

White House logs omit nearly eight hours of Trump calls during January 6 coup

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Official White House phone logs turned over to the House Select Committee investigating the January 6, 2021, attack on Congress have revealed a nearly eight-hour gap in the record of calls made by or to President Donald Trump. During virtually the entire time the US Capitol was under attack by far-right Trump supporters and fascist militia elements, there is no record of Trump making a single phone call, despite previous reports that he was in contact with multiple Republican politicians and political operatives throughout the day.

The White House phone logs were turned over to the select committee earlier this year after the Supreme Court, in an 8–1 decision with arch-conservative Justice Clarence Thomas being the lone dissenter, rejected Trump’s claims of “executive privilege” over the records. The records were initially reported on Tuesday by Bob Woodward of the *Washington Post* and Robert Costa, a former *Post* reporter now at CBS News, and verified by reporters for the *New York Times*. The logs show that an unexplained gap of 7 hours and 37 minutes on January 6, 2021, from 11:17 a.m. through 6:54 p.m.

The fact that the official White House call logs, which are supposed to be objective records of the actions of government officials, show not a single phone call by the president during the attack on the Capitol by his supporters, seeking to capture lawmakers and delay the certification of the electoral college vote, has no innocent explanation. The scale of the omission or erasure is unprecedented, eclipsing the infamous 18.5 minute gap uncovered in the Richard Nixon White House tape recordings during the Watergate scandal.

While the records, some 11 pages, do not show Trump talking to anyone during the entire course of the insurrection, the records do show Trump at other times constantly on the phone with his political allies, feverishly working to overturn the election of Biden and with it democratic forms of rule in the United States.

The gap in the records is made even more conspicuous given the volume of calls Trump made the morning of January 6 to his co-conspirators. Among those Trump talked to prior to speaking at the “Stop the Steal” rally outside the White House which preceded the attack on the Capitol include former advisor Steve Bannon (8:37 a.m.), his personal coup lawyer Rudy Giuliani (8:42 a.m., 9:41 a.m.), White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows (9:03 a.m.), Ohio Rep. Jim Jordan (9:24 a.m.), Missouri Sen. Josh Hawley (9:39 a.m.), fascist White House adviser Stephen Miller (9:15 a.m.) and Georgia Sen. David Perdue (11:04 a.m.). The last call on the log is listed as an “unidentified person” at 11:17 a.m., believed to have been Georgia Sen. Kelly Loeffler.

Hawley, who is listed on the records in the evening as well, was the first US senator to object to certifying the 2020 election for Biden. Hawley and over 135 other Republicans continued to object to the certification of Biden, even after the attack on the Capitol, which caused at least five deaths.

In their report for the *Post*, Woodward and Costa write that Bannon spoke with Trump twice the morning of the attempted coup, during which “Bannon urged Trump to continue to pressure [Vice President Mike] Pence to block congressional certification of Joe Biden’s victory ... according to people familiar with the exchange.”

Previous public reporting has established Trump’s penchant for using non-government phones to avoid scrutiny, including frequently using the phones of Secret Service agents or of advisers like Scavino to make and receive phone calls.

The frequent use of “burner phones” by high-level Trump administration officials was further exposed in a recent *Rolling Stone* interview with a mid-level pro-Trump operative, Scott Johnston, formerly of Women for America First (WFAF). WFAF sponsored the rally at the Ellipse on January 6 and Johnston, who has testified

before the select committee, claimed that rally organizers Amy and Kylie Kremer were “constantly” using “burner phones ... to talk about” plans for the January 6 rally in Washington D.C.

Johnston said that he knew the organizers used non-traceable burner phones to talk with Trump’s inner circle, including Eric Trump, his wife Lara Trump, Mark Meadows and Katrina Pierson, a Trump surrogate. Johnston knew they were using the non-traceable phones because, he said, “I’m the one that bought the burner phones.”

In a pathetic statement Tuesday, Trump claimed to have “no idea what a burner phone is, to the best of my knowledge I have never even heard the term.” Actually, of course, Trump learned much of his political style in the school of the construction industry Mafia, where burner phones are just as essential as knee-breaking, tire chains and concrete blocks.

In another statement on March 29, Trump doubled down on the legitimacy of his attempted coup: “While they say that January 6 was an ‘attempted coup,’ which it was not, they should add that the Election on November 3 was the actual coup ... Our country is paying a big price for that Rigged Election!”

While Trump claims to have never heard of a burner phone, there is no doubt the White House logs have been manipulated to shield his criminality. On Wednesday the *Guardian* reported that the gap is not just a case of Trump using non-traceable phones to hide his illegal coup plotting, instead it appears at least one phone call, placed at 2:26 p.m. by Trump to Utah Sen. Mike Lee, has been deleted from the records.

The *Guardian* notes that Trump called Lee, “with a number recorded as 202–395–0000, a placeholder number that shows up when a call is incoming from a number of White House department phones, the sources said.”

This specific call by Trump is notable because it was accidental: Trump had been trying to reach Alabama Sen. Tommy Tuberville. Lee has confirmed that upon receiving the call from Trump, he passed the phone to Tuberville, who spoke to Trump for less than 10 minutes. While Tuberville has never confirmed all the details of the call, he has admitted that Trump inquired about the whereabouts of Pence.

That this call, it appears, has been purposefully deleted is just the latest example of Trump wantonly violating the Presidential Records Act. Last month it was revealed that throughout Trump’s presidency and after the coup, Trump and his advisers had a routine of destroying and

burning official government records. After Trump left the White House, he even stowed away over a dozen boxes of sensitive files at his resort compound Mar-a-Lago, which were only recently recovered, some of them hastily taped back together.

Despite the obvious criminality and the mountain of evidence, the Department of Justice has yet to announce even an investigation into Trump’s brazen and repeated violations of the Records Act.

Other known calls involving Trump that were not recorded on the official log include at least one call with former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, a call with Pence at 11:20 a.m. and at least one call with House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, during which Trump sided with his fascist foot-soldiers, telling McCarthy that they were apparently “more upset of the election than you are.”

After the gap, the next phone call recorded on the logs is at 7:01 p.m. between Trump and White House Counsel Pat Cipollone. Trump continued to make phone calls to his advisers and coup lawyers, including Dan Scavino, Cleta Mitchell, Rudy Giuliani and Jason Miller.

Despite not showing any phone calls for nearly 8 hours, part of which could be explained by the fact that Trump was speaking at the Ellipse urging his far-right supporters to go to the “Capitol” and “fight like hell,” the logs show that at 1:21 p.m. Trump met with the White House valet, indicating that he had returned to the Oval Office.

The next entry in the log is nearly three hours later, at 4:03 p.m. The log states that Trump went to the Rose Garden and at 4:07 p.m. He “participated in a videotaping session of a message to supporters” (those who were fighting the police inside the building) asking them to “peacefully” halt their attack on the Capitol.

At 4:07 p.m. the log states Trump returned to the Oval Office, where he apparently did nothing before going to the “Second Floor Residence” at 6:27 p.m.



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