

Trump Acknowledges He Wanted to Go to the Capitol on Jan. 6

The former president recalled a key detail central to testimony before the Jan. 6 committee during a campaign event in Wisconsin.



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Former President Donald J. Trump said on Wednesday that he asked his Secret Service detail to take him to the Capitol after his speech at the Ellipse on Jan. 6, 2021, acknowledging a key detail of his actions that were central to the findings of the House committee established to investigate the attack.

During a campaign rally in Waukesha, Wis., Mr. Trump brought up a sensational but disputed element of testimony given to the House Jan. 6 committee by a Trump White House aide: that Mr. Trump had lunged for the wheel and physically struggled with Secret Service agents when they refused to take him to join the large crowd of supporters who were marching toward the Capitol.

“I sat in the back,” Mr. Trump said, giving his version of events. “And you know what I did say? I said, ‘I’d like to go down there because I see a lot of people walking down.’ They said, ‘Sir, it’s better if you don’t.’ I said, ‘Well, I’d like to.’”

“It’s better if you don’t,” Mr. Trump recounted an agent saying. The former president said he replied, “All right, whatever you guys think is fine,” and added, “That was the whole tone of the conversation.”

President Biden's campaign immediately highlighted Mr. Trump's comments, amplifying that the former president had intended to participate in what would become an attack by his supporters on the Capitol in an effort to overturn Mr. Biden's victory in the 2020 election.

It is not the first time that Mr. Trump has spoken of his effort to go to the Capitol on Jan. 6. He has said in several interviews that he regretted not marching on the Capitol with his supporters that day, and that his Secret Service detail prevented him from doing so.

"Secret Service said I couldn't go," Mr. Trump said in an interview with The Washington Post in April 2022. "I would have gone there in a minute."

Cassidy Hutchinson, the former White House aide, later testified to Mr. Trump's conversation with Secret Service agents during televised hearings held by the House Jan. 6 committee. Ms. Hutchinson was not in the car with Mr. Trump, and said that her testimony to those events came secondhand or thirdhand from what other people had told her that day.

In an interview with the same committee, Mr. Trump's driver, whose name was not disclosed, said: "The president was insistent on going to the Capitol. It was clear to me he wanted to go to the Capitol."

Mr. Trump at the rally on Wednesday portrayed his requests to his Secret Service detail as casual ones.

In the interview with investigators for the House panel, the driver said that while he did not see Mr. Trump accost agents or reach for the steering wheel, "what stood out was the irritation in his voice, more than his physical presence."

After Mr. Trump was driven back to the White House by his Secret Service detail, the former president sat and watched the ensuing violence play out on television, according to testimony by an array of former administration officials. After Mr. Trump's speech at the Ellipse where he repeated his false claims that the election

was stolen from him and urged attendees to march on the Capitol, a mob of his supporters overran police barricades to storm the building, temporarily disrupting the certification of Mr. Biden's victory.

In a lengthy interview with Time magazine published on Tuesday, Mr. Trump said he would “absolutely” consider pardoning every person who had been convicted on, or pleaded guilty to, charges related to the storming of the Capitol on Jan. 6. He also would not rule out the possibility of political violence after this year's election.

“I think we're going to win,” he said. “And if we don't win, you know, it depends. It always depends on the fairness of an election.”

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