

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the
District of Columbia

United States of America

v.

MELISSA FARRIS

DOB: xx/xx/xxxx

Case: 1:26-mj-00140

Assigned To : Sharbaugh, Matthew J.

Assign. Date : 8/14/2026

Description: COMPLAINT W/ARREST WARRANT

Defendant(s)

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of August 13, 2026 in the county of _____ in the
_____ District of Columbia, the defendant(s) violated:*Code Section*

18 U.S.C. § 1361

18 U.S.C. § 1369

Offense Description

Willfully Injured or Committed a Depredation against Property of the United States.

Destruction of Veterans' Memorial.

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

SEE ATTACHED STATEMENT OF FACTS

☒ Continued on the attached sheet.
Complainant's signature

Christopher Edmund, Detective, USPP

Printed name and title

Attested to by the applicant in accordance with the requirements of Fed. R. Crim. P. 4.1
by Telephone (specify reliable electronic means).Date: 08/14/2026

Judge's signature

City and state: Washington, DC

Matthew J. Sharbaugh, U.S. Magistrate Judge

Printed name and title

STATEMENT OF FACTS

On or about 2:00 p.m. (1400 hours) on August 13, 2026, members of the United States Park Police (“USPP”) and United States Park Rangers responded to a call for a disorderly person disrupting visitors in the area around the National Mall, specifically at the World War II Memorial. An individual (“WITNESS-1”) reported that they observed an individual (“SUSPECT-1”) spray painting graffiti on portions of the Atlantic Theatre Pavilion of the World War II Memorial.

The National Mall is owned by the United States Federal government. It is administered and managed as a national park unit by the National Park Service (a part of the United States Department of the Interior) under the administrative unit known as National Mall and Memorial Parks.

The World War II Memorial is part of the National Mall and honors the 16 million American service members who served during World War II, the millions more who supported the war effort from the home front, and the more than 400,000 Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice during the war. The memorial contains two main pavilions, the Atlantic and Pacific pavilions, named for the two main theaters of the war. Over four million tourists pay their respect at the memorial annually.

As a United States Park Ranger responded to the call of a disorderly person at the World War II Memorial, the Ranger observed foam in the fountain area of the Atlantic pavilion.



Figure 1. Photograph of Foam in the Fountain at the World War II Memorial.

Upon walking up the ramp on the east side of the Atlantic Pavilion, the Ranger observed multiple people gathered around the balcony observing SUSPECT-1 videotaping herself. After SUSPECT-1 became aware of the Ranger’s presence on scene, the Ranger observed her flee the area.

WITNESS-1 reported that he took a photograph of SUSPECT-1, which was recovered by law enforcement. In the photograph, SUSPECT-1 appears to be a 40-year-old white female with shoulder-length dirty blonde hair, wearing a blue jacket, a brown skirt, and sandals. She also appears to be carrying a backpack, a large plastic tube with a strap, and a white plastic bag. Additionally, the photograph shows SUSPECT-1 holding a can of spray paint in her right hand, which is expelling yellow-colored paint onto the balcony wall of the World War II Memorial's Atlantic pavilion.



Figure 2. Photograph Taken by WITNESS-1 of SUSPECT-1 Appearing to Spray Paint Portions of the World War II Memorial.



Figure 3. Enlarged Photograph Taken by WITNESS-1 of SUSPECT-1 Applying Spray Paint to Portions of the World War II Memorial (Circled).

Upon inspection, law enforcement discovered that the curved balcony wall had been vandalized. Specifically, orange-colored paint was sprayed onto the wall with the words: “Clean Hands Dirty \$.” Additionally, green-colored paint was also sprayed onto the wall just under the orange spray paint, and pink-colored paint was splattered on the ground of the balcony between the wall and the inscribed years 1941-1945 (the years of World War II).



Figure 4. Photograph of the Northern Entrance Balcony of the World War II Memorial.

In a trash can near the north entrance of the balcony, law enforcement recovered a white sign with painted letters. The paint used on the sign appeared to match the paint that was used to vandalize the northern entrance balcony.



Figure 5. Photograph of White Sign with Painted Letters.

The photograph of SUSPECT-1 that was taken by WITNESS-1 was circulated within USPP. One USPP officer recognized SUSPECT-1 as an individual who they arrested on August 10, 2026—just a few days earlier—for unlawfully camping on federal property in the area of 18th Street NW and Virginia Ave NW in Washington, D.C., which is just a few blocks from the World War II Memorial.

