

**Testimony of Officer Michael Fanone  
of the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department**

**The House Select Committee to Investigate the  
January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol:  
“The Law Enforcement Experience on January 6th”**

**July 27, 2021**

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members of this Committee, for inviting me to provide my eyewitness testimony of the violent assault on our Nation’s Capitol on January 6, 2021.

My name is Michael Fanone, and while I have been a sworn officer with the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, D.C. for almost two decades, my law enforcement career actually began here in this building as a United States Capitol police officer shortly after 9/11. In part because of the 2001 attacks on our country by terrorists, I felt called to serve. As a Capitol Police Officer, I was proud to protect this institution and the dedicated Members of Congress and their staff who work hard each today to uphold our American democracy.

I remain proud of the work of the Capitol Police and MPD officers who literally commit their lives to protecting the safety of each of you, and all of us in this room, in our Nation’s Capital.

After leaving the United States Capitol Police, I became an MPD officer serving the residents of Washington, D.C. I have spent the majority of my nearly 20 years at the Metropolitan Police Department working in special mission units whose responsibilities include the investigation and arrest of narcotics traffickers and violent criminals. I have worked as both an undercover officer and lead case officer in many of these investigations.

In this line of work, it probably won’t shock you to know I’ve dealt with some dicey situations. I thought I had seen it all, many times over. Yet what I witnessed and experienced on January 6, 2021 was unlike anything I had ever seen,

experienced, or could have imagined in my country. On that day, I participated in the defense of the United States Capitol from an armed mob of thousands determined to get inside. Because I was among a vastly outnumbered group of law enforcement officers protecting the Capitol and the people in it, I was grabbed, 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!” I can still hear those words in my head now.

Although I regularly deal with risky situations on the job, nowhere in my wildest imagination did I ever expect to be in that situation, or sitting before you today talking about it. That experience and its aftermath were something that even my extensive law enforcement training didn’t prepare me for.

I was just one of hundreds of local police who lined up to protect Congress even though we were not assigned to do that. Some have asked why we ran to help when we didn’t have to. I did that because I simply could not ignore what was happening. Like many other officers, I could not ignore the numerous calls for help coming from the Capitol Complex. I’m a plainclothes officer assigned to the First District Crime Suppression Team. But for the first time in nearly a decade, I put on my uniform.

When my partner, Jimmy Albright, and I arrived at the Capitol around three that afternoon, it was unlike any scene I had ever witnessed. Jimmy parked our police vehicle near the intersection of South Capitol St. and D St., SE and we walked to the Capitol from there passing the Longworth House Office Building. It was eerily quiet and the sidewalks, usually filled with pedestrians, were empty. As we made our way to Independence Avenue, I could see dozens of empty police vehicles that filled the street, police barricades, which had been abandoned, and hundreds of angry protesters, many of whom taunted us as we walked toward the Capitol building.

Jimmy and I immediately began to search for an area where we could be of most assistance. We first made our way through a door on the south side of the

Capitol, walking then to the crypt and finally down to the Lower West Terrace Tunnel. It was there that I observed a police commander struggling to breathe as he dealt with the effects of CS gas that lingered in the air. Then I watched him collect himself, straighten his cap and trench coat adorned with silver eagles, and return to the line. That Commander was Ramey Kyle of the Metropolitan Police Department and those images are etched into my memory never to be forgotten.

In the midst of this intense and chaotic scene, Commander Kyle remained cool, calm and collected as he gave commands to his officers. “Hold the line,” he shouted over the roar. Of course, that day “the line” was the seat of our American government. Despite the confusion and stress of the situation, observing Ray’s leadership, protecting a place I cared so much about, was the most inspirational moment of my life. The bravery he and others showed that day are the best examples of duty, honor and service. Each of us who carries a badge should bring those core values to our work every day.

The fighting in the Lower West Terrace Tunnel was nothing short of brutal. Here I observed approximately thirty police officers standing shoulder-to-shoulder, maybe four or five abreast, using the weight of their own bodies to hold back the onslaught of violent attackers. Many of these officers were injured, bleeding and fatigued. But they continued to hold the line.

As I don’t have to tell the Members in this room, the Tunnel is a narrow and long hallway. It is not the sort of space where anyone would want to be pulled into hand-to-hand combat with an angry mob, although the narrowness of the hallway provided what was probably the only chance of holding back that crowd from entering your personal offices and the House and Senate Chambers.

