



PRESS RELEASE

North Carolina Man Sentenced For Offenses Committed During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Tuesday, December 6, 2022

For Immediate Release

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

Defendant Encouraged Rioters to Battle Law Enforcement Officers

WASHINGTON – A North Carolina man was sentenced today to five months in prison for a felony charge related to his actions 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.

Lewis Easton Cantwell, 36, of Waynesville, North Carolina, pleaded guilty on March 24, 2022, in the District of Columbia, to obstructing, impeding, or interfering with law enforcement officers during the commission of civil disorder. According to court documents, on Jan. 6, Cantwell joined other rioters at the front of one of the entrances into the Capitol and used his cellphone to make several video recordings of individuals battling with law enforcement officers. During one of the recordings, he yelled for rioters to “get the door open.” At another point, he yelled that they needed “fresh patriots to the front.” At times, Cantwell can be seen participating in the mob rocking back and forth while others chanted “heave ho” as they pushed against police. He also helped propel a flagpole toward the Lower West Terrace tunnel, where a variety of objects were used to assault police. Cantwell recorded several videos while on restricted grounds of the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. In one video, estimated to be taken

between 2:15 p.m. and 2:40 p.m. Cantwell filmed himself as he said, “we’ve essentially stormed the Capitol building ... we’re tired of the bullshit.” In another video from the same time and locations, Cantwell proclaimed, “liberty or death.” Cantwell remained inside the Lower West Terrace tunnel from his arrival at 2:40 p.m. until approximately 3:18 p.m., when police were able to push rioters out of the tunnel (albeit briefly). Cantwell remained on the Lower West Terrace until at least 4:18 p.m. When interviewed by the FBI, Cantwell claimed he went to the doors of the Capitol to “help” people. In a post to his Facebook page, Cantwell asserted he helped people and protesters; that there was no major property damage done; and that he treated people with love and respect.

In addition to the term of incarceration, upon release Cantwell will serve a 36-month term of supervised release and pay restitution in the amount of \$2,000.

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 Western District of North Carolina.

The case was investigated by the FBI’s Charlotte Field Office Asheville Resident Agency and the FBI’s Washington Field Office, which identified Cantwell as #143 on its seeking information photos. Valuable assistance was provided by the U.S. Capitol Police and the Metropolitan Police Department.

In the 22 months since Jan. 6, nearly 900 individuals have been arrested in nearly all 50 states for crimes related to the breach of the U.S. Capitol, including more than 275 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 December 6, 2022

Topic

VIOLENT CRIME

Components

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