

**Written Statement of Harry A. Dunn
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**Hearing Before the Select Committee
to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol,
U.S. House of Representatives**

January 27, 2021

Chairman Thompson and Members of the Select Committee, thank you for the opportunity today to give my account regarding the events of January 6, 2021, from my first-hand experience as a Capitol Police officer directly involved in those events, and still hurting from what happened that day. I am providing this testimony solely in my personal capacity, and not as a representative of the U.S. Capitol Police.

I reported for duty at the Capitol, as usual, early on the morning of January 6. We understood that the vote to certify President Biden's election would be taking place that day, and that protests might occur outside the Capitol, but we expected any demonstrations to be peaceful expressions of First Amendment freedoms, just like the scores of demonstrations we had observed for many years. After roll call, I took my overwatch post on the east front of the Capitol, standing on the steps that lead to the Senate chamber. As the morning progressed, I did not see or hear anything that gave me cause for alarm.

But around 10:56 am, I received a text message from a friend forwarding a screen shot of what appeared to be a potential plan of action very different from a peaceful demonstration. The screen shot bore the caption "Jan. 6th –Rally Point – Lincoln Park," and said the "objective" was "THE CAPITAL." It said, among, other things, that "Trump has given us marching orders," and to "keep your guns hidden." It urged people to "bring...your trauma kits" and "gas mask," to "[I]nk up early in the day" in "6-12 man teams," and indicated there would be a "time to arm up." Seeing that message caused me concern, to be sure, and looking back now, it seemed to foreshadow what happened later. At the time, though, we had not received any threat warnings from our chain of command, and I had no independent reason to believe that violence was headed our way.

As the morning progressed, the crowd of protestors began to swell on the east side of the Capitol, many displaying "Trump" flags. The crowd was chanting slogans like "Stop the Steal!" and "We want Trump!" But the demonstration was still being conducted in a peaceful manner.

Early that afternoon, Capitol Police dispatch advised all units over the radio that we had an “active 10-100” at the Republican National Committee nearby. “10-100” is police code for a suspicious package, such as a potential bomb. That radio dispatch got my attention and I started to get more nervous and worried, especially because the crowds on the east front of the Capitol were continuing to grow. Around the same time, I started receiving reports on the radio about large crowd movements around the Capitol, coming from the direction of the Ellipse to both the west and east fronts of the Capitol. Then I heard urgent radio calls for additional officers to respond to the west side, and an exclamation, in a desperate voice, that demonstrators on the west side had “breached the fence!”

Now it was obvious that there was an active threat to the Capitol. I quickly put on a steel chest plate (which weighs about 20 pounds) and, carrying my M-4 rifle, sprinted around the north side of the Capitol to the west terrace and the railing of the Inaugural stage, where I had a broad view of what was going on. I was stunned by what I saw. In what seemed like a sea of people, Capitol Police officers and Metropolitan DC Police (“MPD”) officers were engaged in desperate hand-to-hand fighting with rioters across the west lawn. Until then, I had never seen *anyone* physically assault a Capitol Police or MPD officer – let alone witness *mass assaults* being perpetrated on law enforcement officers. I witnessed the rioters using all kinds of weapons against the officers, including flag poles, metal bike racks they had torn apart, and various kinds of projectiles. Officers were being bloodied in the fighting, many were screaming, and many were blinded and coughing from chemical irritants being sprayed in their faces. I gave decontamination aid to as many officers as I could, flushing their eyes with water to dilute the chemical irritants.

Soon thereafter, I heard an “Attention, all units!” radio dispatch that the Capitol had been breached, and that rioters were in various places inside the building. At that point, I rushed into the Capitol with another officer, going first to the basement on the Senate side where I had heard an MPD officer needed a defibrillator. After returning outside to the west terrace to assist officers, I went back into the Capitol and up the stairs to the Crypt. There, I saw rioters who had invaded the Capitol carrying a Confederate flag, a red “MAGA” flag, and a “Don’t Tread on Me” flag.

I decided to stand my ground there to prevent any rioters from heading down the stairs to the lower west terrace entrance, because that was where officers were getting decontamination aid and were particularly vulnerable. At the top of the stairs, I confronted a group of the insurrectionists, warning them not to go down. One of them shouted “Keep moving, Patriots!” Another, displaying what looked like a law enforcement badge, told me “We’re doing this for you!” One of the invaders approached like he was about to try and get past me and head down the stairs, and I hit him, knocking him down.

