



PRESS RELEASE

Former U.S. Capitol Police Officer Found Guilty of Obstruction Charge Involving Investigation of Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Friday, October 28, 2022

For Immediate Release

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

WASHINGTON — A former U.S. Capitol Police officer was found guilty by a jury today of a federal charge of obstruction of justice stemming from his communications with a rioter and his actions in the aftermath of 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.

Michael A. Riley, 51, was found guilty of one count of obstruction. The verdict followed a trial in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. The jury was unable to reach a verdict on a second count, ending in a mistrial on that charge. No sentencing date was set.

According to the government's evidence at trial, Riley, who has more than 25 years of law enforcement experience, was at work with a K-9 unit on Jan. 6, 2021. Although he was not on duty inside the Capitol Building itself during the attack, he was aware of what was taking place. That day, he responded to reports of an explosive device near the Capitol complex.

The next day, Jan. 7, 2021, Riley learned that a Facebook friend had posted about being at and inside the Capitol on Jan. 6. Rather than forward the information to the Capitol Police or FBI, Riley sent the rioter a private Facebook message with advice on how to avoid being caught. He wrote, “im a capitol police officer who agrees with your political stance. Take down the part about being in the building they are currently investigating and everyone who was in the building is going to be charged. Just looking out!”

Riley then continued to exchange hundreds of friendly private Facebook messages with the rioter, but when he learned that the rioter had told the FBI about being in touch with a Capitol Police officer, Riley deleted all of those messages from his account. Riley then came up with a cover story and sent a new message to the rioter, pretending that he had only later learned that the rioter had smoked weed inside the Capitol and pretending that he was scolding the rioter for his conduct.

The jury was unable to reach a verdict on the charge related to Riley’s communication with the rioter on Jan. 7. It found him guilty of obstruction related to the conduct involving the cover-up.

The charge of obstruction of justice carries a statutory maximum of 20 years. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

The case is being investigated by the FBI’s Washington Field Office, with valuable assistance provided by the FBI’s Norfolk Field Office and the Office of the Inspector General of the U.S. Capitol Police.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Mary L. Dohrmann and Anne P. McNamara of the Fraud, Public Corruption, and Civil Rights Section of the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia. Valuable assistance was provided by Assistant U.S. Attorney Molly Gaston, Paralegal Specialist Mariela Andrade, and Shannon Dotson of the Litigation Technology Unit of the U.S. Attorney’s Office.

Updated October 28, 2022

Topic

PUBLIC CORRUPTION

Components

Press Release Number: 22-378

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