



PRESS RELEASE

Florida Proud Boy Sentenced for Assaulting Law Enforcement During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Friday, December 1, 2023

For Immediate Release

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

Defendant, Working with Fellow Proud Boys, Participated in Coordinated Pushes Against Police in Lower West Terrace Tunnel and Passed Pepper Spray, Sledgehammer to Others

WASHINGTON - A Florida man was sentenced on Nov. 30, 2023, in the District of Columbia after he pleaded guilty to assaulting law enforcement officers 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.

Zachary Johnson, 34, of St. Petersburg, Florida, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Richard J. Leon to 42 months in prison and 36 months of supervised release. Johnson pleaded guilty on Aug. 17, 2023, to one count of assaulting, resisting, or impeding certain officers.

According to court documents and information presented at sentencing, Johnson, a member of the Tampa-area Proud Boys, traveled from his home in Florida to Washington, D.C., to protest Congress' certification of the Electoral College vote. As instructed by the leadership

of the Proud Boys, Johnson met a group of approximately 100 other members at the base of the Washington Monument at 10:00 a.m. Johnson wore a ballistic plate carrier and carried a mouthguard and goggles. Those around him were dressed similarly, including some who carried pepper spray on their vests.

At approximately 10:30 a.m., leaders of the group organized the men, including Johnson, into formation and marched them away from the Ellipse — before the planned speeches occurred — and directly toward the Capitol. Johnson marched with the group and the members of his Proud Boys "chapter" to the Capitol grounds. At about 12:52 p.m., the group arrived at the First Street gate of the Capitol grounds, where a line of officers and fences prevented entry. The group charged through the barricades and was among the first to breach the restricted perimeter.

Court documents say that Johnson spent two hours on the West Plaza, where rioters eventually overran officers. At approximately 3:15 p.m., Johnson advanced with four members of the Tampa Proud Boys chapter into the area known as the Lower West Terrace Tunnel, the site of some of the most violent attacks against police on January 6th. Inside the Tunnel, police officers formed a line behind a set of glass doors to stop rioters from entering the building. Soon thereafter, numerous rioters entered the Tunnel and attacked those police officers.

Johnson entered the Tunnel at approximately 3:15 p.m. and joined other rioters in a collective push against the established law enforcement lines, including, at times, rocking together in a coordinated "heave-ho" fashion. During this time, several rioters stole shields from the officers, which they passed back out of the Tunnel. At approximately 3:18 p.m. and 3:19 p.m., the line of officers pushed the rioters, including Johnson, out of the Tunnel. Johnson celebrated with others while on the steps of the Lower West Terrace.

Outside the Tunnel, Johnson once more joined a group of rioters who again collectively pushed against the officers — again at times rocking together in a coordinated fashion — in another effort to breach the police line and gain entry to the Capitol building. While outside the Tunnel, Johnson helped pass a sledgehammer and a large spray canister containing a lachrymatory agent up to other rioters closer to the entrance. As Johnson intended, those rioters then sprayed the officers with the agent, further assaulting the officers protecting the Capitol. Johnson remained outside of the Tunnel until at least approximately 4:10 p.m.

FBI agents arrested Johnson on Jan. 13, 2022, in Florida.

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 Florida.

This case was investigated by the FBI's Tampa and Washington 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.

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

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VIOLENT CRIME

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**District of Columbia**

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