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## Interview with Officer Daniel Hodges

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Daniel Hodges

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*January 6, 2023: Officer Daniel Hodges, (seated, right), honoree. President Biden speaks during a ceremony to mark the second anniversary of the January 6 assault on the Capitol and to award Presidential Citizens Medals.*

**“We’re the ones who saved Congress that day, and we’ll do it as many times as necessary.”**

**– Daniel Hodges, Metropolitan Police Department Officer,  
Washington, D.C.**

Over the summer 2022, five District of Columbia Police officers testified before the January 6, 2021 Congressional Committee as to the extreme violence faced defending the U.S. Capitol Building on that day. All five said they had begun the day elsewhere, including some assigned to CDUs (civil disturbance units), yet ended up responding to the Capitol as supporters of former President Donald Trump began to attack and then overwhelm police. Upon arrival at the Capitol, the officers described how they encountered an “extremely violent” crowd who attempted to stop them from getting to the front lines by stripping them of their riot gear – batons, radios, shields, and masks.

Of the 32 squad members who responded to the Capitol, only four made it through the crowd together to the police line. Bodycam equipment registered the rioters' calls to attack: "Do you know what happens to traitors?" "They get tied to a post and shot. Are you ready for that?" "Take off your weapons. Take off your badges. Take off your helmets and show solidarity with We the People or we're going to run over you!"

The terrorist attack resulted in the deaths of 5 officers and the hospital treatment of approximately 140. One wounded front-line responder was DC Police Officer Daniel Hodges, who had ended up on the front line of the police's barricade at a security checkpoint inside the tunnel. Subsequently, rioters broke through the glass of a door and began charging toward police, Hodges was crushed against a doorframe by rioters; one attacker ripped off his gas mask and stole his baton before striking him with it, wounding his head for which he later had an MRI. Investigators eventually identified Patrick McCaughey III, of Connecticut, as the man who held the shield trapping Hodges while the mob pushed forward yelling, "heave, ho!" Hodges testified that the pain was so extreme, he felt he was losing consciousness: "If I was there much longer being assaulted in such a way I knew it would make it difficult to maintain consciousness and I would become a liability."



A truncated version of the documented events on that day are chronicled as follows:

**1:00 a.m.:** Trump tweets: "If Vice President @Mike\_Pence comes through for us, we will win the Presidency."

**1:13 a.m.:** Ali Alexander, Stop the Steal organizer, tweets "First official day of the rebellion."

**3:23 a.m.:** Ron Watkins, prominent QAnon figure, posts a tweet accusing Vice President Mike Pence of orchestrating a coup against Trump. He also linked to a blog post which called for "the immediate arrest of [Pence], for treason."

**7:30 a.m.:** White House chief of staff Mark Meadows texts Representative Jim Jordan “I have pushed for this” but is “not sure it is going to happen,” referring to Pence overturning the election results.

**8:07 a.m.:** Secret Service countersurveillance agents reported that “members of the crowd are wearing ballistic helmets, body armor and carrying radio equipment and military grade backpacks.”

**8:17 a.m.:** Then President Trump tweets allegations of vote fraud, alleging that “States want to correct their votes, which they now know were based on irregularities and fraud, plus corrupt process never received legislative approval. All Mike Pence has to do is send them back to the States, AND WE WIN. Do it Mike, this is a time for extreme courage!”

**9:45 a.m.:** A Federal Protective Service liaison officer informs the Capitol Police that more than the permitted 30,000 protesters were expected at the Ellipse; the Freedom Plaza permit was increased from 5,000 to 30,000.

**10:00 a.m.:** White House deputy chief of staff informs Trump that authorities have spotted armed individuals at the crowd gathering at the Ellipse.

**10:30 a.m.:** 200–300 Proud Boys started their march down the National Mall towards the U.S. Capitol.

**10:47 a.m.:** Rudy Giuliani begins a speech in which he calls for “trial by combat.” Twelve minutes later, a Proud Boys contingent leaves the rally and marches toward the Capitol Building.



**11:30 a.m.:** The motorcade of Vice President-elect Kamala Harris arrived at DNC headquarters. (Law enforcement would discover a pipe bomb at 1:07 p.m., only several yards away from where her motorcade had passed through the garage of DNC headquarters).

**11:57 a.m.:** Trump begins his over one-hour speech where he repeats allegations that the election was stolen, criticizes Vice President Mike Pence by name a half-dozen times (though this wasn't part of his prepared remarks), accuses fellow Republicans of not doing enough to back up his allegations, and states that he will walk with the crowd to the Capitol. A member of a group of Proud Boys east of the Capitol makes the OK gesture symbol at 11:54 a.m.

**12:00 p.m.:** A Federal Protective Service briefing email reports that about 300 Proud Boys were at the Capitol, a man in a tree near the Ellipse was holding what looks like a rifle, and some of the 25,000 people around the White House were hiding bags in bushes. The email warns that the Proud Boys were threatening to shut down the downtown water system.



**12:05 p.m.:** Rep. Paul Gosar tweets a demand for Biden to concede by the next morning.

**12:16 p.m.:** Trump tells the crowd: “I know that everyone here will soon be marching over to the Capitol building to peacefully and patriotically make your voices heard.” Finishing his speech with “We fight. We fight like hell and if you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore. So let's walk down Pennsylvania Avenue.”

**12:20 p.m.:** A Federal Protective Service officer writes in an email, “POTUS is encouraging the protesters to march to capitol grounds and continue protesting there.”

**12:26 p.m.:** Pence arrives at the Capitol.

**12:28 p.m.:** A Federal Protective Service officer reports 10,000

15,000 people were moving towards the Capitol down Pennsylvania, Constitution, and Madison Avenues.

**12:30 p.m.:** Crowds of pro-Trump supporters gather outside the U.S. Capitol building.

**12:45 p.m.:** FBI, Capitol Police, and the ATF responded to a pipe bomb found outside RNC headquarters, which had been planted the night before.

**12:53 p.m.:** Rioters overwhelm police along the outer perimeter west of the Capitol building, pushing aside temporary fencing. Some protesters immediately follow, while others, at least initially, remain behind and admonish the others: "Don't do it. You're breaking the law." By 1:03 p.m., a vanguard of rioters had overrun three layers of barricades and have forced police officers to the base of the west Capitol steps.

**12:57 p.m.:** Federal Protective Service officers report that the Capitol Police barricade on the west side of the Capitol building has been breached by a large group.

**12:58 p.m.:** Chief Sund asks House Sergeant at Arms Paul D. Irving and Senate Sergeant at Arms Michael C. Stenger to declare an emergency and call for deployment of the National Guard. Irving and Stenger state that they would forward the request up their chains of command. Soon afterwards, aides to Congressional leaders arrive in Stenger's office and are outraged to learn that he has not yet called for any reinforcement. Phone records obtained at the Senate Hearings reflect that Sund first reached out to Irving to request the National Guard at 12:58 p.m. on the day of the attack. Sund then called the Senate sergeant-at-arms at the time, Michael Stenger, at 1:05 p.m. Sund repeated his request in a call at 1:28 p.m. and then again at 1:34 p.m., 1:39 p.m. and 1:45 p.m. that day. The Capitol Police Board consisting of the Architect of the Capitol, the House Sergeant at Arms, and the Senate Sergeant at Arms have the authority to request the national guard to the Capitol, but had made the decision three days earlier not to do so.

**1:00 p.m.:** Senators and Vice President Pence walk to the House chamber. US Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund calls D.C. Metropolitan Police Chief Contee, who deploys 100 officers to the Capitol complex, the earliest arriving within 10 minutes.

