

**PRESS RELEASE**

Florida “Proud Boy” Sentenced to Prison for Assaulting Law Enforcement and Other Charges During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Wednesday, January 17, 2024

For Immediate Release

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

Defendant Assaulted Multiple Police Officers

WASHINGTON – A Florida man and member of the South Florida Broward Chapter of the “Proud Boys” was sentenced to prison today after he previously pleaded guilty to three felonies, including assaulting a law enforcement officer during the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol breach. 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.

Kenneth Bonawitz, 58, of Pompano Beach, Florida, and a member of the Miami chapter of the Proud Boys, was sentenced to 60 months in prison, 36 months of supervised release, and ordered to pay \$2,000 in restitution and fines by U.S. District Court Judge Jia M. Cobb. Bonawitz pleaded guilty to three felony charges, including one count of civil disorder and two counts of assaulting, resisting, or impeding certain officers on on Aug. 17, 2023.

According to court documents, Bonawitz, who came to the Capitol prepared for violence

and armed with a knife, was one of the more violent January 6 rioters. Bonawitz assaulted at least six law enforcement officers on the West Plaza. His attacks included hurling himself at officers and tackling them to the ground, placing one officer in a chokehold, and lifting the officer up by the neck. Bonawitz's attacks injured one officer, who was also a first responder to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack at the Pentagon, so severely that the officer has now been forced to retire from the United States Capitol Police.

On Jan. 5, 2021, Bonawitz traveled from his home in Pompano Beach, Florida, to Washington, D.C., to attend a rally at the Ellipse on January 6th. After the rally, Bonawitz made his way to the West Front of the U.S. Capitol and was among the first of the rioters to push through a police defensive line on the grounds at about 2:28 p.m. Bonawitz was carrying an 8-inch hunting knife in a sheath attached to his belt.

As police were attempting to hold thousands of rioters back, Bonawitz mounted the stage that had been built for the upcoming Inauguration. He then ran the length of the stage, raised his arms, threw himself into the air as the stage ended, and used his outstretched arms to tackle two United States Capitol Police officers who were standing at the base of a short set of stairs.

After these assaults, officers confiscated the eight-inch knife that Bonawitz had been carrying in a sheath on his hip. Due to the unfolding chaos, the officers were not able to detain Bonawitz at that time and released him back into the crowd after confiscating the knife. Bonawitz then confronted the officers who were attempting to reestablish the line. He rejoined the mob and again confronted additional officers on a defensive police line. Almost immediately, Bonawitz assaulted four separate Metropolitan Police Department officers in a melee.

As rioters pushed back against the police line, Bonawitz shoved an officer, causing the officer to stumble forward. When the officer turned to face Bonawitz, he wrapped his arms around the officer from behind, inserted his forearm under the officer's shield, and then put the officer in a chokehold. He briefly lifted the officer off the ground and caused the officer to gag before struggling free of his grip.

Bonawitz assaulted three more officers before he began to exit the area around the West Front after being sprayed with a chemical agent.

As he exited Capitol grounds, Bonawitz gave two brief interviews to media outlets. In the first, Bonawitz stated, "I was up on the stage breaking through the lines. D.C. police maced me, hit me over the head with batons, and was kicking me in the side of the face." In the second, a reporter asked him his name and where he was from. He replied: "Kenneth Bonawitz, Florida."

Bonawitz was arrested on Jan. 26, 2023, 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 Southern District of Florida.

The case was investigated by the FBI's Washington and Miami Field Offices. Valuable assistance was provided by the U.S. Capitol Police and the Metropolitan Police Department.

In the 36 months since Jan. 6, 2021, more than 1,265 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.

Updated January 18, 2024

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VIOLENT CRIME

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