

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)
)
 v.) CASE NO. 1:21-cr-643-1 (CKK)
)
 MEGHAN ROUTLEDGE)
)
 _____)

DEFENDANT’S MEMORANDUM IN AID OF SENTENCING

Meghan Routledge, through undersigned counsel, submits this sentencing memorandum to aid the Court at sentencing. Based on the facts and arguments below, Ms Routledge requests the Court sentence her to 12-months of supervised probation with community service; probation to convert to unsupervised upon completion of community service. We submit that this sentence would most accurately address the concerns of the sentencing statute, 18 U.S.C. §3553.

As is our practice, we are not going to belabor the Court with a recitation of the information contained in the Presentence Report. Rather we will contain our remarks to factors we feel pertinent and relevant to the Court’s sentencing calculus outside of that document, focusing on Ms Routledge’s actions and memories of the events of 6 January 2021, and perspective on her position over two years later.

Prologue to 6th January.

Meghan Routledge is a supporter of former President Trump, becoming so during his run for the presidency in 2016. She voted for him in that election, and as the 2020 election approached, she felt strongly enough about his term in office to again give him her vote. However, the events of the latter part of that year took a very strange undertone. In the period leading up to the election, perhaps sensing the political winds, the former president claimed were he to lose the election, this

could only happen if election fraud were to take place. This meme was bombarded across right-wing media.

A sad indictment of our times is media outlets have become increasingly polarized and seek not to *inform* their respective audiences, rather catering to the already-apparent biases of their target demographic. In response, it is natural for the audience, hearing what they want to hear, to become increasingly fervent having their particular suspicions and fears buttressed. No one likes to lose, and reassuring any crowd that *if we lose its because we were cheated* is an incredibly powerful narcotic, and this message struck a resonant chord with the right-wing faithful. As the first Tuesday in November approached, the message of potential voter-fraud to the devoted increased to frenetic levels: the scene was set for discord. Trump constantly stoked the fires claiming there was an organized effort from his adversaries to “steal” the election. This was nuclearized with the message that the conservative vote as a whole was being neutralized. Again, the message resonated. Moreover, in addition to the media, the circles and friends one encounters also has a strengthening factor to personal beliefs. All this combined, and on the eve of the election the stage was set; the powder was primed.

3rd November arrived. The country watched with bated breath as America went to the polls. Tuesday evening turned into Wednesday; the nation perched on the edge of its seat as the election leaned towards Biden. The right-wing media went into overdrive. It didn’t help that recount after recount left us 4 days without a decision, but by Saturday the result was called. The effect of this four-day delay only served to ramp-up the tensions and fears as the faithful watched what appeared to be Trump’s prediction coming to pass. In the wake of the result, what followed was an explosion of frenzy with court cases, recounts, protests of cheating screamed from the rooftops. The new meme of “Stop the Steal” took over the airwaves. Meghan watched and was swayed. As court case after court case collapsed, as recount after recount confirmed the returns, and as state after state

refused to nullify its result, the options for the faithful dwindled. 6th January 2021 was the scheduled date for Congress to exercise its two-hundred-year-old constitutional duty in certifying the votes of the Electoral College, and this date quickly became the new focal point. Trump called for a huge rally for that day, and the MAGA hats responded.

6th January, 2022

As the day approached, Meghan considered the situation. She had observed the last eight weeks frenzy and outrage from the outlets. She had discussed the events with her close friends and circle. As mentioned, over the course of his presidency she had become a firm supporter and viewed him to be a good man and a great president. The reports she was exposed to led her to believe that something untoward maybe had occurred in the election. She had heard from friends and social media that Trump had called the faithful to rally in DC on January 6th. Even the name of the event was designed to inflame and arouse his followers. The “Save America” rally was to take place on the south side of the White House on the Ellipse. On the eve of the fateful day of certification, having had talks with friends, Meghan, along with her father and sister decided to make the trip to Washington DC for the rally. Mr Bostic only agreed to the trip on the condition that they were accompanied by a colleague of his Meghan knew as “Bobo.” Nonetheless, Trump had called for their support and it felt like it was the only right thing to do. It must be noted at this point that Meghan, despite the drumbeat from radicals for conservative members of Congress or the Vice President to deny certification, did not harbor any illusions that the result itself could be changed on certification day: to be frank, she was not even really sure what certification meant. As she looks back at it now, it was just a feeling of standing up and being counted: It was to be a show of support for the outgoing president. She had been to one previous rally and saw this as the last opportunity to express support and hear for the last time the outgoing president speak: nothing more, nothing less. How wrong she was to be.