After getting relieved by other officers in the Crypt, I took off running upstairs toward the Speaker’s Lobby, and helped a plain-clothes officer who was being hassled by insurrectionists. Some of them were dressed like members of a militia group, wearing tactical vests, cargo pants,

and body armor. I was physically exhausted, and it was hard to breathe and see because of all the chemical spray in the air.

More and more insurrectionists were pouring into the area by the Speaker's Lobby near the Rotunda, some wearing "MAGA" hats and shirts that said "Trump 2020." I told them to leave the Capitol, and in response, they yelled back: "No, no, man, this is our house!" "President Trump invited us here!" "We're here to stop the steal!" "Joe Biden is not the President!" "Nobody voted for Joe Biden!"

I am a law enforcement officer, and I keep politics out of my job. But in this circumstance, I responded: "Well, I voted for Joe Biden. Does my vote not count? Am I nobody?"

That prompted a torrent of racial epithets. One woman in a pink "MAGA" shirt yelled, "You hear that, guys, this nigger voted for Joe Biden!" Then the crowd, perhaps around twenty people, joined in, screaming "Boo! Fucking Nigger!"

No one had ever – ever -- called me a "nigger" while wearing the uniform of a Capitol Police officer. In the days following the attempted insurrection, other black officers shared with me their own stories of racial abuse on January 6. One officer told me he had never, in his entire forty years of life, been called a "nigger" to his face, and that that streak ended on January 6. Yet another black officer later told he had been confronted by insurrectionists inside the Capitol, who told him to "Put your gun down and we'll show you what kind of nigger you really are!"

To be candid, the rest of that afternoon is a blur. But I know I went throughout the Capitol to assist other officers who needed aid, and to help expel more insurrectionists. In the Crypt, I encountered Sergeant Gonell, who was giving assistance to an unconscious woman who had been in the crowd of rioters on the west side of the Capitol. I helped to carry her to the House Majority Leader's office, where she was administered CPR. As the afternoon wore on, I was completely drained both physically and emotionally, and in shock and disbelief over what had happened. Once the building was cleared, I went to the Rotunda to recover with other officers and share our experiences from that afternoon. Rep. Rodney Davis was there offering support to officers, and when he and I saw each other he came over and gave me a big hug.

I sat down on a bench with a friend of mine who is also a black Capitol Police officer, and told him about the racial slurs I had endured. I became very emotional and began yelling "How the [expletive] can something like this happen?! Is this America?" I began sobbing, and officers came over to console me.

Later on January 6, after order and security had been restored in the Capitol through the hard work and sacrifices of law enforcement, Members took to the floor of the House to speak out about what had happened that day. Among them was House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, who – along with my fellow officers -- I had protected that day, and will protect today and tomorrow. And the Minority Leader, to his great credit, said the following to the House: “The violence, destruction, and chaos we saw earlier was unacceptable, undemocratic, and un-American. It was the saddest day I’ve ever had serving in this institution.” Members of this Select Committee, the Minority Leader was absolutely right that day in how he described what took place at the Capitol. And for those of us in the Capitol Police who serve and revere this institution, and who love the Capitol building, it was the saddest day for us as well.

More than six months later, January 6 still isn’t over for me. I have had to avail myself of multiple counseling sessions from the Capitol Police Employee Assistance Program, and I am now receiving private counseling therapy for the persistent emotional trauma of that day. I have also participated in many peer support programs with fellow law enforcement officers from around the United States. I know so many other officers continue to hurt, both physically and emotionally.

I want to take this moment and speak to my fellow officers about the emotions they are continuing to experience from the events of January 6. There is absolutely nothing wrong with seeking professional counseling. What we all went through that day was traumatic, and if you are hurting please take advantage of the counseling services that are available to us. I also respectfully ask this Select Committee to review the services available to us and consider whether they are sufficient to meet our needs, especially with respect to the amount of leave we are allowed.

In closing, we can never again allow our democracy to be put in peril as it was on January 6. I thank the Members of this Select Committee for your commitment to determine what led to the disaster at the Capitol on January 6, what actually took place at the Capitol that day, and what steps should be taken to prevent such an attack on our democracy from ever happening again.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.