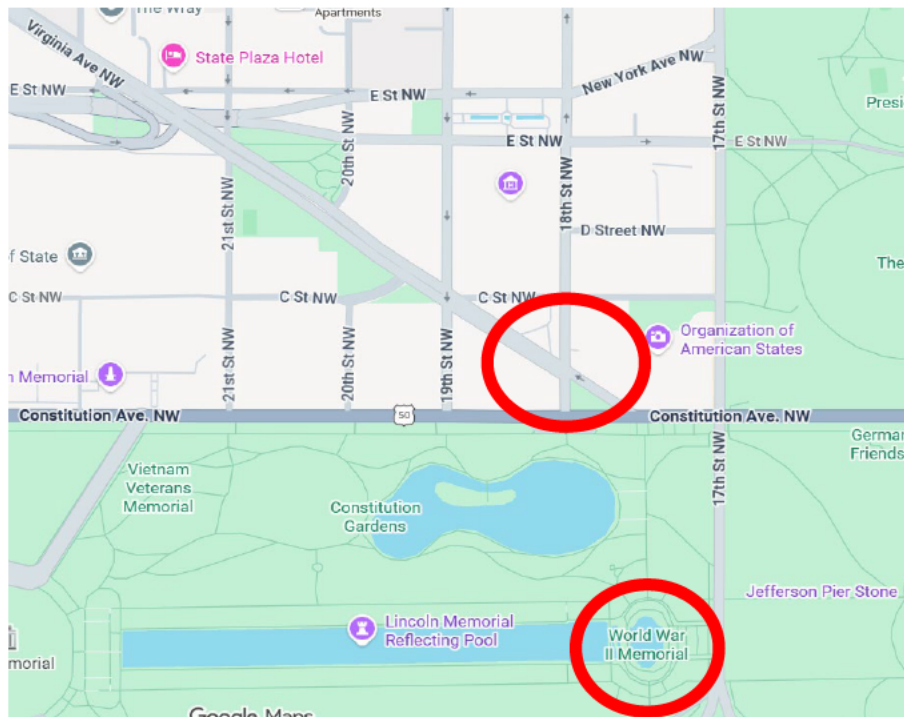


Figure 6. Google Maps Screenshot of World War II Memorial and Intersection of 18th Street NW and Virginia Ave NW (Circled).

The individual who was arrested on August 10, 2026 was identified by her Kentucky driver's license as Melissa L. Farris (DOB: [REDACTED] (hereinafter "FARRIS") from Elizabethtown, Kentucky. While USPP officers were arresting FARRIS on August 10, 2026, she was live streaming the arrest through her social media accounts. The Facebook and Instagram accounts associated with FARRIS had a username of Melissa Lovewell.

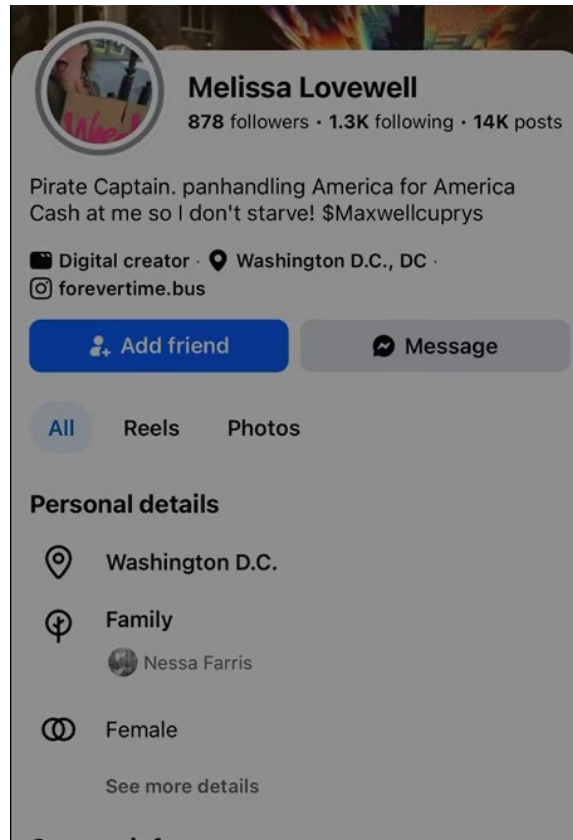


Figure 7. Screenshot of Public Facebook Account Profile Associated with FARRIS.

