

# Hughes . . .

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After his refusal, Hughes was taken to another room, where an officer explained that his actions constituted a violation of Selective Service laws, that this violation was a punishable felony, and described the consequences. The officer asked Hughes to take the oath, which he refused to do.

When Hughes refused the oath, the Army asked him to leave the Base, which he did. He went for a walk, then to a Boston Draft Resistance Group (BDRG) dinner, and then home to think.

## The Demonstration

While all this was happening, there was a large demonstration supporting Hughes and Oestereich outside the gates of the Base. From 250 to 300 demonstrators marched in the early, almost-spring sun, brandishing placards and signs, and chanting "PEACE — NOW!" and "HELL NO, WE WON'T GO!" Included in the orderly march were students from BU, Harvard, and MIT, members of the BDRG, The Resistance, and Resist, faculty members from the three universities, and myriad children and elderly ladies. There was also a large contingent from Andover-Newton Theological Seminary, many carrying signs reading "Shalom."

The faculty from the aforementioned schools released a statement of support for the two resisters, signed by 30 faculty members. The statement reads:

"No one in our time can refuse the call to insure the security of our nation. To refuse to listen to that call is equivalent to giving up one's right as a citizen.

"If one believes in the right and justice of the war this country is fighting in Vietnam, the course is clear; if one believes that this country is engaged in a military conflict in Vietnam that is totally indefensible, outrageous in thought, brutal in action, devastating to civilian morale, blatant in its violation of the basic elements of freedom and human decency, corrosive to the well being of society and sickening to humanity, the course is now also clear.

"Mr. R. Hughes has chosen to refuse induction into the armed services as a means of insuring the security of this nation. We the undersigned support him in the choice of his action." Among the thirty signers were Prof. Louis Kampf, MIT Professor of Humanities and a member of Resist, Rev. Richard Mumma of Harvard, CIA government Prof. Howard Zinn, recently returned from Hanoi, and Prof. Ted Kazanoff from the Theater Arts dept. of SFAA, in which Hughes teaches.

The demonstration was without incident, except for a security guard admonishing for a three-year-old child for letting his flag touch the ground. Later in the day, about 150 demonstrators marched from the Army Base to Post Office Square.

## "This must be stopped now."

Richard Hughes talked with the NEWS the night he refused induction. He was calm, but visibly shaken about the results of his choice.

Commenting on the reactions of the other inductees to his stand, Hughes said: "I think that my action definitely caused them to question what they were doing. I became very concerned with

how young the kids were. Most of them were around 18. They were filling out forms, taking physicals, and going through the entire dehumanizing process. But they didn't appear to be very concerned with what was happening around them. As I left the Base, I realized that concern



RICHARD HUGHES

—Peter Simon

and compassion were being punished, and unconcern is rewarded. What is really absent on the base is any respect for a human being. The sergeants are bored; they look at the kids as numbers."

The NEWS asked Hughes about the possibility of a prison term. He thought for a moment before replying: "I've definitely decided that there was no point in going through with this unless I realized the maximum sentence and fine. If

I assumed that prosecution would never take place, then it would have been an entirely different decision.

"I don't want to go to jail. I'm an actor and have a talent, and five years in prison would be very crucial to my work. But at this point the choice seemed so evident to me that I've resigned myself. I don't want to do this — it's a mess, but there's no other choice.

"My first thoughts of prison were very depressing, but I think it's a mistake to impose a finability on this punishment. People are dying in Vietnam, and so my decision is supported every time I wake up. What is happening is absurd. What does freedom of speech mean to a Vietnamese child with no arms or tongue? How can our crimes be repaid? What do ideologies mean to these children?"

"I do believe that a group of men or an ideology can take control of a nation, as in Germany, and I think they have to be stopped. I think America as a nation has a particular genius which has been distorted."

Hughes added: "I plan to test the law. I'm not naive enough to expect that I'll win, but perhaps things will be said to make people think. I also want to be of some assistance to people who have suffered in this war. This has to be stopped now."

"It's important to realize that decisions like this are tremendously personal. The actual reality of facing the Army head on is an experience. But you just have to know that the sin is not the choice, but in not choosing."