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RNC800, Special Court Solidarity Edition, February 1, 2009

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THE RNC800!

Newsletter of the Community RNC Arrestee Support Structure (CRASS)

Welcome to a special edition of the CRASS newsletter! Read on to learn more about the success of our court solidarity strategy!

From the CRASS Court Solidarity Group...

Court solidarity is truly making a difference. Below are some pretty amazing things that have been happening in the courtroom, both for RNC arrestees and for people from groups who are part of the CRASS coalition. And these examples are all from January alone!

- 1. Anti-War Committee trial, January 12-14.** Seven members of the AWC were on trial for an act of civil disobedience at a local National Guard recruiting office in March 2008. CRASS members showed up in record numbers to stand in solidarity with the defendants (one of whom shares his time between the AWC and CRASS). This three-day trial resulted in a packed courtroom and a verdict of NOT GUILTY.
- 2. The Wall 7 trial, January 20-23.** Seven protestors who were arrested together at the RNC consolidated their cases to stand together on trial even though they didn't necessarily know each other prior to being arrested. CRASS packed the court for this first RNC trial. We listened to conflicting testimonies from several police officers who could not identify any of the seven people on trial as being specifically involved with any criminal activity. On the 4th day, the judge issued a direct verdict from the bench, stating that no reasonable jury could possibly convict these people with such an impressive lack of evidence. The Wall 7's case was dismissed and all charges dropped.
- 3. Darryl Robinson's police brutality trial, January 26 in Hennepin County.** Darryl is the vice president of Communities United Against Police Brutality, a local group that works closely with CRASS and provides some amazing services to our communities. He was brutalized and charged by police while doing a routine cop watch at a homeless shelter in July 2008. A coalition of community groups, including CRASS members, attended this trial to show their solidarity. We were in the middle of jury selection before we recessed for lunch. By the time everyone came back, the prosecutor had dismissed the case and dropped the charges. This is even more proof of the power of court solidarity. This was someone who had the community behind him--half the room stood with him, and the court took notice. And now Darryl is free to continue the necessary work that helps keep our communities safe from state repression.
- 4. Felony case dropped, January 30.** One felony case was dismissed on Friday by the prosecution. Total felonies dismissed by the prosecution to date: 2!!!
- 5. RATM charges continue to be dropped.** Everyone who has fought their charges in Rage Against the Machine cases have had their charges dropped. Every single defendant.
- 6. David McKay's federal felony trial, January 26-present.** McKay's trial is still without verdict. The jury has already deliberated for more than 10 hours, attempting to discern whether or not entrapment is involved. Although the verdict is still uncertain, the jury appears to be deliberating on the right issue: whether Brandon Darby was an *agent provocateur* or not. It was uncertain whether the trial would become focused on the real underlying issues or not, and it seems that the jury has been paying attention to the things that matter.

These decisions should be giving us hope. Who would've thought, given the mainstream media's coverage and

the state's narrative about the RNC, that we would be experiencing these overwhelming victories so early in the process?

Even with all these successes, we still have so much work to do to support each other as we fight our charges in court. People are still traveling to the Twin Cities for hearings and trials. People are still being charged. While times are still a bit uncertain, and while there is still much work ahead, it is comforting to know that what we are doing is making a difference.

It is with this energy, this love, and this rage that we will continue to fight back.

With much love and solidarity,

CRASS Court Watch Group
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