

January 6 Committee releases video of Republican lawmaker leading “reconnaissance” tour of Capitol complex on eve of coup

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On Wednesday, the House Select Committee charged with investigating the January 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol released a video showing Georgia Republican Representative Barry Loudermilk escorting a group of Trump supporters on a multi-hour tour through the Capitol office buildings the day before the fascist assault on Congress.

The US Capitol Police surveillance video is embedded in a letter to Loudermilk, released by the committee to the public, renewing the committee’s request that he agree to be interviewed on the tour he conducted, a request the congressman has rejected.

Noting that the Capitol complex was closed to public tours on January 5, 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions, the letter, signed by committee chair Rep. Bennie Thompson, states that at least one of those being escorted by Loudermilk is seen wearing a red “Make America Great Again” hat. According to the letter, Loudermilk led the group into “the Rayburn, Longworth, and Cannon House office buildings, as well as the entrances to tunnels leading to the U.S. Capitol.”

In the letter, Thompson states that individuals on the tour “photographed and recorded areas of the complex not typically of interest to tourists, including hallways, staircases and security checkpoints.”

Within a week of the attack on Congress, 34 Democratic lawmakers sent a letter to the Capitol Police demanding an investigation into Republican members of Congress they accused of leading “reconnaissance” tours prior to the attack on the Capitol. The Republican Party, which earlier this year officially defended the violent fascist attack on the

Capitol as “legitimate political discourse,” has repeatedly denied that any such tours took place.

The committee also released video footage of the January 6 assault on the Capitol that includes audio of a member of the mob declaring his intention to do violence to Democratic lawmakers, including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Representatives Jerrold Nadler and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer. The insurrectionist said:

They got it surrounded. It’s all the way up there on the hill, and it’s all the way around, and they’re coming in, coming in like white on rice for Pelosi, Nadler, even you, AOC. We’re coming to take you out and pull you out by your hairs. ... When I get done with you, you’re going to need a shine on top that bald head.

Thompson’s letter states that the same individual appears in the surveillance tape of Loudermilk’s tour, taking suspicious photographs of the Capitol complex. The video released by the committee further shows another pro-Trump insurrectionist marching on the Capitol and carrying an American flag with a sharp point, which he makes clear he plans to use as a weapon. The committee asserts that this segment was filmed by the same participant in Loudermilk’s January 5 tour.

The committee has not released the name of this individual, but CNN claims he has already been interviewed by the committee.

From the photographs and video released by the committee, there is no doubt that Loudermilk, one of 140 House Republicans who voted to overturn the election of Joe Biden following the failed coup, led a multihour-long private tour of Trump-aligned “Stop the Steal” elements the day before the attack on the Capitol.

The video explodes previous statements given by Loudermilk and other Republicans, such as Illinois Republican Rep. Rodney Davis, that Democratic accusations of Republicans leading “reconnaissance tours” were “baseless.”

In a letter sent earlier this year to the Capitol Police Board, Loudermilk wrote that there were “no tours, no large groups, no one with MAGA hats on.” All three things are clearly seen in the video released by the committee, which it, and the police, have no doubt been in possession of for over a year.

Notably, all three of the buildings that Loudermilk’s “tourists” visited on January 5 were buildings named as targets for occupation by the Proud Boys in their plan of attack, called “1776 Returns.” The document, which has previously been referenced in court filings, was released on Wednesday by a lawyer for indicted Proud Boy Zachary Rehl, one of five members of the far-right militia group charged with “seditious conspiracy” in connection with Trump’s coup.

In the document, which calls on “Patriots” to occupy a list of “Targeted Buildings” on January 6 in order to delay the Electoral College certification, the three buildings visited by Loudermilk’s group are circled. Other buildings targeted by the Proud Boys include the Russell, Hart and Dirksen Senate office buildings, the Supreme Court and CNN.

In addition to discrediting claims made by Loudermilk and Davis, the release of the footage disputes a letter

sent Monday by U.S. Capitol Police Chief Tom Manger to Davis in which Manger states that none of the activities caught on the security footage “we observed as suspicious.”

Manger admitted that the Capitol Police Board reviewed footage of “Loudermilk’s group of constituents,” which grew to “15 people,” touring the various buildings for over two hours, sometimes without Loudermilk, but then claimed, improbably, that none of this was suspicious.

The Democrats, who control the January 6 Committee, have done their best to downplay the undeniable fact that the U.S. Capitol Police command left the Capitol virtually undefended on January 6, 2021, despite ample intelligence pointing to a violent attack on the joint session of Congress tasked with formally certifying the result of the presidential election.

Loudermilk, an Air Force veteran, was first elected as chairman of the Bartow County, Georgia Republican Party in 2001 and has been a member of Congress since January 2015, six months before Trump announced he was running for president.

The fact that Loudermilk, who is not among the most prominent and openly fascist supporters of Trump in the Republican Party, was evidently giving tours to Trump’s Brownshirts the day before the attack explodes the narrative put forth by the House Select Committee that “normal” Republicans opposed Trump’s coup plot and only a faction of “crazies” supported it.



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