

While on bail for attempted murder

North Carolina neo-Nazi sentenced to three years in prison for assaulting police on January 6

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On Wednesday, 22-year-old neo-Nazi Matthew Jason Beddingfield of Smithfield, North Carolina was sentenced to three years and two months in prison after he pled guilty earlier this year to assaulting police officers with a flagpole during the mob attack on the US Capitol on January 6, 2021. As part of the plea deal, several felony charges against Beddingfield were dropped, reducing his potential sentence significantly.

Surveillance and civilian video from the day of the failed coup shows Beddingfield at the front of Trump's fascist mob, jabbing and striking police with his flagpole, beginning shortly after 1 p.m. on the West Plaza of the Capitol. Additional footage shows Beddingfield giving a Hitler salute before breaking into the Capitol.

One photograph that prosecutors included in their pretrial affidavit identified Beddingfield standing behind convicted Three Percenter Robert Gieswein during the attack. Gieswein was sentenced to four years in prison for assaulting police with chemical spray earlier this year. Prior to storming the Capitol with the Proud Boys, Gieswein was photographed with other right-wing militia members and Colorado Republican Representative Lauren Boebert, in front of her now-defunct restaurant, "Shooters."

The same affidavit that features a photograph of Beddingfield and Gieswein also includes photographs posted on the Facebook account of Matthew's father, Jason Beddingfield. Jason captioned a series of images posted on January 6, 2021 from Washington D.C. "WE ARE HERE TO TAKE THIS COUNTRY BACK FROM THOSE COMMIE BASTARDS."

At the time Matthew Beddingfield participated in the coup, the then 20-year-old was on pretrial release after he had been arrested and charged for attempted murder in December 2019. According to police warrants, a then 19-year-old Beddingfield shot a 17-year-old Hispanic teenager, Hochtavio Garcia, in the head while in a Walmart parking lot in Smithfield after a drug transaction turned into a robbery. Miraculously, Garcia survived the encounter.

Despite the fact that Beddingfield was publicly identified as a violent brawler in the coup in a March 26, 2021 report for the *Huffington Post* by Ryan Reilly and Jesselyn Cook, he was not arrested for actions until nearly a year later, on February 7, 2022.

In August 2021, more than seven months after the coup, Beddingfield pled guilty to reduced charges in the shooting of the teenager. Despite pleading guilty to felony charges of "assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill or inflicting serious injury" Beddingfield faced no prison time, and was instead sentenced to 24 months of probation. The fact that Beddingfield had been identified as a violent insurrectionist did not stop the court from imposing this derisory sentence.

In their February 2022 arrest affidavit, FBI agents confirmed that not only did both father and son participate in the coup together, both Beddingfields had previously traveled to the Washington D.C. to participate in the "Million MAGA March," on November 14, 2020. The march served as a practice run for the attack on Congress and a nexus for Proud Boys, Oath Keepers and other

militia elements to finalize plans with high level Trump cronies such as Roger Stone and Michael Flynn.

During their search of Beddingfield's car, FBI agents claim they found three books in his possession: "*Hitler: The Path to Power*, by Charles Braclene Flood; *The Third Reich at War: The Full Story of the Rise and Fall of the Most Awesome Military Machine the World Had Ever Known*, edited by Michael Veranov; and *The Hitler Book: The Secret Dossier Prepared for Stalin from the Interrogations of Hitler's Personal Aides*, edited by Henrik Eberle and Mattias Uhl."

As part of his bond conditions for the attempted murder charge, Beddingfield was not supposed to be on social media. However, in keeping with their "hands off approach" towards the violent neo-Nazi, police did not enforce this in any manner. Following his arrest, police discovered that Beddingfield maintained multiple accounts across several social media platforms, writing frequently under the name "rightwingdissident."

Under his accounts Beddingfield harassed and intimidated his political enemies, writing in one instance, "Heil Hitler, you're a n*gger lover that's why you have monkey lives matter in your bio."

Attacking an LGBTQ+ account on Instagram, prosecutors say Beddingfield wrote "Don't be duped into the belief that this is normal ... things like this usually signify the fall of an empire and a decline in morality. The last place these things happened at was in Weimar Germany then you know what came next." He later added, "You have no values and the only tragedy that happened was that Hitler didn't finish the job."

In their search of Beddingfield's smartphone, FBI agents said they found "highly offensive and deeply troubling hate symbols and hate speech. Beddingfield appears to harbor deep resentment towards the Black, Hispanic, Native American and LGBTQ+ communities while glorifying white supremacist figures, beliefs, language, and ideologies.

"Beddingfield unabashedly expresses his wish that members of those groups meet a violent end and in others he expresses a desire to inflict said violence or death on the same. Some of the images found on Beddingfield's cell phone include, but are not limited to images of SS

Bolts, swastikas (sometimes with hate language superimposed over the swastika's four arms), numerous images and memes featuring Hitler, and other anti-Semitic, anti-Black, and anti-LGBTQ+ memes and caricatures."

In a search of Beddingfield's apartment, FBI agents reported finding "thousands of rounds of .22 caliber ammunition ... even though he was a convicted felon." In addition to the ammunition, police recovered, "four long guns including two AK-style rifles," four handguns and additional ammunition.

That this neo-Nazi was able to amass an arsenal and participate in Trump's coup while on bond for attempted murder, underscores the real "two-tier" justice system that exists in America. For over two years, Trump and his Republican co-conspirators have whined that they are being unfairly persecuted by the FBI, which did nothing to prevent the attack, and the Department of Justice.

These claims disintegrate in the face of the actual consequences Trump and his high-level co-conspirators have faced. While more than 1,000 people have been charged in the attack, more than two and half years later, neither Attorney General Merrick Garland, nor Special Counsel Jack Smith have leveled any charges against any of the principal organizers and inspirers of the coup, from Trump, to Mark Meadows, to Virginia and Clarence Thomas.

While ruling class criminals go free, since Trump's failed coup, thousands of working class and poor people have been shot and killed by police and border guards. In Georgia, 42 people protesting the construction of "Cop City" and the murder of environmental activist Manuel "Tortuguita" Paez Terán are facing trumped up domestic terrorism charges; a charge that has not been leveled against a *single* January 6 fascist.



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