962, the University of Buffalo was incorporated into the State University of New York system, it marked a dramatic change in the nature and public perception of the university. Prior to its elevation to the status of contender for the title of “Berkeley of the East,” the University of Buffalo had been a well-regarded midsize educational institution that enjoyed the affections of the Western New York communities it largely served, an ornament of their domestic hearth.

With its incorporation into the SUNY system and the evident aspirations for national prominence, perception of the university underwent a process of change, slow at first but accelerating over time. The demographics of the student body were no longer tilted so heavily

toward the surrounding area of Western New York. The infusion of substantial numbers of students from New York City and its suburbs resulted in an increase of student activism on campus in opposition to the war in Vietnam, a development viewed with little sympathy by the local populace and regional press. Popular sympathy sided decisively with civic and institutional authorities in dealing with anti-war demonstrations on- and off-campus. Reflecting this sentiment, the Buffalo police force was notably aggressive when called upon to intervene in anti-war protests.

During 1966 and -67, University actions bearing on the Vietnam War sparked campus demonstrations – picketing, marches, and a small-scale sit-in of short duration – in which students and small contingents of faculty participated. The university's decisions to administer on campus the Selective Service Qualification Test (to determine students' eligibility for draft deferment) and permit recruitment on campus by the Dow Chemical Company, notorious for the manufacture of napalm used against both military targets and civilian populations, were two of the touch papers for attempts by campus activists to disrupt university sanctioned activities seen as supporting the war. None of these early incidents resulted in Buffalo police being called to quell disruptions on campus.

More Immediate Factors – The Hysterical Background

In summer 1968, however, an incident off campus became the catalyst that touched off renewed demonstrations and eventually resulted in the presence of Buffalo police on campus. After burning his draft card, Bruce Beyer and a group of supporters sought symbolic sanctuary against arrest for draft evasion in the Unitarian Universalist Church not far from the Main Street campus. On August 19th, FBI agents, U.S. marshals, and Buffalo City police entered the church to arrest Beyer. Encountering resistance, Beyer and eight of his supporters were arrested for assault although they themselves were assaulted during the course of their arrests. The group became known as the Buffalo 9. Though not SUNY/Buffalo students, the stand taken by Beyer and the Buffalo 9 was actively supported by anti-war students and faculty at the university.

Through a mutual acquaintance, I met one of the 9, Raymond Malak. Malak was a Vietnam veteran, a soft-spoken young man who impressed me as sensitive, intelligent, gentle, but deeply committed to the anti-war movement. I was also struck by the bruises he bore on his face as a consequence of the arrests.

When Beyer was convicted at trial in February 1969, the campus erupted in a series of demonstrations that culminated in the occupation of Hayes Hall by more than 500 students. University president Martin Meyerson applied for and was granted a court order to end the sit-in. When 150 City of Buffalo police arrived on campus to enforce the court order, the protesters left the building, ending the demonstration.

Meyerson's initiative was approved *post facto* by the Faculty Senate, an action that provided a precedent for further recourse to use of city police in response to student protests.

This was particularly significant given that Meyerson announced in early September that he was taking a leave of absence for the 1969-70 academic year, with the result that Dr. Peter Regan, a professor of psychology with modest administrative experience, was placed in charge as interim president. Inevitably, the presence of Buffalo police on campus remained a contentious matter both for students and a sizable minority of faculty.

Throughout the fall of 1969, fueled by national events (the first Vietnam moratorium in October) and controversies on campus (relating variously to research funded by the Department of Defense, racial disparities in admission to the UB School of Medicine, and a boycott by African American athletes on the UB Basketball team), there were sporadic disruptions of normal university activities including instances of vandalism.

After the January 1970 announcement that Martin Meyerson was leaving the university to assume the presidency of the University of Pennsylvania, campus demonstrations continued. When students staged a sit-in causing cancellation of a UB men's basketball game, city police were again called in to clear the gym where the game was to be played. Inquiries failed to disclose on whose authority the police had been called. Further, the call appeared to have circumvented the UB Security Task Force, a faculty/student advisory group the administration had committed to contact before authorizing the presence of city police, further straining relations among students, faculty and administration.

