



PRESS RELEASE

Arizona Man Pleads Guilty to Felony Charges for Actions During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Monday, October 30, 2023

For Immediate Release

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

Defendant Assaulted and Obstructed Metropolitan Police Officers

WASHINGTON – An Arizona 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.

Jacob Zerkle, 51, of Bowie, Arizona, pleaded guilty to assaulting, resisting, or impeding certain officers and civil disorder, both felonies, before U.S. District Judge Reggie B. Walton. Zerkle is scheduled to be sentenced Feb. 22, 2024.

According to court documents, on Jan. 6, 2021, Zerkle traveled to Washington, D.C., where Congress was scheduled to convene to certify the results of the 2020 election and where related protests were scheduled to occur in the surrounding area. Mr. Zerkle entered the restricted area of the Capitol Grounds near the Peace Circle and walked to an area near the base of the Northwest Staircase, even though the Grounds were closed to the public that day.

While there, Mr. Zerkle repeated the chants of other protestors, including chants like “hang ‘em high.”

At approximately 2:00 p.m., Mr. Zerkle assaulted a line of Metropolitan Police Department officers who had arrived at the Northwest edge of the grounds in order to assist and reinforce U.S. Capitol Police (USCP), who were outnumbered by the amassing crowd on the West Plaza of the Capitol. Between 1:59 and 2:04 p.m., as the officers attempted to navigate through the crowd to the West Plaza, Zerkle, as well as other individuals in the crowd, physically engaged with the officers and intentionally made physical contact with at least three officers, which included placing his hands on the officers and forcibly pushing. Zerkle also yelled at the officers that they were “traitors.”

Because of Mr. Zerkle’s and other rioters’ conduct, the officers were delayed in responding to the Capitol Building as ordered.

Zerkle was arrested on March 15, 2022, in Arizona.

This case is being 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 District of Arizona.

This case is being investigated by the FBI Phoenix and Washington Field Offices, which identified Zerkle as #335 in its seeking information photos. The Metropolitan Police Department and the U.S. Capitol Police provided valuable assistance.

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 30, 2023

Topic

VIOLENT CRIME

Component

Press Release Number: 23-654

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Nikhil Parekh, 37, of Randallstown, Maryland, pleaded guilty today in U.S. District Court in connection with the theft and sale of hundreds of government-issued smartphones, laptop computers, and other IT...

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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...

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