

Mayday Acquittals May Free All Others

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WASHINGTON.—A Superior Court jury Tuesday acquitted the first eight of about 100 demonstrators awaiting trial on charges stemming from mass arrests on the steps of the U. S. Capitol during the Mayday anti-war protest.

Hailing the verdict as a victory for free speech, defense attorneys said they have been informed that the Government will now drop charges in the remaining cases. Although more than 1,000 demonstrators initially were arrested in the May 5 incident, charges previously were dropped against about 200 others.

The charges on which the eight were acquitted were disorderly parading and unlawful entry at the Capitol.

"The jury has spoken and we will abide by its decision,"

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The trial of the eight, which lasted for 13 days, initially was described by both prosecutors and defense attorneys as a test case of the government's ability to gain convictions in the Capitol Hill arrests.

But it took the jury, composed of 11 women and one man, only about five hours of deliberating to find the defendants innocent. They returned the verdict with smiles on their faces.