



PRESS RELEASE

Florida Man Arrested for Assaulting Law Enforcement with a Weapon and Other Offenses During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Friday, December 20, 2024

For Immediate Release

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

USADC.Media@usdoj.gov

Defendant Allegedly Struck Police Officer with Baseball Bat

WASHINGTON — A Florida man was arrested yesterday morning and charged with assaulting law enforcement with a weapon and other counts related to his alleged conduct during the Jan. 6, 2021, breach of the U.S. Capitol. His alleged 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.

Joel Linn O'Donnell, 44, of Clearwater, Florida, is charged in a criminal complaint filed in the District of Columbia with seven offenses, including assaulting, resisting, or impeding certain officers with a deadly or dangerous weapon; assaulting, resisting, or impeding certain officers; obstruction of law enforcement during civil disorder; entering and remaining in a restricted building or grounds with a deadly or dangerous weapon; disorderly and disruptive conduct in a

restricted building or grounds with a deadly or dangerous weapon; and engaging in physical violence in a restricted building or grounds with a deadly or dangerous weapon.

In addition to the felonies, O'Donnell is charged with two misdemeanor offenses of disorderly conduct in a Capitol building and an act of physical violence in the Capitol grounds or buildings.

The FBI arrested O'Donnell December 19, in Clearwater. He made his initial appearance in the Middle District of Florida.

According to court documents, on Jan. 6, 2021, O'Donnell attended a rally near the Ellipse in Washington, D.C., and afterward, joined a large crowd marching toward the U.S. Capitol building. Once on Capitol grounds, O'Donnell positioned himself at the Lower West Plaza.

O'Donnell, accompanied by an associate, moved closer to the Capitol building, transitioning from the West Front to the Upper West Terrace. There, he joined a mass of rioters on temporary stadium-style risers as objects were hurled at police officers nearby. The crowd reportedly chanted "TRAITORS!" at law enforcement officers attempting to control the unrest.

At approximately 4:54 p.m., it is alleged that O'Donnell advanced toward the Lower West Terrace Tunnel, the site of some of the most violent attacks against law enforcement that day, while carrying a large wooden step and two long poles. Moments later, O'Donnell allegedly used these items as weapons, hurling all three of the objects at police officers defending the Tunnel.

At approximately 5:02 p.m., it is alleged that O'Donnell returned to the police line armed with a baseball bat and repeatedly struck a Metropolitan Police Department officer, hitting the officer's riot shield. Court documents say that O'Donnell only retreated from the tunnel area after police deployed riot control munitions to disperse the crowd.

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 Middle District of Florida.

This case is being investigated by the FBI's Tampa and Washington Field Offices which identified Gonzalez as AFO (Assault on Federal Officer) BOLO (Be on the Lookout) #352 on its seeking information images. Valuable assistance was provided by the United States Capitol Police and the Metropolitan Police Department.

In the 47 months since Jan. 6, 2021, more than 1,572 individuals have been charged in nearly all 50 states for crimes related to the breach of the U.S. Capitol, including more than 590 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.

A complaint is merely an allegation, and all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

Contact

USADC.Media@usdoj.gov

Updated January 2, 2025

Topic

VIOLENT CRIME

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**District of Columbia**

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