**1:02 p.m.:** Pence refuses to go along with Trump's plan to pick and choose electors, and tweets a letter stating in part: *It is my considered judgment that my oath to support and defend the Constitution constrains me from claiming unilateral authority to determine which electoral votes should be counted and which should not.*

**1:05 p.m.:** Congress meets in joint session to confirm Joe Biden's electoral victory; Acting Secretary of Defense Miller receives open-source intelligence reports of demonstrators moving towards the U.S. Capitol.

**1:07 p.m.:** Authorities respond to the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee, following discovery of the second pipe bomb. When police arrive, Vice President-elect Kamala Harris was inside.

**1:10 p.m.:** Trump ends his speech by urging his supporters to march upon the Capitol Building: *If you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore....We're going to try and give them [Republicans] the kind of pride and boldness that they need to take back our country...The Democrats are hopeless—they never vote for anything. Not even one vote. But we're going to try and give our Republicans, the weak ones because the strong ones don't need any of our help. We're going to try and give them the kind of pride and boldness that they need to take back our country.*

**1:11 p.m.:** First MPD officers arrive at lower west plaza to confront rioters approaching the Capitol.

**1:12 p.m.:** Rep. Paul Gosar (R-AZ) and Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) object to certifying the votes made in the 2020 United States presidential election in Arizona. The joint session separates into House and Senate chambers to debate the objection.

**1:14 p.m.:** Due to the pipe bomb, Vice President-elect Harris is evacuated from DNC Headquarters.

**1:17 p.m.:** Trump's motorcade leaves the Ellipse. The Secret Service does not allow Trump to go to the Capitol and drives him back to the White House against his wishes. Trump behaved angrily, according to multiple witnesses who testified for the House committee.

### **Trump watches TV (1:25–4:03 p.m.)**

According to the final report of the January 6 House select committee:

"Here's what President Trump did during the 187 minutes between the end of his speech and when he finally told rioters to go home: For hours, he watched the attack from his TV screen. His channel of choice was Fox News. He issued a few tweets, some on his own inclination and some only at the repeated behest of his daughter and other trusted advisors. He made several phone calls, some to his personal lawyer Rudolph Giuliani, some to Members of Congress about continuing their objections to the electoral certification, even though the attack was well underway. He did not call any relevant law enforcement agency to ensure they were working to quell the violence. He did not call the Secretary of Defense; he did not call the Attorney General; he did not call the Secretary of Homeland Security. And for hours on end, he refused the repeated requests—from nearly everyone who talked to him—to simply tell the mob to go home."

White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham texts First Lady Melania Trump: "Do you want to tweet that peaceful protests are the right of every American, but there is no place for lawlessness and violence?" She immediately responds: "No." (Melania Trump didn't tweet at all on the day of the attack, and did not tweet to condemn the violence until five days later).

**1:26 p.m.:** U.S. Capitol Police order evacuation of at least two buildings in the Capitol complex.

**1:30 p.m.:** Capitol Police are overwhelmed and retreat up the steps of the Capitol. Lawmakers see the police in the halls. Large numbers of Trump supporters march from the Ellipse 1.5 miles down Pennsylvania Avenue toward the Capitol. Lawmakers watch their approach on online videos.

**1:34 p.m.:** D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser requests via phone that Army Secretary provide an unspecified number of additional forces.

**1:35 p.m.:** In Senate deliberations, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) warns that refusing to certify the election results under false pretenses would push American democracy into a "death spiral."

**1:49 p.m.:** Capitol Police Chief Sund requests immediate assistance from District of Columbia National Guard (DCNG) Commander Major General William J. Walker. Major General Walker loads guardsmen onto buses in anticipation of receiving permission from the Secretary of the Army to deploy. Trump tweets a video replay of the Ellipse rally where he'd wrapped up his speech a half-hour earlier.

**1:50 p.m.:** D.C. Metropolitan Police on-scene incident commander Robert Glover declares a riot. Radio talk show host and former FEMA director Michael D. Brown tweets the baseless claim that the people breaching Capitol security are likely antifa, Black Lives Matter protestors, or other insurgents disguised as Trump supporters, and suggests the attack could be a psychological warfare operation.

**1:59 p.m.:** Chief Sund receives the first reports that rioters had reached the Capitol's doors and windows and were trying to break in.

**3:00 p.m.:** Chuck Schumer, seated with Nancy Pelosi, tells her: "I'm gonna call up the effin' Secretary of DoD." Then, speaking on the phone to Christopher Miller, acting Secretary of Defense, he says: "We have some Senators who are still in their hideaways. They need massive personnel now. Can you get the Maryland National Guard to come too?" Nancy Pelosi then speaks into



Schumer's phone, telling Miller she plans to call the DC mayor to learn what other backup may have already been called.

**3:04 p.m.:** Secretary Miller, with advice from senior Defense leadership, formally approves "activation" of the 1,100 soldiers in the DCNG. Army Secretary McCarthy orders the DCNG to begin full "mobilization." (However, it will be another hour and a half before Miller approves an "operational plan" for the DCNG's deployment to the Capitol.)

**3:09 p.m.:** A rioter walks through the halls, singing: "Nancy Pelosi! Where you at, Nancy? Nancy! Where are you, Nancy? We're looking for you!" (Someone responds: "She's in jail!") The rioter resumes: "Nancy, oh Nancy! Nancy! Nancy! Where are you, Nancy? We're looking for you, Nancy!" Former White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus to current CoS Meadows: "TELL THEM TO GO HOME!!!"

**3:15 p.m.:** House Speaker Pelosi calls the Governor of Virginia. The Governor of Virginia, Ralph Northam, confirms to House Speaker Pelosi that all assets of the State of Virginia including the National Guard are being sent to aid the U.S. Capitol.

**3:19 p.m.:** Army Secretary McCarthy has a phone call with Senator Schumer and House Speaker Pelosi about Mayor Bowser's request. McCarthy explains that a full DCNG mobilization has been approved.

**3:21 p.m.:** Albuquerque Cospirator pulls Officer Michael Fanone into the crowd, where Daniel Rodriguez tases Fanone in the neck. (In 2022, Head and Rodriguez are sentenced to prison for this.) Fanone is carried unconscious back into the tunnel.

**3:22 p.m.:** Nancy Pelosi calls Virginia Governor Ralph Northam and asks if he's discussed sending the Virginia National Guard, noting that Steny Hoyer has already spoken to Maryland's Governor Larry Hogan and that Northam may need federal approval to send troops to "another jurisdiction." When the call ends, Pelosi is told that the Virginia National Guard has been called in, and Pelosi confirms that Northam just told her "they sent 200 of state police and a unit of the National Guard." Rohrer informs Fairfax County officials that the county is suspending fire, rescue, or emergency transportation to D.C. hospitals and "upgrading response and command structure."

**3:25 p.m.:** Pelosi and Schumer sit together holding a phone and speak to acting attorney general Jeffrey Rosen. Pelosi acknowledges that rioters are "ransacking our offices" but says she is primarily concerned about "personal harm." Schumer suggests that Rosen, "in your law enforcement responsibility," persuade Trump to make a "public statement" to tell his supporters "to leave the Capitol."

**3:36 p.m.:** White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany tweets that National Guard and other Federal forces were headed to the Capitol.

**3:39 p.m.:** Senator Schumer implores Pentagon officials, "Tell POTUS to tweet everyone should leave." House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-MD, wondered about calling up active duty military.

**3:46 p.m.:** Leaders from both parties huddle around a single phone, appealing to the Department of Defense to send troops with a sense of urgency. The person on the other end says they cannot give a timeline for when the Capitol will be secured. Virginia and Maryland National Guard forces had already been mobilized.

