



PRESS RELEASE

Two Men from Mississippi and Alabama Sentenced for Actions During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Monday, October 16, 2023

For Immediate Release

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

Cousin Defendants Convicted of Assaulting Police on the Upper West Terrace

WASHINGTON — Two cousins from Mississippi and Alabama were sentenced today on felony and misdemeanor charges for their actions during the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol breach. Their 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.

Thomas Harlen Smith, 45, of Mathiston, Mississippi, was sentenced to 108 months in prison and 36 months of supervised release by U.S. District Judge Reggie B. Walton. A jury convicted Smith of 11 charges, including nine felonies and two misdemeanors, on May 5, 2023.

Donnie Duane Wren, 44, of Athens, Alabama, was sentenced to 12 months and one day in prison and 24 months of supervised release by Judge Walton. A jury convicted Wren of two felonies and one misdemeanor on May 5, 2023.

According to evidence presented during the trial and court documents, on Jan. 5, 2021, Smith traveled from his home in Mississippi to Washington, D.C., to attend a rally held by former President Trump the next day and picked up his cousin, defendant Wren, from his home in

Alabama along the way. On the morning of Jan. 6, 2021, Smith and Wren attended the rally and afterward made their way toward the U.S. Capitol building. Before entering Capitol grounds, Smith climbed a column near the African American History Museum with the outdated Mississippi state flag.

Smith and Wren arrived on the restricted Capitol grounds and observed other rioters climbing scaffolding erected around the stage for the Presidential Inauguration. The two then climbed the structure and made their way to the Lower West Terrace Tunnel. Smith pushed toward the front of a group of rioters and used a flagpole like a spear to try to break a window next to the Lower West Terrace doors. Smith thrust his flagpole at the window five times. He then surged through the doorway, where he and a mass of other rioters pushed into a line of Metropolitan Police Department (“MPD”) officers attempting to hold the door shut.

Smith then exited the Tunnel and reunited with his cousin, Wren, who had witnessed the violence directed by other rioters against police officers in the area. The two posed for a photograph together on the Lower West Terrace. Smith and Wren then climbed up a railing to the Upper West Terrace and confronted a line of police officers using riot shields and attempting to clear the area. Smith and Wren pushed back against the police line, placing their hands on the officer’s shields and leaning back into the police. Wren leaned all his weight into the riot shield, preventing the police officer from advancing. Wren’s push against the riot shield was an early assault on the Terrace that instigated the fight between rioters and police attempting to clear the area.

While this occurred, Smith witnessed an object fly past him and hit an officer. Smith yelled at the officer, “You deserve that, you piece of s —!” At 4:35 p.m., Smith kicked an MPD officer in the back — sending the officer to the ground. Smith then picked up a metal pole-like object and threw it toward the line of police, striking two MPD officers in the head.

Later that day, on Facebook, Smith described the assault on the Capitol: “Patriots stood together and battled the tyrannical cops throughout the entire afternoon.”

Smith was convicted of 11 charges at trial, including felony offenses of assaulting officers with a dangerous weapon; obstruction of an official proceeding; two counts of civil disorder; two counts of assaulting, impeding, or resisting officers; entering and remaining in a restricted building or grounds with a deadly or dangerous weapon; disorderly and disruptive conduct in a restricted building or grounds with a deadly or dangerous weapon; and engaging in physical violence in a restricted building or grounds with a dangerous weapon. He was also convicted of two misdemeanors: disorderly conduct in the Capitol grounds or buildings and an act of physical violence in the Capitol grounds or buildings.

Wren was convicted of civil disorder and assaulting, impeding, or resisting officers, both felonies, and a single misdemeanor charge of entering and remaining in a restricted building or

grounds.

This case was prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia and the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section. Valuable assistance was provided by the U.S. Attorney's Offices for the Northern District of Mississippi, the Northern District of Alabama, and the Southern District of Florida.

This case was investigated by the FBI's Washington and Birmingham Field Offices and the Homestead, Florida and Oxford, Mississippi Resident Agencies, which listed Wren as #219 on their seeking information photos. Valuable assistance was provided by the U.S. Capitol Police, the Metropolitan Police Department, and the Prince George's County Police Department.

In the 33 months since Jan. 6, 2021, more than 1,100 individuals have been charged in nearly all 50 states for crimes related to the breach of the U.S. Capitol, including more than 400 individuals charged with assaulting or impeding law enforcement, a felony. The investigation remains ongoing.

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

Updated October 16, 2023

Topic

VIOLENT CRIME

Components

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Darius Anderson, 23, of Washington, DC, was sentenced today to 32 years of in prison for first-degree murder while armed and related offenses in the June 2022 killing of 30-year...

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**District of Columbia**

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