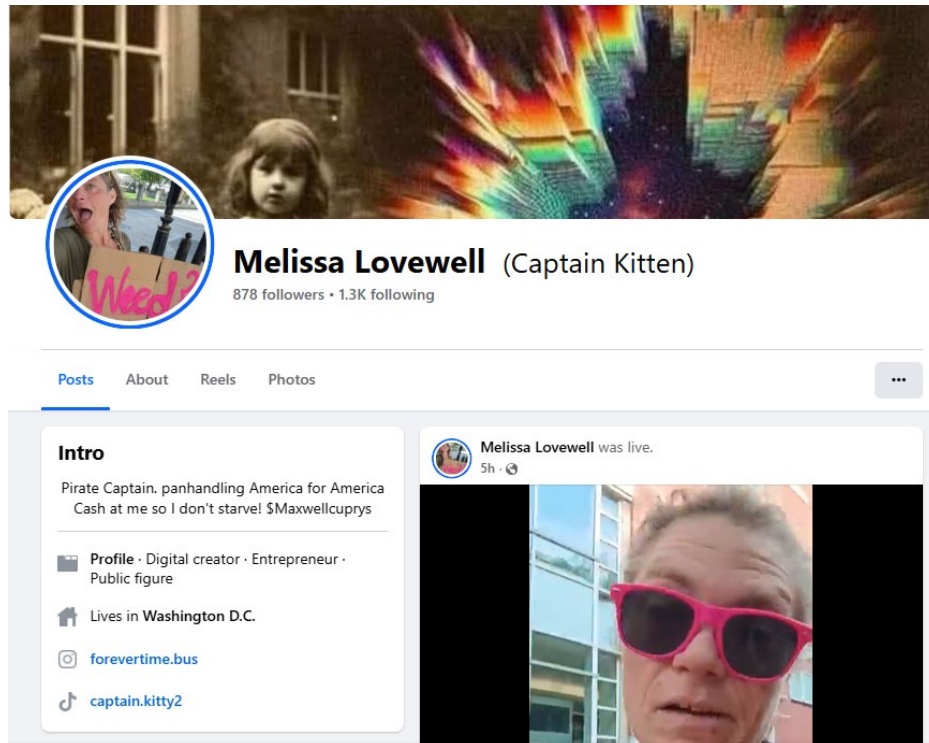


Figure 8. Screenshot of Public Facebook Account Profile Associated with FARRIS.

After a review of FARRIS’ public Facebook and Instagram accounts, law enforcement discovered that FARRIS recorded multiple livestream videos on August 13, 2026—including a recorded video of her admitting to damaging the World War II Memorial.

FARRIS posted a public livestream video before she defaced the World War II Memorial and stated, “I am cognitively aware and executively (*sic*) of the choices I am making and I am doing so to push my whistleblower case into the courtroom . . . someone has to make choices that are different and I am accountable for my actions. I am going to make these choices today and I will step foot into the courtroom and I will wait to be arrested . . . I am accountable for the things that I do and the choices that I make and our government needs to be accountable for their choices too.”

