

Tap, Tap-- Hughes There?



Arthur Hoppe

Cambridge, Mass.

THE GERMANIC THREAT of Hughes Kissingernow, idol of stage, screen and television, to walk off the set of Miracle Productions has stunned his millions of fans.

What triggered the outburst were hints by press critics that Kissingernow had been a bad actor in minor roles in the past, plus rumors that he would be cast as a heavy in "Tapping on the Potomac"—a cheap musical now being filmed in Washington.

"How can I continue to serve my public as the greatest sex symbol of our time," he modestly told a hastily-summoned press conference in Austria, where he was on location, "if the critics keep unfairly harping at me?"

"And the very idea of casting a matinee idol of my stature as a villain in 'Tapping on the Potomac' is outrageous. It would not only destroy my million-dollar image, but the script has too many villains in it already."

Kissingernow angrily demanded an abject apology from everyone involved along with a complete rewrite of the scenario for "Tapping on the Potomac."

"If I don't get to play the hero," he said firmly, "I'm quitting."

★ ★ ★

KISSINGERNOW, a former instructor of dramatics at Harvard University here, rose to fame with his first box-office hit, "Last Tangle in Paris," in which he cleverly outwitted a hoard of 16 million Asians singlehandedly in a prize-winning performance.

He followed this up with a brilliant, widely-acclaimed job in "Sunrise over Suez" and its sequel, "Road to Damascus"—the story of how a harried commuter with an addiction for shish kebab and gefilte fish settles an ancient feud between three trigger-happy families and thereby averts World War III.

He is now currently on location in Europe and the Middle East with "Travels with Dick," which most critics see as a low-budget "quickie" designed by Miracle Productions to capitalize on Kissingernow's recent smash success.

What was odd about his outburst was that it apparently had the approval of Nick Dixon, president of Miracle Productions ("If it's a good production, it's a miracle!")

Dixon, himself, has been under considerable fire from the critics lately and he certainly can't afford to lose Kissingernow, his only box-office star, as his other recent productions have all laid eggs.

Dixon apparently hopes that the wrath of Kissingernow's millions of fans will fall on the heads of the critics, thus putting an end to harping and karping so that he and his star can then go on unharried to new and greater productions.

★ ★ ★

HERE AT HARVARD, Kissingernow's former colleague who knew him well as an instructor in dramatics, expressed the highest admiration for his performance at the Austrian press conference.

"It's heartwarming to see good, old Kissingernow," said one, "finally playing himself."