**4:03 p.m.:** Trump goes outside to the Rose Garden so his staff can make a video of him calling for an end to the violence. He refuses the script they give him.

**4:05 p.m.:** President-elect Biden holds a press conference calling on President Trump to "demand an end to this siege."

**4:08 p.m.:** From a secure location, Vice President Pence phoned Christopher Miller, the acting defense secretary, to confirm the Capitol was not secure and ask military leaders for a deadline for securing the building while demanding that the Capitol be cleared.

**Trump speaks (4:17 p.m.)** Trump uploads an unscripted video to his Twitter denouncing the riot but maintaining the false claim that the election was stolen: *I know your pain, I know you're hurt. We had an election that was stolen from us. It was a landslide election and everyone knows it, especially the other side. But you have to go home now. We have to have peace. We have to have law and order.*



*We have to respect our great people in law and order. We don't want anybody hurt. It's a very tough period of time. There's never been a time like this where such a thing happened where they could take it away from all of us—from me, from you, from our country. This was a fraudulent election, but we can't play into the hands of these people. We have to have peace. So go home. We love you. You're very special. You've seen what happens. You see the way others are treated that are so bad and so evil. I know how you feel, but go home, and go home in peace.*

**Riot continues**

**4:18 p.m.:** Secretary Miller verbally authorizes mustering and deployment of out-of-State National Guard forces to D.C.

**4:22 p.m.:** Pelosi speaks to Pence on the phone about how to move forward with the election certification.

**4:34 p.m.:** A White House landline places a call to the cell phone of Anton Lunyk, a rioter who had entered the Capitol an hour earlier. The call lasts nine seconds. (The call was first publicly disclosed in September 2022 and is the only known call between the White House and a rioter that day.)

**5:20 p.m.:** The first contingent of 155 Guard members, dressed in riot gear, began arriving at the Capitol.



**5:40 p.m.:** 154 DCNG soldiers arrive at the Capitol Complex, swear in with the Capitol Police, and begin support operations. As the interior of the Capitol is cleared of rioters, leaders of Congress state that they will continue tallying electoral votes.

**5:45 p.m.:** Secretary Miller signs formal authorization for out-of-State National Guard to muster and deploy in support of U.S. Capitol Police.

**6:00 p.m.:** D.C. curfew comes into effect.

**6:01 p.m.:** President Trump tweets: *These are the things and events that happen when a sacred landslide election victory is so unceremoniously & viciously stripped away from great patriots who have been badly & unfairly treated for so long. Go home with love & in peace. Remember this*



*day forever!*

**6:14 p.m.:** U.S. Capitol Police, D.C. Metropolitan Police, and DCNG successfully establish a perimeter on the west side of the U.S. Capitol.

**6:30 p.m.:** Chief Sund briefs Pence, Pelosi, Schumer and other members of congressional leadership on the security situation, advising that both chambers could reopen by 7:30 p.m.

**7:00 p.m.:** Facebook, Inc. removes Trump's posts from Facebook and Instagram for "contribut[ing] to, rather than diminish[ing], the risk of ongoing violence."

**7:02 p.m.:** Twitter removes Trump's tweets and suspends his account for twelve hours for "repeated and severe violations of [its] Civic Integrity policy."

**Congress reconvenes (8:00 p.m.):** U.S. Capitol Police declare the Capitol building to be secure. The Senate reconvenes, with Vice President Pence presiding.

**10:00 p.m.:** Officer Brian Sicknick collapses while still on duty at Capitol building. Trump's allies planned for him to give another speech the following day to disavow the violence. Trump rejected several lines from the script and crossed them out. The rejected lines included: "I am directing the Department of Justice to ensure all lawbreakers are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. We must send a clear message—not with mercy but with JUSTICE. Legal consequences must be swift and firm. ... I want to be very clear: you do not represent me. You do not represent our movement."

The significance of the ordeal was nothing short of this cadre of extremely courageous officers, risking their lives while being perilously outnumbered, to defend U.S. democracy. As per *The Washington Post*:

*The defense of the Capitol that day was in fact a defense of democracy at a perilous moment when a defeated president sought to disrupt the constitutionally mandated tallying of the electoral vote and the final ratification of President Biden's victory. The attack followed months of false accusations (which continue today) by Trump that the election had been rigged or stolen or rife with fraud. When democracy was threatened, law enforcement held the line and allowed the elected officials to finish their work.*

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## INTERVIEW, MAY 2023

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**Q:** Firstly, thank you Officer Hodges for your service to D.C., to the nation, and to all democracies worldwide – nascent, established, and potential. So pleased to see that you were awarded the Presidential Citizens Medal by President Biden in early January. The demonstration of bravery was, and is, unbelievable. Have you completely recovered from your physical wounds? This was nothing short of mortal combat– a war zone – and I would surmise that the mental trauma suffered will be lifelong.

*Thank you for the kind words and for asking me for the interview; I'm honored.*

*I was out on injury for a few weeks following the 6th, but I was fortunate enough to (as far as I can tell) make a full recovery. I've always been fairly resilient emotionally so I imagine that helps with that aspect, though memories and media of the day can still catch me off guard on occasion.*

**Q:** Your picture of being crushed in the doorway is iconic and will go down in history as emblematic of one of the ugliest days in American history. Personally, I saw this happening live as this act of brutality was playing out. It was surreal. Did you see any signs of humanity around you at all at that time? Was anyone trying to assist you or block others from this action?

*After calling out for help, the man who had me pinned with the shield reached out and*

*lowered my face shield. I don't credit him with effort since a) he was the one who held me in that position in the first place, b) Lowering my face shield didn't help me at all, but rather blinded me since it was opaque with chemical irritants, and c) he immediately resumed his*

VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT  
(TRIAL OF PATRICK MCCAUGHEY - SENTENCED TO 7.5 YEARS)

To the Honorable Judge McFadden:

Looking at the charges Mr. McCaughey has been found guilty of, I'm struck by the contrast between the quiet words on the page and the enormity of the actions they represent, the consequences of those actions and how they will echo through the ages. 8 of the 9 offenses pertained to disorderly conduct, violence against an interfering with law enforcement. As I've previously testified, Mr. McCaughey's deliberate, sustained assault against me caused me significant pain and injury, and allowed others to level an attack against me that could have cost me my life. Not a day has gone by where I do not recall the events of January 6th, in no small part thanks to the assault that took place on the West terrace and in the tunnel. I do not foresee that changing anytime soon.

The violence against myself and my colleagues has far-reaching effects. While I was lucky enough to make a full physical recovery, not everyone was so fortunate. There is no official number, but I have it on good authority that over 50MPD officers have cited the events of January 6th and their reasons for retiring or acquitting the jobs since that day. 50 officers. At a time when we are struggling to feel the enough police to maintain public safety, Mr. McCaughey took part in an assault that removed 50 officers from duty. That's 50 officers that no longer have my back when I'm on a call, 50 officers then can no longer protect the city, and 50 officers that won't be there the next time a would-be dictator decides to try his luck against these United States. I know there are those who will criticize my statements today as assigning a disproportionate amount of blame for the violence that day upon a single man. To them I say this: I have sat by and watched in the intervening years as so many criminals from that day come through court and plead that they were "caught up in the moment," that they would never have taken the actions they did if not for those around them, implying some sort of violent hypnosis renders them not culpable for their own crimes. The shameless, one after another, come up against the inexorable march of Justice and espouse the notion that no raindrop is responsible for the flood but this offense litany carries no water with me. Of all weapons utilized that day, the most effective one was the mob: every single person present made it incalculably more difficult to repel the violent, tend to the wounded, and protect democracy. The remaining charge is obstruction of an official proceeding. While I may not be the victim on paper for this crime, in practicality, all Americans were victimized by Mr. McCaughey and the rest of the mob when they attempted to stop the peaceful transfer of power. Too many Americans have informed me personally of the sickening dread they experienced witnessing the attack unfold. And though ultimately unsuccessful, what level of success they did achieve will inspire our enemies, both foreign and domestic, for years to come.