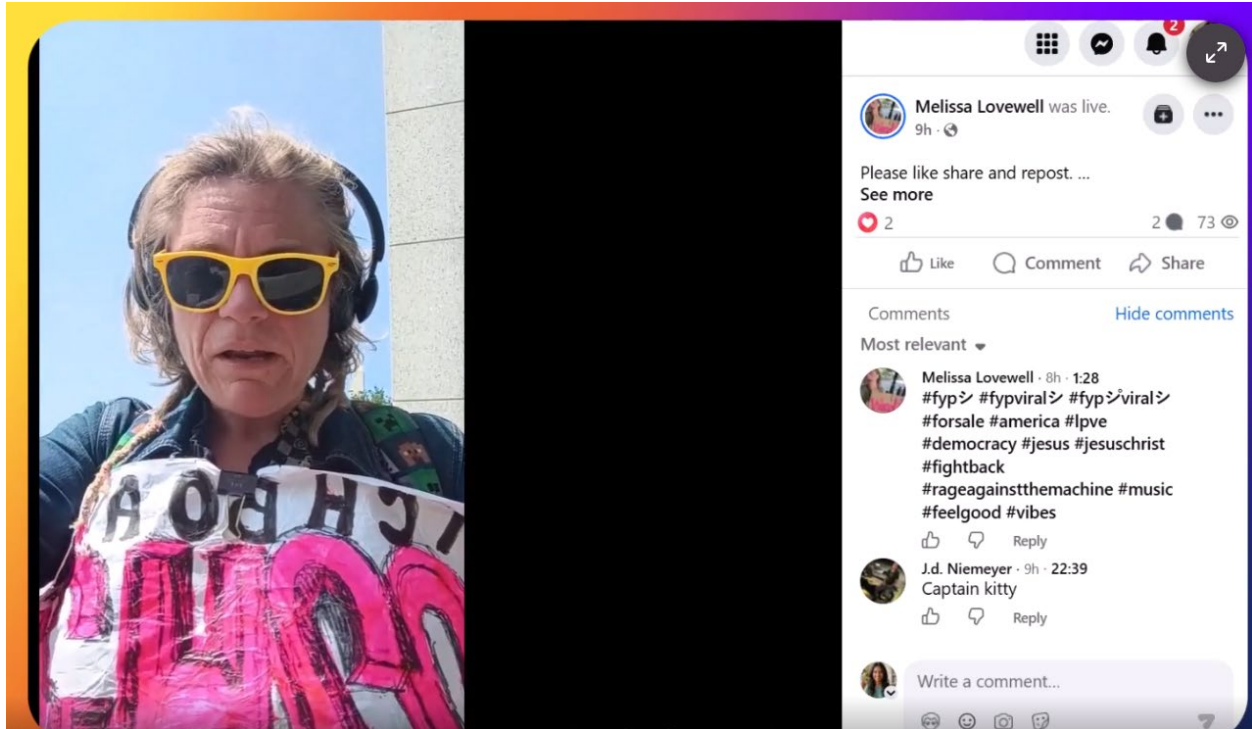


Figure 9. Screenshot of Livestream Video Posted on a Public Facebook Account Profile Associated with FARRIS.

In the livestream video, FARRIS is wearing yellow sunglasses and a blue jacket consistent with glasses and jacket worn by SUSPECT-1 in the photograph of SUSPECT-1 that was taken by WITNESS-1.



Figure 10. Enlarged Photograph of SUSPECT-1 taken by WITNESS-1.



Figure 11. Zoomed-In Screenshot of Livestream Video Posted on Public Instagram Account Profile Associated with FARRIS.

FARRIS also posted a video on August 13, 2026 to her public Facebook page showing the World War II Memorial fountain filled with a foam-like substance and the vestibule spray painted. Further, she recorded herself saying, “Nobody cares, why doesn’t anybody care, this is unreal.”

Additionally, on August 13, 2026, at 3:58 p.m. (1558 hours), FARRIS posted a video to her public Facebook feed stating, “Anybody watching this please make an edit of the live, highlight the good parts, make me look fancy, get it all over the internet, why the fuck didn’t I get arrested? You don’t think that’s weird”

Later in the same video, FARRIS stated “I was just allowed to deface Federal fucking property, and nobody batted an eye, and that is very strange.” In another public Instagram story, FARRIS stated “so I imagine the police will be coming for me soon and I would like to have it recorded for my own safety, recording for my own safety, you know, keeping it real”

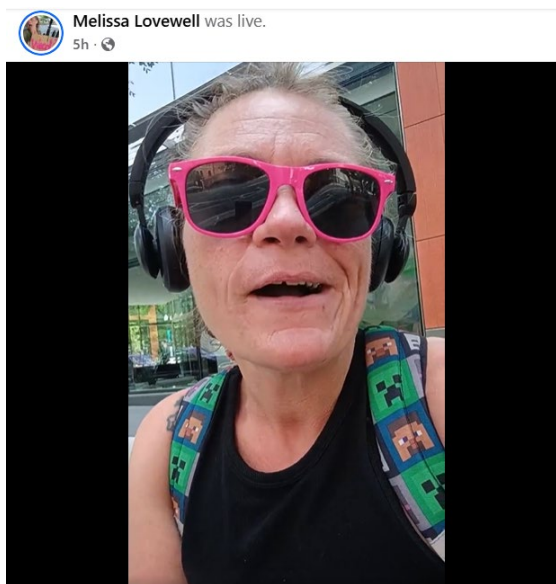
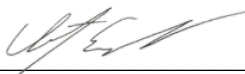


Figure 12. Zoomed-In Screenshot of Livestream Video Posted on a Public Facebook Account Profile Associated with FARRIS.

Members of the National Park Service and contractors were responsible for the clean-up and restoration of the damage caused to the World War II Memorial. A preliminary estimate of the total costs to clean and restore the memorial already exceeds \$1,000.00.

Based on the aforementioned facts, your affiant submits there is probable cause to find that on August 13, 2026, MELISSA FARRIS willfully injured or committed a depredation against property of the United States, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1361, and willfully injured or destroyed a monument on public property commemorating the service of persons in the armed forces, which was under the jurisdiction of the Federal government (Destruction of Veterans’ memorials), in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1369.

Respectfully submitted,



Detective Christopher Edmund
United States Park Police

Subscribed and sworn by telephone pursuant to Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure. 4.1
on August 14, 2026.

HONORABLE MATTHEW J. SHARBAUGH
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE