

# ‘A small number of extremists’: Capitol Police video will show that January 6 was not an insurrection

BY J. MICHAEL WALLER



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Release of US Capitol security videos so far shows no “insurrection” against Congress during the January 6 protests and violent riot.

Another 14,000 hours of Capitol Police video remain hidden. When released, they will show that the attack on the Capitol was not an insurrection, but a small, high-visibility operation planned and executed to exploit a large and unsuspecting crowd as cover.

We know this based on the privately taken videos, some online and some not yet published, that do exist. They confirm this writer’s eyewitness account published at the [Center for Security Policy](#) and [The Federalist](#) on January 13 and 14.

From the viewpoint of the embattled front-line Capitol Police officers who defended the building and Congress – as opposed to many of their colleagues who waved in the protesters – it certainly could have looked like the scores, perhaps hundreds, of violent attackers had tens of thousands of MAGA people as backup.

Nationally known videos from the front line absolutely showed the unprovoked violence of organized cadres against the heroism of the embattled police.

But how did those acts of violence relate to the “tens of thousands of insurrectionists” narrative?

To those of us who stood in the crowds just thirty or forty yards away, we saw no such rage or violence. We witnessed – and recorded – an entirely different picture. This article goes through the amateur imagery that this author and two others took that day, between the Ellipse at the White House to the outside of the Capitol, during those fateful hours between about noon and 3:30 p.m. on January 6.

## **Concealing the video conceals the story**

Perspectives from both police and citizens show reality and truth. But none was complete.

The government surveillance video will provide the more complete picture that the nation needs. Especially as the Biden Justice Department has acknowledged

that the violence was largely a pre-planned operation, not a spontaneous incitement after goading from an outgoing president.

Rehearsed testimonies of a few Capitol Police officers before their congressional bosses make for good TV, but – like any eyewitness account, including my own, published a week after the incident – they are not objective intelligence assessments. They do, however, provide important perspectives and pieces of evidence and analysis to help form a larger picture, and to allow for open critique and discussion to find the truth.

There is no legitimate intelligence, security, or law enforcement reason to keep the Capitol Police videos secret. The sources and methods are known: Footage from static security cameras and mobile body cameras.

The only reason to hide those videos, then, is to maintain a political narrative.

The more evidence that comes out, the more that narrative falls apart.

We can ascertain the extent of the “insurrection” by studying the images from private citizens.

As a kickoff, we can begin by analyzing the photos and videos that formed the evidentiary basis of my January eyewitness account. While they still provide only a narrow perspective and did not record the violence, they did give witness to two important things: the small groups of organized cadres who planned the violence in advance and executed the assault, and the massive numbers of patriotic Americans on the scene who had no idea that their march being used as cover.

The “tens of thousands of insurrectionists” narrative was false from the start.

## What the known videos show

- Tens of thousands, possibly hundreds of thousands, of average Americans marched from the White House to the Capitol on January 6, calmly and peacefully, and were not incited, organized, or inclined to commit violence (the [FBI's top counterterrorism official](#) would later confirm this).
- Small groups of organized cadres operated as units, often with markings so they could identify one another, to exploit the huge and unsuspecting crowd for what was clearly a pre-planned attack.
- Police presence was low along the route and at the US Capitol.
- At the Capitol building, Capitol Police showed disorganization and poor command and control (the [Capitol Police inspector general](#) has confirmed this).
- Instead of defending vulnerable areas of the Capitol and concentrating forces against the attackers, the Capitol Police fired flash grenades and tear gas repeatedly over the heads of the violent rioters on the front line, and into the densely packed crowd of non-violent protesters.
- The crowd withstood the tear gas attacks for almost 50 minutes. They stood their ground but did not attack.
- The Capitol Police did not attempt to engage with the crowd or disperse them until after the small organized cadres had attacked the Capitol building itself.
- Following the attack, the helmeted invaders of the



US Senate, as well as QAnon Man, stood calmly on the Senate steps a few yards from a line of police officers who made no attempt to apprehend them.

Our imagery is linked in the text to show the crowd on the Capitol's West Front between about noon and 3:30 p.m. on January 6.

