

**PRESS RELEASE**

Texas Woman Pleads Guilty to Felony and Misdemeanor Charges for Actions During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Wednesday, August 21, 2024

For Immediate Release

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

USADC.Media@usdoj.gov

WASHINGTON – A Texas woman pleaded guilty today to felony and misdemeanor charges related to her conduct during the Jan. 6, 2021, breach of the U.S. Capitol. Her 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.

Kellye SoRelle, 45, of Grandbury, Texas, pleaded guilty to a felony charge of obstruction of Justice — tampering with documents and a misdemeanor charge of entering and remaining in a restricted building or grounds before U.S. District Judge Amit P. Mehta. Judge Mehta will sentence SoRelle on Jan. 17, 2025.

According to court documents, SoRelle was an affiliate of the Oath Keepers and the Oath Keepers' founder and leader, Elmer Stewart Rhodes and is an attorney who has previously worked as a prosecutor in Texas. In the days following the 2020 U.S. presidential election, members of the Oath Keepers, a far-right militia group, led by Stewart Rhodes, began discussing the necessity of opposing the transition of power from President Donald J. Trump to President-Elect Joseph R. Biden, Jr. This opposition extended to advocating for the use of force if necessary.

On Nov. 5, 2020, Rhodes sent a message to an encrypted group chat titled "Leadership intel sharing secured," which included other key figures in the Oath Keepers organization, such as Kellye SoRelle. In his message, Rhodes emphatically declared, "We MUST refuse to accept Biden as a legitimate winner," and further escalated the rhetoric by stating, "We aren't getting through this without a civil war. Too late for that. Prepare your mind, body, spirit."

While some members of the Oath Keepers distanced themselves from the group due to the increasingly violent and radical tone, others, like Kellye SoRelle, continued to collaborate closely with Rhodes. SoRelle, a Texas-based attorney who had become increasingly involved with the Oath Keepers, worked with Rhodes on various projects aimed at opposing the election results.

On Jan. 3, 2021, SoRelle traveled with Rhodes from Texas to Washington, D.C., where they planned to be part of the Oath Keepers' operation on January 6. During the journey, Rhodes purchased or picked up over \$20,000 worth of firearms-related equipment. By the morning of January 6, SoRelle and Rhodes were in the vicinity of the U.S. Capitol, ready to take part in the day's events.

As the riot at the Capitol began to unfold, SoRelle messaged the "Leadership intel sharing secured" group at around 1:31 p.m., declaring, "We are acting like the founding fathers — can't stand down. Per Stewart, and I concur." Rhodes, for his part, directed his Oath Keeper followers to the Capitol, leading to at least 20 members of the group breaching the building. At approximately 2:12 p.m., SoRelle, Rhodes, and another Oath Keeper affiliate entered the restricted areas of the Capitol grounds. Video footage captured the group passing barriers that had been set up by law enforcement to protect the Capitol.

As she entered the restricted area, SoRelle live-streamed a video to Facebook, expressing her support for the actions of the rioters and urging others not to be afraid. She described the scene as one of the "coolest damn things" she had ever witnessed and framed the riot as a necessary step to prevent the United States from descending into communism and tyranny. SoRelle continued to document the riot over Facebook live-stream as she moved around the Capitol building with Rhodes and the other Oath Keeper affiliate. The group eventually made their way to the Upper West Terrace of the Capitol, where they watched as rioters continued to stream into the building.

As they stood on the terrace, another Oath Keeper affiliate remarked that the people inside the Capitol "gotta be shitting their pants right now." SoRelle laughed and agreed, while Rhodes responded with the Latin phrase "Sic semper tyrannis," which means "Thus unto tyrants," a phrase famously shouted by John Wilkes Booth after he assassinated President Abraham Lincoln.

After the events at the Capitol, SoRelle joined Rhodes and other Oath Keepers for a celebratory dinner. During the dinner, the group received word that law enforcement was either arresting or searching for individuals involved in the Capitol attack. SoRelle, and the others then

left the restaurant, returned to their hotel, packed their belongings, and regrouped at a nearby gas station.

At the gas station, Rhodes turned off his cell phone and handed it to SoRelle, fearing it might be tracked by law enforcement. He then left with another Oath Keeper affiliate while SoRelle drove separately. They later rendezvoused in Tennessee before continuing to Alabama and ultimately back to Texas.

As they traveled, Rhodes and SoRelle sent messages from SoRelle's phone, since Rhodes' phone remained off to avoid tracking. These messages urged Oath Keeper affiliates to delete any evidence of their involvement in the January 6 events. In a Signal group chat named "DC Op: Jan 6 21," SoRelle wrote, "Please delete any information you've posted regarding the DC op and your involvement. This thread will be deleted when possible." She also relayed instructions from Rhodes to "clean up all your chats."

SoRelle further directed, "YOU ALL NEED TO DELETE ANY OF YOUR COMMENTS ABOUT WHO DID WHAT," explaining that only the comment authors could delete their posts. Oath Keeper members and affiliates complied, deleting messages, photographs, and videos from their devices that could serve as evidence of their participation in the Capitol attack.

The FBI arrested SoRelle on Sept. 1, 2022, in Junction, Texas.

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 Offices for the Western and Eastern Districts of Texas provided valuable assistance.

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

In the 43 months since Jan. 6, 2021, more than 1,488 individuals have been charged in nearly all 50 states for crimes related to the breach of the U.S. Capitol, including nearly 550 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

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