

Houston Man Sentenced to Prison for Assaulting Law Enforcement With Dangerous Weapons During Jan. 6 Capitol Breach

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Press Release

For Immediate Release

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

Defendant Attacked Police with Bear Spray and a Metal Whip

WASHINGTON – A Houston man was sentenced to prison today for assaulting law enforcement and other 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.

Andrew Taake, 35, of Houston, Texas, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Carl J. Nichols to 74 months in prison, 36 months of supervised release, and ordered to pay \$2,000 in restitution. Taake pleaded guilty to one count of assaulting, resisting, or impeding certain officers using a dangerous weapon, a felony, on Dec. 20, 2023.

Taake, while on pretrial release for a still-pending child-solicitation case in Texas, came to Washington, D.C., armed with bear spray and a metal whip. Taake attended the “Stop the Steal” rally on the Ellipse and was among the first to breach the restricted perimeter of the Capitol grounds and swarm the West Plaza.

Taake made his way to the front of the crowd on the West Plaza, at which point he and other rioters forced the outnumbered U.S. Capitol Police (USCP) officers to retreat closer to the building. Taake followed, maintaining proximity to the officers.

At approximately 1:13 p.m., Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) reinforcements arrived on the Capitol grounds, and, with the aid of metal bike-rack barricades, the officers slowly pushed rioters away from the Capitol and formed a line behind the barricades. This regrouping enraged the rioters, Taake included. A chaotic physical struggle between officers and rioters broke out. At approximately 1:16 p.m., Taake surged forward toward the police line and sprayed the officers with bear spray from approximately ten feet away for about three seconds, engulfing the officers in a cloud of orange chemicals.

Five minutes later, at approximately 1:21 p.m., Taake again approached the police line. This time, he sprayed a group of USCP officers from approximately 30 feet away. About thirty seconds later, at approximately 1:22 p.m., Taake sprayed a nearby group of USCP and MPD officers from approximately 20 feet away.

About eight minutes later, at 1:30 p.m., Taake, with his metal whip in one hand and bear spray in the other, joined other rioters in a concerted effort to push the police line back. Seconds later, Taake reached over the heads of the other rioters and sprayed officers with bear spray for a fourth time. Approximately three minutes later, Taake, standing amidst the mob, picked up a water bottle and launched it over other rioters at the line of officers.

At approximately 2:00 p.m., a group of MPD reinforcements attempted to make their way through the crowd on the northwest side of the grounds and to the West Plaza. Rioters, Taake among them, surrounded the officers and trapped them in place, assaulting them from all sides.

Nearby, several officers were engaged in a physical struggle with rioters on the West Plaza. Police body-worn footage shows Taake emerging from the crowd and attacking an MPD officer, making contact with the officer’s forearm with his metal whip.

Taake entered the Capitol building via the Senate Wing door at approximately 2:20 p.m. Once inside, he made his way to the Crypt, holding the whip-like weapon at his side as he walked through the building. Taake exited the Capitol via the Senate Wing Door at 2:40 p.m., having spent

approximately 20 minutes inside.

Later that day, Taake messaged an individual on a dating application and spoke on his conduct at the Capitol. That individual then sent Taake's name and messages to the FBI, leading to his eventual identification and arrest in Houston, Texas in July 2021.

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia and the Department of Justice National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section prosecuted this case. The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Texas provided valuable assistance.

The FBI's Houston and Washington Field Offices investigated this case. The U.S. Capitol Police and the Metropolitan Police Department provided valuable assistance.

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.
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Topic

Violent Crime

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