I'm not assigning the totality of blame for that day upon the man in front of me. But every man who participated bears some responsibility for everything that transpired, and while I have a voice I won't brook the notion of mass innocence due to mass violence.

Which brings us to Mr. McCaughey: he was not just part of the mob, he was in the vanguard of the assault, and only retreated not because of any horror at the violence he wrought but because (per his own testimony) he found he could no longer continue the assault afflicted by pepper spray.

Sometimes I wish I were, but I am not, a vengeful man. I'm not going to stand here and advocate for life without parole for this wistless foot soldier, I simply ask that the court draw upon its experience and the facts of the case and hand down a sentence that is proportional to the crimes committed, and will adequately serve as a deterrent to future acts of violence of this nature, both from Mr. McCaughey and those who fantasize about a different outcome to the assault on America that day.

Thank you, Officer Daniel Hodges

*assault upon my colleagues after my retreat. I suspect he was just glad to have one fewer Officer between him and free range of the Capitol, but it doesn't matter now: he's been tried, found guilty and sentenced. Other than potentially that, I didn't see anyone who took issue with the violence they were perpetrating at that time.*

**Q:** As your story and your name have become so well known (and I don't know for sure what, or if) you have solid political leanings, have you considered running for office? If so, at what level? What are, or will be, your primary policy proposals? Alternatively, have you thought about being a political commentator for a media station? Have you been approached to date – any details?

*I've been asked multiple times if I'm running for office, but never by any political party representatives. I take it as a compliment but it's problematic for multiple reasons.*

*Practically speaking, I'd be unelectable in anything beyond perhaps local politics. Our tragically de facto two party, First, "Past the Post" system means you have to have broad appeal with one party and just enough with the other to win, proportional to the distribution of the electorate's political allegiances.*

*As you can imagine my popularity with the GOP would be practically nil if they know anything about me. I am a southern, generic-looking white male with a background in law enforcement so I've got that going for me. But then I unabashedly refer to those who attacked the Capitol as "terrorists" and "insurrectionists" and make no secret of my loathing for Donald Trump, the current front-runner GOP Presidential candidate by a wide margin. And this is before any mention of my stances on popular issues - pro-bodily autonomy so long as it doesn't affect anyone else, much stricter gun control measures at a minimum, anti-Citizen's United, environmentalist, etc.*

*I'd fare better with Democrats but not as much as one might think, for the reasons I might be palatable to the GOP. I'm a southern white male with background in law enforcement in a primarily black neighborhood and make no apologies for it. While I certainly don't equate it with the insurrection (in stakes or official backing) like some fools do, I fought the violent elements that followed the Black Lives Matter protests in the summer of 2020 and have no love for their riotous behavior, regardless of their politics.*

*Too many buy in to the false dichotomy of either backing law enforcement or social welfare programs, but the fact is you need both to effectively and ethically alleviate crime and social inequity. It would be expensive, but the only thing more expensive would be not fully funding both, as a lack of one pillar means the status quo won't budge.*

*Long story short, my support for law enforcement would get piled on by anyone running against me as a Democrat, liberal groups would support my opponent(s) and I'd lose.*

*Me running for, well, anything also feels disrespectful to those who make a study of politics and have devoted their lives to it. Meanwhile I have no public policy experience or education and my claim to fame is, essentially, being an assault victim. I feel like we have to have more qualified candidates out there. Then again, I see some of these Congress members (to say nothing of our 45th President) and think "There's no way I could be worse than that." But that's a low bar indeed.*

*No one has approached me to be any kind of commentator. I've too much social anxiety to do something like that live and with regularity, but I could certainly write about things; I know*

*several words and pleasing ways to order them on the page. Media outlets: ball is in your court.*

**Q:** In a 2022 Politico piece, you stated that you attended almost every Jan. 6 committee hearing and that you understood that the investigation is still ongoing. You seemed to make it clear that former President Donald Trump holds “a great deal of responsibility” for what happened and that you would not achieve any closure until accountability was realized. How do foresee accountability being satisfactorily realized?

*Donald Trump, along with his co-conspirators and anyone who participated in the insurrection is barred from holding public office under Section Three of the Fourteenth Amendment. The challenge now is getting everyone to understand that fact.*

## 14TH AMENDMENT

### Amendment XIV

#### Section 3.

No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any state, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any state legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any state, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.

*In 2022, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW) filed suit against Couy Griffin, then-Otero County Commissioner, and leader of “Cowboys for Trump” in his State of New Mexico. They sued to have him removed from office under the same Amendment and Article, as he participated in the insurrection. I testified as a witness, and*

*we won the case. This was the first time since 1869 a court had disqualified someone under Section Three and establishes legal precedent that the assault on the Capitol was, in fact, an insurrection.*

*Aside from him never holding office again, accountability would him being tried for his myriad crimes and his name being held in cultural disgust, as it should be. Sadly, we appear to be a long way off from that last part.*

**Q:** In a recent interview conducted by American University, the information that the person(s) who pinned you have now been convicted. Have there been any apologies made directly to you from these perpetrators - Patrick McCaughey III, Tristan Stevens, and David Mehaffie?

*During his sentencing hearing, McCaughey gave a statement which included apologies to many, including law enforcement in general. He did not address me personally. I am unaware of any statements from the other two.*



**Q:** When you see American flags with the thin blue stripe, which has historically meant support for law enforcement, do you believe that this “demonstration of support” includes the DC Metropolitan Police Department? Many communities have banned it, largely because it has been associated, at times, with white nationalists. Others point out that the flag excuses police violence against Black residents, and was seen alongside Confederate flags at the deadly white supremacist rally in Charlottesville in 2017. Several local officials have stated that: “This is not the American flag. It’s a violation of the flag code that prohibits altering of the flag in this manner and an affront to the #BlackLivesMatter protests.” Where do you stand, if at all, on this spectrum?

*I don't believe the “Thin Blue Line” should be banned or is a symbol of racism or violence - but then I wouldn't, would I?*

*Communication is messy. There is a pertinent quote apocryphally attributed to George Bernard Shaw though likely originating in some form from William H. White: “The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.” Language is generally sufficient for communicating simple declaratives and the like, but when it comes to high-concept topics (say, for example, the role of law enforcement and pride in one's work thereof) so much gets lost in translation from our mouths to another's ears. And now, with regards to the TBL, we have the additional obfuscation and ambiguity inherently present in all symbolism!*

*As you mentioned, the TBL is a simple statement of support for law enforcement. If one is a member of that community, it can be an expression of pride in one's work. That's all.*

*But then if another group perceives (rightly or wrongly) they are being targeted unfairly by a law enforcement agency, that resentment is comingled with any reference to law enforcement, including the TBL. This sentiment is reinforced when American conservatives take up “support for law enforcement” as a political pillar and facet of their identity and display the TBL on themselves and their property. And since modern American conservatives often have, shall we say, less charitable views on historically beleaguered demographics, these beliefs then become associated with the TBL as well.*

*So now we have a little blue stripe, drawn simply as a cheer for those who work in law enforcement, now representing to huge swaths of the population: police brutality, racism, politically conservative values, oppression of the disenfranchised, etc. The question remains: who is right?*

*Does Roland Barthes's literary theory of “La mort de l'auteur/Death of the Author” apply to symbolism? I believe authorial intent should matter but ultimately humanity as a whole is what imbues anything with meaning. So, in a sense, yes, what the TBL (and any other symbol) means is decided by popular vote. And in this way what it is a symbol of is inexorably tied to whether law enforcement is generally perceived as a force for good or ill.*

*So, with all that being said, no, I don't think the Thin Blue Line is a negative thing or should be banned. I think that agencies that do ban it are actually reinforcing the idea that it is something negative, when they are just trying to appease outspoken critics.*

*(As an aside, I personally don't wear or display any TBL devices and don't own any save a few gifts I've received. It's a tactically poor decision to let people know you are law enforcement while off-duty and feels a bit redundant if you are on duty.)*

**Q:** According to *Police1*, the duty of an officer has been described as follows: “We are here for everyone. The public depends on us to protect them from harm, to keep the criminals at bay, to put out their fires, rescue them from the smoldering wrecks they sometimes find themselves in and to defend them against people who are trying to harm them...At the end of the day it is, was and always will be up to us to keep the peace.

