



PRESS RELEASE

Florida Man Pleads Guilty to Felony Charges Related to Actions During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Thursday, August 17, 2023

For Immediate Release

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

Defendant Assaulted Multiple Police Officers

WASHINGTON – A South Florida man pleaded guilty today to three felony charges 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 2020 presidential election.

Kenneth Bonawitz, 41, of Pompano Beach, Florida, pleaded guilty in the District of Columbia to three felony charges, including civil disorder, obstruction of an official proceeding, and assaulting a law enforcement officer during a civil disorder. U.S. District Judge Jia M. Cobb scheduled Bonawitz to be sentenced on Dec. 1, 2023.

According to court documents, Bonawitz traveled by bus from Florida to Washington, D.C., to attend a rally on January 6 at the Ellipse. After the rally, Bonawitz marched with more than 1,000 individuals to the U.S. Capitol and was among the first of the rioters to push through a police defensive line on the grounds at about 2:28 p.m. at the building's West Front. Bonawitz was carrying an 8-inch hunting knife in a sheath attached to his belt.

Bonawitz mounted the stage built for the upcoming Inauguration. He then turned and ran in the direction of the edge of the stage with both arms raised. He hurled himself at two Capitol police officers, knocking both to the ground, injuring one of them.

As other officers escorted Bonawitz away, they confiscated the knife and then released him back into the crowd. Seconds later, Bonawitz rejoined the mob and again confronted additional officers on a defensive police line. Almost immediately, Bonawitz assaulted four separate Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) officers in a melee.

As rioters pushed back against the police, Bonawitz shoved an officer, causing the officer to stumble forward. When the officer turned to face Bonawitz, he wrapped his arms around the officer from behind, inserted his forearm under the officer's shield, then put the officer in a chokehold. He briefly lifted the officer off the ground and caused the officer to gag before struggling free of his grip.

Bonawitz assaulted two more officers before he began to exit the area around the West Front after being sprayed with a chemical agent.

As he exited Capitol grounds, Bonawitz gave two brief interviews to media outlets. In the first, Bonawitz stated, "I was up on the stage breaking through the lines. D.C. police maced me, hit me over the head with batons, and was kicking me in the side of the face." In the second, a reporter asked him his name and where he was from. He replied: "Kenneth Bonawitz, Florida."

Many of Bonawitz's actions were video recorded by police body worn cameras.

Bonawitz was identified by a confidential source based upon his distinctive tattoos, Bonawitz's own social media accounts, and his appearance on a Proud Boys meet-up poster that circulated in May 2022 in South Florida.

The FBI arrested Bonawitz on Jan. 26, 2023, in Pompano Beach.

A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

This case was 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 Southern District of Florida.

The case was investigated by the FBI's Washington and Miami Field Offices. Valuable assistance was provided by the U.S. Capitol Police and the Metropolitan Police Department.

In the 31 months since Jan. 6, 2021, more than 1,106 individuals have been arrested in nearly all 50 states for crimes related to the breach of the U.S. Capitol, including more than 350 individuals charged with assaulting or impeding law enforcement.

Anyone with tips can call 1-800-CALL-FBI (800-225-5324) or visit tips.fbi.gov.

Updated August 17, 2023

Topic

VIOLENT CRIME

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