



PRESS RELEASE

Utah Man Sentenced for Felony Obstruction and Other Charges During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Friday, April 26, 2024

For Immediate Release

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

WASHINGTON – A Utah man was sentenced today on felony and misdemeanor charges related to 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.

John Earle Sullivan, 29, of Salt Lake City, Utah, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Royce C. Lamberth to 72 months in prison, 36 months of supervised release, and ordered to pay \$2,000 in restitution.

Sullivan was found guilty by a federal jury of felony offenses of obstructing an official proceeding, obstructing officers during a civil disorder, entering or remaining in a restricted building or grounds with a dangerous weapon, disorderly or disruptive conduct in a restricted building or grounds with a dangerous weapon, and unlawful possession of a dangerous weapon on Capitol grounds or buildings on Nov. 16, 2023. In addition to the felonies, the jury also found Sullivan guilty of misdemeanor offenses of disorderly or disruptive conduct in a Capitol building and parading, demonstrating, or picketing in a Capitol building.

According to court documents, in the days and weeks leading to the events of Jan. 6, 2021, Sullivan used various digital platforms and personas to present himself as an activist; however, on these platforms, Sullivan made his true objectives clear: to cause pure chaos and disruption to the status quo. Sullivan alternated between advertising legitimate protests and broadcasting violent anti-establishment rhetoric.

In the winter of 2020, Sullivan began advocating for a violent government dismantling. In one Instagram post, Sullivan wrote, "We will have live updates on the location for tonight's purge. Spread the message. Let the electoral purge commence." On Jan. 2, 2021, Sullivan tweeted, "F — The System-Time To Burn It All Down," with an accompanying still from a TikTok video of him burning an American flag. Sullivan also made it clear he knew the significance of what would be occurring that day — both the certification and the rally. Sullivan made and posted a video explaining the details of the certification process. On Dec. 30, 2020, Sullivan wrote, "Definitely don't surround his house..." with a photo of Senator Mitch McConnell.

On Jan. 6, 2021, Sullivan, fitted with a ballistic vest, gas mask, and bull horn, joined rioters storming the U.S. Capitol. Sullivan joined the crowd pushing through several police barriers on the west side of the Capitol grounds, using the bull horn to encourage others statements like "Get in that s — , let's go! Move, Move, Move! Storm that s — !" As Sullivan and the others approached the Capitol building, Sullivan can be heard in his video saying at various points: "There are so many people. Let's go. This s — is ours! F — yeah," "We accomplished this s — . We did this s — together. F — yeah!" "We are all a part of this f — ing history," and "Let's burn this s — down."

On the Upper West Terrace of the Capitol, Sullivan triumphantly put his hand above his head and let out several celebratory whoops. Sullivan assisted a rioter scale the wall of the Upper West Terrace, calling the feat "awesome" and "savage." Before entering, Sullivan told his companion that he would continue to film as "a good ploy" so he would not get arrested after entering the building.

At approximately 2:15 p.m., Sullivan entered the Capitol via a smashed window next to the broken Senate Wing Door and, once inside, roamed the building with other individuals who had unlawfully entered. During an interaction with another, Sullivan can be heard in the video saying, "We gotta get this s — burned," "It's our house m — f — ," and "We are getting this s — ." In multiple locations, Sullivan ignored law enforcement commands to leave and told the officers to stand down so they would not get hurt.

At approximately 2:28 p.m., Sullivan joined the growing crowd outside the House of Representatives, working his way up to the front where he was stopped by Capitol Police. Members, staff, and press were present inside the House of Representatives during this time. Sullivan encouraged other rioters, explaining he was "ready" because he had "been in so many riots." When rioters told the crowd at the House Chamber door not to be violent and to be

peaceful, Sullivan responded, "They don't listen without that s —," "F — that s —," and later told the crowd to "pull that m-f — er out this b —." Sullivan told the other members of the crowd that he had a knife and held it up to the crowd outside the House Main Doors. The FBI would later determine that the knife was a Smith & Wesson M&P knife with a 3.74" blade.

After unsuccessful attempts to access the House floor, the crowd, including Sullivan, made their way to the Speaker's Lobby, where the evacuation of the House floor was actively underway. Sullivan, once again telling the mob he had a knife, positioned himself at the front of the Speaker's Lobby crowd as the crowd began to break the doors' glass windows. Sullivan encouraged those attempting to break the windows to "Go, go. Let's go. Get that s —!" After the windows were broken out, a woman climbed through, resulting in her being shot. Members, staff, and press were still present in the House gallery at this time.

Afterward, Sullivan was filmed stating he brought his megaphone to "instigate s —" and was in favor of anyone wanting to tear the system down.

The FBI arrested Sullivan on Jan. 14, 2021, in Salt Lake City.

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 District of Utah.

This case is being investigated by the FBI's Salt Lake City and Washington Field Offices. Valuable assistance was provided by the United States 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.

Updated April 26, 2024

Topic

VIOLENT CRIME

Components

[Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\)](#)[USAO - District of Columbia](#)[USAO - Utah](#)

Press Release Number: 24-365

Related Content

PRESS RELEASE

Facebook Marketplace Armed Robberies Case Ends in Guilty Plea

Elijah Porter, 20, of Washington, D.C., pleaded guilty today in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia to charges from two armed robberies, committed in 2023, announced U.S. Attorney...

February 7, 2025

PRESS RELEASE

Man Who Stabbed His Girlfriend 21 Times Gets 15 Year Prison Term

Devan Green, 30, of Washington DC, was sentenced today to 180 months in prison, for stabbing his girlfriend in their apartment on September 19, 2023, announced U.S. Attorney Edward R...

February 7, 2025

PRESS RELEASE

Guilty Plea in Theft and Sale of Hundreds of Government-Issued Phones and Computers Slated for Destruction

Nikhil Parekh, 37, of Randallstown, Maryland, pleaded guilty today in U.S. District Court in connection with the theft and sale of hundreds of government-issued smartphones, laptop computers, and other IT...

February 4, 2025



District of Columbia

Main Office:

601 D Street, NW

Washington, DC

Email USAO-DC



Telephone: (202) 252-7566