

Republicans plan fascist rally on September 18 in Washington D.C. to back jailed January 6 insurrectionists

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10 September 2021

Former Trump campaign official and executive director of Look Ahead America, Matt Braynard, is organizing a fascist rally in defense of the insurrectionists charged in the attack on the US Capitol on January 6.

The “Justice for J6” event was announced on July 31. While speakers have yet to be finalized, the event is expected to draw Republican Party officials and far-right supporters of Donald Trump, including fascist militia members who spearheaded the attack on the Capitol in an attempt to overturn the Electoral College victory of Joe Biden.

Referring to the event set for September 18, Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi told the press on Wednesday, “What happened on January 6 was such an assault on this beautiful Capitol. And now these people are coming back to praise the people who were out to kill members of Congress.”

In response to a query about planned security measures, Pelosi said “there are some briefings going on at the appropriating level” involving the House Administration Committee. Multiple outlets have reported that Pelosi has invited Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy for a security briefing with recently installed US Capitol Police Chief Tom Manger on Monday.

The *Hill* reported Wednesday that security fencing, which was installed following Trump’s attempted coup and remained standing for months, would be set up again ahead of the rally. An anonymous D.C. law enforcement source told CNN in August that the Metropolitan Police would be fully activated for the Saturday rally, including the deployment of additional

Civil Disturbance Units on a stand-by basis.

The organizer of the rally, Braynard, is a long-time Republican operative. He joined the Republican National Committee in 1996 and has worked for hundreds of Republican campaigns, including arch-conservative Pat Buchanan’s failed 1996 presidential run.

Braynard, along with the majority of elected Republican officials, have characterized those charged and imprisoned in connection with the coup attempt as “political prisoners” targeted by the FBI and police for exercising their First Amendment rights on January 6.

In a July interview with former Trump White House adviser and Breitbart News editor Steve Bannon, Braynard said of the September rally: “We are going back to the Capitol, right where it started, on September 18, and we are going to push back against the phony narrative that there was an insurrection.”

Braynard has previously held rallies outside federal courthouses and the D.C. Correctional Center in support of militia members currently being detained. Republican lawmakers such as Marjorie Taylor Greene (Georgia), Matt Gaetz (Florida), Paul Gosar (Arizona) and Louie Gohmert (Texas) have spoken at such events. While it does not appear at this time that Greene and Gaetz will speak at Saturday’s event, Gosar and Gohmert have yet to comment publicly.

Some 37 members of the Proud Boys have been indicted for their role on January 6, but the group is not expected to attend the September 18 event en masse. It was revealed earlier this year that the head of the Proud Boys, Henry “Enrique” Tarrio, was an FBI informant.

Tarrio will not be in attendance at the rally, having turned himself in this week to begin a five-month jail

sentence. In July, Tarrio pled guilty to one count of destruction of property and one count of attempted possession of a large-capacity ammunition feeding device. As part of the plea deal, Tarrio admitted to burning a Black Lives Matter banner he had stolen from a D.C. church during a December 12, 2020, far-right rally backing Trump's claims of a "stolen election."

Prior to turning himself, Tarrio claimed he was simply a "free speech activist," who was unfairly "punished" for "engaging in constitutionally protected free speech activities."

The D.C. Metropolitan Police, US Park Police and US Capitol Police have announced plans for stepped up security measures on the day of the event. An internal Capitol Police memo shared with CNN this week warned of an increase in "online chatter" in support of the rally after an interview with Capitol Police officer Lt. Michael Byrd aired in late August. Byrd was cleared of any wrongdoing early this year in the fatal shooting of Q-Anon adherent and Air Force veteran Ashli Babbitt, who was trying to break into the House chamber on January 6.

In the interview with NBC's Lester Holt, Byrd defended his actions, telling Holt: "I know that day I saved countless lives." Refuting Republican characterizations of the attempted coup as a "normal tourist visit," Byrd said, "I know members of Congress, as well as my fellow officers and staff, were in jeopardy and in serious danger." Byrd added that his decision to shoot Babbitt was "a last resort."

"I tried to wait as long as I could," he recalled. "I hoped and prayed no one tried to enter through those doors. But their failure to comply required me to take the appropriate action to save the lives of members of Congress and myself and my fellow officers."

On Tuesday, a series of internal US Park Police emails were released revealing that Park Police had seized multiple weapons on January 6, including rifles and handguns. The emails revealed that at least 10 arrests were made for "simple assault and weapons possession" by 9:35 a.m. on the morning of the attack.

The emails were obtained by NBC4 Washington through a Freedom of Information Act request. They show that far from lacking intelligence, the police were actively monitoring the Proud Boys group that spearheaded the attack on the Capitol. NBC reported

that one Park Police intelligence branch commander noted, "We are monitoring the group's movement through the city."

Another email revealed that the FBI was also actively monitoring the attack, passing along a warning to a US Park Police detective that read: "Per US Capitol Police, a congressional staffer was at the Hyatt Regency Hotel this morning and overheard an individual wearing fatigues state, 'We are going to storm the FBI at 2 p.m.'"

Prior to his interview, Byrd's name had been circling on right-wing message boards for months. The confirmation that Byrd, an African-American, shot Babbitt has incited white supremacists and neo-Nazis, some of whom are expected to travel to D.C. on September 18.

Babbitt has been held up by fascistic Republicans as a martyr. Lead "Stop the Steal" organizer, Republican Representative Paul Gosar (Arizona), has claimed in congressional hearings that Babbitt was "executed." Trump, channeling Hitler's promotion of Nazi "martyr" Horst Wessel, has described Babbitt as an "innocent, wonderful, incredible woman."

The "online chatter" cited in the internal Capitol Police report includes calls to re-brand the September 18 event as the "Justice for Ashli Babbitt" rally. According to CNN, the report also warns that some right-wing elements are discussing "violence against Jewish centers and liberal churches while law enforcement is distracted that day."



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