Everything else is up to them. We are all in this together. There is no us and them. There is only us.” But the DC Metropolitan Police encountered something very different on January 6, 2021. Would you not agree that there was a “them” and “us” on that day – a coup against the government, which put us all – especially your team – at incredible risk?

Were they not the “criminals” which needed to be kept at bay? From that experience, do you now have a revised or even compromised sense of duty?

*That Police1 description is an ideal, and a worthy goal to continually strive toward. Like any government entity, law enforcement functions poorly without the support of the people it serves. Cooperation from all sides elevates all sides.*

*That being said, practically speaking, there is always an "us" vs "them." Any group of people that acts on desires forbidden by criminal law does so knowing that they can run afoul of law enforcement, whether it be a crew of tire thieves, a seditious militia, or a cabal of politicians conspiring to seize power undemocratically.*

*This isn't a new perspective and the insurrection did not change it; if anything January 6th just reinforced the belief.*

**Q:** Following the attempted coup, many have said that had these protesters been BLM members, and/or largely of color, that they would have been mowed down before ever breaching the Capitol. Do you agree – why or why not? With over 140 officers wounded, why wasn't lethal force used other than just against one female protester?

*This is always the most offensive notion I hear from those who purport to be a "supporter" of law enforcement action that day. They go from thanking me for my work to, in the same breath, saying that I would have gleefully murdered as many as I could if my assailants had skin of a different color.*

*“Oh, we're not talking about you, of course,” is the implicit addendum. Oh? Why not? Because I was on the news? I'm no different from so many of my colleagues who fulfilled their oath that day. Burdening them with your racial animus is no different than impugning my own integrity.*

*It's particularly galling when January 6th followed a long year of civil disobedience and riots from more liberal-minded groups, during which I saw my colleagues at the MPD operate with empathy, professionalism, and restraint.*

*Critics will cite disproportionate numbers of officers and resources on the street in response to 2020 demonstrations and riots, conflating the actions of the Army and federal agencies with those of local law enforcement. They need to understand that the deployment of resources is a decision made by a handful of leaders far above any of our pay grades, and extremely different from second-to-second decisions on use of force from officers on the ground.*

*Race and law enforcement is a discussion impossible to cover adequately in this format (though a vital discussion to have). However, I'm not ignorant; I don't pretend all of law enforcement across the country is innocent of discriminatory practices. Where it is found it should be aggressively stamped out. I just ask that critics and watchdogs not stereotype all law enforcement based on the worst examples the media can find.*

*With regards to why lethal force was not more prevalent on the side of law enforcement on January 6th: there are a few reasons I personally chose not to use my firearm.*

*My radio was stolen during a fight I was in before I even made it to the lower west terrace of the Capitol building. One of the last things I remembered hearing over the air before entering to fray was that our Explosive Ordinance Disposal unit had identified a viable device nearby, meaning they had found one of the pipe bombs.*

*This threat was never far from my mind for the duration of the day. During the more intense fights I wondered to myself: Is that the only bomb they deployed? If not how many more bombs are out there? One? Dozens? Why haven't they set it off? I decided this last question could potentially be answered by them awaiting escalation. Once we used lethal force, they may feel they had the "justification" for setting off their explosives, causing untold damage to life and property. I resolved to not give them what they wanted.*

*There was also the fear of being out-gunned. We knew many in the mob to be carrying firearms, from the arrests we had already made, to the mob standing outside the magnetometers at the Elipse, to at least one gun dropped by a member of the mob and recovered by an officer, to admissions in court of being armed, to pictures of guns being revealed on waist bands on social media in the aftermath, to the small armory the Oath Keepers had stored across the river in Alexandria VA, it has been well-established that this was a heavily armed insurrection. I worried that if I opened fire, the mob would return fire in kind. With the knowledge that we were comically outnumbered and an unknown number of firearms present among insurrectionists, I feared that if the situation were to devolve into a firefight we would lose, and that was a battle that we could not afford to lose.*

**Q:** They say that a true measure of a democracy is not its bad events but how it comes back from those events. Others would assert that what the country needs now is a "strongman" – ignoring the fact that empowering an autocrat would end oversight and enable those in power to use the government to enrich themselves at the expense of the nation's citizenry. Their supporters appear to not care and are willing to accept corruption as long as the government persecutes those they deem as their enemies – women challenging them in the marketplace; members of the LGBTQIA+ community; and people of color. What is your assessment currently of the status of American democracy and where do you think it is going?

*A democracy is only as strong as the beliefs and actions of those who it governs. Unfortunately, a decades-long campaign of propaganda from both foreign and domestic organizations has sown distrust among a large portion of the voting public. Sadly, I must specify the "voting" public because, just as critically, there is still a significant percentage of those eligible who do not exercise their right to vote.*

*Our institutions are thankfully resilient and able to weather the machinations of some who would see them annihilated, but no system is impregnable and a concerted effort by some*

*conservatives to tear down the system from within is bearing poisonous fruit in various forms. Whether it be DeSantis's and Abbot's efforts to legislate a theocracy at the state level or the GOP's ironically named "Weaponization of the Federal Government," House subcommittee members using their official status to spread conspiracy theories against political opponents, the greatest threat to our democracy comes from within, and it is up to all of us to do what is in our power to preserve it.*

**Q:** Joe Biden's stated that global "democracies" are strong in his State of the Union address on Feb. 7, 2023, whereas others might see the global situation as heading in a pernicious direction with autocrats assuming the helm (Belarus, Hungary added to the list) or far-right officials recently elected (Italy and Sweden). How do you see where the U.S. — and the world for that matter — are heading in terms of democracies vs. autocracies?

*It does feel like there is a wave of fascistic fervor taking hold in some long-democratic countries. In the modern era, more than at any other time, globalism means no country charts a political course in a vacuum. Populations all over the world take inspiration from each other, and, at the risk of sounding like a proponent of American Exceptionalism, the consequences of strengthening or weakening of our own democratic institutions will have effects that reach far beyond our own borders.*

**Q:** There's no doubt that the political narrative and discussion in social media circles prior to January the 6th fueled the fire for that day. Were you aware it was coming? Did you question the strength and number of the force in place for that day?