## **A festive and jovial crowd; not angry or incited**

Despite the protest against fraud in the 2020 election, the general mood was calm, jovial, and festive.

Even so, cells of organized operatives were visible to people who knew what to look for. As events unfolded, it became clear that a prearranged plan had been implemented to storm the Capitol building, exploiting the unsuspecting crowd as cover and recruiting the more gullible or excited as a follow-on invasion force.

This became incontrovertible after spending weeks reviewing photos and videos (including our own), interviewing other observers, and reading other eyewitness accounts.

## **No incitement: The operation was underway well before Trump's speech**

The operation began long before President Donald Trump gave his speech that opponents blamed for “inciting” the “insurrection.” Capitol Police surveillance video should show that the earliest protesters assembled near the Capitol at about 8:00 in the morning, with reports of the first perimeter breach of the outer Capitol barriers at about 9:30, while the huge crowds of Trump supporters were starting to assemble at the White House, one-and-a-half miles away, in time for the president's expected

speech, which started at 11:57.

Trump's long, rambling, almost directionless speech dragged on until 1:12 in the afternoon. Even as he was speaking, thousands began walking down Constitution Avenue toward Capitol Hill. People helped one another along the way. Families marched with [strollers](#) and pushed friends and relatives in [wheelchairs](#). At 12:31, thousands could be seen marching calmly down Constitution by the American History Museum. The crowd was [quiet](#), with [no agitation](#), with [few wearing masks](#), looking like anything but insurrectionists as [smiling marchers](#) chanted “Stop the Steal.”

But all wasn't well. Behind a handicapped woman in an electric scooter, a [gloved man in subdued clothes](#), wearing a hoodie over a hat with sunglasses and a bandana covering his face, looked like he didn't belong. Few MAGA people covered their faces.

All the marchers we saw acted calm. The crowd was diverse and friendly. There were self-described Christians, Jews, Muslims, and Buddhists. Everyone tolerated everyone else. A gay activist called Kyle Fabulous waved a [Trump rainbow flag](#). [Blacks for Trump](#) had a spirited contingent. Vietnamese-Americans carried the gold-and-orange banner of the fallen republic of South Vietnam. Chinese-Americans handed out literature showing that the Coronavirus pandemic originated in the Communist Party-run Wuhan Institute of Virology. People of [all ages](#) attended, some carrying Christian crosses and signs that pleaded, “Save America.”

## Shock force

It was different on Capitol Hill. At the tip of the spear of the march line, a shock force of several dozen militants broke through police barriers well ahead of the crowd. We weren't there to see it, but the police and news services covered it, with the militants posting their own videos online and authorities later using it as evidence.

Among the marchers themselves, though, everything remained peaceful. A [12:52](#) photo shows "Michigan for Trump" quietly approaching Capitol Hill from Constitution. A panoramic photo taken at [12:55](#) shows a long toilet line between the Canadian Embassy and the National Gallery of Art. Everyone is calm and nothing suspicious, apart from another possible suspect in the crowd with his face covered, wearing a backpack. A [video three minutes later](#) shows marchers, one in a wheelchair, singing the National Anthem as they walked their last four blocks to the Capitol.

Back at the Washington Monument, thousands and thousands continued listening to the president with more [breaking away](#) to join the march. The video shows no militancy or incitement.

## Provocateurs at the Peace Monument

Minutes after the Proud Boys and others broke through the police barrier (which we learned days after the fact), the rank-and-file walked pass the Peace Monument on the Senate side and up toward the West Front. A video from [1:04](#) captures the jovial and festive mood of the marchers, who obviously had no idea what had just happened ahead. A man merrily called through a bullhorn that skin color doesn't matter: "And we all bleed red, white and blue, baby." People cheered. Children with their families skipped

across the pavement.

The route past the Peace Monument became the principal entry point for the largest number of marchers on the West Front. Pictures taken at [1:06](#) show a large and calm crowd, completely normal [except](#) for about four men, some in helmets, with orange tape apparently to identify themselves as part of a unit.

What the images do not show to this point is any police presence at the entry to the Capitol grounds. It wasn't until [1:08](#), as far up the West Front of Capitol Hill as possible without entering the building, that we saw the first Capitol Police personnel.

