

## Anti-Hustler crusaders await fate

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SANTA CRUZ — An eight-woman, four-man jury will begin deliberating this morning on whether feminists Nikki Craft and Ann Simonton committed malicious mischief when they tore up copies of Hustler magazine during an anti-violence demonstration last March.

The two admit they tore up several of the magazines at various stores around the county during a series of demonstrations that began March 9, during International Women's Week.

They say after an arrest March 11 at Park's Food Store in Soquel, they returned the next day because it was the only store where the proprietor would have them arrested and press misdemeanor charges.

But their attorney, activist Ray Grueneich, has attempted to show there was no malice in their actions, and that therefore, there was no malicious mischief.

But the real reason for their "civil disobedience" and trial, the two admit, is to draw attention to a three-year crusade against Larry Flynt's publication. Hustler is "sexual, political propaganda against woman," Craft charged on the witness stand.

It advocates the rape, murder, mutilation and degradation of women and children, she says, for men's sexual gratification, and contributes to an atmosphere of violence in general and against women in particular.

She contends she does not advocate governmental censorship; in the same sentence she says the community should demand storekeepers to rid their shelves of the magazine.

But Municipal Court Judge Richard McAdams made it clear several times during the Wednesday afternoon trial it was Craft and Simonton who were on trial, not Larry Flynt or Hustler. He refused to allow the magazine or pictures from it to be admitted as evidence or shown to the jury, saying the content of the magazine was irrelevant to whether the crime occurred. And he attempted to limit what the two women or their attorney could say about it.

He ruled they could tell the jury in general terms why they tore up the magazines, and he allowed them to explain the purpose of their demonstration. But he sustained frequent objections from the prosecution, and tried to curb questions or answers when they began expand into lectures about Hustler and its contents, the history of the women's movement or the relationship of rape to pornography.

McAdam's limits did not go far enough to satisfy Assistant District Attorney Dennis Keough. He contended the crime had occurred, and all else was irrelevant but the facts relating directly to the destruction of the magazines.

He frequently showed his impatience with the proceedings. He tapped his foot, rolled his eyes and slammed books and a pen down on the table in front of him and objected frequently as Grueneich repeatedly tried to edge around McAdams' strictures.

At one point Keough asked Craft if she had torn up the magazine, and when she answered yes, he asked, "Then why are we here?" He called the trial "theater of the worst kind," and called Grueneich's contentions and actions "absurd."

Both women broke into tears on the stand under the questioning of their own attorney. Simonton sobbed as she described the terror and revulsions she experienced after she was gang-raped. She said she was abused as a child, and called her arrest and trial a "last-ditch stand.... If responsible people had a chance to look inside Hustler magazine, they wouldn't put up with it either."

Testimony continued until just before 5 p.m. McAdams made it clear he too was losing patience, and Keough and Grueneich concluded their questioning.

Final arguments were scheduled to begin this morning at 10 p.m.



Defendants Ann Simonton, left, and Nikki Craft, right.