The party left for DC on the morning of the 6th. There had been no planning; this was a spur-of-the-moment thing. Living in Virginia Beach, they had no concerns that this was merely a quick drive up and a quick drive back. However, by the time they arrived in the District, found parking (about a mile away from the rally) and made it to the event, they were late. So late that in fact that the Ellipse was full and they had to watch from the hill surrounding the Washington Monument, the other side of Constitution Avenue. From that distance they could hear very little, but from the crowd around them, the message was passed that Trump had told the crowd to go to the Capitol. It was widely circulated that he intended to speak again there. The crowd began the trek down Constitution Avenue. The Routledge group followed.

As they joined the crowd at the Capitol, Mr Bostic took stock of the scene. They were at the bottom of the steps on the north-west corner of the building close to the north edge of the structure being constructed for the inauguration. For a short while the crowd was muted, but as time went on his assessment was that this was getting too crowded and too disorganized for another speech. He relayed to the group his belief that Trump wasn't coming and it was time to leave. At this point they noticed Bobo was missing. The crowd of people *en masse* had started to move up the steps to the north edge of the patio running the west side of the Capitol. Meghan's sister expressed a belief that Bobo was amongst this crowd climbing the steps. They couldn't reach him by phone, so, as a group they made the decision to follow up the steps to find him. At the top of the steps, on the patio, they were swept in with the crowd through the breached door on the Senate side. It was 3:12.

While we do not attempt to assert some kind of coercion in what was happening, the truth is the group was looking for their friend and was carried along in the flow of the crowd. The scene inside the building was deteriorating. This was not a situation which allowed for calm reflection, and mob mentality was taking hold. Mr Bostic decided it was no place for his daughters and, upon

considering finding his friend a hopeless challenge in that environment, told the girls they were leaving. This was easier said than done as people were still streaming in but, upon patiently finding an exit, after taking some pictures for posterity, they left the building. It was now 3:16. They had been in the building for approximately 4 minutes.

Once outside, as the group descended the steps, they came across Bobo. They somehow had missed each other in the crowd on the steps, and he'd not gone up and entered the building. The reunited group agreed this experience was over, and made their way back to the car to go home. The trip home was surreal. The mood was subdued. Whilst they were unaware of what had transpired at other locations in and around the building, there was still the feeling that something had just taken place that was not anticipated. Fresh in their heads was the rumor floating around the crowd all day that Antifa and Black Lives Matter supporters were present and causing mayhem. The tear gas that Meghan had encountered that day was thought to have originated by those parties. Indeed, upon being contacted on social media by contemporaries, Meghan conveyed these thoughts. But as the subsequent days and weeks passed, and as she became exposed to the realities of that day and the true extent of what had occurred, she was appalled. The gravity of what had transpired set in, and the feeling that things would never be the same again was unshakeable.

The Present Day.

Meghan Routledge looks back at the events of 6th January 2021 with regret. She feels regret from several angles. First, she expresses remorse for her actions that day. In going to the Capitol, she had no intent to engage in any of the behavior that rose to the level we all experienced. The environment she found herself in was animated to say the least and she found herself being swept along, to, and into the Capitol building itself. As we have mentioned, that is not to say that she was coerced but rather the frenzy left little time for self-reflection: the self-reflection she now employs. She looks back and understands the gravity of being inside the building; what it meant. It brings

home that what took place went way beyond her initial intent. She recalls it like being in the eye of a hurricane and remembers the moment she felt the need to get out as quickly as she could. She wishes she'd encountered that epiphany before things got out of hand. She knows that despite a lack of any underlying malevolence, or any preconceived plan to alter the election, or even to *fight like hell*, her actions crossed a line, and she accepts responsibility for this.

Secondly, she feels sadness at the manner that day is now perceived. She came to DC with the honorable intent of displaying her support for the outgoing president. Throughout the Capitol building area, events span out of control. The nature of the violence the nation witnessed has cast a pall over anyone who attended that day, and that is something she will take a long time to get over; if at all. She believes the events of that day will continue to haunt the ex-president, and that is certainly contradictory to the reason she travelled to DC. She has been approached on several occasions by media to provide her side of events, but has declined to do so. Quite simply her experiences on that day have left an indelible sour taste in her mouth and she wants to put it in the past and close the door as quickly as possible. She is very frightened of what could happen to her at sentencing but she wishes to make the Court aware that she knows she's here based on her own actions and takes responsibility.

Sentencing Factors.