## No commotion visible as organized groups assemble within crowd

Pictures taken at that time reveal no commotion and only a few police on the temporary inaugural platform, where Joe Biden would soon be sworn in as president, at the crypt level outside the Great Rotunda. If there was trouble at that moment, we couldn't see from thirty or so yards away. But, as the [picture](#) shows, men dressed in subdued clothing, with backpacks and tactical pants, had begun assembling.

One police officer on the platform is seen on alert, appearing to aim a [long-barrel pepper gun](#) at targets slightly below him, facing southwest. At the far right of the photo, near the top of the temporary news media tower across from the inaugural platform, a 360-degree Capitol Police surveillance camera can be seen observing all.

The growing, tightening crowd faced the inaugural stand. Marble stairs to the north of the inaugural platform lead up to the Senate at the terrace level. Pictures taken at [1:09](#) show the stairs are clear, with

no crisis and no police, and about six to eight officers clustered at the swearing-in section of the inaugural platform.

The world would soon know that the police were in fact contending with a clear and present danger up-front with steel barriers, metal poles, bear spray, and a fire extinguisher used as weapons. As serious as that was, the size of the threat in terms of people was minuscule in comparison to the tens or hundreds of thousands of protesters continuing to flow in from the White House.

Back by the Washington Monument and the Ellipse sixteen blocks west, the remaining crowd began dispersing toward the end of President Trump's speech. The Village People's "YMCA" blasted again over a sound system. [Videos](#) and stills show a lot of happy, enthused people, often with children, heading toward the Capitol to make their voices heard.

Back to the Capitol: Suddenly on the inaugural platform, roughly 30 [anti-riot police](#) in fluorescent green vests assembled closest to House side and the [bleachers](#), but still no trouble from where we stood.

At the White House: The president finished his speech at 1:12 as [people continued to leave](#) the Washington Monument/Ellipse area and walk to the Capitol. None of our imagery shows signs of anyone acting as if incited by his remarks.

At the Capitol, photos show thousands of marchers still pouring in – almost all well-mannered, many positive, and still no sign of trouble. Only [a few Capitol Police](#) could be seen on the inaugural platform; the anti-riot police in green vests had moved somewhere else. One person of interest, wearing a helmet and what looks like tactical gear, could be seen at the media tower near the police surveillance camera.

We'll call such individuals "tacticals" for short, to distinguish them from agitators dressed in civilian clothes.

Images taken over the next few minutes show a similar scene of calm, but with organized agitators both standing in fixed locations and moving through the crowd. The average person would have taken little notice of them. The [police](#) were alert but did not appear to provoke anyone. Many in the crowd were photographed [looking away](#) from the Capitol as the massive throngs continued surging in.

## Confederate battle flags provide a clue

Soon, the agents-provocateurs started agitating. A 1:19 [video](#) shows a calm crowd, with some cheering or shouting. A male agitator ruined the festive moment by shouting profanities as another walked by wearing a green helmet and what could be body armor. A [separate video](#) at that minute offers a panoramic view, showing the crowds converging up Capitol Hill and then sweeping toward the Capitol building.

One woman cheerfully and innocently chatted with a friend about how "happy" she was to be "making history" at such a huge protest in support of the president, but the agitators were now getting louder. Some chanted "traitor, traitor," and the voice of the same male dropping the F-bomb can be heard telling people to "move forward." This was the first agent-provocateur in action that I had witnessed so far.

Inflammatory props at the lead of a protest showed one of two things: someone had organized in advance to want extra media coverage for his cause, or was an opponent trying to discredit the event.

I couldn't tell which was which, but in 40 years of observing demonstrations in Washington, it's

clear that someone has planned trouble when a few provocateurs conspicuously wave Confederate battle flags at the front of a mainstream conservative protest.

Another prop could be [seen at 1:20](#): A brand-new roofer's fork, used for tearing off shingles and other demolition work, raised as a symbol of some sort of pitchfork rebellion. Coordinated members of the crowd chanted in unison, apparently against Vice President Mike Pence, "traitor, traitor, traitor."

