

# Capitol Police suspend officer after anti-Semitic book discovered at Capitol Hill security checkpoint

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On Sunday, Zach Fisch, the chief of staff for New York Democratic Representative Mondaire Jones, discovered a copy of the notorious anti-Semitic propaganda screed, “Protocols of the Elders of Zion,” on the desk of a Capitol Police officer.

On Monday evening, acting Capitol Police Chief Yogananda Pittman released a statement confirming the suspension of an unnamed police officer Monday evening, pending an investigation, “after anti-Semitic reading material was discovered near his work area on Sunday.”

Pittman confirmed in congressional testimony last month that 35 Capitol police officers were being investigated for their actions during the January 6 fascistic insurrection.

Fisch, who is Jewish, said he was “horrified” after discovering, in his words, a “tattered printout” that was “over two years old” sitting “in plain sight” at the security checkpoint.

On Twitter, Fisch posed multiple pertinent questions: “Why did that officer feel comfortable leaving this out in the open? This printout was tattered, over two years old. Had it been passed around? How many other USCP officers share these beliefs?”

Fisch also noted that there were not an insignificant number of Capitol Police officers on January 6 who were “indifferent to—and even accommodating of—white supremacist insurrectionists, some of whom wore Camp Auschwitz t-shirts.”

Two other developments underscore the close relationship between far-right and fascistic groups, including the Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers, and the police and military.

## Fresno cop suspended after ties to fascistic groups exposed

On Sunday, Fresno, California, Police Chief Paco Balderrama announced an internal affairs investigation and placed Fresno cop and admitted Proud Boys member Rick Fitzgerald on leave after footage emerged of Fitzgerald at a protest the previous Sunday.

Fitzgerald was positively identified online as a cop via his tattoos by anti-fascists who compared pictures of a man identified as “Rick” claiming to be part of a group called “Sons of 76” at the protest to a Proud Boy who was photographed last November in Sacramento during a “Stop the Steal” protest.

Fitzgerald has confirmed that he was a recent member of the Proud Boys, but said he left the group in order to start the “Sons of 76.” Speaking of the Proud Boys, Fitzgerald said he did not “disparage them and what they do,” and encouraged others to join them or the “III Percenters,” another fascist group. He said he was no longer a member of the Proud Boys because he wanted to do something, “a little more proactive in the community.”

The *Fresno Bee* reported that Fitzgerald said in a podcast he hosted, in which he goes by the moniker “Sheepdog,” that he had been a Proud Boy for “about a year and reached the third degree and leadership level of membership before he left.”

In the same podcast, recorded the day after the siege on the Capitol, Fitzgerald admitted he got “a little giddy inside” seeing politicians “hiding behind walls and scared and running in their bunkers because that’s what needs to happen.”

In a now-deleted Instagram post, Fitzgerald posted a picture of himself holding a shotgun with a Punisher-style

skull mask with the caption “sh\*t is a lot easier when you can kill people.”

Fitzgerald was one of eight officers who shot and killed 23-year-old Rod Fironi, a student at Fresno Pacific University, in October 2010. While Fironi was holding a gun when police encountered him, he never fired the weapon. After allegedly refusing to drop the weapon, Fitzgerald and seven other officers discharged 63 rounds into Fironi, killing him. None of the officers were ever disciplined for their actions.

### **Prosecutors argue neo-Nazi Army Reservist should remain imprisoned**

Federal prosecutors revealed in court documents released March 12 the results of a recent Naval Criminal Investigative Service investigation into the activity of a previously arrested Capitol insurrectionist, Navy federal contractor and now former Army Reservist, Sgt. Timothy Hale-Cusanelli.

Prosecutors are seeking to keep Hale-Cusanelli in pretrial detention due to the risk that he will “obstruct or attempt to obstruct justice, or threaten, injure, or intimidate, or attempt to threaten, injure, or intimidate, a prospective witness.”

Hale-Cusanelli was arrested in January and is facing seven criminal charges for his actions at the Capitol on January 6, which include obstructing congressional proceedings, civil disorder and disorderly conduct.

According to the Army, up until this month, Hale-Cusanelli, who enlisted in 2009, served in the 174th Infantry Brigade out of Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in New Jersey. In his civilian job, he worked as a security contractor at the Naval Weapons Station Earle where he held a “secret” security clearance, and as federal prosecutors previously noted, had access to a “variety of munitions.”

During their investigation, NCIS found that out of 44 interviews conducted with co-workers of Hale-Cusanelli, 34 agreed that Hale-Cusanelli held “extremist or radical views pertaining to the Jewish People, minorities and women.”

Hale-Cusanelli was very open with his Nazi affinities, showing up to work at the Weapons Stations Earle last year, according to one of his supervisor, donning a “Hitler mustache,” which police later discovered selfies of on his

phone. Copies of *Mein Kampf* and *The Turner Diaries* were found during a search of Hale-Cusanelli’s residence.

Investigators also cited a YouTube channel Hale-Cusanelli had in which he openly broadcasted his fascist, anti-Semitic views: “You know, New Jersey will recover from the coronavirus, but it will not recover from the Hasidic Jewish invasion,” he declared.

The NCIS report notes that one Navy petty officer said that Hale-Cusanelli, “talked constantly about Jewish people and remembered [him] saying ‘Hitler should have finished the job.’”

One Navy seaman recalled hearing Hale-Cusanelli say, “Babies born with any deformities or disabilities should be shot in the forehead,” while another petty officer heard Hale-Cusanelli refer to black people as “sh\*t skinned minorities.”

That someone felt comfortable enough to air such reactionary trash in front of dozens of co-workers speaks to the fascistic culture endemic to police departments and military units across the US and internationally.

One of his co-workers, Sgt. John Getz, submitted a letter in support of Hale-Cusanelli’s release. In his letter, Getz said he was “appalled at how [Hale-Cusanelli] was slandered in the press in regards to him being a ‘white supremacist.’”

This is despite Getz himself admitting to NCIS investigators after submitting the letter that Hale-Cusanelli would “walk up to new people and ask ‘You’re not Jewish are you?’” Getz described Hale-Cusanelli’s demeanor to prosecutors when he interrogated co-workers on their religion as “joking but not.”

Hale-Cusanelli had been reported multiple times to the local authorities, according to Avi Schnall, an advocate for the Orthodox Jewish community of New Jersey. Schnall said in an interview with the PBS *Newshour* program that Hale-Cusanelli frequently targeted members of the community in his social media rants.

Schnall said that Hale-Cusanelli’s comments “were reported to different law enforcement agencies, the prosecutor’s office. He was reported to the attorney general’s office. I think I think they dropped the ball on it.”



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