



PRESS RELEASE

Virginia Man Found Guilty of Felony and Misdemeanor Charges Related to Capitol Breach

Tuesday, March 7, 2023

For Immediate Release

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

Defendant Illegally Entered Capitol, Remained Inside for About 40 Minutes

WASHINGTON – A Virginia man was found guilty in the District of Columbia today of felony and misdemeanor charges for his actions during the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol breach. His actions and the actions of others disrupted a joint session of the U.S. Congress convened to ascertain and count the electoral votes related to the presidential election.

Hatchet Speed, 41, of Vienna, Virginia, was found guilty following a bench trial before U.S. District Court Judge Trevor N. McFadden. Speed was found guilty of obstruction of an official proceeding, entering and remaining in a restricted building, disorderly and disruptive conduct in a restricted building, disorderly conduct in a Capitol building, and parading, demonstrating, or picketing in a Capitol building.

On January 6, Speed drove to Washington, D.C., from his residence in Virginia. Over text, he had touted his residence as a “Suburban Environment, but close enough to the city for those days when I just wanna be part of a riot.” After attending the “Stop the Steal” rally at the Ellipse, Speed traveled to the U.S. Capitol, where he observed toppled fencing as he entered Capitol

Grounds. He arrived at the West Plaza, near the Lower West Terrace, by approximately 1:30 p.m. Speed then climbed the stairs and reached the Northwest Courtyard. At the Northwest Courtyard, he saw a rioter use a large crowbar to break into an emergency exit door near the Senate Parliamentarian's Office. Speed also learned that Vice President Mike Pence had "validated" certain ballots he considered "invalid." To Speed, Pence's act was a betrayal. No longer content to stay outside, he said, "I was like, 'I'm going in there. Like I have no respect for people in this building. They have no respect for me. I have no respect for them.'" Speed stated, "[S]o we all went in and we took control. Like, when you have that many thousands of people, like there's nothing the cops can do...it's impressive."

At approximately 2:51 p.m., Speed entered the building through the Senate Wing Door, which rioters had violently breached only two minutes earlier. As he entered, an alarm rang out. He walked up to a line of police in riot helmets, surrounded by angry chants and yells from the crowd. Speed then continued to the Crypt, where he remained until approximately 3:30 p.m., leaving briefly to travel down a nearby hallway. Speed then walked back to the Senate Wing Door area, briefly removed and replaced his face mask, and hoisted himself out a window to leave the building. In total, Speed was inside the Capitol for over 40 minutes, from approximately 2:51 p.m. to 3:34 p.m. Minutes after climbing out through the window, Speed took photos of rioters in the northwest courtyard outside the U.S. Capitol building, then proceeded to walk around to the East Front, where he took photos of more rioters on the steps. From there, Speed continued south, where he photographed of riot police as they moved toward the U.S. Capitol Building to clear and secure it. He next photographed the Lower West Terrace, where the inaugural stage was now completely overrun by rioters. Speed also sent text messages claiming that "We made it to the crypt with sheer force of numbers," and acknowledging that he left because he believed that Congress had postponed the certification.

During its subsequent investigation of Speed, an FBI undercover employee ("UCE") met Speed, posing as a like-minded individual. In addition to explaining how he had entered the Capitol Building after learning that Vice President Pence had not submitted an alternate elector, Speed described how the mob "controlled the entire building," and that "Congress and Senate had evacuated through the tunnels, so nobody was there except us." Once Speed heard that Nancy Pelosi had ordered "a delay of the vote," he left, because "that was what we wanted anyway."

A sentencing hearing is scheduled for May 8, 2023. The felony obstruction charge carries a statutory maximum of 20 years in prison and potential financial penalties. The Court 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. Valuable assistance was provided by U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia.

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

In the 26 months since Jan. 6, 2021, nearly 1,000 individuals have been arrested in nearly all 50 states for crimes related to the breach of the U.S. Capitol, including more than 320 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 March 7, 2023

Topic

VIOLENT CRIME

Components

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Press Release Number: 23-120

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**District of Columbia**

Main Office:

601 D Street, NW

Washington, DC

Email USAO-DC



Telephone: (202) 252-7566