In an attempt to assist injured officers, Jimmy and I asked them if they needed a break. There were no volunteers. Selflessly, they only identified *other* colleagues who may be in need of assistance.

The fighting dragged on, and I eventually joined the tactical line at the Tunnel's entrance. I can remember looking around and being shocked by the sheer number of people fighting us. As my police body-worn camera shows, thousands upon thousands of people, seemingly determined to get past us by any means necessary.

At some point during the fighting, I was dragged from the line of officers into the crowd. I heard someone scream, "I got one!" as I was swarmed by a violent mob. They ripped off my badge. They grabbed my radio. They seized the ammunition that was secured to my body. They began to beat me, with their fists and with what felt like hard metal objects. At one point I came face to face with an attacker who repeatedly lunged for me and attempted to remove my firearm. I heard chanting from some in the crowd, "get his gun" and "Kill him with his own gun." I was aware enough to recognize I was at risk of being stripped of, and killed with, my own firearm. I was electrocuted, again and again and again with a Taser. I'm sure I was screaming, but I don't think I could even hear my own voice.

My body camera captured the violence of the crowd directed toward me during those very frightening moments. It's an important part of the record for this Committee's investigation and for the country's understanding of how I was assaulted and nearly killed as the mob attacked the Capitol that day, and I hope that everyone will be able to watch it. The portions of the video I've seen remain extremely painful for me to watch. But it is essential that everyone understands what really happened that tragic day.

During those moments, I remember thinking that there was a very good chance that I would be torn apart or be shot to death with my own weapon. I thought of my four daughters who might lose their Dad. I remain grateful that no Member of Congress had to go through the violent assault that I experienced that day.

During the assault, I thought about using my firearm on my attackers. But I knew that if I did that, I would quickly be overwhelmed. And that, in their minds, it would provide them with the justification for killing me. So instead, I decided to appeal to any humanity they might have. I said as loud as I could manage, “I’ve got kids.” Thankfully, some in the crowd stepped in and assisted me.

Those few individuals protected me from the crowd and inched me toward the Capitol until my fellow officers could rescue me. I was carried back inside the Capitol Building. What happened afterwards is much less vivid to me. I had been beaten unconscious and remained so for more than four minutes. I know that Jimmy helped evacuate me from the building and drove me to MedStar Washington Hospital Center despite suffering significant injuries himself. At the hospital, doctors told me that I suffered a heart attack, and I was later diagnosed with a concussion, traumatic brain injury and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

As my physical injuries gradually subsided and the adrenaline that had stayed with me for weeks waned, I have been left with the psychological trauma and the emotional anxiety of having survived such a horrifying event. And my children continue to deal with the trauma of nearly losing their Dad that day.

What makes that struggle harder and more painful is to know so many of my fellow citizens, including so many of the people I put my life at risk to defend, are downplaying or outright denying what happened. I feel like I went to Hell and back to protect the people in this room. But too many are now telling me that Hell doesn’t even exist—or that Hell actually wasn’t all *that* bad.

The indifference shown to my colleagues and I is disgraceful. My law enforcement career prepared me to cope with some aspects of this experience. Being an officer, you know your life is at risk whenever you walk out the door, even if you don’t expect otherwise law-abiding citizens to take up arms against you. But nothing—truly nothing—has prepared me to address those elected Members of our government who continue to deny the events of that day. Those

very same members whose lives, offices, staff members I was fighting so desperately to defend.

I agreed to speak here today, and have talked publicly about what happened, because I don't think our response to the insurrection should have anything to do with political parties. I know that when my partner Jimmy and I suited up on January 6, we didn't care what we or our fellow officers believed about politics or what political party any of you public servants belonged to. I've worked in this city for two decades and never cared about those things, no matter who was in office. All I've ever cared about is protecting you, and the public, so you can do your job in service to this country and for the people you represent.

I appreciate your time and attention. I look forward to the committee's investigation. I am hopeful that with your commitment, we as a country will confront the truth of what happened on January 6 and do what is necessary to make sure this institution of our democracy never again falls into the hands of a violent and angry mob.

We must also recognize the officers who responded that day, many unsolicited, and their countless acts of bravery and selflessness. It has been 202 days since 850 MPD officers responded to the Capitol and helped stop a violent insurrection from taking over the Capitol Complex, which almost certainly saved countless Members of Congress and their staff from injury and possibly even death. The time to fully recognize these officers' actions is now.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide my testimony today.