



PRESS RELEASE

Texas Man Pleads Guilty to Felony Charge for Actions During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Wednesday, May 25, 2022

For Immediate Release

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

Defendant Taunted Law Enforcement Officers Attempting to Secure Building

WASHINGTON – A Texas man pleaded guilty today to a felony charge for his actions during the breach of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. His and others' actions disrupted a joint session of the U.S. Congress convened to ascertain and count the electoral votes related to the presidential election.

Christian Cortez, 28, of Seabrook, Texas, pleaded guilty in the District of Columbia to a charge of civil disorder. A co-defendant, Benjamin Larocca, 28, also of Seabrook, Texas, pleaded guilty in April 2022 to a misdemeanor charge of engaging in disorderly or disruptive conduct in a restricted building or grounds with the intent to impede or disrupt the orderly conduct of government business. He is awaiting sentencing.

According to court documents, Cortez and Larocca traveled from Texas to Washington and, on Jan. 6, attended a rally near the Washington Monument. They then proceeded to the Capitol, where they saw others illegally in a restricted area and climbing the walls of the building. Cortez and Larocca climbed the stairs on the West side of the Capitol, ultimately

reaching the Upper West Terrace. Both men entered the Capitol at approximately 2:53 p.m. through the Parliamentary Door. They traveled through the building before law enforcement stopped them and others from proceeding further into the building. Cortez and Larocca then exited the Capitol at approximately 3:06 p.m.

After leaving the building, Cortez joined a crowd in front of the North Doors, where rioters were attempting to break Capitol doors down, and law enforcement officers were attempting to keep rioters outside the building. Cortez stepped in front of the doors while officers were trying to seal them, and Cortez began swearing at the officers and calling them “oath breakers.” He slammed a blue-colored flag down and stepped in front of the doors. Even after he was sprayed with a chemical irritant, Cortez did not move and yelled, “Do it some f----- more!”

Cortez and Larocca were arrested on March 26, 2021, in Seabrook, Texas. Cortez is to be sentenced on Aug. 31, 2022. He faces a statutory maximum of five 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. Valuable assistance was provided by the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of Texas.

The case was investigated by the FBI’s Houston Field Office. Valuable assistance was provided by the FBI’s Washington Field Office, the U.S. Capitol Police and the Metropolitan Police Department.

In the 16 months since Jan. 6, 2021, more than 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 May 25, 2022

Attachments

[Cortez -Plea Agreement](#) [PDF, 5 MB]

[Cortez -Statement of Offense](#) [PDF, 1 MB]

[Cortez -Superseding Information](#) [PDF, 125 KB]

Topic

VIOLENT CRIME

Components

[Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\)](#) | [National Security Division \(NSD\)](#) | [USAO - District of Columbia](#) | [USAO - Texas, Southern](#)

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PRESS RELEASE

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

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February 4, 2025

PRESS RELEASE

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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



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