



PRESS RELEASE

Virginia Man Sentenced for Assaulting Law Enforcement During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Wednesday, December 20, 2023

For Immediate Release

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

WASHINGTON – A Virginia man was sentenced to prison today in the District of Columbia after he pleaded guilty to assaulting law enforcement 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.

Jonathan G. Mellis, 35, of Williamsburg, Virginia, was sentenced to 51 months in prison, 36 months of supervised release, and ordered to pay \$20,000 in fines by U.S. District Judge Randolph D. Moss. Mellis pleaded guilty to one count of assaulting, resisting, and impeding certain officers on June 12, 2023.

According to court documents, Mellis traveled to Washington, D.C., on Jan. 6, 2021, to attend the “Stop the Steal” rally, which was organized to protest the result of the presidential election. As the rally was finishing, Mellis joined a large crowd that marched to the Capitol, where the Joint Session of Congress to certify the Electoral College vote was underway.

Mellis eventually made his way to the west front of the Capitol grounds, where he recorded and posted multiple videos on Instagram. In one video, he filmed himself amidst the crowd, framed the West Terrace of the Capitol behind him and stated, “We’re getting up, we’re

going up, we are going up, baby!” Later, as he made his way onto the Lower West Terrace, he posted more Instagram videos in which he stated, “We ain’t f**king leaving either! We ain’t f**king leaving!” and “So you ever wonder where they do the inaugurations? I bet Joe Biden here. That mother***** will never come up here. We’re banging on the goddamn doors, is what we’re doing. Storming the f**king castle.

At about 3:19 p.m., Mellis arrived at the Lower West Terrace Tunnel and Archway, the site of some of the more violent attacks against law enforcement on January 6th. At approximately 4:26 p.m., Mellis made his way to the front of the crowd of rioters. Here, another rioter named Justin Jersey moved towards the front of the crowd carrying a large, gnarled wood stick. The stick was approximately four feet long and was several inches thick. Mellis approached Jersey and told him to “knock their masks off.” Jersey handed the wooden stick to Mellis and then, responding to Mellis’ urging, charged the officers and knocked one officer to the ground. Court documents say that the attack, which was prompted by Mellis’s behest, incited the crowd of rioters to further resist law enforcement.

Mellis himself then moved forward until he was in striking range of the officers at the mouth of the Lower West Terrace Tunnel. As Jersey lunged at the officers, physically shoving the officers and attempting to knock their protective face and head coverings off, court documents say that Mellis used the large wooden stick like a sword and stabbed at the faces and heads of officers at least five times, violently striking some officers in the face, head, neck, and body area. Mellis then threw the stick at the officers in the Tunnel before falling backward into the chaos. However, Mellis did not immediately retreat from the Lower West Terrace or Capitol grounds.

Instead, he remained near the Lower West Terrace until about 4:40 p.m. when he returned to the front of the crowd facing the police officers in the Tunnel. Approximately one minute later, Mellis threw a three-foot piece of plywood over police shields and at the officers in the Tunnel. The plywood ricocheted off of the officers’ shields and struck the Tunnel ceiling with enough force that it cracked in two before falling down on the officers in the Tunnel. Court documents say that this was a separate piece of wood from the previous attack.

In the evening hours of January 6, after Mellis had left the Capitol grounds, he proudly proclaimed in a video “interview” with ParlerVideos that the violence he and his fellow rioters perpetrated that day on the police officers guarding the Capitol was justified. Among the statements Mellis made included:

“Everybody, everybody, everybody on the podium, I’m telling you, look, don’t even bullsh--, ANTIFA might have been in there, and doing a little thing, I don’t give a sh--, it was Trumpers, we were there and we were there to be heard. For sure. They will ignore us any other time. They will make excuses for the riots and the violence that BLM and ANTIFA do, and ANTIFA and BLM get

everything they want every single time they throw a hissy fit and burn innocent buildings. We had a goal, to occupy that f--king Capitol Building, . . .”

Mellis was arrested by the FBI on Feb. 16, 2021, in Williamsburg, Virginia.

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 Eastern District of Virginia.

This case was investigated by the FBI’s Washington and Norfolk Field Offices, with valuable assistance provided by the FBI Memphis Field Office, the U.S. Capitol Police, and the Metropolitan Police Department.

In the 35 months since Jan. 6, 2021, more than 1,230 individuals have been charged in nearly all 50 states for crimes related to the breach of the U.S. Capitol, including more than 440 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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