

Prominent peddler of COVID misinfo pleads guilty to joining Capitol riot | Ars Technica

By Beth Mole

March 7, 2022

Dr. Simone Gold, a prominent anti-vaccine doctor who founded a group notorious for widely peddling COVID-19 misinformation, pleaded guilty on Thursday to joining the insurrectionists who violently attacked the US Capitol building on January 6, 2021.

Gold is the founder of America's Frontline Doctors (AFLDS) and has spent the pandemic downplaying COVID-19, promoting unproven treatments (such as hydroxychloroquine and ivermectin), and casting doubt on the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines.

According to her guilty plea, Gold entered a restricted area around the Capitol on January 6, joining part of the mob outside the East Rotunda door. There, she stood directly in front of a law enforcement officer as the officer was assaulted and dragged to the ground, the plea notes. Shortly after, she entered the rotunda with rioters and began giving a speech against COVID-19 vaccine mandates and government-imposed lockdowns while co-defendant John Strand video-recorded her remarks. Multiple law enforcement officers had to intervene before Gold stopped her speech. Then she and Strand left the area.

In an interview published in The Washington Post on January 12, Gold said that she did regret going into the Capitol because it could distract from her "advocacy" work but that "it emphatically was not a riot." She denied seeing any violence. "Where I was, was incredibly peaceful," she told the Post.

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