



PRESS RELEASE

District of Columbia Man Pleads Guilty to Felony Charge for Offenses Committed During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Friday, April 22, 2022

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of
Columbia

Defendant Swung Poles at Police Officers, Hitting One in the Shoulder

WASHINGTON – A District of Columbia man pleaded guilty today to a felony charge for assaulting law enforcement officers during the breach of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, which disrupted a joint session of the U.S. Congress that was in the process of ascertaining and counting the electoral votes related to the presidential election.

Mark K. Ponder, 56, pleaded guilty in the District of Columbia to assaulting, resisting, or impeding officers using a dangerous weapon. According to court documents, on Jan. 6, Ponder assaulted three police officers in a series of incidents in the western portion of the Capitol grounds.

At approximately 2:31 p.m., after rioters overwhelmed police lines in the West Plaza, Ponder ran out from the crowd and swung a long, thin pole at a U.S. Capitol Police officer. The officer protected himself by raising his riot shield above his head. Ponder's pole struck the riot shield and broke in two, with part of the pole flying off to the side. Ponder then retreated into the crowd. Moments later, he re-armed himself with a new, thicker pole that was colored with

red, white, and blue stripes. At approximately 2:32 p.m., he ran toward a second U.S. Capitol Police officer who also was able to block the pole with his riot shield. Then at 2:48 p.m., Ponder joined a crowd of rioters that faced off against a line of officers with the Metropolitan Police Department in the Upper West Terrace. He swung the same striped pole and banged it against the ground in a menacing manner. Then, as the police officers advanced to move the crowd, Ponder wildly swung the pole at the advancing police line, striking an officer in the left shoulder.

Ponder was arrested on March 17, 2021, in Washington, D.C. He is to be sentenced on July 18, 2022. He faces a statutory maximum of 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

The case is being prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia and the Department of Justice National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section. The case was investigated by the FBI's Washington Field Office. Valuable assistance was provided by the U.S. Capitol Police and the Metropolitan Police Department.

In the 15 months since Jan. 6, 2021, nearly 800 individuals have been arrested in nearly all 50 states for crimes related to the breach of the U.S. Capitol, including over 250 individuals charged with assaulting or impeding law enforcement. The investigation remains ongoing.

Anyone with tips can call 1-800-CALL-FBI (800-225-5324) or visit tips.fbi.gov.

Updated April 22, 2022

Attachments

[Ponder Statement of Offense](#) [PDF, 5 MB]

[Ponder Plea Agreement](#) [PDF, 15 MB]

Topic

VIOLENT CRIME

Components

[Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\)](#) |

[National Security Division \(NSD\)](#) |

[USAO - District of Columbia](#)

Press Release Number: 22-112

Related Content

PRESS RELEASE

Guilty Plea in Theft and Sale of Hundreds of Government-Issued Phones and Computers Slated for Destruction

Nikhil Parekh, 37, of Randallstown, Maryland, pleaded guilty today in U.S. District Court in connection with the theft and sale of hundreds of government-issued smartphones, laptop computers, and other IT...

February 4, 2025

PRESS RELEASE

Alleged Armed Carjacker Charged After Arrest

Parren Hawkins, 33, of Washington, D.C., was charged today in Superior Court with armed carjacking in connection with an incident, yesterday, in Northeast D.C. The charge was announced by U.S...

February 3, 2025

PRESS RELEASE**Murder of Shoe Reseller Results in 32 Year Sentence**

Darius Anderson, 23, of Washington, DC, was sentenced today to 32 years of in prison for first-degree murder while armed and related offenses in the June 2022 killing of 30-year...

January 31, 2025

**District of Columbia**

Main Office:

601 D Street, NW

Washington, DC

Email USAO-DC



Telephone: (202) 252-7566