18 U.S.C. §3553 provides:

(a) Factors To Be Considered in Imposing a Sentence.—The court shall impose a sentence sufficient, but not greater than necessary, to comply with the purposes set forth in paragraph (2) of this subsection. The court, in determining the particular sentence to be imposed, shall consider—

(1) the nature and circumstances of the offense and the history and characteristics of the defendant;

(2) the need for the sentence imposed—

(A) to reflect the seriousness of the offense, to promote respect for the law, and to provide just punishment for the offense;

(B) to afford adequate deterrence to criminal conduct;

- (C) to protect the public from further crimes of the defendant; and
- (D) to provide the defendant with needed educational or vocational training, medical care, or other correctional treatment in the most effective manner;

Addressing these factors individually we find the following. Nature and circumstances of the offense in these matters is a highly combustible issue, and we will return to it shortly. On history and characteristics of the defendant there is not much debate. Ms Routledge has extremely minor criminal history. Her background displays an individual who has led a law-abiding existence prior to the events which bring her here. Indeed as noted in other documents she is married to a serving police officer and carries with her the appropriate respect of the law characterized by a police officer's wife. Subsection (2)(A) discusses seriousness of the offense, respect for the law, and just punishment for the offense. We will return to this also when we discuss nature and circumstances of the offense. Subsection (B) contemplates adequate deterrence to criminal conduct. She has been emotionally shaken by her experiences with the justice system, and the insight she has acquired has left her with the strongest of convictions that this will be her last. She has indicated she will never attend another rally: Those days are over. Incarceration is not necessary to make that point. Subsection (C) considers a similar idea as that in (B), in protecting the community from further criminal contact. Here we point out Ms Routledge is as far from being a career offender as is possible and, again, given her experiences here, the public has nothing to fear from Meghan Routledge in the future. With respect to Subsection (D), quite simply she has no need of any of the services available to U.S. Probation. Which brings us back to sections (1) and (2)(A).

The nature and circumstances of the offense is a not a simple issue to unpack. On the one hand, the offenses Meghan accepted responsibility for, in the universe of criminal conduct, are not especially egregious. However, taken into context with the much larger events of 6 January, the nature and circumstances question becomes much less clear. There is no question the events of

that day have left a deep scar on the national psyche. Seditious behavior has in some cases been charged. But we ask the Court to take note that Ms Routledge is one of a small group of people who despite having gone down the regrettable road of entering the Capitol realized the gravity of what was happening and once recognizing that, got out as quickly as possible. We ask the Court to recognize that even at what appeared to be the point of no return, this was a Rubicon she made every effort to recross. We ask the Court to view her actions against the backdrop of those with more sinister intentions as proof of her original harmless purpose and sentence her accordingly.

Addressing (2)(A), we have already discussed Ms Routledge's view of the rioters' actions being contrary to the best interests of the former President, but she also views those acts as not being true to one of her core values of respect towards law and order. Again, we remind the Court Meghan is a serving police officer's wife. We highlight to the Court that at no point has there been any suggestion that Ms Routledge belongs to any organization that encourages civil disobedience, advocates overthrow of the government, displays extremist right-wing views, or has encouraged in any way of the violence on display on 6th January. In terms of any sense of danger to the community, there is simply none: it does not exist. The Court should have no concerns as to her views on the respect for law either today or for the future.

The final issue §3553 to be discussed is the last part of (2)(A): just punishment for the offense. At its heart, this is the very central issue for this Memorandum as a whole. Ms Routledge is a law-abiding citizen who placed herself in the wrong place at the wrong time. She came to DC to exercise her right to express her political support, and quickly found herself in the middle of an escalating situation in which speech, free or not, was being dropped as a form of expression by a mob, spinning out of control, in which rage was taking over. She has been shattered at the fallout from that day. Her life will never be the same again. This, in and of itself, is more than adequate punishment. In no way, shape, or form should the Court be under the impression that a

probationary sentence would be seen as getting away with anything. For the rest of her life Meghan will forever be associated with the events of that day, and she takes this to heart. Given all discussed above, including the fact of her decision to disengage when she did, we ask the Court to sentence in accordance with our proposal.

Conclusion

Taking all the above into account. We ask the Court to provide the following sentence. We submit a twelve-month probationary period to be fitting with community service. We believe the community would benefit far more from her service than her incarceration. We would ask the Court to make the probation supervised for the initial portion up to the completion of community service, and then to convert to unsupervised for the remainder of the probationary period. We believe this sentence to best satisfy the concerns of 18 U.S.C. §3553.

/s/ Peter A. Cooper

Peter Cooper; 478-082
Counsel for Meghan Routledge
400 5th Street NW.
Washington DC 20001