As a result, the university chapter of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) held a rally to discuss the previous evening's events that ended with a march to Acting President Regan's office to put the question of authorization directly to him. When Regan refused to meet with them, some of the marchers vandalized the president's office. Regan called Campus Police to arrest the rock-throwing vandals who had fled to the nearby Norton Union. After the arrest of three students, the Buffalo Police Tactical Patrol Unit was summoned to clear Norton Union. In the ensuing scuffles, both students and police sustained injuries. University property and police vehicles were damaged.

In the atmosphere inflamed by fresh injuries inflicted by the police on students, it was predictable that the recursive process would spawn yet another instantiation. The following evening, more than 1000 students gathered for a rally in Norton Union, after which several hundred sought to confront President Regan in Hayes Hall. Not finding him "at home," the students availed themselves of the nearest "target of opportunity," a small group of Campus and City Police guarding Clark Gym. Students attacked the police, forcing them to retreat from campus under a hail of ice, rocks and other missiles. In response, a 70-strong contingent of Erie County Sheriff's deputies in riot gear arrived on campus. By now, a much larger crowd of students had gathered. A really dangerous confrontation was circumvented by the timely intervention of the University Vice President for Student Affairs, Richard Siggelkow, who convinced the deputies to leave campus after which the crowd of students dispersed.

On March 1st, Acting President Regan made a televised address to the public in which he blamed campus disorders on a small cadre of “vicious vandals,” Nonetheless, the campus remained in a state of ferment with threats of a large-scale student strike that began with wide participation but ultimately failed to take hold. The university was operating under an injunction prohibiting protests on campus as well as the continuing threat of occupation by City of Buffalo police. The injunction notwithstanding, students repeatedly blockaded Hayes Hall. In several of the ensuing confrontations, police used nightsticks on demonstrators, once chasing students into the Norton (Student) Union, beating protestors and bystanders who happened to be in the Union at that moment.

As all these events unfolded, local community sentiment and that of state and local legislators was strongly opposed to student protests and emphatically supportive of intervention by police to end the student strike, the blockades of Hayes Hall and to restore normal university functions. Intensifying these tensions were the dynamics of national political currents. Nelson Rockefeller, the incumbent governor of New York State, had ambitions of running for President of the United States. Since he represented the liberal (i.e., “permissive”) wing of the Republican party, he was under pressure to demonstrate his *bona fides* as a “law and order” candidate. So, it was unlikely that he would act as mediator in the situation.

This outside political pressure made it almost certain that City Police were again going to be called to patrol the university campus. On the one hand this prompted renewed efforts to widen the scope of the student strike and encouraged the more extreme among student protestors to take further provocative actions. On the other the administration hardened its position insisting on an immediate end to campus unrest and rebuffed efforts by faculty to conciliate or lower the temperature of the mood on campus. It was clear that the situation was becoming a vortex of inexorable escalation.

On Sunday, March 8th, 400 Buffalo police arrived on campus at the summons of Acting President Regan, with orders to institute round-the-clock patrols. The sense of being on the cusp of a volatile and dangerous confrontation encouraged efforts by different groups of faculty and students to urge restraint on the part of the administration in calling for deployment of police on campus. In general, Regan resisted calls to meet with students from the strike movement or with faculty attempting to find a path of conciliation. In their turn, leaders of the strike declared they would not meet with representatives of the administration until the injunction against campus protest was lifted and the police on campus withdrawn.

The Run-Up to Sit-In Sunday

In response to the heightened tensions and deteriorating conditions on the occupied campus, the full Faculty Senate met on Wednesday, March 11th. The meeting was held off-campus at the Buffalo War Memorial Auditorium (also the home of two new professional teams in 1970 – the Buffalo Sabres NHL hockey team, and the Buffalo Braves, an NBA basketball franchise). Approximately 700 faculty participated. Students who attended as observers were

seated in the upper level of the arena. For faculty who could not attend in person, there was an audio feed of the proceedings broadcast in the Cinema of Norton Union on the main campus.

