

Students

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Bergevin gave up hope. Rioters were rocking passing cars, starting fist fights and throwing beer bottles in the air. Someone even fired a bullet into the air.

"Once it really started going down," he said, "I had just given up trying to get those people out of there because I knew there was no way I was going to get anything done."

So why did several hundred mostly affluent students riot?

"I really don't know. It's like the whole: Why do drunk people gotta fight?" Bergevin said. "It seems like drunk people always have to get in fights, and it's never over anything substantial or reasonable. I think the kids were just out there."

Vifquain, who attended his party dressed as a hillbilly, has another theory.

"Half the people have masks on and paint, so they don't feel quite as responsible," he said.

Bergevin camped out on his neighbor's porch to keep an eye on his car, and the tear gas was his

first notion that the police had arrived.

When tear gas started to fly just before midnight, Bergevin decided to head home. His house was nearly empty when he entered. He and his roommates locked doors and closed windows to keep out the tear gas — and the people in the front yard who were choking on it.

Bieler knew the police were present but didn't understand how they chose the time to send in tear gas.

"They never reacted at the height of it," he said. "By the time that happened, most of the damage had already been done."

He speculated they may have been waiting for reinforcements. Bergevin would have preferred a different approach.

"I would have liked it if they would have come and talked to us a little earlier on," he said. "I think it would have helped a lot if there would have been a cop or two there with me saying, 'Yeah, you gotta leave. You guys gotta go.'"

"I can understand there were a

lot of kids there. I mean, I can understand, too, one of the reasons why they didn't want to move in."

The hosts were a little worried and felt overwhelmed after the riot.

"We figured there was probably going to be some fallout from that," Bieler said. "We had police by our house every day for about a week questioning us about the riot, questioning us about fights that had occurred in front of our house, trying to find out who the responsible parties were."

"Pretty much like three or four" days straight it would be the top story in the news. It was pretty hectic. We weren't sure what the legal repercussions were going to be for the riot."

Some were quick to blame, but the former roommates say that was unfair.

"I don't think that you can blame it all on the people that throw the party," Bergevin said. "From being there, from being on the side that did throw the party, it seemed like half the night I was sitting there worrying, trying to

contain the whole thing. I wasn't out there trying to get people all messed up and into a riot. I wanted people just to relax, cruise on in, have a beer, just kind of hang out. I mean, I didn't throw any bottles. I didn't kick down any signs, anything like that."

"I think everybody's kind of calmed down a little bit now and realized that it couldn't have been just us. It can't be just the fault of the guys that had the house."

Those who lived in that house were shocked by the riot in front of their house.

"That kind of came out of the blue," Vifquain said. "I figured everyone was having a good time. It's Halloween."

In spite of the police and media attention, Bergevin and Bieler are adamant that their party was not the cause of the riot.

"I don't think it was directly our party that caused it," Bergevin said. "We had a big party, and I mean basically it just got a bunch of really drunk kids together. I think it was a combination of things. It was Halloween night,

everybody was really rowdy and we had a big party going on. And then another huge wave of kids cruised over, and they were all just hanging out in the street."

"I still think those same kids who were tearing down street signs and stuff like that would have found other ways to bust things up, just by themselves in smaller groups."

In contrast to his roommates, Vifquain said he looks forward to telling the story to his grandchildren.

"I think why it happened is we ran out of beer," he said. "It was pretty crazy, and it was illegal. But I wouldn't trade the memory of it for the world. I don't look at it as a bad thing. I look at it as a good college memory."

But none are interested in creating another memory like that one. Bieler and Vifquain, who now live together in an apartment, haven't thrown a party since the riot.

Vifquain's got other ideas for this year.

"I'm going to go out and find a riot this time."

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