



PRESS RELEASE

Louisiana Man Pleads Guilty to Felony and Misdemeanor Charges for Actions During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Monday, June 3, 2024

For Immediate Release

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

WASHINGTON – A Louisiana man pleaded guilty today to felony and misdemeanor charges stemming from his conduct during the Jan. 6, 2021, breach of the U.S. Capitol. 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.

Willard Purkell, 51, of Covington, Louisiana, pleaded guilty in District Court to a five-count indictment charging him with civil disorder, a felony, and misdemeanor offenses of entering a 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 Chief Judge James E. Boasberg will sentence Purkell on Sept. 12, 2024.

According to court documents, on Jan. 6, 2021, Purkell trespassed over the restricted perimeter around the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C., and made his way toward the east side of the building. Here, Purkell, was among a crowd of rioters who forced their entry into the Capitol building via the East Rotunda Doors.

At about 3:07 p.m., court documents say that a group of rioters were attempting to enter the building through the East Rotunda Doors while another group was trying to exit. Meanwhile, police officers were working to close the doors to stop the influx of rioters into the building. Purkell then joined with a crowd of rioters as they pushed against the police, which temporarily prohibited the officers from closing the doors. While doing so, Purkell made contact with at least one officer as he attempted to push his way through.

Around 3:21 p.m., the East Rotunda Doors were again opened in an effort to expel rioters from the building. As this occurred, the rioters, including Purkell, used their force to collectively push their way through the doors, streaming into the lobby outside of the Rotunda. Purkell then joined in with a crowd that pushed against police officers who were attempting to prohibit rioters from entering the Rotunda. Purkell and the mob were successful in breaking through and entered the Rotunda around 3:25 p.m.

Purkell and other rioters left the Rotunda when instructed to do so by the police.

The FBI arrested Purkell on Nov. 30, 2023, in Louisiana.

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 Eastern District of Louisiana provided valuable assistance.

This case was investigated by the 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 40 months since Jan. 6, 2021, more than 1,424 individuals have been charged in nearly all 50 states for crimes related to the breach of the U.S. Capitol, including more than 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 June 3, 2024

Topic

VIOLENT CRIME

Components

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