

Opening Statement: Trial of Hancock 38 Drone Resisters, by Martha Hennessy

Your Honor my name is Martha Hennessy and I come here to DeWitt Town Court from Weathersfield, Vermont and the New York Catholic Worker. I speak on behalf of my co-defendants, who in some cases have traveled a significant distance to Syracuse. As citizens of the United States we come to exercise our rights to freedom of speech, freedom of association and of peaceful assembly, and to petition our government for the redress of grievances. May I also say that none of us has entered lightly into this judicial process that is before us. Evidence will show our efforts to be a reasoned response in the face of violations of greater laws in contrast to the charges leveled against us. We are attempting to seek justice on behalf of voiceless victims. As some of our Afghan friends have asked “What do we do with another voice not our own, especially a dead voice?”

We are here to bring evidence that will show the defendants did not obstruct vehicular or pedestrian traffic as we attempted to deliver an indictment for violations of human rights to Commander Kevin Bradley of the Air National Guard stationed at Hancock Air Base. We walked to the entranceway that was previously sealed off by the military and local law enforcement before our arrival. Traffic continued to flow on the nearby highway and was diverted to an alternate gate. The evidence will also show in contradiction to the charge of disorderly conduct, the defendants demonstrated peacefully throughout our presence at the entranceway and to the sides of the public highway. Video footage has documented this to be a peaceable assembly. The defendants have used all other available avenues to bring grievances and concern to our representatives and to the government regarding human rights violations. It is our right and duty as citizens to resist, under the protections of international law, when we are witnesses to ongoing criminal activity.

We speak as a group of concerned citizens and human beings to you Your Honor. The defendants expect to be allowed to exercise our constitutional rights by presenting the facts of the case. We appeal to your reasonable good faith believe in upholding the rule of law when considering these very grave matters before you. We appeal to your humanity and to your understanding of our constitutional laws when considering our intent with this charge of causing public inconvenience, annoyance or alarm. The reckless creation of a risk must be taken very seriously and here is an opportunity to look at the risks being taken with our moral standing in the world. Here is an opportunity to examine the use of robotic warfare technology as judge, jury and executioner and its genuine impact on everyone’s freedom and security.

Thank you Your Honor.