

Judge Dismisses, D.A to Continue Witchhunt Defense Moves to Dump May 21st Felony Trial

On Wednesday April 26, **Judge Paul Burdick** dismissed all charges against four of eleven defendants in the recent round of felony prosecutions for last year's peaceful occupation and withdrawal from the 3 ½ years vacant Wells Fargo property at 75 River St. The protest, one of many across the country inspired by the **Occupy Wall Street** movement, involved hundreds of people as observers, supporters, and reporters. Video released to the defense and to the public revealed targeted **selective enforcement and prosecution**—a constitutional violation by authorities yet to be addressed by the courts.

District Attorney **Rebekah Young** admitted she had no evidence to prove that **Grant Wilson, Angel Alcantara, Ed Rector, or Cameron Laurendeau** trespassed, vandalized, or criminally conspired to do so—as charged against the 4 (and 7 others). Young's spun her theory that the **mere presence of anyone** in the vacant building over the 3 day period was “aiding and abetting”. The maximum penalty for these alleged offenses is 7 years in prison. Young agreed there were **no arrests & generally no police action to stop in-and-out movement** nor any evidence of vandalism yet insisted they “conspired” and were responsible for vandalism by other unknown parties. She had no evidence of prior agreements by the 4, nor that they even knew each other. Burdick apologetically rejected Young's theory.

He said, “Ms. Young, you need to establish that these four defendants **intended** to enter the building, occupy for a period of time, and stay after being ordered to leave. **There isn't anything in the evidence to infer that they did.** All you've shown is that as part of the protest, when like others, they saw the doors were open, they went in and out to see what was happening.” The false charges have forced two to lose their jobs and one her housing.

In response, Young retorted she would **ignore the judge's decision and refile charges** against Alcantara & Laurendeau and consider doing so against Wilson and Rector. The cost of these prosecutions is estimated to be **hundreds of thousands of dollars.**

Meanwhile attorneys for two other defendants, **Alex Darocy & Bradley Stuart Allen**, filed a Motion to Dismiss all charges to stop May 21st trial on identical charges. The two are journalists with Santa Cruz Indymedia, In March at an earlier hearing, Young persuaded visiting **Judge Steven Sillman** to charge the two with conspiracy and trespass. In spite of **expert testimony** that there were **additional First Amendment issues** involved, as well as the same **lack of evidence**, Young claimed the two were “the media arm of the conspiracy”, who showed their criminal intent by “walking into the bank” with cameras.

Five more defendants anxiously face the credulous Sillman May 29th. **D.A. Bob Lee & SCPD Chief Kevin Vogel** urged the community to identify more “conspirators” via their snitch websites. The local *ACLU*, the president of the *National Lawyer's Guild*, *WILPF (Women's League for International Peace and Freedom)*, and *HUFF (Homeless United for Friendship & Freedom)* denounced the charges, demanding they be dropped.

Drop the Charges: End the Witchhunt!

Sign the petition at www.santacruzeleven.org