

Testimony of Michael Fanone

Judiciary Committee's Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government

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Mr. Chairman and Members of this Committee, I thank you for inviting me here today to answer questions regarding the events that occurred at the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021. I would like to tell you that I have forgotten some of the events of that day or that my recollection is not as clear as it once was, but that would not be the truth. The events of January 6 are as vivid to me now as when they occurred over three years ago. While the physical scars of that day have healed, the emotional scars still remain.

We are “a government of laws, not of men.” I spent nearly two decades as a law enforcement officer trying to enforce the law. My career began in the United States Capitol as a Capitol Police Officer and ended when called upon as a Metropolitan Police Department Officer to protect the Capitol against a mob of people. While much of my career involved dangerous encounters with violent criminals, that experience was unlike what I experienced when I urgently responded to the Capitol on January 6.

I am here to tell you what happened to me on that day and what I saw and heard happening to fellow officers. As for me, I was violently grabbed, restrained, beaten, tased, all while being called a traitor to my country. I was at risk of being stripped of and killed with my own firearm as I heard chants of, “Kill him with his own gun.” My body camera video captured the violence of the crowd directed towards me during those very brutal moments. The portions of the video I have seen remain extremely painful for me to watch, but doing so is crucial to fully understand what really happened that day and the extent of the violence. During those moments, I remember thinking there was a very good chance I could be killed, and my thoughts were of my children who might lose their father.

While I am here to share my experience, I know that hundreds of other law enforcement officers responded that day, were outnumbered, and acted with tremendous bravery to protect the Capitol and all those present inside who serve our country. Those officers too have suffered injuries, both physical and emotional. They too have been scarred, some visible, and some that cannot be seen.

I think of them often, like my partner, Jimmy Albright, who dragged me to safety, while I was unconscious, and who drove me to the emergency room though injured himself. I think about then Commander Ray Kyle who like so many of us self-deployed to the Capitol and who organized the defense of the Lower West Terrace Tunnel. His rally cry, “Do not give up the door” echoes through my thoughts. I think of all the brave men and women, newly minted officers and those nearly retired, who responded to the call of service that day in the defense of our nation, and those who are still on the front lines each and every day to make our cities safe and to protect our institutions of government.

I appear today, not to give my opinion or analysis or to advocate for some action, but simply to bear witness. I leave whatever actions should be taken to your wisdom, and where we go as a nation to the American people. I have no agenda or affiliation. I do not come with malice in my heart, but only with a deep love of this country, which I know is shared by so many others, both young and old, both Republican and Democrat. And in this process of speaking and more importantly, listening to each other, hopefully we can come together as one nation, with shared values of wanting tomorrow to be better than today, with the hope and confidence that what we do each and every day is for the singular purpose of trying to provide a better life for our children and for our children’s children in the generations to come.

I thank you for your invitation to be here today and for the opportunity of speaking with you.