The police appeared [more alert](#) during these chants, with one raising an anti-riot weapon as if to fire an irritant. Back at the base of the media tower, one could see a man in a [dark helmet](#) with orange tape, and another speaking into a [large walkie-talkie](#). The concentration of people made cellular phone reception all but impossible.

It started to change at 1:21

The violence at the very front of the crowd had been going on for a few minutes, though we didn't know it thirty yards back. Those militants had been the first to the scene, the ones who challenged the Capitol Police and threw aside the barriers. Others' videos showed that the violence at that point was generally restricted to a row of militants only two or three people deep. No insurrection.

## First police projectile recorded at 1:21

My video at [1:21](#) records the first police projectile fired into the crowd. At least it seemed that it had come from the police. The pop was a small flash grenade that burst above people's heads. The organized militants were now mobilizing. Two tacticals are shown in the video in similar tan helmets, one with a red emblem on the back. Closer to the ground and in front appeared a group of men in black, one in what

looked a regular police cap, two with baseball caps, and one in camouflage and a vest and helmet with insignia.

Another pop like a second flash grenade. The crowd started booing. Normal people didn't understand why the police are firing at them, while the profanity-yelling agitator from before resumed his tirades. Someone threw an object back at the police on the inaugural platform.

The atmosphere had changed. Lack of discipline from the Capitol Police provoked that change among the peaceful vast majority of the crowd. The police did not provoke the planned violence. But they inadvertently got their potential sympathizers in the crowd angry.

The following 11 minutes of video confirm that – apart from the first two or three layers of militants whom we could not see at the time – the crowd did not act aggressively, even as the police fired four rounds of tear gas within 30 seconds. The canisters were fired over the heads of the militants and into the nonviolent crowd.

[At first](#), the people began yelling at the officers. Someone flipped the bird. People chanted "USA, USA." Less than two minutes later, [at 1:23](#), an officer with a long paintball gun fired in a southeasterly direction, with the barrel downward but nearly horizontal, as if shooting a pepper ball at a target in the crowd well away from any violence. Now began the chants later attributed to the organized agitators: "[Our house](#)." Police aimed again into someone in the crowd.

[At 1:25](#), police fired the first tear gas about thirty yards into the crowd, the flash going off between nonviolent civilians. This was a dangerous, irresponsible move. Nobody in that area of was causing trouble. With

thousands of people continuing to pour in, there was nowhere for the crowd to go.

But with few exceptions, the protesters didn't want to go. On their own, without coordination, they stood their ground. [Video shows](#) that the crowd remained calm. Somebody threw what looked like the remains of a tear gas canister back at the police. The people grew noisy, chanting "USA," but not moving. Someone called for people to relax.

## More tear gas is fired, not at the violent militants, but into the crowd

[At 1:32](#), police fired four more tear gas rounds. Smoke from the first can be seen at the start of the video, with the next three shots fired roughly ten seconds apart. Children were present. The people stood still and not aggressively, resuming "USA, USA" chants. A male agitator insulted the few trying to leave the area and told them to "Stay where you're at."

Police fired another tear gas round at [1:33](#). [An unrelated eyewitness, in a very detailed account](#), later described a dangerous, pre-planned operation underway within the massive scaffolding of the inaugural platform. The plastic sheeting made a perfect shelter for concealment and blocked out the tear gas. The police outside lobbed irritants instead at innocent people in the crowd.

They fired two or three more rounds at 1:34. No agitators were necessary to rile up anyone. The mass of protesters stood their ground, most quietly. No police messaging could be heard for the crowd to disperse. Organized cadres worked through and around the people. A [45-second video](#) shows two tear gas rounds striking deep into the assembly and reveals a suspected agitator with a large black-and-gray face

covering, followed by at least two tacticals in black helmets.

Three more tear gas shots at [1:35](#). The crowd was loud but still peaceful.

A [minute later](#), members of another unit emerged: Two male civilians in helmets with respirators, marked with green tape.

Police fired a yellow smoke grenade at [1:38](#), prompting some wag to start chanting, "I can't breathe." The crowd remained stable, chanting "USA, USA." Some took selfies. One of those chanting in the video is man wearing a [gas mask](#) and thrusting a gloved hand into the air.

