

Opening Statement: Trial of Hancock 38 Drone Resisters, by James Ricks, Jr.

Your Honor, my name is James Ricks, *pro se* defendant. I live in Endfield NY, a small berg on the outskirts of Ithaca. My family, I have recently learned, has lived in the area since the 1820's.

My great great grandfather, Charles Reed had escaped slavery in the south, made his way to Canada, where he married my great great grandmother a Mohawk woman.

Together they returned to upstate NY, settled in the Ithaca area where my family has lived for generations.

Last spring I walked with some very excellent human beings from Ithaca's De Witt Park (where my uncle Raymond Hopkins' name is engraved on a stone monument with other WWII soldiers killed in action.) – we walked to Hancock Air Field.

I am 62 years old your Honor, in 5 days we walked more miles than years I have lived on this earth. We received much encouragement along the way, none more enthusiastic, warm, and uplifting than our humbling welcome at the Onondaga Nation. They blessed us and sent their tribal protectors to guide and protect us on our walk. The evidence will show that our walk and upon our arrival at the base we took great pains to avoid impeding vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

We walked to raise public awareness about CRIMES being committed by our government in our name.

The evidence will show that we went to Hancock on April 22nd, 2011 to exercise our First Amendment Rights to petition our government for the redress of grievances.

The evidence will show that it was our intent on April 22nd 2011 to go to Hancock Air Field home of the 147th Air National Guard and the national maintenance center of the reaper drone to deliver the indictment for violation of human rights and we were successful.

The evidence will show that the indictment we delivered is based on our constitution and he supreme laws of our land.

The evidence will show that it was not to engage in disorderly conduct but to uphold the law. The greatest laws we have, those which seek peace. The evidence will show any American including the members of the armed services, who commits specified crimes, including attacks against civilians, cruel or inhumane treatment, or who commits murder, or causes bodily injury onto others is subject to prosecution. The War Crimes Act defines war crimes as any grave breach of the Geneva Convention and therefore, individuals have a duty to disobey orders that could cause crimes against humanity.

I would like to thank you Judge Gideon, for your kind and very comprehensive instructions last night. It was impressive to hear of Mr. McRoberts' extensive education and experience. I can't do anything about that now. Laws change as lawmakers change. Morality and justice I hope

would be more substantial, more permanent. Logic, intellect and legal maneuvering are integral in our courts. I pray that these skills do not obscure the truth that resides in man's heart.

I will finish with what I feel is an appropriate quote from G. Massey, an Egyptologist: "They must find it difficult, those who take authority as truth rather than truth as the authority."

Thank you, Your Honor.