*I was definitely paying attention to social media chatter in conservative circles leading up to January 6th. I wasn't monitoring the forums myself, but I'd see screenshots from people who were, sharing discussions on planning for violence that day. I remember one thread talking about how they were going to attack police stations in DC. As the station I work out of had already been attacked by a mob earlier in 2020 that is the scale of violence I was imagining. Like everyone else it seems, I did not anticipate the scale, organization, ferocity, timing, and target of the attack that day.*

*With regard to my agency, MPD was fully activated on January 6th 2021. That means that all normal days off were canceled, and unless an officer had leave approved in advance everyone had to work that day. Barring canceling the leave of the relatively few Officers who had it, it was literally impossible for MPD to deploy more manpower that day than we did.*

*As the MPD is first and foremost tasked with providing law enforcement services to those in the District of Columbia, that is where most of our manpower was and is tied up. Additionally, we planned to maintain operational security around the tens of thousands who attended the "rally" all day and night, which means we couldn't have all officers report for duty at 7 in the morning. Officers were scheduled to come on duty and be relieved in waves all day and night, so a great deal of our manpower, while scheduled to work Civil Disturbance Unit duty, was not present when the insurrection began in earnest.*

*As I am not a member of USCP, I have no insight to their deployment choices that day or how it would compare with how they deployed resources for past comparable events.*

**Q:** You fought for this country on that day and arguably, Ukraine is fighting for the world

currently. As you are in national security, what is your assessment of Ukraine and the Western forces helping to arm it?

*Referring to myself as being in national security is probably not the most accurate description, but I'll take it as a compliment.*

*Ukraine finds itself in the unenviable position of being neighbors with a post-Soviet Russia under the regime of a man who believes his own military propaganda. As such what Putin believed to be a "special military operation" designed to take Kiev in three days has now lasted 14 months and (as reported by Ukraine), and has cost approximately 200,000 Russian men. [<https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/05/15/7402191/>]*

*The Russian invasion of Ukraine and Ukraine's subsequent counter-attack has been an incredible boon for western democratic countries in the long term. As Russia is a nuclear-armed state, the MAD doctrine both complicates and simplifies things. Aid sent in both material and funds by the United States is incredibly cheap compared to what a conventional war with Russia would cost us in blood and treasure – and Ukraine is the only country paying the blood price. For this sum, we have seen the myth of Russian military might crumble and their economy sunk by economic sanctions. Russian soft power can be expected to nosedive and, barring an irrational actor in charge, I wouldn't expect to see another Russian ground offensive like this one for at least a generation. Hopefully, in that time, leadership in Russia will change hands to those who see greater potential in elevating their country through international cooperation rather than conquest and subterfuge.*

*My heart goes out to the people of Ukraine and those who unwillingly live under the authoritarian regime in Russia.*

**Q:** The January 6 Committee has recommended four (4) separate criminal counts against the former president. On the civil side, for those of you who were injured, have you considered or are you bringing a civil action(s) against the former president and his supporters for damages incurred?

*I believe some officers have filed suit against Trump already. I've heard of some others considering it but not yet deciding. Personally, I haven't given it a lot of thought but I haven't ruled it out either.*

**Q:** We are in a dangerous place with certain representatives including Marjorie Taylor Green, Paul Gosar, Lauren Boebert, Jim Jordan, and Matt Gaetz. Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy made major concessions to this faction in early January. Now, any one Member can call a "no confidence" vote in the Speaker of the House. Where do you foresee this going in the future?

*The answer to this question is probably a bit too inside baseball with regard to Congressional politics for me to answer with any degree of confidence. I do agree that the characters you mentioned being in the positions of power that they are in certainly contribute to us being in a "dangerous place." They've all demonstrated a complete lack of integrity in their own ways, something sorely needed from our elected officials.*

*With the Republican party being the thrall of Donald Trump and his ilk, should McCarthy get replaced it feels very unlikely the successor will be an improvement so long as the GOP*

*controls the House.*

**Q:** One of the main conclusions made by the January 6 committee that there were decisions made in the oval office and in political service circles prior to that day, premised on the “Big Lie.” If a sizable portion of the country was, and largely remains, convinced that the election was stolen and believe that their vote doesn’t count, how can the democracy survive? Self-governance is premised on telling the truth and fighting by the rules. Do you see any kind of reversion back to this?

*It's true; all bets are off when a sizeable portion of the voting public believes whatever their preferred public figures tell them without a shred of evidence and act on these communications regardless of the action's lawfulness. Undoing this intense cultish programming will take time, and the first step is to halt the ways in which it was allowed to propagate in the first place. With the advent of internet-based media, the country isn't as reliant on traditional media as it once was. However, it may be time we revisited the Fairness Doctrine and adapted it for the modern age. Critics of the Doctrine claimed it infringed upon First Amendment rights, but in its absence omnipresent modern media has radicalized the country with startling alacrity. I'm all for the maximum expression of our civil liberties but January 6th has convinced me that unfettered propaganda outlets working in concert with amoral politicians make the current scheme untenable.*

**Q:** Social media appears to be a double-edged sword in terms of its benefits and negative impacts. Most consider this private sector NOT bound by free speech rights. With social media sites, the under-educated and the fanatical feel they have a voice, hence the channels of disinformation and calls to violence are prevalent. How do you see this social media sites evolving? Do you believe that more federal regulation is warranted? Why or why not?

*I am a big nerd (in terms of pop culture interests, not in usefulness) and grew up alongside the internet. I'm romanticizing a bit, but I miss some aspects of its nascent stages, before corporate America neatly divvied up the virtual real estate. The Web brings – instead of aggregators – the permanence and community of forums. Instead of transient stream chats, possibly the securing the handle you wanted on a site without a bunch of random numbers attached – all these things lost to time, like tears in rain.*

*The outrage and dopamine factories known as social media have ascended to intimidating levels of influence at all levels of human existence, and politics is no exception. Content is often self-regulated by populism; if a post is popular, it is pushed harder to more accounts, increasing visibility, and therefore furthering its popularity. In this way this social media is the lightspeed manifestation of the strengths and weaknesses of democracy itself.*

*Of course, like all information systems it is vulnerable to manipulation by bad actors. I feel like the most obvious way to combat misinformation and propaganda would be to make real life identification mandatory. But then the old internet would truly be a thing of the past, as anonymity paired with an equal voice in conversation is a great virtue. People could (theoretically) judge you based on the merits of your message rather than something irrelevant about you personally.*

*The conundrum of social media manipulation is a lot more complicated than that of*

*traditional media; I truly don't know how to address the harm it can cause without depressing levels of regulation, and I'm not certain the gains would be worth the losses. One thing is for certain: social media isn't going anywhere, and I don't see a paradigm shift in human ethics making it a more palatable place on its own.*

**Q:** On January 31, 2023, NBC reported: “The House Jan. 6 committee concluded that the FBI and other federal security agencies could have prevented a violent mob from overrunning the Capitol had they acted on the large volume of intelligence collected beforehand – a judgment the committee left out of its televised hearings and final report.”

Former federal prosecutor Tim Heaphy, the committee’s chief investigative counsel, remarked that while he endorsed the panel’s main finding that then-President Donald Trump sparked the riot by urging protesters to go to the Capitol, his probe documented how federal law enforcement failures contributed to the debacle.

Do you believe that what happened at the Capitol was also affected by law enforcement failures to operationalize the ample intelligence that was present before Jan. 6, about the threats of violence?

*I don't work in intel analysis and am not privy to how it works (or doesn't work) at that level so I'm hesitant to pass judgement on that aspect of homeland security. Obviously, there was plenty of chatter alluding to or outright planning violence that day, but you have to take into consideration the targets in question and the sheer volume of threats they face.*

*I've never seen anyone ask how the threat intel collected prior to January 6th stacked up against that of other events. People communicate threats to all members of government with alarming regularity and in such volume that I wonder if the signal-to-noise ratio took its toll on analysts over the years. Eventually the boy who cried wolf wears down even the most vigilant, especially when the nature of the suggested attack is unprecedented.*

*So yes, there was a failure to operationalize the intel present and that undoubtedly hampered defensive efforts, it must be said that hindsight is 20/20 and without more detailed knowledge on intel analysis for Capitol security, I can't give a more detailed criticism.*

**Q:** The feral, violent behavior that we saw at the Capitol – based upon disinformation and incendiary, hate speech – has manifested itself into other despicable acts, namely the far-right candidate in New Mexico who lost his election and shot at Democratic candidates’ and officials’ homes; the former Jan 6 participant who was fatally shot after storming into a Cincinnati FBI field office; and the brutal hammer attack on Paul Pelosi in San Francisco. “Inciting-fight speech” is an exception to 1st Amendment protections, yet it continues unabated. What would you like to see happen to curb the spread of incendiary speech throughout the U.S.?

*Regulating incendiary speech at the macro level is best addressed by my answers to prior questions, namely the regulation of traditional media via a Fairness Doctrine analogue and addressing the misuse of social media.*

*Incendiary speech at the micro level is much more difficult to address. It is my hope that addressing the macro level communication issues will lead to a more levelheaded populace*

*at the individual level, thus diminishing the occurrence of incendiary speech and fighting words.*

### **July 21, 2021: Testimony of Officer Daniel Hodges**

Good morning to the committee, members of the press and to the country. To the members of the committee. I'd like to thank you for your invitation today to provide my account of my knowledge and experiences from January 6th, 2021. As the Chairman mentioned, I'm a member of Civil Disturbance Unit 42, and I was working in that capacity on the day in question. We started that day at 7:30 AM, and our assignment at the time was to maintain high visibility along Constitution Avenue, namely the blocks leading up to President's Park, where then President Donald Trump was holding his gathering.

My particular station was in front of 1111 Constitution Avenue, where I stood on foot as the crowd poured down the street and into the park. There were a significant number of men dressed in tactical gear attending the gathering, wearing ballistic vests, helmets, goggles, military face masks, backpacks, and without identifiable visible law enforcement or military patches, they appeared to be prepared for much more than listening to politicians speak in a park. Two of my colleagues were approached by a group of three to four such men. They were white men in good shape with load bearing vests equipped with MOLLE pouches. They were wearing BDUs, or battle dress uniform pants, tactical boots, black sunglasses, and short haircuts. They had radios and one was equipped with an earpiece. After a bit of small talk, one of them asked my colleagues



something to the effect of, is this all the manpower you have? Do you really think you're going to be able to stop all these people? Dumbfounded, my colleagues simply expressed they didn't understand what the speaker meant, and the group continued on. As the day went on and speakers in the park said their peace, I monitored the crowd and the radio. Over the radio, I heard our gun recovery unit working constantly, monitoring those in the crowds suspected of carrying firearms and making arrests and seizures when possible. Multiple gun arrests were made from January 5th through the 7th against those attending and likely had attended or planned to attend Donald Trump's gathering. Unfortunately, due to the course of events that day, we will never know exactly how many were carrying firearms and other lethal weapons. I don't know what time it was, but eventually the flow of the foot traffic reversed, with people leaving President's Park and traveling eastbound down Constitution Avenue towards the United States Capitol. At approximately 12:30 PM, I noticed a commotion about half a block to my east. I saw the crowd starting to coalesce around two figures. I ran to where they were and found a confrontation at the intersection 10th and Constitution Avenue Northwest. One counter protestor, a black man, was backpedaling away from a white man in a Trump labeled face mask, who was closely following him with an outstretched arm. Myself and my colleague first arrived and physically separated the two, but a crowd of Donald Trump's people had gathered. They attempted to bait the counter protestor into attacking, shouting insults such as, "Your mother's a whore," and accusing him of hiding behind the cops.

Eventually enough MPD members had gathered to move along the crowd, who continued eastbound toward the Capitol Building, and the counter protestor departed northbound on 10th Street. Returning to my post, I continued to monitor the radio. I could hear a Commander Glover leading the defense efforts at the Capitol as the protestors began their transition from peaceful assembly into terrorism. I became agitated and wished we could move into support, as I could hear the increasing desperation in the

commander's voice, yet we still had to wait for our orders to change. And eventually they did. At approximately 1:30 PM, the commander authorized rapid response platoons to deploy their hard gear and respond to the Capitol, including CDU 42.

The last thing I remember hearing over the air before departing for the Capitol grounds was confirmation that our explosive ordinance disposal team had discovered a device. Given what unit was being associated with the device, I immediately realized MPD had discovered a bomb of some type near the Capitol. This thought was never far from my mind for the rest of the day. We ran back to our vans and got on our hard gear as quickly as we could. Navigating alternative routes to avoid the foot traffic, we drove as close as we could to the Capitol-

... to avoid the foot traffic, we drove as close as we could to the Capitol, disembarking at the northwest side of the Capitol grounds. We gave our gear a final check, and marched towards the West Terrace. The crowd was thinner the further out from the Capitol you were. So as we marched, the resistance we initially met was verbal. A man sarcastically yelled, "Here come the boys in blue, so brave." Another called on us to, "Remember your oath." There was plenty of booing. A woman called us stormtroopers. Another woman who was part of the mob of terrorists laying siege to the Capitol of United States shouted, "Traitors." More found appeal in this label, and shouted, "Traitors," at us as we passed. One man attempted to turn it into a duosyllabic chant. Now we continued to march. We had been marching in two columns, but as we got closer to the West Terrace, the crowd became so dense that in order to progress, we marched single file with our hands on the shoulders of the man in front of us in order to avoid separation.

However, as we came close to the terrace, our line was divided and we came under attack. A man attempted to rip the baton from my hands, and we wrestled for control. I retained my weapon after I pushed him back. He yelled at me, "You're on the wrong team." Cut off from our leadership, which is at the front of our formation, we huddled up and assessed the threats surrounding us. One man tried and failed to build a rapport with me, shouting, "Are you my brother?" Another takes a different tact, shouting, "You will die on your knees."

I was at the front of our group, and determined we had to push our way through the crowd in order to join the defense proper. So I began shouting, "Make way," as I forged ahead, hoping that I'm clearing a path for others behind me to follow. However, as I looked back, I saw the rest of the group came under attack, and were unable to follow. The crowd attempted to physically bar the rest of the platoon from following. I backtrack and started pulling the terrorists off my team from their backpacks and their collars. Around this time, one of the terrorists who had scaled the scaffolding that adorned the Capitol at the time threw something heavy down at me and struck me in the head, disorienting me. I suspect this resulted in the likely concussion I dealt with in the weeks after. Another man attempted to disarm me of my baton, and again, we wrestled for control.

He kicked me in my chest as we went to the ground. I was able to retain my baton again, but I ended up on my hands and knees and blind. The medical mask I was wearing at the time to protect myself from the coronavirus was pulled up over my eyes, so I couldn't see. I braced myself against the impact of their blows and feared the worst. Thankfully, my platoon had repelled their own attackers, and got me back on my feet. The crowd started chanting, "USA," at us, and we struck out again for the West Terrace.

I led the charge through the midst of crowd control munitions, explosions, and smoke engulfing the area. Terrorists were breaking apart the middle fencing and bike racks into individual pieces, presumably to use as weapons. Thankfully, we made it to the secondary defense line on the West Terrace that MPD and Capitol Police were managing to hold. The rest of my platoon got behind the line, and we could take stock of the situation. I realized that back during the previous assaults, someone had stolen my radio. From that point on, I was in the dark as to our current status, when reinforcements would arrive. Terrorists were scaling the scaffolding on both our sides of the tower that was in front of us, and attempting to breach the waist-high metal fencing that was the only barrier we had aside from ourselves.