The Faculty Senate discussed the contentious atmosphere and the presence of Buffalo police on campus, as well as the policies and actions of Interim President Regan and his administration. Although Regan announced to the meeting that he was planning a “phased withdrawal” of the police, the Senate voted in favor of a motion for the immediate removal of police from campus. A subsequent motion of no confidence in the administration was defeated by a vote of 263 to 417, leading to a cascade of jeers from students in the “nosebleed seats.”

For my part, taking in the audio feed in the Union, the proceedings were highly unsatisfactory. There seemed no sense of urgency to the discussion of police on campus, whereas I had begun to fear that we were heading in a direction where the likelihood of an incident resulting in police firing their weapons at a group of students was now plausible. This was an opinion shared by several colleagues from my department who were present. It seems that this fear was shared by others that afternoon because as I left the Cinema I ran after a couple of colleagues whom I recognized and proposed that we constitute a “rump session” of the Senate, contact as many like-minded colleagues and meet urgently to discuss taking action to forestall a potentially unthinkable outcome.

[Interpolation: At the time, the university having rapidly outgrown its Main Street (now, South) Campus, was planning and designing its future campus to be located in the Buffalo suburb of Amherst. In the meantime, it was necessary to move some departments – Computer Science, Theoretical Biology, Mathematics, Philosophy, Statistics, Anthropology, Art, Political Science, Biophysics, Medical Technology and the Computing Center – to a temporary location, about two miles away on Ridge Lea Road off Niagara Falls Road in Amherst.]

Since my department, Mathematics, was one of those “exiled” to the Ridge Lea interim campus that was virtually deserted during the weekend, I could guarantee the availability of a classroom accommodating more than 80 people. So, we made a hasty agreement to hold our meeting on Saturday morning in the Mathematics building, in the meantime making contact by word of mouth with as many colleagues favorably disposed to the initiative as we could.

The yield on our improvised organizing was pretty good. The room was nearly full. Not every one of the 45 was there on Saturday morning and some who did attend were not among the 45. The latter included the university’s well-known Marxist historian, who in spite of my invocation of the bloodshed on the Odessa Steps, had probably concluded (correctly, as it turned out) that conditions were not quite ripe for the Revolution. But those who were convinced of the danger to our students did, in fact, reach agreement to meet at Hayes Hall early in the afternoon the next day and occupy the President’s office.

What Actually Happened

At about 1 P.M. on Sunday, March 15th, 1970, our group of approximately fifty SUNY/ Buffalo faculty and students peacefully entered the offices of the President of the University. We were there to protest the presence of City of Buffalo police on campus, fearing that intensification of violence between police and student protestors would lead to serious injury or death of students.

Although the building, Hayes Hall, and the presidential suite were both open, neither the actual president, Martin Meyerson, nor his interim replacement, Professor Peter F. Regan, was present. (Meyerson was on leave. In January, it had been announced that he would become president of the University of Pennsylvania, effective June 1970.)

Our group was met by Vice President Edward Doty and other administrators who requested that we leave, warning the group that we would be arrested for trespassing if we refused. Upon this warning, several members of the group left. The forty-five faculty who remained said we would stay until the police were removed from campus and amnesty given to students previously arrested for nonviolent protest. Very little dialogue occurred between the faculty protestors and administrators present. Several of us sat at tables, others stood around. One of our number, Raymond Federman, a survivor from World War II France, read aloud from texts pertinent to the situation.

Eventually the police arrived, the 45 faculty were arrested and transported in several police vans to the 16th Precinct station on Bailey Avenue where we were booked and jailed. To sustain the spirits of the prisoners, Federman, in the cell adjoining mine, began to sing ballads associated with the French resistance in World War II. Sometime in early evening, lunch – a sandwich (one slice of bologna on cheap white bread) and a powdered sugar doughnut – was distributed. Other than that, nothing memorable happened during the five or so hours we were detained.

