

# What Really Happened on Jan. 6 at the Capitol Building?

*Note: Click [here](#) to read part 1 of this two-part story.*

President Donald Trump did not inspire me to riot on Jan. 6, 2021. But he did inspire me and many other Americans to see the mainstream news for what it really is.

I was there for the march on that day, and, as I wrote about in part 1, things were beginning to amp up quickly.

When the riot police showed up a few feet from us near the steps of the Capitol, I panicked for a second at the thought of tear gas and police batons. Then I tried to regather my composure and think quickly. I thought, "What do they need?"

So I started to approach a few of them and say, "Thank you for your service." Others had the same idea and simultaneously started thanking them. Then I started to chant, "Back the blue! Back the blue! Back the blue!"

It seemed like hundreds joined in with me, and within minutes the line of riot police filed away. I was relieved. Spice made fun of me, though. "I saw it in your eyes, Rob!" he joked. "You panicked. You saw your life flash before your eyes."

After the police filed away, we cheered, and I reached in my pocket to check my texts. A few of my friends and family members asked me where I was and if I was OK. My mom texted me this:

"(Prayer hands) Get away from the capitol building! (Prayer hands) Guns drawn inside the capitol building. Get away!"

I tried to google what was happening on my phone, which had an AT&T unlimited data plan, but I couldn't pull up the internet. As others checked their phones, I could hear them also

complaining about having no service. I also tried to send out pictures to her to make sure she knew I was OK. While I was at the Capitol Building, none of them made it through. I could only intermittently send short texts.

After I checked my texts, I replied back to a few of my friends that I was “storming the Capitol.” None of them thought it was funny. I didn’t know why.

As we walked back through the enormous crowd, it felt like a tailgate party. People were singing patriotic songs, laughing and hanging out. And when we retraced our steps through downtown D.C., protesters were eating at open-air restaurants, picking up trash and making their way quietly back to their cars.

Although there was too much trash to keep all of it in the trash cans, a group of protesters had neatly stacked and organized pizza boxes, trash bags and other items so that they would be easy for garbage trucks to pick up.

Because the day was so inspiring and fun, I decided to buy two flags. One was for my father-in-law, who had given me \$150 cash to get back to Ohio in case anything happened. The other was the flag of Trump on a tank with a bald eagle shooting a machine gun.

The only disturbance we faced was a group of self-proclaimed Black Lives Matter protesters telling us to “get the (expletive) out of our city” and calling us “(expletive) terrorists.” A black man riding a bicycle also tried to provoke us to fight. Spice smiled and waved while I clenched my fist to defend myself if approached.

When we reached the Jeep in the parking garage, I breathed a sigh of relief. My friend said, “Don’t you feel so inspired? Didn’t that make you feel alive? You’ve never experienced anything like that, have you?”

I hadn't. As we drove away from the city, I sent this text out to friends:

"So pumped I went. It gives me an emboldened passion for liberty. A million people, no masks, and picking up trash on the way out. So diverse. So many black, white, Chinese against Communism, Vietnamese against Communism, Hispanic. I cried a few times. It was beautiful."

The first response I received was from one of my best friends, who said, "You sound insane."

If you watched the events of Jan. 6 on any major news network, this article probably does sound insane to you, but there are hundreds of thousands of people exactly like me. Because of the inauguration scaffolding, we never saw the crazy men and women fighting police, breaking windows, or really, any violence of any kind.

I saw a crowd of hundreds of thousands who sang patriotic songs, who waved American flags, who weren't divided by race and who even left the city streets clean.

As I rode through the night with Spice back to my in-laws' house in Ohio, headlines flooded my phone—headlines of violence, headlines of six people dead and headlines of chaos in the D.C. streets.

And the headlines didn't stop for months after. Like the majority of the crowd, I couldn't see past the inauguration scaffolding so I can't pretend to know what happened when protesters entered the Capitol. But to me, those headlines of violence didn't pass my "smell test."

And just like the 2020 election, each mainstream headline still sounds less like humble analysis and more like arrogant propaganda. {eo}

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