

**PRESS RELEASE**

Florida Proud Boy Sentenced on Felony Charges for Assaulting Police Officers During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Thursday, January 4, 2024

For Immediate Release

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

Defendant Became a Fugitive to Avoid Sentencing, Triggering a 6-Week Manhunt

WASHINGTON – A Florida man who became a fugitive after he was convicted on felony assault charges for his actions at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, was sentenced today. 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.

Christopher Worrell, 52, of Naples, Fla., was sentenced to 120 months in prison on multiple felony counts that included assaulting a group of police officers with a deadly and dangerous weapon.

According to court documents, Worrell had been found guilty May 12, 2023, after a bench trial in the District of Columbia during which he perjured himself. On August 14, 2023, four days prior to his previously scheduled sentencing in U.S. District Court, Worrell cut off his GPS ankle monitor in a Walmart parking lot and became a fugitive.

Worrell's disappearance triggered an FBI manhunt that culminated six weeks later in his arrest at his home in Naples. In addition to an unresponsive Worrell, the FBI also found night-vision goggles, a wallet with approximately \$4,000 in cash, and a bag with new camping gear inside. Worrell later admitted that he had faked an opioid overdose upon arrest as a "delay tactic."

In addition to the prison term, U.S. District Court Judge Royce C. Lamberth ordered 36 months of supervised release, restitution of \$2,000, and a \$610 special assessment.

According to the government's evidence, Worrell plotted his trip to D.C. with other Proud Boys from the "Hurricane Coast" for weeks leading up to January 6, participating in conversations in which the police were called traitors and Proud Boys brainstormed ways to disrupt the certification. Consistent with this planning, on January 6, Worrell wore a tactical vest and carried Sabre Red Maximum Strength Pepper Gel and a large radio.

Intent on obstructing the certification, he did not wait for the former president to call his supporters to the Capitol. Instead, Worrell marched with a larger group of Proud Boys onto Capitol grounds, threatening U.S. Capitol Police (USCP) officers along the way to "honor their oaths" to avoid making the crowd "go against" the officers.

Worrell and other "Zone 5" members from the "Hurricane Coast" Proud Boys chapter breached the restricted perimeter and reached the West Plaza of the Capitol by approximately 1 p.m. Once on Capitol grounds, Worrell filmed himself calling the USCP officers "scum," "piece[s] of "sh**," and "commies," among other expletives and insults.

At about 1:31 p.m., Worrell stepped forward and sprayed pepper gel at a line of police officers trying to defend the Capitol from the mob on the West Plaza. Worrell later bragged that he had "deployed a whole can" and was "f***** handing it to them." A photojournalist present at the Capitol witnessed Worrell spraying toward the officers and took a photograph that captured the moment.

About 20 minutes later, Worrell's fellow Zone 5 Proud Boy member and co-defendant, Daniel Scott, shoved two USCP officers who were defending a staircase leading to the Upper West Terrace of the Capitol. Scott's assaults collapsed the police line, allowing a large group of rioters to make their way up the stairs to the Capitol building, where they became the first group of rioters to break into the building itself. Worrell and other members of Zone 5 celebrated Scott's assault, with Worrell turning the camera on himself to say: "Yeah! Taking the Capitol!"

Shortly after January 6, Worrell posted to Facebook: “The violence was perpetrated on civil protestors. Not one person was causing harm or inciting violence on those steps!! The Capitol COMMIE Police fired tear gas and flash bangs into a PEACEFUL CROWD!!”

Worrell was arrested on March 12, 2021, in Naples, Florida. Worrell was found guilty on May 12, 2023, on six felony counts and a misdemeanor that included assaulting, resisting, or impeding certain officers using a dangerous weapon, obstruction of an official proceeding of Congress, and obstructing, impeding, or interfering with officers during the commission of a civil disorder, 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 with a deadly or dangerous weapon all felonies, and an act of physical violence in the Capitol Grounds or Buildings, a misdemeanor.

The verdict followed a five-day bench trial before U.S. District Judge Royce C. Lamberth, who commented in reading the verdict that Worrell’s claim that he had been pepper spraying other violent rioters instead of U.S. Capitol Police officers was “preposterous” and that the Worrell’s testimony presented an “unbelievable” and “false narrative” that was “undermined by the contradictions and post-January 6th false statements identified by the government during Mr. Worrell’s cross-examination and the government’s rebuttal case.”

The case is being prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia. Valuable assistance was provided by U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Middle District of Florida.

The case was investigated by the FBI’s Tampa Field Office-Fort Myers Resident Agency and the Sarasota Resident Agency and the Washington Field Office. Valuable assistance was provided by the U.S. Capitol Police and the Metropolitan Police Department.

In the 35 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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