Later that evening, we were brought down from our cells to the front desk of the precinct where a group of student volunteers from the UB Law School were arranging for our release on our own recognizance. I personally never learned who it was that set this initiative in motion.

From the Eye of the Beholder

When I returned home the night of our arrest, the anxiety caused by our detention was quickly dispelled, for our two grade-school children at least, by their delight at the unexpected treat of a “jail food” sandwich and doughnut. In the days that followed, there were a few other sources of simple satisfaction for them: “Your father is one of the 45? Oh, wooww!!”

But not all the attention our arrest provoked was quite as innocent. This was 1970, before cell phones. It was the era of telephone directories revised and published annually and

before it was common to have an unlisted number. Thus, when both the Buffalo newspapers – the *Courier Express* and the *Evening News* published our names and addresses on the front page, the harassing phone calls began. My wife must have fielded most of these but if they caused her serious anxiety, she never betrayed it to me.

Fortunately, also, this was 1970, a time when anger concerning political affiliation or philosophical stance (for example, about the Vietnam war) did not commonly get played out violently or murderously. In fact, the only cross burned on my front lawn that spring was a prank played by two of my best beloved graduate students in revenge for my having confiscated pair of handsome leather gloves and a beautiful scarf as forfeit for their impertinent behavior at a graduate student party that evening. (I still have the scarf, Joe, but the gloves seem to have vanished somewhere along the way these past fifty-four years. Sorry, Howie.)

There was, however, a brace of phone calls that I picked up that were troubling, given my tendency to mild paranoia about running afoul of more remote governmental authorities. The voice on the other end was that of a woman, a particularly attractive and charming voice. The woman introduced herself as an agent for the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and provided some information that convinced me that this was the case. After a little misdirection in the conversation, she began to probe my knowledge of the activities of others among the Faculty 45. In the end, I gathered that she was tacitly offering me some sort of immunity from auditing or investigation in return for information that might put others among the group in the IRS searchlight. She was persistent enough to make contact three times, which conveyed that this was not an idle line of inquiry. But I was completely in the dark as to which among my colleagues might have been targets of this fishing expedition. Or why my interlocutor thought I might be a source of damning information on anyone. On the other hand, like the first time I crossed an international border in the presence of guards armed with machine guns at the ready, this was a sobering experience the effect of which was not short-lived. Moreover, if any other of my colleagues was the target of the same sort of harassment, they were as discreet as I was in not disclosing the matter to any but my most intimate friends.

On April 14th, a judge of the State Supreme Court found us guilty of contempt and sentenced us to 30 days in jail. Imposition of the sentence was stayed pending the outcome of the appeal filed by our lawyers. Apparently, our case was one of some significance since we were represented by noted First Amendment lawyer, Herald Price Fahringer.

Although there was a certain reassurance in having Fahringer plead our case, it also raised the question of how we would meet the expensive legal costs of the appeal. Without any apparent coordination, there were several strategies at play. Edgar Z. Friedenberg, well-known author and professor of sociology at SUNY/Buffalo published a letter in the *New York Review of Books*, describing the events surrounding our arrest, denouncing the role of the administration, and soliciting contributions to a defense fund for the 45. Also, Michael Frisch of the UB history department, front man of the instantly prominent group, Vizzy Goth and His Vicious Vandals, released a 45-rpm record of his song, “Hayes Hall Blues,” recorded on the 45 Revolutions Per

Minute label with fellow musician Charles Keil, both members of the 45, with proceeds from its sale going to our defense.

My “World Tour”

Innocent (as I remain to this day) of any sense of the adequacy of the funds available for our defense, impatient of a summer of inactivity in this regard, and astonished at the apparent universal indifference to what Edgar Friedenberg had characterized as “an action without parallel in any of the many tumultuous confrontations that have marked academic life recently,” I resolved to set out in my car and visit any university or college that would extend an invitation for me to give a talk laying out the background to our action and the threat to academic freedom posed by SUNY/Buffalo’s response to our peaceful protest. In the interim:

On Monday, May 4th, troops of the Ohio National Guard, patrolling the campus of Kent State University after several days of anti-war rioting, fired into groups of protesting students, killing four and injuring nine others. None of the students was armed.