The sea of people was punctuated throughout by flags, mostly variations of American flags and Trump flags. There was Gadsden flags. It was clear the terrorists perceived themselves to be Christians. I saw the Christian flag directly to my front. Another read, "Jesus is my savior. Trump is my president." Another, "Jesus is king." One flag read, "Don't give up the ship." Another had crossed rifles beneath a skull, emblazoned with the pattern of the American flag. To my perpetual confusion, I saw the thin blue line flag, the symbol of support for law enforcement, more than once being carried by the terrorists as they

ignored our commands and continued to assault us. The acrid sting of CS gas or tear gas and OC spray, which is mace, hung in the air as the terrorists threw our own CS gas canisters back at us, and sprayed us with their own OC either they bought themselves or stole from us.

Later, I learned at least one of them was spraying us in the face with wasp spray. The terrorists alternated between attempting break our defenses, and shouting at or attempting to convert us. Men alleging to be veterans told us how they had fought for this country and were fighting for it again. One man tried to start a chant of, "Four more years." Another shouted, "Do not attack us. We're not Black Lives Matter," as if political affiliation is how we determined when to use force. A man in a QAnon hoodie exclaims, "This is the time to choose which side of history to be on." A man whose shirt read, "God, guns, and Trump," stood behind him silently holding a Trump flag.

A new man came to the front and fixated on me, continually berating me, telling me to take off my gear and give it to him, "to show solidarity with we the people, or we're going to run over you." His voice cracked with the strain and the volume of his threats. He continued, "Do you think your little pea shooter guns are going to stop this crowd? No, we're going in that building." Eventually, there is a surge in the crowd. The fence buckled and broke apart, and we were unable to hold the line. A chaotic melee ensued. Terrorists pushed through the line and engaged us in hand-to-hand combat. Several attempted to knock me over and steal my baton. One latched onto my face, and got his thumb in my right eye, attempting to gouge it out. I cried out in pain and managed to shake him off, managed to shake him off before any permanent damage was done.

I couldn't fully engage anyone, for the moment I do is when another 20 terrorists move in to attack while my hands are full. It was all we could do to keep ourselves on our feet and continue to fall back. I was sprayed with a fire extinguisher, and a red smoke grenade burns at our feet. In the fight, a terrorist is knocked to the ground and his jacket rides up, exposing a large hunting knife on his belt. I, along with several other officers, piled on him while another removed the knife from his person. He regained himself unharmed, and shouts indignantly, "What are you doing? What are you guys doing?"

At this point, the terrorists had claimed most of the western terrace, cornering myself and other officers on the southern edge. We found a side stair off of the terrace up to an upper landing, followed by more stairs up and inside. Inside the Capitol building, officers walked through the halls briefly until they found a place to sit, decontaminate their faces of OC and CS, and take a quick breather. I followed suit. Someone had managed to find a package of water bottles and was passing them out. I washed off my face as best I could, rinsed out my mouth, and drank the rest. I took the opportunity of relative safety to don my gas mask. Not long afterward, I heard someone calling for officers to move to assist. I steeled myself for another round and ascended a stairway into a long hallway filled with smoke and screams.

The Capitol building is labyrinthine, but judging from the sound of intense combat, I could tell this hallway led outside to where the terrorists had forced our retreat. Officers were stacked deep, but every so often one would fall back from the front line, nursing an injury or struggling to breathe, and those who remained would take a step forward. It was a battle of inches, with one side pushing the other a few, and then the other side regaining their ground. At the time, I, and I suspect many others in the hallway, did not know that the terrorists had gained entry into the building by breaking in doors and windows elsewhere, so we believed ours to be the last line of defense before the terrorists had true access to the building, and to potentially our elected representatives.

Eventually, it was my turn in the meat grinder that was the front line. The terrorists had a wall of shields that they had stolen from officers as well as stolen batons, what other armaments they brought. Even during this intense contest of wills, they tried to convert us to their cult. One man shouted, "We all just want to make our voices heard, and I think you feel the same. I really think you feel the same," all while another man attempts to batter us with a stolen shield. Another man, like many others, didn't seem to appreciate that this wasn't a game. He fought his way across the lawn, up the steps, through the western terrace, all the OC and CS gas, and at the front line of this final threshold was asking us to hold on because he has asthma. The two sides were at a stalemate at a metal doorframe that sat in the middle of the hallway. At the front line, I inserted myself so the frame was at my back in an effort to give myself something to brace against, provide additional strength when pushing forward.

Unfortunately, soon after I secured this position, the momentum shifted and we lost the ground that got me there. On my left was a man with a clear riot shield stolen during the assault. He slammed it against me, and with all the weight of the bodies pushing behind him, trapped me. My arms were pinned and

effectively useless, trapped against either the shield on my left or the doorframe on my right. With my posture granting me no functional strength or freedom of movement, I was effectively defenseless, and gradually sustaining injury from the increasing pressure of the mob. Directly in front of me, a man seized the opportunity of my vulnerability, grabbed the front of my gas mask, and used it to beat my head against the door. He switched to pulling it off my head, the strap stretching against my skull and straining my neck. He never uttered any words I recognized, but opted instead for guttural screams.

I remember him foaming at the mouth. He also put his cell phone in his mouth so that had both hands free to assault me. Eventually, he succeeded in stripping away my gas mask, and a new rush of exposure to CS and OC spray hit me. The mob of terrorists were coordinating their efforts now, shouting, "Heave, ho," as they synchronized pushing their weight forward, crushing me further against the metal doorframe. The man in front of me grabbed my baton that I still held in my hands, and in my current state, I was unable to retain my weapon. He bashed me in the head and face with it, rupturing my lip, and adding additional injury to my skull.

At this point, I knew I couldn't sustain much more damage and remain upright. At best, I would collapse and be a liability to my colleagues. At worst, be dragged out into the crowd and lynched. Unable to move or otherwise signal the officers behind me that I needed to fall back, I did the only thing that I could do, and screamed for help. Thankfully, my voice was heard over the cacophony of yells and the blaring alarm. The officer closest to me was able to extricate me from my position, and another helped me fall back to the building again. I had found some more water and decontaminated my face as best I could. I don't know how long I waited in the halls for, but soon after, I got back on my feet and went to the front where the fight was again. Until reinforcements arrived, every able body made a difference. Without my gas mask, I was afraid I'd be a liability in the hallway, so I took the exit outside of the upper landing above the West Terrace.

I found a police line being held, and the terrorists encircling us much like on the West Terrace lower. It was getting later in the day, however, and it appeared we weren't the only ones getting tired. It seemed most of the mob was content to yell rather than try and break our line again. After some time of guarding the upper landing, I saw reinforcements arrive from the south. I'm not sure which law enforcement agency it was, but I turned to them and I started clapping, as it was a sign that badly-needed help was starting to finally arrive. Soon after that, I started feeling the effects of the day taking their toll, and went back inside to rest. Gradually, all the members of CDU 42 gathered in the room known as the Capitol Crypt. We checked on each other and convalesced, glad to see each other in one piece. Despite our exhaustion, we would have ran out into the fight again, should the need have arisen. Thankfully, as the day wore on, more and more resources had arrived at the Capitol to drive off the terrorists. We stayed in the Crypt until quite late. Indeed, even after we were allowed to leave the grounds, we didn't get to go home. Those who needed immediate medical attention took a van to the local hospital, while the rest of us parked near the city center until the city was deemed secure enough for us to check off. I believe we finally got that message around 1:00 AM the following morning. We drove back to the Fourth District and from there went home. Thank you for letting me testify.

***Thank you, Officer Hodges, for service that far exceeded what we all know was not part of the original job description. Hopefully, your example of leadership and heroism will help check those forces which may one day again threaten this country's governance.***