

Following records request from Inspector General

US Secret Service deleted text messages sent between January 5-6, 2021

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On July 13, 2022 the Department of Homeland Security Inspector General (IG) sent a letter to the Senate and House Committee on Homeland Security revealing that after requesting text messages sent by U.S. Secret Service agents between January 5 and 6, 2021 “many ... were erased as part of a device-replacement program.”

In his letter, Inspector General Joseph Cuffari noted that the U.S. Secret Service (USSS) deliberately “erased those text messages *after* OIG (Office of Inspector General) requested records of electronic communication from the USSS, as part of our evaluation of events at the Capitol on January 6.”

Cuffari added that “DHS personnel have repeatedly told OIG inspectors that they were not permitted to provide records directly to OIG and that such records had to first undergo review by DHS attorneys. This review led to weeks-long delays in OIG obtaining records and created confusion over whether all records had been produced.”

In a statement Thursday evening, chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee and the January 6 House Select Committee Bennie Thompson (Democratic-Mississippi) said that the Homeland Security Committee “will be briefed about this extraordinarily troubling destruction of records and respond accordingly.”

The stunning revelation that the USSS deleted, no doubt incriminating, text messages after they were requested by the OIG, once again refutes lies proffered by ex-President Donald Trump, his Republican co-conspirators and complacent elements in the upper middle class and pseudo-left that the January 6 coup was simply a “spontaneous riot” or “First Amendment demonstration” that spiraled out of control.

The fact that the Secret Service is deleting records which show their involvement in the coup further demolishes claims that Trump’s attempts to stay in power were the result of him and a few “crazies” in the Republican Party, such as lawyers Rudy Giuliani and Sidney Powell. Both capitalist parties and the entire state were complicit in the coup, either through deliberate actions taken in furtherance of its success, or through their silence in the

days and hours leading to the attack.

That Trump and his Republican co-conspirators were planning a coup was not only well known by the *World Socialist Web Site* prior to January 6 but the entire capitalist state, which is why it nearly succeeded. The coup had the support of the majority of the Republican Party and significant elements in the police, intelligence and military apparatus, including the Secret Service, an agency that not only knows where many of the “bodies are buried” but put them there in the first place.

In the 18 months since the attack on the Capitol, there has been a slow drip of information regarding the activities of the Secret Service before, during and after the coup. What is known is that Vice President Mike Pence was a prime target for the fascistic mob on January 6, after he refused Trump’s request to unilaterally reject electors from states Trump lost.

That Pence and the Secret Service knew he was in physical danger for refusing Trump’s unconstitutional request was revealed last month in a report by the *New York Times*. The *Times*, citing statements from Pence’s Chief of Staff Marc Short, revealed that on January 5, one of the days the Secret Service deleted its texts, Short contacted the Secret Service agent in charge of Pence’s security and warned him that Trump was “going to turn publicly against” Pence which would result in a “security risk” to the Vice President.

This security risk became a reality the next day after Trump tweeted at 2:24 p.m. that: “Mike Pence didn’t have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution, giving States a chance to certify a corrected set of facts, not the fraudulent or inaccurate ones which they were asked to previously certify. USA demands the truth!”

In the book *I Alone Can Fix It: Donald J. Trump’s Catastrophic Final Year*, reporters for the *Washington Post* Philip Rucker and Carol D. Leonnig wrote that 11 minutes prior to Trump’s tweet, Pence was evacuated by Secret Service agents and the certification was suspended—for the first time in US history.

Rucker and Leonnig reported that the Secret Service agents first took Pence to his second-floor ceremonial office, at which point Pence's lead agent, Tim Giebels, twice asked Pence to leave the Capitol.

Pence allegedly told Giebels, "I'm not leaving the Capitol," explaining to him that the last thing he wanted the cameras to see was his 20-car motorcade fleeing the Capitol.

Rucker and Leonnig wrote that the third time Giebels requested Pence to leave, "it was more of an order than a request. 'They're in the building,' Giebels said. 'The room you're in is not secure. There are glass windows. I need to move you. We're going.'"

The Select Committee has revealed that as Pence was being evacuated to the basement of the Capitol, Trump's fascistic mob came within 40 feet of the Vice President. Once Pence was evacuated to the basement of the Capitol, an armored limousine was waiting to take him away.

"I'm not getting in the car, Tim," Pence told the Secret Service agent, possibly suspecting that Trump-aligned elements within the Secret Service had planned to kidnap him so he would not be able to return to the Capitol to complete the Electoral College certification.

Without Pence at the Capitol to oversee the counting of the votes as prescribed by the Electoral Count Act, Republicans would have had the pretext needed to delay the certification, in the process creating a constitutional crisis that would allow Trump's allies on the Supreme Court, such as Justices Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas, to provide Trump with a pseudo-legal justification to overturn the election.

The existence of the inspector general's letter was first made public by *Intercept* reporter Ken Klippenstein. In his report on the letter, Klippenstein cited a "congressional official not authorized to speak publicly" on the pivotal role the Secret Service played on January 6 and how close Trump came to succeeding.

"People need to understand that if Pence had listened to the Secret Service and fled the Capitol, this could have turned out a whole lot worse," the anonymous official told Klippenstein. "It could've been a successful coup, not just an attempted one," the official added.

There is no question that high-level elements in the Secret Service, including Anthony Ornato, a former Secret Service agent who became deputy White House chief of staff for operations in 2019, were deeply involved in Trump's efforts to stay in power. As chief of staff for operations, Ornato was charged with ensuring the continuity of government and coordinating Trump's movements and security outside the White House.

As of this writing, Ornato is still the assistant director of the United States Secret Service Office of Training.

In damning testimony provided to the committee last month, Cassidy Hutchinson, a former top aide to Trump White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows, recalled that on January 6, the Secret Service was well aware prior to Trump's speech at the Ellipse that several in the crowd were armed with rifles and pistols. Hutchinson recalled that Trump was "enraged" that the Secret Service had set up magnetometers to screen for weapons, preventing his armed supporters from entering the restricted zone.

Hutchinson recalled hearing Trump say: "I don't f...ing care that they have weapons. They're not here to hurt me. Take the f...ing mags away."

She also revealed that Trump planned to march on the Capitol with his mob after his speech. However, the Secret Service could not guarantee his safety and refused to drive Trump to the Capitol, sending the would-be dictator into a rage. Hutchinson recalled hearing from a Secret Service agent inside Trump's vehicle that he tried to grab the steering wheel of the vehicle and drive it to the Capitol. Hutchinson said the agent recalled Trump reaching for his throat after he tried to prevent Trump from grabbing the wheel.

Hutchinson said she heard this recounting from the agent himself in the presence of Ornato, who has disputed this testimony but not on the record.

Joining Ornato in attacking Hutchinson's credibility was Trump. In an interview Wednesday on Real America News, Trump called Hutchinson a "psycho girl."

Insinuating that it was preposterous that he would ever lose his temper at a Secret Service agent for not going along with his putsch, Trump said: "I get along with these guys so well. And they were great to say it never happened. And it never happened."



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