The mood shifts again as agitators coordinate.

## Mobilization begins

By [1:40](#), the videos show another shift in mood. The police had been hurling irritants and flash grenades on and off for 19 minutes and tens of thousands more people thronged in. By now, some tried to get out of the increasingly packed, choked area. The organized agitators wanted no one to leave. "Hold the line," one called in a commanding tone. "Stairs next" – an apparent reference to the stairway leading up to the Senate. "We're doing the stairs next."

By now the coordination was clear to any seasoned protest participant, but the atmosphere seemed surreal to most. "We just pepper sprayed the cops," another agitator bragged. "Hold the line," another called. People didn't argue or ask questions. They were fixated on the drama surrounding them.

Meanwhile, at [1:45](#), imagery shows huge crowds continued to march down Constitution Avenue from



the White House. Not insurrectionist-minded or equipped. An elderly protester passed the National Archives in a wheelchair.

Like so many others, they have no idea what was happening ahead, which was a lot. At [1:50](#), a group of helmeted tacticals designated with green tape headed toward the stairs leading up to the Senate. A group of [five men](#) in green tape assembled at the base.

Police continued to fire tear gas deep into the crowd. A senseless provocation. At [1:51](#), police projectiles hit people about 40 yards away. Someone yelled, “Throw it back!” It could have been a provocateur. It could have been a normal, outraged person.

This far back, we were still unaware that militants had been battling the police at the Capitol’s doors, or that bombs were discovered a few blocks away at the Republican and Democrat party headquarters.

For the police, it was reasonable and proper to presume a massive attack on the Capitol.

That didn’t explain why police kept aimlessly firing tear gas and smoke grenades at innocent people unconnected to the violence. Fortunately for all, the irritant was mild. Anything stronger would have caused a stampede and crushed the most vulnerable.

The crowd, by staying firm, prevented the stampede, while making way for those who wanted out. The agitators, on the other hand, seemed to want a stampede.

At [1:55](#), various organized attack units converged on the stairs to the Senate. One attacker wore a blue armband, another a helmet with green tape, others with dark helmets and some in white. A handful of police guarded the top stairs. Two more organized

rioters emerged in [white helmets](#) marked with green tape.

Militants took the top of the high scaffolding structure at [1:57](#), but the crowd below remained calm. Videos show that blocks away, by the federal courthouse on Pennsylvania Avenue, thousands more continued their way to the Capitol, calmly, almost tentatively, showing no sign of wanting to cause trouble. It was [2:00](#).

## Attack

The huge amount of people in one concentrated area had overloaded the local cell phone towers. So many cell phones in one area made calls, texts, and other messaging virtually impossible. Most people simply didn’t know what was happening.

This wasn’t a government conspiracy to shut down communication. It happens at most large protests in Washington, including the annual March for Life and pro-abortion events that are about as large as the January 6 crowd.

The only people who could reliably communicate with one another were those equipped with phone apps that could break through the electronic congestion, and with old-fashioned walkie-talkies, loudspeakers, and flags. Those people were few.

## ‘Move forward’

Closer in, things were heating up. Where I had been standing, an [agitator](#) in a red Trump hat pounded his flagpole vertically into the ground to make a rhythmic, annoying racket. [A minute later](#), a flag-carrying agitator donned a white gas mask and conferred with another in a similar mask as someone else ordered, “Move forward.”

But instead of going after the covert cadre with the clear unit-designation markings – as any trained crowd control unit would easily recognize – from our vantage point the police aimlessly went after the ordinary people.

With the red-hat agitator continuing to pound his flag pole at [2:04](#), police fired flash grenades and tear gas with greater intensity. Another agitator banged a wooden flag pole in unison and called out, “Keep pushing!” as he advanced toward the stairs. A man marked with [orange tape](#) approached the red-hat flagman.

By now the scaffolding tower on the north end of the inaugural platform had been taken over from the inside, and someone [cut through the sheeting](#) and waved a flag in what looked like a command signal. At that moment, at 2:05, the organized, helmeted tacticals set out for the Senate stairs.

