



PRESS RELEASE

Colorado Man Arrested for Assaulting Law Enforcement and Other Charges During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Thursday, February 29, 2024

For Immediate Release

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

WASHINGTON - A Colorado man has been arrested for assaulting law enforcement and other charges 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.

Matthew James Melsen, 34, of Wheat Ridge, Colorado, is charged in a criminal complaint filed in the District of Columbia with felony offenses of civil disorder and assaulting, resisting, or impeding certain officers. In addition to the felonies, Melsen is charged with several misdemeanor offenses, including entering and remaining in a restricted building or grounds, disorderly and disruptive conduct in a restricted building or grounds, engaging in physical violence in a restricted building or grounds, impeding passage through the Capitol grounds or buildings, and act of physical violence in the Capitol grounds or buildings.

The FBI arrested Melsen on Feb. 28, 2024, in Wheat Ridge and he made his initial appearance in the District of Colorado.

According to court documents, on Jan. 6, 2021, at approximately 2:15 p.m., police body-worn camera footage captured a man, later identified as Melsen, as he arrived at the bike rack

barricades separating a crowd of rioters from the U.S. Capitol building on the West Plaza of Capitol grounds. Melsen wore a white t-shirt over a red long-sleeve t-shirt, a navy coat, jeans, and a black baseball hat with white lettering that read "Keep America Great."

Seconds later, Melsen reached over the bike rack barricades and pushed a Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) officer. The officer responded by pushing Melsen away from the barricades and into the crowd. Melsen then charged at the officer with both hands outstretched and pushed the officer in the chest. Melsen was again pushed back toward the crowd and was sprayed with OC spray.

Melsen then moved back into the crowd of rioters away from the police line. Later, he was seen in an open-source video as he climbed onto the Inaugural stage scaffolding erected on the West Plaza of Capitol grounds. By approximately 3:54 p.m., Melsen had made his way onto the Inaugural stage and through the dense crowd of rioters and approached the archway at the mouth of the Lower West Terrace Tunnel. The Tunnel was created by the construction of the Inauguration stage and the site of some of the most violent attacks against law enforcement on January 6th. Rioters at the Tunnel battled police officers for hours as they attempted to storm the Capitol building.

Inside the Tunnel at approximately 3:55 p.m., an MPD officer climbed up on a ledge and attempted to stop a rioter from climbing into the Tunnel and on top of officers by prodding the rioter with a long stick. The rioter grabbed the stick and tried to pull it away from the officer. Melsen also grabbed the stick and held onto it with the other rioters until the stick broke. The rioter then used the broken part of the stick to forcefully strike the officers' shields several times while yelling, "LET US IN!" A few seconds later, another officer attempted to use his baton to stop the rioter from attacking the police. Once again, Melsen tried to grab the officer's baton to prevent him from using it.

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia and the Department of Justice National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section are prosecuting this case. The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Colorado provided valuable assistance.

The FBI's Denver and Washington Field Offices are investigating this case. Melsen was identified as BOLO (Be on the Lookout) #375 on the FBI's website. The U.S. Capitol Police and the Metropolitan Police Department provided valuable assistance.

In the 37 months since Jan. 6, 2021, more than 1,313 individuals have been charged in nearly all 50 states for crimes related to the breach of the U.S. Capitol, including more than 469 individuals charged with assaulting or impeding law enforcement, a felony. The investigation remains ongoing.

A complaint is merely an allegation, and all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

[Read Melsen Statement of Facts](#)

Updated February 29, 2024

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VIOLENT CRIME

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