



PRESS RELEASE

New Mexico Man Arrested on Felony Charges For Actions During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Wednesday, April 12, 2023

For Immediate Release

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

Defendant Accused of Assaulting Officer and Entering the U.S. Capitol

WASHINGTON — A New Mexico man has been arrested on felony charges, including assaulting a law enforcement officer, for his actions during the breach of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. 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.

Rockne Earles, 62, of Chama, New Mexico, formerly of Oriska, North Dakota, is charged in a criminal complaint filed in the District of Columbia with assaulting, resisting, or impeding officers, civil disorder, both felonies, and the misdemeanor charges of entering and remaining in a restricted building or grounds, disorderly and disruptive conduct in a restricted building or grounds, engaging in physical violence in a restricted building or grounds, disorderly conduct in a Capitol building, act of physical violence in the Capitol grounds or buildings, and parading, demonstrating, or picketing in a Capitol building. He was arrested yesterday in Chama, New Mexico. He is expected to make his initial appearance today in the District of New Mexico.

According to court documents, on Jan. 6, 2021, Earles went to the West Front of the U.S. Capitol. In a publicly available video, Earles is seen grabbing and throwing a U.S. Capitol Police Officer (Victim Officer 1) against the Northwest stairs underneath the West Front scaffolding outside the U.S. Capitol Building. In the video, Earles grabs and throws Victim Officer 1 to the ground using what appears to be a significant amount of force. Two other rioters joined Earles in shoving and assaulting Victim Officer 1. Victim Officer 1 landed on the steps and then attempted to escape away from the rioters. Based on preceding and subsequent events, this assault is believed to have occurred between approximately 1:50 p.m. and 2:10 p.m. on January 6, 2021.

After being contacted by law enforcement, Victim Officer 1 recalled being assaulted numerous times on January 6, 2021, including being struck with a flagpole by an unidentified male, being knocked to the ground by three men, and being hit in the head. As result of the riots on January 6, 2021, including this incident, Victim Officer 1 was concussed, treated for medical injuries at the hospital, and out of work for 45 days.

Law enforcement reviewed numerous surveillance videos from the U.S. Capitol building which show Earles physically inside the U.S. Capitol between approximately 2:17 p.m. and 2:44 p.m. on January 6, 2021. Based on the surveillance video footage, Earles appears to have remained in the U.S. Capitol building for approximately 27 minutes.

This 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 District of New Mexico.

The case is being investigated by the FBI's Albuquerque, Minneapolis and Washington Field Offices, which identified Earles as #425 on its seeking information photos. Valuable assistance was provided by the U.S. Capitol Police and the Metropolitan Police Department.

In the 27 months since Jan. 6, 2021, more than 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.

A complaint is merely an allegation, and all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

Updated April 12, 2023

Topic

VIOLENT CRIME

Components

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