Six Capitol police suspended, 29 others under investigation for role in January 6 assault

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At a Thursday evening press conference, the Washington DC Capitol Police revealed that six Capitol Police officers have been suspended with pay and 29 others are under investigation for their actions during the January 6 assault on Congress.

According to CNN, Democratic Representative Tim Ryan of Ohio said that one of the officers was suspended for wearing a "Make America Great Again" hat and taking selfies with insurrectionists. Another Capitol police officer, a lieutenant, was recorded on video wearing a MAGA hat and giving his bull horn to Trump supporters before leading them up the Capitol steps to pull officers under his command from the building.

"Acting Chief Yogananda Pittman has directed that any member of her department whose behavior is not in keeping with the Department's Rules of Conduct will face appropriate discipline," Capitol police spokesman John Stolnis said in a statement.

In prepared remarks made last month to Congress, Pittman admitted that the department had "failed to meet its own high standards" and did not take the necessary steps to address the "strong potential for violence."

She said: "By January 4, the Department knew that the January 6 event would not be like any of the previous protests held in 2020. We knew that militia groups and white supremacist organizations would be attending. We also knew that some of these participants were intending to bring firearms and other weapons to the event. We knew that there was strong potential for violence and the Congress was the target."

However, neither Pittman nor any official from the various police departments in the nation's capital, nor any Pentagon official has explained the failure of the police and the military to protect the Capitol building from the fascist mob assembled and incited by ex-President Trump and his Republican accomplices. There was no serious police presence at the Capitol when the siege began, and it took hours for Trump's hand-picked Pentagon officials to approve the dispatch of National Guard troops.

The Democratic Party conducted its impeachment and Senate trial of Trump in a manner guaranteed to cover up the role of Republican lawmakers, former Vice President Pence, and the military and police in aiding and abetting the mob. The Democrats also covered up the political aims of the insurrection—the outcome of a conspiracy to prevent the certification of the Electoral College vote and enable Trump to remain in power as dictator.

Now, within days of the Senate acquittal of Trump, the media and the Democrats have dropped any reference to the unprecedented attack on the Constitution and democratic rights.

In response to Pittman's testimony, US Capitol Police union chair Gus Papathanasiou wrote in a statement last month that "this discourse that the entire executive team (former Chief Sund, now Acting Chief Pittman, and Assistant Chief Thomas) knew what was coming but did not better prepare us for potential violence, including the possible use of firearms against us, is unconscionable."

Press reports on those who have been charged in the January 6 attack reveal that a substantial number are current or former police or active or former members of the military, many of whom are linked to far-right militias such as the Oath Keepers, the Proud Boys and the III Percenters.

Unnamed police have reported seeing people with military or law enforcement credentials flashing their identification to gain passage through police lines.

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Major media outlets have reported that at least 30 police or law enforcement officers have been confirmed as participants in the siege on the Capitol. An ongoing tally by the *Appeal* has catalogued media reports citing at least 40 police participants.

In a recent interview in the *Los Angeles Times*, Georgetown University Associate Law Professor Vida Johnson commented on a 2019 paper in which she found "white supremacist ideology" to be prevalent in police departments across the country. Johnson's research documented "scandals in over 100 different police departments, in over 40 different states, in which individual police officers have sent overtly racist emails, texts or made racist comments via social media."

A recent example of such activity was the sharing of a vile image mocking the police murder of George Floyd by Los Angeles Police Department officers.

Within the last five years, police and other law enforcement agencies in Virginia, Florida, Nebraska, Louisiana, Michigan and Texas have been forced to fire officers for belonging to the Ku Klux Klan.

Last year, the student newspaper, the *Manual RedEye*, uncovered a Kentucky State Police cadet training presentation that approvingly cited Adolf Hitler and Confederate General Robert E. Lee and taught cadets to be "ruthless killers." Subsequent reporting by the *Louisville Courier-Journal* found that some of the violent images from the slideshow had been in use by the police training academy since 1998.

In Oklahoma, a petition seeking the removal of Canadian County Sheriff Chris West has garnered more than 3,000 signatures. West has confirmed that he marched on the Capitol on January 6 but denies storming the building. The current president of the National Sheriffs' Association, David Mahoney, in an interview with the *New York Times* admitted that he passed on information to the FBI that West had made a "celebratory telephone call" from inside the Capitol.

In his role as sheriff, West has refused to enforce a mask mandate and has commissioned a civilian "posse" to "maintain order" at public demonstrations. He has agreed to detain immigrants on behalf of ICE and attended the 2019 Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) conference in Washington DC.

The elevation of far-right sheriffs continues in Michigan, where less than six months ago Governor Gretchen Whitmer was the target of a kidnapping and assassination plot in which some of the accused militia members freely associated and shared a stage with Barry County Sheriff Dar Leaf.

Leaf is a leading member of the fascistic Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association. A frequent featured speaker at the group's annual convention, Leaf spoke at the last conference, which took place on September 30. In his speech, Leaf railed against "activist judges" and stated that the three branches of government were "biblical" in origin.

Following the November election, Leaf parroted Trump's lying claims that the election had been stolen and filed a lawsuit against Whitmer, the state Board of Canvassers and Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, claiming to have evidence of "massive election fraud." The lawsuit was dismissed by US District Judge Robert Jonker the day after it was filed.

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