Meme Rehashes Old, False Claim That J6 Committee Destroyed Evidence

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Quick Take

The House committee that investigated the attack on the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, issued a more than 800-page report presenting and analyzing the evidence about what happened that day. It also released videos, transcribed interviews, depositions and other documents. But some high-profile conservatives are now making the false claim that the committee destroyed "all the evidence."

Full Story

The House Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol issued a more than 800-page report in 2022 that detailed how former President Donald Trump's false claims undermining the integrity of the 2020 election led to the Capitol riot.

The committee also released more than 140 transcripts of the testimony that went into the report and has made public videos, depositions and documents — including memos, emails and voicemails.

But now, in the final weeks before the 2024 election, some conservative influencers — including Donald Trump Jr. and Jack Posobiec — are spreading a meme making the false claim that the committee destroyed "all the evidence" linking Trump to the attack.

The meme features a picture of Al Pacino in the 1983 film "Scarface" with this text: "If Trump was guilty why did the J6 Select Committee destroy all the evidence they compiled against him?"

The committee did no such thing.

The claim that the committee destroyed evidence appears to be a reprise of a talking point we wrote about last year. Republican Rep. Barry Loudermilk, of Georgia, had told Fox News in a story published on Aug. 8, 2023, that the committee hadn't adequately preserved some documents, data and video depositions.

The same day, Trump took that argument further, posting on his social media platform: "The January 6th Unselect Committee got rid of EVERYTHING! Discarded, Deleted, Thrown Out. A Flagrant Violation of the law."

The following month, in an appearance on NBC's "Meet the Press," Trump made a similar claim.

But, as we noted at the time, Loudermilk's original claim didn't allege that the committee's records were destroyed, as Trump claimed. Rather, Loudermilk raised concerns over what materials needed to be archived. When we reached out to Trump's spokesperson for clarification or evidence to support his claims, we didn't get a response.

In a letter to Loudermilk on July 7, 2023, Rep. Bennie Thompson, who chaired the committee, reported that more than a million records had been prepared for publication and archiving in coordination with several governmental offices, including the National Archives and Records Administration and the Committee on House Administration.

In a footnote to that letter, Thompson explained, "the Select Committee did not archive temporary committee records that were not elevated by the Committee's actions, such as use in hearings or official publications, or those that did not further its investigative activities."

So, the meme shared by Trump's eldest child and Posobiec appears to be a rehashed version of this old claim. In reality, the evidence collected by the committee is still publicly available on a government website.

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Sources

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