



PRESS RELEASE

Pennsylvania Woman Sentenced on Felony and Misdemeanor Charges for Actions During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Tuesday, October 17, 2023

For Immediate Release

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

Defendant Smashed Capitol Building Windows and Directed Others with Bullhorn

WASHINGTON - A Pennsylvania woman was sentenced today on nine total felony and misdemeanor charges for her actions during the breach of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. Her 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.

Rachel Marie Powell, 43, of Sandy Lake, Pennsylvania, was sentenced to 57 months in prison and 36 months of supervised release by U.S. District Judge Royce C. Lamberth. Judge Lamberth also ordered Powell to pay more than \$8,000 in restitution, fines, and fees.

Powell was found guilty on July 18, 2023, following a bench trial before Judge Lamberth of civil disorder; obstruction of an official proceeding and aiding and abetting; 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; engaging in physical violence in a restricted building or grounds with a deadly or dangerous

weapon; destruction of government property; 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.

According to court documents and evidence presented during the trial, Powell was one of the first rioters to break through onto Capitol grounds near the Peace Circle. At the West Plaza, Powell pushed against barricades and encouraged other rioters to attack the police line. After the West Plaza was breached, Powell climbed up to the Lower West Terrace (LWT), and eventually entered the Capitol itself through a broken window. Powell later used an ice axe and a battering ram to break through a different window and breach the Capitol at a different location, encouraging other rioters to enter the Capitol. After the riot, instead of remorse, Powell continued to call for political violence.

On Jan. 6, 2021, Powell first attended former President Trump's rally before joining rioters at the Capitol building and grounds. She was wearing a pink hat, black jacket, and carried a bullhorn. She ignored numerous police orders to leave the grounds. Instead, she repeatedly pushed against the barricades using her hands, shoulders, and back. At approximately 2:28 p.m., rioters breached the police line at the West Plaza and pushed forward toward the Capitol, violently assaulting law enforcement officers along the way. Powell participated in this breach by shoving a barricade against an officer as the police line broke.

Powell is seen in multiple videos and photographs using the bullhorn to further instruct others on how to gain control of the Capitol. One video of Powell depicts a group of individuals inside a room of the Capitol discussing how to penetrate the building further. One individual is heard asking, "What's the floor plan?" Another shouts, "We just need a plan. We need enough people. We need to push forward."

Shortly after, Powell is clearly seen speaking through the bullhorn and giving very detailed instructions about the layout of the building to others in the room. Powell can be heard stating that she had just been inside an adjacent room and that they should "coordinate together if you are going to take this building." Powell also notes that they "have another window to break."

Law enforcement authorities identified multiple images and videos of Powell during the day's events, including instances of her using an ice axe to breach windows of the Capitol. Video footage from inside the Capitol building shows Powell entering the building at 2:41 p.m. through the West Lower Terrace exterior door along with a large crowd of rioters. At 5:01 p.m., Powell returned to the left side of the tunnel as part of an effort to coordinate a breakthrough into the Capitol building. That attempt failed when officers emerged from the tunnel and successfully dispersed Powell and the rioters from the area at 5:05 p.m.

On January 7, she posted on social media: “we have given you all a chance to help us settle this peacefully. We have been patient. The time is up.”

In the following days, Powell repeatedly bragged about the aggressive behavior of rioters, their violence towards law enforcement, and the eventual retreat of officers. For example, on January 7, Powell wrote: “IT WAS F--ING WAR TO GET IN. IF YOU WERE NOT HERE THEN STFU.” In another post, she wrote: “There were lots of security. They had to retreat into the building and fight back because patriots were relentless.” In another, Powell replied, “They didn’t open the gates. The people trampled them. It was war.”

The FBI arrested Powell on Feb. 4, 2021, in Pennsylvania. On Apr. 5, 2023, a federal grand jury returned a superseding indictment charging Powell with nine counts.

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 Western District of Pennsylvania.

This case was investigated by the FBI’s Pittsburgh and Washington Office, which identified Powell as BOLO (Be on the Lookout) #110 on its seeking information photos. Valuable assistance was provided by the Metropolitan Police Department and the U.S. Capitol Police.

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 17, 2023

Topic

VIOLENT CRIME

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February 4, 2025

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Parren Hawkins, 33, of Washington, D.C., was charged today in Superior Court with armed carjacking in connection with an incident, yesterday, in Northeast D.C. The charge was announced by U.S...

February 3, 2025

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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...

January 31, 2025



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