



PRESS RELEASE

Illinois Man Sentenced to Prison for Felony Destruction of Property During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

Saturday, January 11, 2025

For Immediate Release

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

WASHINGTON – An Illinois man was sentenced to prison after he previously pleaded guilty to a felony charge of destruction of government property 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.

Justin LaGesse, 37, of McLeansboro, Illinois, was sentenced to 11 months in prison, 12 months of supervised release, and ordered to pay \$43,315 in restitution by U.S. District Judge James E. Boasberg on Jan. 10, 2025.

Additionally charged in this matter as a co-defendant is Theodore Middendorf, 36, also of McLeansboro. Middendorf previously pleaded guilty to a felony charge of destruction of government property.

According to court documents, in December 2020, LaGesse and Middendorf made arrangements to travel to Washington, D.C., to protest the results of the 2020 presidential election. As part of their planning, the men had an associate create shirts with the wording "F — ANTIFA" written on the front.

On Jan. 6, 2021, the two men arrived in Washington, D.C., carrying with them an American and Gadsden flag. LaGessee wore a camouflaged jacket, the aforementioned shirt, a blue baseball cap, and an American flag-style neck gaiter. At approximately 2:51 p.m., LaGessee entered into the U.S. Capitol by climbing through a broken window next to the Senate Wing Door. He then turned around and helped Middendorf through the window. Once inside, the pair moved towards the middle of the Senate Wing Door lobby area and waved their flags while chanting "U.S.A." with a crowd of rioters.

After spending some time in the lobby, LaGessee and Middendorf continued to traverse through the Capitol before exiting the building at approximately 3:02 p.m. Once outside of the building, LaGessee partially pulled down his neck gaiter and began to harass several police officers who were protecting the Capitol. Among other things, LaGessee called the officers "f— traitors" and "f— communist scum."

By approximately 4:09 p.m., the two men had moved to the north side of the Capitol where a large group of rioters were attempting to breach the building via the North Door. There, police officers defended the door and blocked the rioters' entry. As the officers held back the rioters, LaGessee and Middendorf approached the nearby exterior window of a room inside the Capitol and struck the glass window several times with the bases of their flagpoles. Their strikes caused visible damage to the glass.

After the riot, the Architect of the Capitol determined that the total cost of the damage to the window was \$41,315.25.

The FBI arrested LaGessee on Jan. 17, 2024, in Illinois.

This case was 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 Southern District of Illinois.

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

In the 48 months since Jan. 6, 2021, more than 1,583 individuals have been charged in nearly all 50 states for crimes related to the breach of the U.S. Capitol, including more than 600 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.

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VIOLENT CRIME

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**District of Columbia**

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