Just after midnight, Friday, May 15th, city and state police confronted a group of students outside a dormitory of Jackson (Mississippi) State College (now Jackson State University). Police opened fire killing two students and injuring twelve others.

In the end, I received invitations from four Pennsylvania universities and colleges: Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania State University in State College, Bucknell University in Lewisburg, and Lehigh University in Bethlehem (listed in the order I visited them). My last thought as I left on my world tour was the caution we all received from our legal team as we left the courtroom on our release pending the result of our appeal after we were convicted: “You are not prohibited from talking about your case. Just don’t say or do anything that could cause a demonstration or a riot!”

The small audiences at Juniata and Lehigh, the first and last of my talks, listened with interest to my account of the events at SUNY/Buffalo, responded with questions that led to a short discussion but otherwise were quiet, reflective events.

At the Penn State main campus, the audience was, fortuitously and completely unexpectedly, enormous. I had phoned a friend from graduate school, Scott Williams, who had been appointed to a two-year assistant professorship at Penn State upon completing his doctorate. I asked if he could find a venue and an audience for me to present a talk about the situation at Buffalo. He assured me he would try and, in addition, wanted me to meet some of his colleagues in the mathematics department. So, I drove up from Huntingdon to State College expecting to meet a small group of mathematicians and others from Scott’s circle of acquaintances for a talk similar to the one I had just given at tiny Juniata College.

When I arrived, it didn't seem as though Scott (characteristically laid back while I was wound tight as a drum) had done much of anything, but, in fact, he had discovered that there was a public meeting scheduled for that evening at which some activist groups were going to discuss responses to the Kent State killings and the war in Vietnam. He arranged with one of the conveners for me to have a few minutes at the beginning of the meeting to talk about our arrests and the situation in Buffalo. The meeting was scheduled for 8 PM in a room in one of the buildings not far from the building where Scott had his office. After visiting in his office, we walked over to the venue for the first time a few minutes before 8.

Boom!!!! We entered at the back of a very long room with an elevated stage across the front, a room wide enough to have a center aisle with rows of about 12 seats either side. The room was almost full, with some people already standing at the back and on the floor. When I got to the stage and looked out on the hall, it seemed as though there must be 800 people in the audience, maybe more. Recalling the warning from our attorneys, I had a sudden flash of the scene from *Modern Times* when Charlie Chaplin, the innocent tramp, picks up the red warning flag that's just dropped off the back of a turning longbed and, rounding the corner to run after the truck, finds himself at the head of a parade of militant workers just as it is set upon by the baton-wielding police.

Improving on Chaplin's riot-police were the two attentive men in identical suits of an improbable green fabric, one in each of the far back corners of the hall, looking for all the world like FBI agents, there to surveil and record whatever was about to happen. I was completely spooked. When I was introduced, identified as one of the Buffalo Faculty 45 to a few cheers from the audience and began to speak, an involuntary automatic process kicked in. I gave a speech lasting ten or fifteen minutes in which I managed to say everything that I had wanted to cover in my presentation, but in such a convoluted manner that, among everyone present in the hall, I was likely the only one who actually understood what I was saying. I don't think I saluted my two friends, the recording angels in the back corners of the hall, a missed opportunity I acutely regret.

It was, emphatically, not a speech I was proud of. I think I left the stage bathed in sweat and retain, to this day, no memory of the rest of the evening or almost anything else, till I was behind the wheel of my car the next day, on my way to Lewisburg.

That drive I recall clearly because it took me on a familiar highway, PA Route 45, along a ridge running gently northeast with views on either side over beautiful valley farm- and woodlands to the next parallel southwest- to northeast-running ridge. It was a luminous spring day, the air sweet, the trees in blossom, the countryside beautiful as in a dream. All the tension and anxiety of the previous day flowed out of me as I drove. I felt idiotically as though I was under a spell, traveling through an impossible innocent and unspoiled America – no flaming, divided populace, no home-brewed violence, no Vietnam war – you had to be there.

