



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on August 17, 2012

Trial Delayed as Ft. Hood Shooter Hasan Pleads Guilty, Won't Shave Beard

Nidal Hasan thinks pleading guilty and growing a beard will keep him out of hell. On [Wednesday, however, the military officer presiding over the court martial](#) of the one-time U.S. Army psychiatrist and accused murderer rejected Hasan's guilty plea and told him that he would order the devout Muslim to be forcibly shaved before the trial begins.

In [December 2009, Army prosecutors charged Hasan](#) with 32 counts of attempted murder in connection with the victims wounded in his armed rampage at Ft. Hood, Texas, on November 5. Among those injured by Hasan were the two civilian police officers who eventually fired on Hasan and brought him down, ending the massacre. These lesser charges are in addition to the 13 counts of murder with which the former army psychiatrist and alleged jihadist was charged.

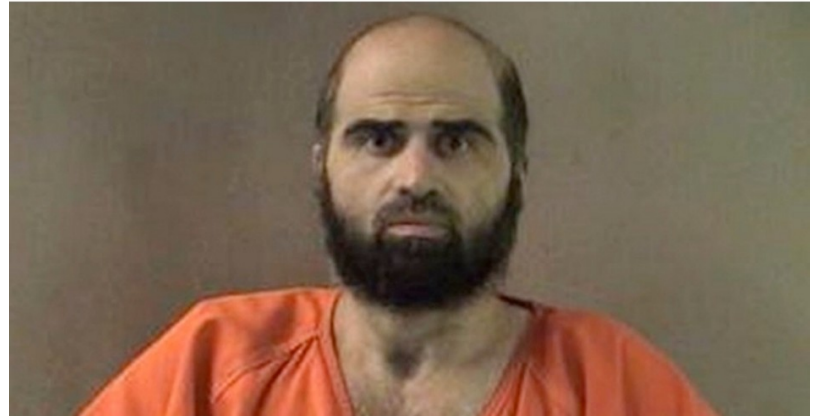
On the day of the shooting spree, Hasan reportedly entered a testing center for soldiers awaiting deployment to Afghanistan and Iraq. According to the statements given by witnesses, Nidal Hasan brandished two pistols, climbed on a table and opened fire. Then, targeting first those in uniform, Hasan shouted "Allahu Akbar!" — Arabic for "God is Great."

Federal government investigators claim that Hasan's "militancy" was influenced by the late American-born Muslim cleric Anwar al-Awlaki. [President Obama placed Awlaki on his infamous \(and illegal\) kill list](#) and on September 30, 2011, while Awlaki was eating breakfast in Yemen, two unmanned Predator drones fired two Hellfire missiles, killing him. Two weeks later, his 16-year-old son Abdulrahman was killed in similar manner. No charges. No trial. No due process.

At one of the previous hearings in the Hasan case, Michele Harper testified against the accused. Harper, a medical technician, told the judge that she hid under a desk, watching Hasan slowly walk around the processing center opening fire on fellow soldiers. One of those soldiers was standing in front of Harper as he was shot three times. Gunfire, moans, and cries for help can be heard in a recording of a 911 call made by Harper.

At the August 15 hearing, military judge Colonel Gregory Goss informed Hasan's defense team that under military law he cannot accept their client's guilty plea because the premeditated murder charges Hasan faces carry the death penalty and the military prosecutors are seeking that punishment.

The trial on the merits of the charges against Hasan that was scheduled to begin August 20 will have to





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wait until an appeals court rules on Hasan's objection to being shaved. "He does not wish to die without a beard as he believes not having a beard is a sin," the Associated Press reports, quoting from the appeal filed with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces by Hasan's defense counsel.

Judge Goss on the other hand considers the beard a distraction and points out that it is a violation of Army regulations. Goss will not allow Hasan to enter the courtroom until he complies with the regulation and has fined him \$1,000 for failing to comply with the order. The [Associated Press reports](#) that Goss wants Hasan in the courtroom so that he cannot use his absence from the proceedings as a basis for a subsequent appeal should he be found guilty.

Army prosecutors claim that Hasan's reason for growing the beard was less spiritual and more pragmatic. They insist that Hasan wants to make it hard for witnesses to identify him. Despite the delay, Colonel Goss denied a defense motion for a continuance and ordered that jury selection in Hasan's case would begin August 20 as scheduled.



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