

Phillips' 11th-inning hit lets Reds walk off with 3-2 win over Braves

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## Immigrants' employers acquitted

By Jim Hannah  
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Asian Buffet owners say illegal workers fooled them

COVINGTON — Zhang Jiu Chen said he was looking forward to clipping out the newspaper article about his acquittal and taping it to the front window of the Asian Buffet restaurant he co-owns in Florence.

Three months after he and his two business partners

were charged with multiple counts of harboring illegal aliens, a federal jury on Friday found them not guilty on all counts.

"The truth set them free," Chen's attorney, Shannon Sexton, said while celebrating the victory with his client.

Under federal sentencing

guidelines, the defendants likely would have been sentenced to two to three years in prison if found guilty.

Federal authorities alleged the three defendants employed a Guatemalan and two Mexicans who were in the country illegally.

Investigators said the ille-

gal immigrants toiled up to six days a week and 12 hours a day at the restaurant.

The jurors were played an undercover surveillance tape that showed many of the restaurant's workers being picked up at a home in Union by a van that would shuttle them to the restaurant on

Mall Road. The home in Union is owned by defendant Dian Zhou.

"I want the public to know I never had intention to break any law," Zhou said through an interpreter after the verdict.

Sexton said part of the defense during the four-day trial

was that the defendants didn't know the three immigrants were here illegally.

They were hired through an employment agency out of Georgia that is owned by Chinese nationals and advertises in Chinese-language newspapers, Sexton said.

The three immigrants had forged IDs.

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Bengals kicker Shayne Graham likes to put