



PRESS RELEASE

Tennessee Man Pleads Guilty to Felony Charges For Actions During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Friday, September 30, 2022

For Immediate Release

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

Defendant Admits Advance Planning to Interfere With Peaceful Transition of Power, Assaulting Law Enforcement Officers

WASHINGTON – A Tennessee man pleaded guilty today to felony charges 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 2020 presidential election.

Ronald Sandlin, 35, of Millington, Tennessee, pleaded guilty in the District of Columbia to conspiracy to obstruct an official proceeding and assaulting, resisting, or impeding officers.

According to court documents, Sandlin and two co-conspirators – Nathaniel DeGrave and Josiah Colt – planned to interfere with the peaceful transition of presidential power, beginning in December 2020. For example, on Dec. 31, 2020, Sandlin posted to Facebook that he was organizing a caravan to travel to Washington and sought donations on a GoFundMe site. The same day, he, DeGrave, and Colt began a private chat on Facebook to plan for Jan. 6. In the chat,

they discussed “shipping guns” to Sandlin’s residence in Tennessee, where they planned to meet prior to their trip.

On Jan. 4, 2021, before heading to Washington, Sandlin posted to Facebook a picture of Colt lying on a bed holding a firearm, with the caption, “My fellow patriot sleeping ready for the boogaloo Jan 6.” Sandlin understood at the time that the term “boogaloo” referred to civil war.

On Jan. 6, after watching live television coverage of the “Stop the Steal” rally near the Ellipse, at a nearby restaurant, Sandlin live-streamed a video in which he called on “other patriots” to “take the Capitol.” In the video, Sandlin stated four times that “freedom is paid for with blood.”

Sandlin, DeGrave, and Colt then traveled together to the Capitol wearing protective gear, including gas/face masks, helmets, and shin guards. Sandlin was armed with a knife, while DeGrave carried bear spray. The trio then marched towards the Capitol. After arriving on the Capitol grounds, the men scaled dismantled bike barricades and past law enforcement officers, pushing past members of the crowd to get closer to the Capitol Building. Sandlin repeatedly yelled things such as “we’re not here to spectate anymore,” “the time to talk is over,” and “if you’re not breaching the building, move out of the way.”

The three men entered the Capitol through the Upper West Terrace door, at approximately 2:35 p.m. While inside, Sandlin and DeGrave pushed against officers guarding an exterior door to the Capitol Rotunda, slowly forcing the door open and letting a mob stream inside. Sandlin shouted at the officers, “you’re going to die, get out of the way,” before later grabbing an officer’s helmet.

The three men then went together up a set of stairs and to a hallway outside the Senate Chamber. Sandlin incited others in the mob to prevent U.S. Capitol Police officers from locking the doors to the Senate Gallery, shouting “grab the door.” He began shoving officers in an attempt to keep the doors open. As he did this, his hand made contact with the side of an officer’s head. The trio and dozens of other rioters then gained access to the Senate Gallery, where Sandlin recorded a selfie-style video with his cellphone, exclaiming: “We took it. We did it.”

After leaving the Senate Gallery, Sandlin smoked a marijuana joint in the Rotunda of the Capitol. He also stole a book from a desk in a Senate-side office, which he later described to Colt as a “souvenir.” He also picked up an oil painting from the Capitol and slung it over his shoulder before others in the mob took it off his shoulder. He finally exited the Capitol at approximately 3:16 p.m.

Shortly after the riot, Sandlin deleted photographs and messages regarding the events of Jan. 6 from his group chats with Colt, DeGrave, and others.

Colt, 35, of Meridian, Idaho, pleaded guilty on July 14, 2021, to obstruction of an official proceeding. DeGrave, 33, of Las Vegas, Nevada, pleaded guilty on June 27, 2022, to conspiracy to obstruct an official proceeding and assaulting, resisting, or impeding officers. Both are awaiting sentencing.

Sandlin was arrested on Jan. 28, 2021. He is to be sentenced on Dec. 9, 2022. He faces a statutory maximum of 20 years in prison for conspiracy to obstruct an official proceeding and up to eight years in prison on the charge of assaulting, resisting, or impeding certain officers. The charges also carry potential financial penalties. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia and the Justice Department's National Security Division are prosecuting the case, with valuable assistance provided by the U.S. Attorney's Offices for the District of Nevada and the Western District of Tennessee.

The case is being investigated by the FBI's Washington Field Office. Valuable assistance was provided by the FBI's Las Vegas, Salt Lake City, and Memphis Field Offices, the U.S. Capitol Police, and the Metropolitan Police Department.

In the 20 months since Jan. 6, 2021, more than 870 individuals have been arrested in nearly all 50 states for crimes related to the breach of the U.S. Capitol, including over 265 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 September 30, 2022

Attachments

[Sandlin - Plea Agreement](#) [PDF, 11 MB]

[Sandlin - Statement of Offense](#) [PDF, 8 MB]

Topic

VIOLENT CRIME

Components

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

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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**

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