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## FBI did not send undercover operatives to join Jan. 6 attack, watchdog says

By Sarah N. Lynch

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A mob of supporters of U.S. President Donald Trump fight with members of law enforcement at a door they broke open as they storm the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, U.S., January 6, 2021....  
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### Summary

- False claims of FBI role in Jan. 6 attack debunked in new watchdog report
- FBI did not authorize any of its informants to participate in attack or enter Capitol
- FBI accepts recommendations to improve future event preparations

WASHINGTON, Dec 12 (Reuters) - A U.S. Justice Department watchdog report released on Thursday debunked claims by far-right conspiracy theorists who falsely alleged that FBI operatives were secretly involved in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol by [Donald Trump's](#) supporters.

The report by Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz concluded there was no evidence to suggest that undercover FBI agents participated in the attack on the U.S. Capitol.

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The report also found that the FBI did not authorize any of its informants to enter the building or engage in violence.

The FBI has long denied having any involvement by its own staff or its informants in the riots at the Capitol, though conspiracy theories about its role in the attack have persisted.

One such false claim pertained to James Ray Epps, an Arizona man who entered the Capitol that day. Epps, who was [charged last year with a misdemeanor](#) for entering a restricted building or grounds, was falsely accused by Trump's supporters and by former Fox News host Tucker Carlson of being an undercover government informant.

Horowitz's report comes a little more than a month before Trump will be [sworn in for his second term as president](#). He has pledged to [grant clemency to many of the people](#) who stormed the Capitol as soon as his first day in office.

The report found that the FBI could have done more ahead of the Jan. 6 attack by canvassing its field offices for intelligence from informants to prepare for what was to come.

Twenty-six FBI confidential informants were in Washington, D.C., on the day of the attack, the report said.

Three of them were tasked with reporting on domestic terrorism case subjects. One of those three entered the Capitol that day, while two others entered a restricted area around the Capitol.

The other 23 informants who were in Washington to attend protests did so on their own initiative and were not asked by the bureau to attend the events, the report said.

Several of the informants cited in the report on Thursday were tasked with providing the FBI with information related to far-right groups including the Oath Keepers and the Proud Boys.

Leaders for both the Oath Keepers and Proud Boys were later prosecuted for their involvement in the Capitol attack, with juries [convicting Oath Keepers founder Stewart Rhodes](#) and Proud Boys former chairman Enrique Tarrío of seditious conspiracy and other crimes.

In its response to the report, the FBI said it will accept the watchdog's recommendations for how to improve its processes to prepare for future events that could pose domestic security issues.

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Sarah N. Lynch is the lead reporter for Reuters covering the U.S. Justice Department out of Washington, D.C. During her time on the beat, she has covered everything from the Mueller report and the use of federal agents to quell protesters in the wake of George Floyd's murder, to the rampant spread of COVID-19 in prisons and the department's prosecutions following the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol.



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