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Nfld. & Labrador

Reporter pleads not guilty to charges stemming from Muskrat Falls protest coverage

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Justin Brake had a civil charge against him dismissed earlier this year

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Justin Brake, pictured here in 2017, has pleaded not guilty to mischief and disobeying a court order. (Jacob Barker/CBC)

Reporter Justin Brake has pleaded not guilty to criminal charges stemming from a protest at the Muskrat Falls work site three years ago.

The plea was entered on Brake's behalf by his lawyer, Geoff Budden. Brake, who now lives in Ottawa, was not in court on Monday for the brief proceedings.

Brake is charged with mischief and disobeying a court order.

While reporting for the Independent in October 2016, Brake followed protesters into the Muskrat Falls site and stayed with them as they occupied a building for four nights.

- **Criminal charges to proceed against reporter covering Muskrat Falls protests**

Budden told CBC he would be entering a number of applications ahead of the trial, but didn't specify.

The Crown has chosen to proceed summarily and the issue will be back in court on Sept. 9.

Earlier this year, Brake was victorious in civil court when a contempt charge related to the same incident was dismissed.

His lawyers' application to stop the civil charge was denied in the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador, but in a decision released at the end of March by the appellant court, Brake won.

- **Civil charges dismissed against reporter who covered 2016 Muskrat Falls protests**

"The honourable Justice [Derek] Green took the opportunity to both comment on the importance of journalists' work and how we need to be careful in crafting these court orders so that we're not unnecessarily infringing on the rights of journalists to do their work," said Brake's lawyer, Allison Conway, at the time of the dismissal of the civil charge.

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With files from Jacob Barker

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