Nor was the spell broken by the welcome I received at Bucknell. People were warm, cordial, welcoming, enthusiastically awaiting my talk. This time it was to be in a nice terraced classroom – wide but not terribly deep, with windows at the back, seating about a hundred, filled and featuring the reassuring presence of the two guys in suits (new ones I think, the suits not that appalling green this time), one on each side, attentive, probably recording every word, but comforting, as if confirming the identification I had tentatively made the night before.

This time, feeling on familiar ground, the anxiety gone, no lapse marred my talk. From the initial evocation of the battered face of gentle Raymond Malak after the arrest of the Buffalo 9, to the corrosive effect of the surrounding local and national political environment, through the administration's willful obliviousness to the possibility of murderous violence being visited on students by their irresponsible dependence on deploying hostile armed police on campus, and the exaggerated rhetoric used to characterize the threat to civilization posed by our quiet, almost apologetic gesture, everything fit together like a well-joined chair. The angel of good words spoke into my ear as I ended my presentation with the luminous vision of a peaceable America inspired by the journey to Lewisburg earlier that afternoon. It was unquestionably the most inspired and effective speech I have ever given. Even now, it wonders me how the world has gone so far wrong from the perfect state it achieved that evening.

Coursera Avant la Lettre

One last experience of arrest-induced paranoia is worth relating. That summer, I was asked by the head of graduate studies in the social sciences to create a ten-week course for grad students in those disciplines covering as much of a background in calculus and linear algebra as would fit in that compass and be useful for the students to have in their kit bag in preparation for reading mathematically grounded papers in their fields. It was a task very much to my taste and, in the circumstances, a great blessing. The pedagogical challenge of composing a condensed, integrated syllabus for students sophisticated in their own disciplines but with scant exposure to quantitative methods; the challenge in the classroom of gauging the pace and pitch of the exposition to create a bridge from the students' initial level of understanding to the point where we could discuss convincing applications of mathematics to problems familiar to them; both served to help me set aside for the moment the anxiety and preoccupations stemming from our arrests. And working out the details of the experiment with this particular group of students proved to be a real delight. The class had a wonderfully reactive and forthcoming collective personality that transformed what could have been grinding and lifeless three-hour sessions into what seemed more like a series of gatherings of congenial acquaintances engaged in an engrossing common pursuit.

This is the enduring impression that remains with me from that summer. And it lends a starkly contrasting note to the one apparently discordant detail in the story. On the afternoon of our first meeting, one of the students approached me to speak privately before we convened. He was tall, fit, perhaps in his mid-50's, so a good bit older than all the other students – a good bit older than me for that matter. He gave his name (which ungratefully, I no longer remember)

and identified himself as a senior officer in the U.S. Army – no longer on active duty, either retired or still in the reserves. (Again, memory is furtive. Let me refer to him as Major A.)

His request startled me. Major A. was asking my permission to bring a high-quality tape recorder to class to take a verbatim record of the lectures and discussion as an aid for him to master the course material. Mathematics was a subject that had been off his radar for a long time, so, as he told me, he approached the course with a certain apprehension.

In the circumstances, it was hard to exclude the possibility that this was a set-up. On the other hand, Major A. carried himself with such civility and amiability that, after considering it for a minute or so, I agreed to his request. The immediate effect was liberating. No need for me to “look over my shoulder” all summer: I had agreed to put everything that happened in the classroom “on the record.” I believe it had the same salutary effect on everyone in the class. It removed any consideration of my “special status” from all our minds.

Pedagogically and spiritually, the class was a spectacular success – one of the best experiences I have had as a teacher. And there was one more blessing to come.

