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8 Acquitted in Gainesville Of G.O.P. Convention Plot

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GAINESVILLE, Fla., Aug 31—Seven antiwar veterans and a supporter were acquitted today of charges that they plotted an assault with automatic weapons, slingshots and crossbows on the Republican National Convention.

The jurors deliberated only three and a half hours before they filed in with broad smiles to deliver their verdict.

Moments after the trial was declared at an end, the jurors, the defendants and their attorneys were hugging one another, laughing and crying by the jury box.

The charges faced by members of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War represented the latest in a series of conspiracy cases against radicals and dissenters brought by the Justice Department's Internal

Security Division. The Government has lost nearly all of the major cases.

The prosecution put on 28 witnesses in the month-long trial, but its case rested heavily on the word of five paid informers and an undercover policeman who infiltrated the veterans group.

The defense brought only one witness.

"They had nothing on those boys," a juror, Gerald E. Bennett, a 33-year-old lineman, said later.

The courtroom was tense, and 14 United States marshals lined the aisles as the jury foreman, Mrs. Lois M. Hensel, handed over the slip of paper with the verdict.

"We find the defendant Donald Perdue not guilty," the

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clerk began.

One defendant, Peter P. Mahoney, put his hand lightly on the T-shirted shoulder of Mr. Perdue, a former Marine with short hair — the others wear their hair in pony tails—who carried books on ecology to court each day.

As the list continued, a defendant, Stanley K. Michelson, began to walk about the table, throwing his arms around each man found not guilty.

The defendants and their lawyers stood in a long row, arms on shoulders, as Federal District Judge Winston E. Arnow formally dismissed the charges and bail bonds.

The prosecution team quickly left the courtroom by a side door as the trial ended.

"Oh, I feel all right about the case. I have a job to do," the chief prosecutor, Jack Carrouth, told reporters.

Inside the courtroom, Mr. Mahoney, one of the defendants, said: "In spite of all this joy and elation, I can't forget the Government put me through 14 months of hell."

The Government had charged that the alleged band of plotters planned to disrupt the 1972 Republican convention last summer with a bizarre assortment of weapons including slingshots, crossbows, homemade firebombs and antitank guns.

The case was brought by Guy L. Goodwin, chief of the Special Litigations Section of the Internal Security Division, who has specialized in the last few years in conducting grand jury investigations of radicals.

Mr. Goodwin, who does not appear in court during the trials, was here behind the scenes at the beginning. He has since returned to Washington, but three young lawyers from the Internal Security Division were sent down to assist the prosecution.

Among other cases, Mr.

Goodwin previously secured the grand jury indictments against the Rev. Philip F. Berrigan and other radicals accused of plotting to kidnap Henry A. Kissinger. The trial ended in acquittal of the major charges.

The defense had contended that the charges were trumped up to discredit the antiwar activities of the veterans group.

The trial began with the discovery of two Federal Bureau of Investigation agents with a suitcase of electronic gear in

ing to a more open Soviet society.

Today 33 farm scientist added their open letter of denunciation of Mr. Sakharov to those already issued by 4 members of the Academy of Sciences and by 31 leading Soviet writers.

These statements and a growing number of letters from outraged readers being quoted in the Soviet press have accused Mr. Sakharov of opposing Moscow's peace policy and, therefore, of being, in effect, in favor of war.