



PRESS RELEASE

Four Oath Keepers Found Guilty of Seditious Conspiracy Related to U.S. Capitol Breach

Monday, January 23, 2023

For Immediate Release

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

Defendants Also Convicted of Related Felony Charges

WASHINGTON – Four members of the Oath Keepers were found guilty today by a jury in the District of Columbia of seditious conspiracy and other charges for crimes related to the breach of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. Their actions and the actions of others 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.

According to the evidence at trial, in the months leading up to January 6, these defendants and their co-conspirators plotted to oppose by force the lawful transfer of presidential power, including by amassing an armed “quick reaction force” on the outskirts of the District of Columbia. The defendants – Roberto Minuta, 38, of Prosper, Texas; Joseph Hackett, 52, of Sarasota, Florida; David Moerschel, 45, of Punta Gorda, Florida; and Edward Vallejo, 64, of Phoenix, Arizona – were leaders and associates of the Oath Keepers organization. In addition to the seditious conspiracy count, all four were found guilty of conspiracy to obstruct an official proceeding, obstruction of an official proceeding, and conspiracy to prevent Members of Congress from discharging their official duties. Hackett was also found guilty of destruction of evidence.

Today's verdict follows the Nov. 29, 2022, seditious conspiracy conviction of Elmer Stewart Rhodes III and Kelly Meggs – two leaders of the Oath Keepers. Jessica Watkins, Kenneth Harrelson, and Thomas Caldwell were also convicted of related felony charges in that first trial. All nine defendants were indicted as part of the same conspiracy on Jan. 12, 2022.

“Today, the Justice Department secured the conviction of four members of the Oath Keepers for their criminal conduct surrounding the January 6, 2021 attack on the Capitol,” said U.S. Attorney General Merrick B. Garland. “A jury found all four defendants guilty of seditious conspiracy, as well as conspiracies to obstruct the certification of the electoral college vote and to prevent members of Congress from discharging their duties. I am grateful to the prosecutors, agents, and staff for their excellent work on this case.”

“For the second time in recent months, a jury has found that a group of Americans entered into a seditious conspiracy against the United States,” said United States Attorney Matthew M. Graves. “The goal of this conspiracy was to prevent the execution of our laws that govern the peaceful transfer of power – striking at the very heart of our democracy. We are grateful to the thoughtful, deliberative work of this jury who gave weeks of their lives to carefully consider and deliver justice in this case and in so doing reaffirmed our democratic principles.”

“The peaceful transition of power is fundamental in the preservation of American democracy,” said David Sundberg, Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI Washington Field Office. “By engaging in illegal activities in an attempt to subvert the will of the people, the defendants displayed a reckless disregard for the electoral process. Today's verdicts serve as a steadfast reminder that justice will prevail over those who seek to undermine the U.S. Constitution through obstruction and violence.”

Seditious conspiracy, conspiracy to obstruct Congress, obstruction of Congress, and destruction of evidence all carry a statutory maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. All charges carry potential financial penalties. The Court will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors. U.S. District Court Judge Amit Mehta will schedule sentencing hearings at a later date.

According to the government's evidence, following the Nov. 3, 2020, presidential election, the defendants conspired together and with others to oppose by force the execution of the laws governing the transfer of presidential power by Jan. 20, 2021. Beginning in late December 2020, via encrypted and private communications applications, the defendants and various co-conspirators coordinated and planned to travel to Washington, D.C., on or around Jan. 6, 2021, the date of the certification of the electoral college vote. The defendants made plans to bring weapons to the area to support the operation. The co-conspirators then traveled across the country to the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area in early January 2021, with paramilitary gear and supplies including firearms, tactical vests with plates, helmets, and radio equipment.

The defendants conspired through a variety of manners and means, including: organizing into teams that were prepared and willing to use force and to transport firearms and ammunition into Washington, D.C.; recruiting members and affiliates to participate in the conspiracy; organizing trainings to teach and learn paramilitary combat tactics; bringing and contributing paramilitary gear, weapons, and supplies – including knives, camouflaged combat uniforms, tactical vests with plates, helmets, eye protection, and radio equipment – to the Capitol grounds; breaching and attempting to take control of the Capitol grounds and building on Jan. 6, 2021, in an effort to prevent, hinder and delay the certification of the electoral college vote; using force against law enforcement officers while inside the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021; continuing to plot, after Jan. 6, 2021, to oppose by force the lawful transfer of presidential power; and using websites, social media, text messaging and encrypted messaging applications to communicate with co-conspirators and others.

The case is being prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia and the Department of Justice’s National Security Division and Criminal Division. Valuable assistance was provided by numerous U.S. Attorney’s Offices across the country.

The case is being investigated by the FBI’s Washington Field Office, as well as the Metropolitan Police Department, with significant assistance provided by the FBI’s New York, Dallas, Tampa, and Phoenix Field Offices. Valuable assistance was provided by the United States Capitol Police and the United States Secret Service.

In the 24 months since Jan. 6, 2021, more than 950 individuals have been arrested in nearly all 50 states for crimes related to the breach of the U.S. Capitol, including over 284 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.

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Topic

VIOLENT CRIME

Components

[Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\)](https://www.fbi.gov) | [USAO - District of Columbia](https://www.usdoj.gov/usao-dc)

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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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