At the end of the summer, I got on my bicycle and left for a two-week solo ride through Ontario to Manitoulin Island and back. A month or so later, Major A. came to visit at our family home and, as he had promised, delivered a much-prized gift: a box containing a duplicate set of the reel-to-reel tapes containing every minute of our class’ work together. Thus, if ever I harbor any doubts about the quality of my teaching, all I need to do is get out our old tape machine, find two rubber spindle caps and dig into the box to hear what a really satisfying “teaching and learning” environment sounds like.

Concluding Thoughts

It’s difficult for me to imagine what a modern practitioner makes of this tale from ancient history – especially in regard to the topics around which the RECAP workshop is primarily organized – surveillance, communications security, or even activism.

Given that the Faculty 45 constituted itself spontaneously and acted in haste, it isn’t surprising that the group was not very tightly knit. Secure communications could hardly have been a serious consideration in advance of the sit-in. Afterwards the loose sense of affiliation among the 45 was an obstacle to contemplating steps in that direction.

Nor were the 45 an activist group in the usual construction of the term. The common thread connecting us was the palpable fear that harm would come to our students from the actions of police on campus – and, **importantly, in differentiating the 45 from many other colleagues also conscious of the danger, the sense of urgency impelling us to take some public action to try to forestall a murderous outcome.**

The modes of surveillance and reprisal available at the time were simple, blunt and effective. As I left the stage after my speech at Penn State, I was appalled at how easily I had been spooked by the presence of FBI agents and the vague threat of legal consequences and therefore relinquished the opportunity to speak forthrightly about the importance of events and our arrests at Buffalo.

Perhaps the principal things which give me personal satisfaction in this story are 1) the fact that I recognized (or overestimated?) the real and immediate danger that existed on campus in real time; and 2) that, leaving the audio feed of the Faculty Senate meeting, I responded to my sense of distress by taking immediate action to precipitate the weekend meeting that led to the Faculty 45 sit-in.

A Note on Sources

For clarity as to the chronology of events described above, places, (numbers and identity of) participants, and pertinent details, I have had reference to the following sources:

University at Buffalo/University Libraries – Campus Unrest: Timeline and Photos |1968-1969| | Spring 1970| at <https://research.lib.buffalo.edu/campus-unrest/timeline> , last accessed 15 March, 2024.

Sarah Handley-Cousins and Averill Earls, The Vietnam War, Protest, and Liberal Academia: The Buffalo 9, podcast transcript at <https://digpodcast.org/2017/08/27/buffalo-nine/> , last accessed 15 March, 2024.

Edgar Z. Friedenbergs Letter to the *New York Review of Books* is found at <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1970/04/23/trouble-in-buffalo/> , accessed 18 March, 2024.

For the rest, I have relied (!) on my own memory of these events and the recollections, over the years, of two of my three colleagues from the Mathematics Department of SUNY/ Buffalo at the time, Jean-Claude B. Dérderian and Milton Parnes, also arrested as members of the Faculty 45. (Isn't it somehow lovely that 4 of the 45 were mathematicians? The count is actually 5 since Luigi Bianchi qualifies.) I have also relied on the accurate recollections of my beloved editor and companion of many years, Phyllis Marie Giuliano Fleischman, who would have applied her editorial red pencil to this manuscript with brutal and justified rigor had she not, during the evening of February 12th of this year, taken leave of our company for a remote island in one of the celestial hemispheres where there are no phones. (*Avec mes aimables remerciements*, Billy Collins.)

Considering the contingent and refractory nature of human memory, it seems only fair to close with the following declaration:

This memoir is presented in the spirit of the great French pataphysicien, Boris Vian. I refer specifically to the Foreword of his superb novel, *L'Écume des Jours* (*Mood Indigo*, in its English translation), paraphrased here appropriately enough as an Afterword:

... and the few pages of [narrative above] derive all their strength from the fact that this is a completely true story, since I imagined it from start to finish. Its specific material realization consists in projecting reality obliquely and enthusiastically onto another surface which is irregularly corrugated and thus distorts everything. As you can see, if ever there was a procedure that does us credit, this is it.