



PRESS RELEASE

Louisiana Man Pleads Guilty to Felony Charge for Actions During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Monday, April 22, 2024

For Immediate Release

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

WASHINGTON — A Louisiana man, who was charged with his father for their conduct during the breach of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, pleaded guilty today to a felony charge. Their 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.

Colby Purkel, 27, of Covington, Louisiana, pleaded guilty to civil disorder, a felony, for his actions on Jan. 6, 2021. Purkel and his father, Willard Colby, Jr., 51, also of Covington, were charged together with the felony count and several misdemeanors. Willard Purkel's trial is yet to be scheduled. U.S. District Court Judge James E. Boasberg will sentence Colby Purkel on Aug. 1, 2024.

According to court documents, on Jan. 6, 2021, Colby Purkel went to the east side of the Capitol building and joined a crowd of rioters who forcibly entered the Capitol via the East Rotunda doors. At approximately 3:07 p.m., a group of rioters were attempting to enter the Capitol through these doors while another group was attempting to exit. Law enforcement authorities attempted to shut the doors to prevent the rioters' entry. In an attempt to get in, the defendant joined a group that pushed against the officers, temporarily blocking the police from closing the doors.

At around 3:21 p.m., with the doors opened again to get the rioters out of the building, the defendant lent his strength to a crowd that collectively managed to push its way in, streaming into the lobby outside the Rotunda. He was in a crowd that pushed against police who were trying to prevent the protesters from entering the Rotunda itself. Shortly before the police could close the door around 3:25 p.m., the defendant and the others in the crowd streamed into the Rotunda.

Once inside, the rioters were surrounded by a group of officers, who were able to control the situation. After a few minutes, the defendant was escorted outside, though he illegally remained on the Capitol grounds. He eventually walked to the west side of the building, where he and the rioters remained as police attempted to clear the area.

Purkel and his father were arrested in Louisiana in November 2023.

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 Eastern District of Louisiana.

This case is being investigated by the FBI's New Orleans and Washington Field Offices. Valuable assistance was provided by the U.S. Capitol Police and the Metropolitan Police Department.

In the 39 months since Jan. 6, 2021, more than 1,385 individuals have been charged in nearly all 50 states for crimes related to the breach of the U.S. Capitol, including nearly 500 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.

Contact

USADC-Media@usa.doj.gov

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Topic

VIOLENT CRIME

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