

**PRESS RELEASE**

Kentucky Man Found Guilty of Felony and Misdemeanor Charges for Actions During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Monday, March 4, 2024

For Immediate Release

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

Defendant the First to Breach Capitol Building on January 6th

WASHINGTON – A Kentucky man, and the very first defendant to breach the U.S. Capitol building on Jan. 6, 2021, was found guilty in the District of Columbia on Friday, March 1, 2024, of multiple felony and misdemeanor offenses related to his conduct at the U.S. Capitol on January 6th. 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.

A federal jury convicted Michael Sparks, 46, of Elizabethtown, Kentucky, of felony offenses of obstruction of an official proceeding and civil disorder. In addition to the felonies, Sparks was convicted of several misdemeanor offenses, including entering and remaining in a restricted building or grounds, disorderly and disruptive conduct in a restricted building or grounds, disorderly conduct in a Capitol building, and parading, demonstrating, or picketing in a Capitol building.

U.S. District Judge Timothy J. Kelly will sentence Sparks on July 9, 2024

According to evidence presented during the trial, Sparks was the very first rioter to enter the U.S. Capitol building on Jan. 6, 2021. Video surveillance from inside the U.S. Capitol building on January 6th showed Sparks entering through the window and jumping down to the floor at about 2:13 p.m. Despite others' screams of "don't go in," Sparks climbed through a window next to the Senate Wing Door that had been broken by rioters with a police shield.

Once inside the Capitol, Sparks followed a group of men who chased a U.S. Capitol Police officer up a flight of stairs. Sparks and the others pursued the officer up the stairs while the mob shouted at the officer. Upstairs, the officer found backup, and several police officers attempted to stop the group of rioters. Officers ordered the group to leave, but Sparks did not retreat. Instead, he walked to the front of the group and confronted the first officer they had chased up the stairs. He yelled, "This is our America! This is our America!," as he grew increasingly agitated.

Evidence presented during the trial showed that in the days leading up to the events of January 6th, Sparks wrote on the social media site Parler, "We want a civil war to be clear." On Jan. 3, 2021, Sparks posted to Facebook that, "It's time to drag them out of Congress. It's tyranny[.]"

Court documents say that Sparks was well-informed about Congress's plan to certify the votes of the electoral college on January 6, even posing the question to his Parler community, "If we have to have one person from the house to contest the electoral on the 6 th who will it be[?]" In another message posted after January 6th, Sparks warned, "A new dawn is coming. Be ready. Just pray and trust in the Lord." He claimed he was canceling his Facebook account and had "give[n] up on democracy." He warned readers to "be ready for a lot of big events. Have radios for power loss etc. Love every body[.]"

The FBI arrested Sparks on Jan. 19, 2021, in Elizabethtown.

This case is being 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 Western District of Kentucky.

The FBI's Louisville and Washington Field Offices investigated this case. Sparks was identified as BOLO (Be on the Lookout) #46 on the FBI's seeking information photos. Valuable assistance was provided by the United States Capitol Police and the Metropolitan Police Department.

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.

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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