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Protest signs fail to reach the jury

By PAUL B. BROWN

Slogans supporting accused murderer Joanne Chesimard were spray-painted on the Middlesex County Courthouse in New Brunswick yesterday, but the 15-member jury never saw them.

Five New York women were arrested for posting handbills urging support for Chesimard on the nearby county welfare building at approximately the same time the spray-painting occurred.

The phrases "Stop the lynching" and "Free Assata" were sprayed on the building and nearby sidewalk sometime between 1 and 2 a.m., police said.

Assata Shakur is the Muslim name Chesimard uses. She is on trial for the murder of a state trooper and the wounding of another during a 1973 gunbattle on the New Jersey Turnpike.

Workmen had steam-cleaned the signs from the courthouse by mid-morning. The jury, which is sequestered in a nearby hotel, was brought into the courthouse through a back entrance, police said.

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The five women, all from Brooklyn, were arrested shortly after 1 a.m. by officers on routine patrol.

The suspects, Lisa Roth, 27; Natalee Rosenstein, 29; Susan Rosenberg, 21; Linda Borup, 22, and Eve Resahn, 26, are charged with violating a municipal ordinance which prohibits posting handbills on public property.

In addition, Rosenstein is charged with possession of lottery slips.

The women were arraigned in municipal court yesterday and released in their own recognizance pending a hearing April 12.