



PRESS RELEASE

Tennessee Man Pleads Guilty to Felony Obstruction and Assault Charges in Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Friday, September 1, 2023

For Immediate Release

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

Defendant wrested barricades from police, hit officers with door-sized plywood

WASHINGTON - A Tennessee man pleaded guilty on Aug. 31, 2023, to a felony charge related to 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.

Joshua John Portlock, 41, of Smyrna, Tennessee, pleaded guilty to assaulting, resisting, or impeding law enforcement officers during a civil disorder in the District of Columbia. Portlock is scheduled to be sentenced on Dec. 1, 2023.

According to court documents, Portlock traveled to Washington, D.C., to attend the Jan. 6, 2021, "Stop the Steal" rally. Following the event, Portlock joined a crowd gathered between the Washington Monument and the Ellipse and, afterward, joined a crowd marching toward the U.S. Capitol.

Once on the Capitol grounds, Portlock was stopped by a line of metal barricades supported by U.S. Capitol Police and Metro Police Department officers on the Lower Western Plaza.

At about 2:28 p.m., Portlock and other rioters breached the defensive perimeter. Portlock pushed open one of the metal barricades while police attempted to keep the barricade in place. Portlock then brought the barricade into the crowd such that they could no longer be used to defend the building from the rioters. The officers retreated further into the Western Plaza and established a defensive perimeter.

At 2:31 p.m., Portlock and others breached the second defensive perimeter. Portlock then picked up a large sheet of plywood and, holding it at an angle with other rioters, pushed it into the line of police officers.

At about 2:46 p.m., Portlock joined the mob, attempting to enter the Capitol building through the Lower West Terrace tunnel. While in the tunnel, Portlock passed a stolen police shield to the surge of rioters leading the attack.

At 3:06, Portlock passed a second stolen shield toward the front of the line. The surrounding mob then started a “heave-ho” effort to push past the officers protecting the entrance. Portlock spent approximately two minutes participating in those efforts.

FBI agents arrested Portlock in Smyrna, Tennessee, on Nov. 3, 2021.

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 Middle District of Tennessee.

The case was investigated by the FBI’s Washington and Nashville 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 September 11, 2023

Topic

VIOLENT CRIME

Components

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January 31, 2025



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