

Draft court defendant is guilty

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BOSTON — Edward J. Hasbrouck addressed the jury at the start of his trial in federal court late yesterday morning. He looked straight at the seven men and five women and told them he expected they would convict him of failing to register for the military draft. By 3 p.m., the trial was over and Hasbrouck was right. The jury found him guilty. When he appears for sentencing next month on the felony charge, he could face as much as five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

It was New England's first trial in a draft case since the Vietnam War, and one of the nation's few such trials since the draft registration was reinstated in 1980.

IN COURTROOM NO. 6, on the 15th floor, an individual challenged the power of the federal government and that government brought its forces to bear on the individual. Hasbrouck represented himself. But he offered no defense, presented no witnesses.

When he did speak, it was in a fashion that bespoke an education

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at the University of Chicago, the Midwest's version of Oxford. He wore a rose on the lapel of a suit jacket that didn't match his pants. He unlaced his hiking boots and padded around the carpet in his socks.

But right from the start Edward Hasbrouck told everyone in the room: "What goes on here is entirely irrelevant."

The real issue, he said, deals with the draft and a government guilty of "patriarchy, war, imperialism and nuclear omnicide." He said, "Those who do not register find the government guilty and sentence it to irrelevance."

Even after a two-year campaign by the Selective Service, as many as a half-million young men — the number of the American forces in Vietnam War days — have failed to register. So far, the government has identified for possible prosecution fewer than 200 of those, generally vocal protesters like Ed Hasbrouck. Few have been indicted and even fewer have been tried.

THE TRIAL BEGAN with the court clerk intoning: "United States of America versus Edward J. Hasbrouck." Then he ordered all to rise for Judge David Nelson.

Hasbrouck did not stand up. Nor did dozens of others among the 90 spectators crowded in the room with buttons proclaiming: "Food Not Bombs" and "Don't Pay War Taxes."

As the judge spoke to the jury, Hasbrouck crossed his legs under him in a big leather chair in the middle of the huge room with its bronze eagle and gold-fringed American flag. His light red hair fell down his shoulders and over the tiny bow tie he wore.

Nearby sat the prosecutor, Asst. U.S. Atty. Robert Mueller, in a dark suit, white shirt, and tortoise-shell

glasses. In a word, he was crisp. Among the spectators was Edward Hasbrouck's mother. She had taken the day off from her job as the editor of a newsletter on computer equipment. As she listened, she was knitting a sweater for a baby and looking up occasionally — especially when her son talked of war and peace.

Edward Hasbrouck was born in 1960 and grew up in Wallesey. Politics was discussed at the dinner table. The New York Times was read every day. His mother said "seeds were planted" for him to become what he has become.

The family was not involved in the civil rights movement or Vietnam protest of the 1960s. But their home was changed by those movements. The family is now involved in the nuclear protest movement.

Across from Hasbrouck's mother in court was a man who said he came to show his support. David T. Dellinger of Peckham, Vt., went relatively unnoticed yesterday. In the '60s, as one of the Chicago Seven, he was very much noticed. But long before that, in 1940, he sat where Hasbrouck sat yesterday: As a divinity student, he failed to register for the draft and spent three years in jail.

The legacy of Vietnam is still strong among students today, he said. Now 67, he teaches at colleges, tours the country lecturing and, he says, has a sense of the mood. Hasbrouck's 70 to 80 supporters yesterday represented "the tip of the iceberg," Dellinger said.

HASBROUCK ASKED that news cameras and microphones be allowed in the court. He wanted the public to hear his story. The judge denied the motion, saying that at least 10 reporters were taking notes and that "pictures" were being recorded.

The government's six witnesses spoke, and the trial was soon over. By then the rose petals from Ed Hasbrouck's lapel were falling onto the carpet around his stocking feet.