At [2:06](#), with only two police visible at the top of the stairs, the flagpole agitator about 80 feet back noisily pounded the ground: “War! Start the fight.” More calls of “Our house.”

## Confusion begins

Instead of reinforcing their vulnerable position at the top of the stairs, the Capitol Police continued to fire tear gas into the crowd. By [this time](#), protesters had become confused, angry, and frustrated. The organized ones took advantage, riling up excitable elements of the crowd and getting anyone within earshot jumpy with the constant, obnoxious banging of flagpoles.

The police action played into the hands of the militants. A signalman with a unique [black-and-orange “Don’t Tread On Me” flag](#) climbed up a lamp post and faced

the stairs. Orange tape designated his unit. Some command had been given. “[Move forward](#),” some voices called. Members of a green tape unit emerged.

Organizers had formed a perimeter to try to channel the unsuspecting marchers. A [female agitator](#) with a megaphone, accompanied by others in costumes, stationed herself on the Peace Monument where the crowd funneled in from a Senate parking lot to Capitol Hill, screeching, “We will kick everybody’s ass that doesn’t support us.” Most ignored her. A man yelled at her and others to “[get off that Peace Monument](#)” because they look like a bunch of “f--in’ liberals.”

## 2:08 – The invasion

With what seemed like hundreds of thousands of ordinary Americans unwittingly acting as cover, the organized militants broke into the Capitol’s East and West fronts within the same minute. At 2:08, a man was recorded smashing a window on the East Front, Senate side, at the terrace level, as two uniformed officers took him down. The police briefly guarded the vulnerable opening but soon left.

We were on the West Front, Senate side. From the inaugural platform at 2:09, police fired [two flash grenades](#) and [two tear gas rounds](#) into the crowd. They had no effect; the people hit were far from the action and doing nothing wrong. [Atop](#) a stone wall on either side of the footpath, agitators or signalers with a commanding view held their posts. Nearly all the demonstrators remained orderly, but an [apparent enforcer](#) stood by ominously with a large metal softball bat. Out from under the scaffolding, [rioters in camouflage](#) readied to approach the stairs.

As the first wave charged up the stairs [at 2:09](#), a shrill woman yelled “Go, go, go!” The police at the top resisted but appeared overwhelmed. A man with a flag

led a single-file column, known as a stack, in a west-to-east direction toward the stairs, with two helmeted tacticals in front of them.

Mobs poured up the stairs to the Senate in a confusing, enthralling atmosphere.

At that same minute, out near the Peace Monument at First Street several hundred feet west, marchers [continued pouring in](#), singing, chanting, and cheering with no idea of what they were walking into.

Outside the Senate, the command had been given. “Let’s go, let’s go. [Move forward](#),” the female agitator near the stairs called shrilly, to rally unsuspecting people caught up in the excitement to join the attack. “Push forward, don’t be scared, push forward.”

A male operative waved in militants from behind the cover of the inaugural platform scaffolding. A man on an elevated surface, carrying one of three Confederate battle flags, armed with a walkie-talkie, moved people onward from within the outside crowd. “Don’t be scared,” the woman continued as the scaffolding’s shredded sheathing came down. “Move forward.”

The call for excited, unthinking, hesitant or confused volunteers [continued](#). “Push forward, push forward.” “Move forward.” “Let’s go.” “Don’t be scared, push forward.”

## **‘We’re in, baby’**

Covertcadremembersinradioorvisualcommunication with one another announced a victory. “[We’re in, baby!](#)” cheered a masked, helmeted man with a green tape designator. By now it was like a tailgate party or mosh pit gone bad. “USA, USA” chants went up, although people couldn’t quite compute why. The flag-waving at the top of the scaffolding, with the

canopy peeling away, seemed like a celebration.

A [tactical group](#) moved toward the stairs as a specialized column charged ahead. Lead elements, some wearing [backward MAGA hats](#), formed a [multiracial group](#), with a protester in a striped kerchief helping people climb toward the stairs.

News accounts would later report that Vice President Pence was escorted off the Senate floor as the Senate was called into recess. It was 2:13.

