



PRESS RELEASE

Chicago Man Pleads Guilty to Two Felony Charges in Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Friday, August 25, 2023

For Immediate Release

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

Defendant Obstructed and Interfered with Police Officers During Riot

WASHINGTON – A Chicago man pleaded guilty today to two 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.

Joseph Pavlik, 65, a retired firefighter, pleaded guilty in the District of Columbia to one count of civil disorder and a count of entering or remaining in a restricted building or grounds with a deadly or dangerous weapon, both felonies. U.S. District Judge Trevor N. McFadden scheduled a sentencing hearing for December 1, 2023.

According to court documents, Pavlik is a member of the B Squad, a subgroup of a militia-style, Florida-based organization known as the Guardians of Freedom. Some members of the Guardians of Freedom adhere to the ideology of the Three Percenters. From 2009-2015, Pavlik also had been associated with the Oath Keepers.

According to the government's evidence, on January 5, 2021, Pavlik traveled from Illinois to Washington, D.C. with several other members of the B Squad. On Jan. 6, Pavlik and other B Squad members helped provide security for the rally at the Ellipse. Following the rally, Pavlik

and his group marched to the Lower West Terrace of the Capitol building. They joined rioters attempting to force their way past the officers responsible for securing the “Tunnel,” an entry to the Capitol that provides immediate and unobstructed access to sensitive areas and offices used by Members of Congress.

Pavlik wore a black tactical vest, a black gas mask, a black helmet with patches on the side, and carried what appeared to be a chemical irritant spray in his hand. After entering the Tunnel, Pavlik was among a mob that engaged in a physical confrontation with law enforcement officers. As a direct result of the actions of the rioters in the tunnel at that time, the mob penetrated deeper, pushing the police line back. At one point, Pavlik interacted with a police officer, giving him a pair of goggles because the officer was not wearing any protective eye gear. The officer ordered Pavlik to leave the grounds. Pavlik did not comply.

Video captured Pavlik on restricted Capitol grounds at about 3:09 p.m. with numerous members of B Squad. About 4:08 p.m., Pavlik, trying to force his way further into the Tunnel, struggled with an officer wearing a body-worn-camera. The tussle was captured on video by another officer standing on a ledge. Pavlik also was recorded on video on the Capitol grounds as late as 5:05 p.m.

Pavlik told investigators that he left the Tunnel after his gas mask was dislodged and he was pepper sprayed in the face. Eventually, he said U.S. Capitol Police escorted him out of the Tunnel and Pavlik returned to his hotel room. He departed Washington, D.C. on January 7 and drove home.

FBI agents arrested Pavlik on January 31, 2023, in Chicago.

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 Northern District of Illinois.

It was investigated by the FBI’s Washington, and Chicago 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 25, 2023

Topic

VIOLENT CRIME

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Press Release Number: 23-488

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