

**PRESS RELEASE**

New York Man Sentenced for Assaulting Law Enforcement and Other Charges During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Wednesday, January 31, 2024

For Immediate Release

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

Defendant Tackled Capitol Police Officer from Behind, Causing Officer to Flip Over Ledge and Fall onto Others Below

WASHINGTON – A New York man was sentenced yesterday in the District of Columbia for assaulting law enforcement and other charges as a result of his conduct 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.

Ralph Joseph Celentano III, 56, of Broad Channel, New York, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Timothy J. Kelly to 78 months in prison and 36 months of supervised release. A jury convicted Celentano of two felony charges, including assaulting, resisting, or impeding officers and civil disorder and related misdemeanor offenses on June 12, 2023. When imposing the sentence, Judge Kelly told Celentano that his conduct was "disgraceful" and that there was no excuse for it, calling the attack on the officer "a truly cowardly and despicable thing to do."

According to court documents, Celentano traveled from New York to Washington, D.C., and attended the “Stop the Steal” rally on the Ellipse on Jan. 6, 2021. After the rally, Celentano made his way to the Peace Monument on U.S. Capitol Grounds—just outside the restricted perimeter. There, he was recorded saying, “Someone’s gotta do something!” When asked by someone off camera, “What do you think we should do?” Celentano replied, “Occupy the Capitol, it’s our building.” Celentano then worked his way through thousands of people on the west side of the Capitol to get to the very front of the mob that was confronting a police line. Here shouted at the police, “How dare you pathetic pieces of sh —.”

Celentano and other rioters then linked arms and marched straight at the police officers, breaking the police line on the West Plaza. Celentano used his body weight and momentum to make physical contact with a Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) Officer and fought with other officers who had been on the line. Immediately thereafter, Celentano chased an unidentified officer for eight to ten feet before shoving that officer.

Celentano then blind-side tackled a United States Capitol Police (USCP) Officer from behind. Leading with his shoulder, Celentano hit the officer in the back, lifting the officer off their feet and over a 5-foot-high ledge, landing on other persons below. Those assaults all took place in under two minutes.

Celentano remained on the West Plaza of the Capitol grounds for at least another 45 minutes. He recorded a video of the huge mob and triumphantly proclaimed, “We did it boys, we stormed the Capitol. Here we are, for all to see. A sea of American patriots.” Over the next few days, Celentano sent several text messages and posted on the social media network Parler about the riot on Jan. 6th. Among his messages, Celentano indicated he had fought the Capitol Police and won, taken over the Capitol, and stated that it was a day he would always remember and that he would do it all over again.

Celentano was arrested on March 9, 2022, in Broad Channel, New York.

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 New York.

This case was investigated by the FBI’s Washington Field Office, which identified Celentano as #107 in its seeking information photos, and the FBI’s New York Field Office. Valuable assistance was provided by the Metropolitan Police Department and the U.S. Capitol Police.

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.

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VIOLENT CRIME

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