



PRESS RELEASE

Chicago Man Sentenced on Felony Charges for Actions During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Friday, December 1, 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 was sentenced today on 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, 66, of Chicago, Illinois, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Trevor N. McFadden to two months in prison, six months of home confinement, 24 months of supervised release, a \$6,000 fine, and \$2,000 in restitution. Pavlik pleaded guilty to one count of civil disorder and one count of entering or remaining in a restricted building or grounds with a deadly or dangerous weapon, both felonies, on Aug. 25, 2023.

According to court documents, Pavlik drove from Illinois to Washington, D.C., on Jan. 5, 2021. While in D.C., he stayed in a hotel with members 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.

Pavlik attended the “Stop the Steal” rally on Jan. 6, 2021. Following the rally, Pavlik returned to his hotel and then dressed in a black tactical vest, a black gas mask, a black riot helmet with patches on the side, and goggles. Pavlik also took a can of chemical spray with him. After getting his gear, he went to the U.S. Capitol. Pavlik and other members of the B Squad traveled to the Lower West Terrace of the Capitol building. There, they joined other rioters in attempting to force their way past the officers responsible for securing the Tunnel, the site of some of the most violent attacks against police on January 6th.

Court documents say that Pavlik was the first member of his group to push against the established police line and into the Tunnel. Pavlik, at the vanguard of the rioters in the Tunnel at that time, thrust his way forward despite police officers’ attempts to keep him and other rioters out of the Tunnel and away from the Capitol building. The officers in the Tunnel were under siege for almost two and a half hours from Pavlik and others. After Pavlik pushed against officers in the Tunnel for about 10 minutes, police successfully expelled him. Nevertheless, he stayed at the Tunnel entrance and took out a canister of chemical spray that he had brought with him. Pavlik put his hand on the nozzle, but the crowd jostled him, and he fumbled the can before he could use it against officers.

Before walking away, Pavlik passed a can of chemical spray back to the mouth of the Tunnel, where another rioter grabbed the can and used it on the officers. Although other members of the group he was with left the Tunnel area at around 4:30 p.m., Pavlik stayed until after 5 p.m. as officers cleared the Lower West Terrace with tear gas.

Following his actions at the Capitol that day, Pavlik wrote about his conduct and the conduct of others on social media in a series of posts, including falsely stating that “[t]here wasn’t one person with a weapon [at the Capitol],” even though he himself had brought chemical spray on January 6. Pavlik also wrote, “It’s past time. We need an insurrection or a revolution and it has to be so convincing that the left will never raise their head above ground again.”

FBI agents arrested Pavlik on Jan. 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.

This case 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 34 months since Jan. 6, 2021, more than 1,200 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.

Updated December 1, 2023

Topic

VIOLENT CRIME

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