Far from the action, Capitol Police [continued firing tear gas](#) ineffectively into the crowd.

Yet the great masses of Trump protesters [remained peaceful](#).

[Five minutes later](#), stragglers continued to climb the stone outer wall of the Senate foundation, but the bulk of the crowd just stood there. Cheering adventurers who climbed the wall – or who had taken the steps but not broken in – waved flags and [called to others](#) on the grass and in a muddy construction area to join them. They appeared to be ordinary protesters caught up in the excitement – an assessment that the [FBI’s top counterterrorism official](#) would also make in response to a question from Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI) about this writer’s eyewitness account. A [video](#) panned a wide arc, showing a spirited but orderly crowd.

By [2:24](#), people continued up the stairs to the Senate, but the overwhelming bulk of the crowd stayed on the grass. Among them: [Tacticals](#), including two in white helmets with a red “X” designator. [Video](#) a few minutes later shows spirited flag-wavers atop the once-public terrace level of the Senate side, but most of the people were still standing in the grass. A [360-degree video](#) of the crowd shows continued calmness.

Inside the Capitol, of course, a few of the organized agitators strode into the Senate but, as other videos show, interacted peaceably and civilly with Capitol Police. Newly released Capitol security videos show the tacticals, whom I had witnessed outside, now on the inside, while groups of civilians followed like tourists.

The worst violence was on the House side, with a raid on Speaker Nancy Pelosi's ceremonial office and the attempt to smash through the doors of the House chamber, resulting in the shooting death at 2:44 p.m. of protester Ashli Babbitt. John Sullivan, a BLM/Antifa militant from Utah, had entered the Capitol with the first wave, mobilized with a violent unit to attack the House chamber, recorded everything on video and sold imagery of the woman getting shot to CNN. Sullivan's presence at the vanguard of an allegedly right-wing insurrection has not been adequately explained, with left-wing groups denying that Sullivan was one of them.

That criminal violence, however, did not typify the tens of thousands or more of people at the protest who have been wrongly called insurrectionists and extremists.

## **Suddenly, it was over**

The massive crowd on the Senate side of West Front began to disperse within minutes of the fatal police shooting of Babbitt within the Capitol on the House side. Everything was suddenly over, even though few seemed aware of Babbitt's death or the attacks on police.

As the hour approached and passed three o'clock, the [diverse](#) crowds outside the Senate – [families with children](#), babies, and the elderly – remained [passive](#). Rumors began swirling about the violence inside.

The crowd still didn't seem to understand what had just happened. Some turned the chaos into a party atmosphere. Someone with a master key started up a [green cherry picker](#) to elevate people above the crowd for a better view. A person in the background stood there with a sign saying, "Bigly."

By [3:16 p.m.](#) the crowd dispersed on its own, with no visible police presence needed or seen on the Senate lawn.

## **Weirdness on the Senate steps**

Walking along a strip of Constitution Avenue on the north end of the Senate side to view what happened on the East Front, we saw a [weird sight](#): Agitators sitting around on the stone walls and surrounding the Capitol Police guardhouse and checkpoint at the Senate entrance, and lots of tacticals, some with orange markings.

No sign of any mass arrests. To the contrary. Civilian militants wearing similar tactical backpacks milled around the parking area at the base of the grand Senate stairway as about twenty police officers looked on impassively.

Amidst all the weirdness, my camera caught a [shirtless man](#) in face paint standing seven or eight steps below the line of police. He was holding a bullhorn. Animal horns protruded from his head. He was the about-to-be-famous Q-Anon Shaman.

At [3:32](#), anti-riot reinforcements arrived on the East Front and marched toward the Great Rotunda. Some looked ready for battle. Others looked very unready.

They had nothing to do. The protest had petered out on its own. The network of Capitol Police cameras and other devices had recorded it all – 14,000 hours'



worth.

At 4:15, [CNN tweeted a statement from former Vice President Joe Biden](#). “Let me be very clear. The scenes of chaos at the Capitol do not reflect a true America,” Biden said. “What we’re seeing are a small number of extremists dedicated to lawlessness.”

We couldn’t have said it better ourselves.



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