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Occupy Philly basks in court victory

Protesters in Philly, targeting large corporations for massive profits while institutions like city schools are bankrupt, beat trespassing charges Monday.

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Occupy Philadelphia scored its first major victory against its sworn enemy -- the wealthy corporate culture -- in court Monday when seven protesters were acquitted of defiant trespass at the Comcast Center and the movement seeks a second win today as twelve more demonstrators go to trial for the sit-in at a Wells Fargo Bank branch last November.

"I don't think it changes our plan," said Temple University graduate student and defendant in today's case Aaron Troisi of the acquittals in the Comcast sit-in from Nov. 18. "Our plan has always been to flip the script on them and put Wells Fargo on trial."

Attorney Paul Hetznecker, who represented Jeff Rousset in the Comcast trial Monday, said the prosecution failed to prove demonstrators were given reasonable notice to leave the building, citing video evidence shot by Philadelphia police's Civil Affairs Unit. "A representative of the property management firm, the landlord for Comcast in that building, allegedly communicates his directive to leave - that they were trespassing, essentially," Hetznecker said. "It's not clear on the tape."

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A spokeswoman for the District Attorney's office would not comment on its loss to the pro bono group of attorneys. Comcast did not return a message seeking comment.

Rousset, national organizer for Philly-based Prometheus Radio Project, said "it was a big relief when we finally won. Most of us were prepared to get on the stand and testify. We wanted to expose the crimes of comcast, which is why we did what we did in the first place."



He added that Comcast protesters will lend their support to Wells Fargo defendants at the trial today. "It definitely raises our confidence for their case but it also shows protests are legitimate and people have a right to be in public spaces and a right to express our free speech."

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