



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on February 18, 2022

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## “Armed Insurrection”?

“This wasn’t a group of tourists. This was an armed insurrection.”

— President Joe Biden

“The president of the United States [Donald Trump] incited this insurrection, this armed rebellion against our common country. He must go. He is a clear and present danger to the nation that we all love.”

— House Speaker Nancy Pelosi

“Every American must be assured that no lie, conspiracy theory, or armed group of white supremacists has the power to impair the government they freely and fairly elected.”

— Representative Cori Bush (D-Mo.)

“Yesterday, an armed mob, at the behest of President Donald Trump, stormed the Capitol with guns, homemade bombs, and chemical weapons while the entire Congress gathered to certify the election results. This was an act of domestic terrorism and a grave assault on our democracy. We must move quickly to hold this President and his enablers, including those in Congress, accountable for these treasonous acts.”

— Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.)

“We saw what happened. It was a violent insurrection for the purpose of trying to prevent the peaceful transfer of power after a legitimately certified election, from one administration to the next. That’s what it was.”

— Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.)

Playing off the title of the 1970 anti-war film “Suppose They Gave a War and Nobody Came,” we might pose a similar thought experiment: “Suppose They Gave an Insurrection and Nobody Came Armed.” What might that look like? Well, we have some idea from the reality of what happened at the so-called Capitol Insurrection of January 6, 2021. A veritable tsunami of “news” stories, op-eds, and commentaries over the past year, along with highly publicized statements by politicians, have created a sea of misinformation, disinformation, and propaganda concerning that event.

While there are many words that could be used to accurately describe what occurred — melee, riot, fracas, clash, assault, attack, siege — President Trump’s political enemies have deliberately exaggerated and mischaracterized the violence of a small subset of the huge crowd that rallied to support him on January 6, 2021. His political enemies have deliberately and repeatedly used the term “armed” along with “sedition,” “rebellion,” “treason,” and “conspiracy.” The quotes we have posted above are a tiny fraction of the millions (literally) of similar examples that will come up on various internet searches regarding the January 6 riot.



AP Images



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The quote by Representative Schakowsky claiming that “an armed mob, at the behest of President Donald Trump, stormed the Capitol with guns, homemade bombs, and chemical weapons” is one of the most egregious examples of deliberate disinformation and propaganda. Aside from the unsupported claim that any of the violence that occurred at the Capitol was done “at the behest of President Donald Trump,” it is categorically false that it was carried out by an “armed mob” using guns and homemade bombs.

Let’s deal with the “armed” issue first. Although the Capitol Police and other law-enforcement personnel were armed, there has been zero evidence produced to show that a single firearm was carried or used by any of the protesters who entered the Capitol. In addition to the Capitol security-camera system, there were countless video cameras and smartphones taking images from all angles and covering virtually every minute of the Capitol breach and occupation. (The government says it has over 15,000 hours of video of the event.)

How many guns can be seen in any of the video or photo images? Zero.

How many of the hundreds of participants who have been arrested are charged with possessing a firearm inside the Capitol? Zero.

How many shots were fired by participants inside the Capitol? Zero.

The only firearm that was discharged was the one fired by Capitol Police Lieutenant Michael Byrd, which killed an unarmed woman, Ashli Babbitt, an Air Force veteran who served in Afghanistan and Iraq.

PolitiFact, [FactCheck.org](#), and the “fact checkers” for the Fake News industrial complex have attempted to save their false “armed insurrection” narrative by redefining “armed.” PolitiFact said “we know rioters brought knives, brass knuckles, a stun gun and other weapons.” PolitiFact continued, noting that “video plainly shows the mob using all manner of makeshift weapons to attack police and force their way in, including hockey sticks, flagpoles, fire extinguishers and a police shield stolen from an officer.”

Yes, we agree that virtually any object, from a paperclip to a BLM banner to an Antifa pipe wrench, can be made into a “makeshift weapon” to be used for deadly assault or destruction of property. And those Capitol invaders who used such “arms” and committed crimes, especially those who violently attacked police officers, should be prosecuted — whether they were actual Trump supporters or federal *agents provocateurs*. But an unruly mob armed with a few knives, a hockey stick, a fire extinguisher, and “makeshift weapons” does not an “armed insurrection” make.

We have searched the Department of Justice’s database of “Capitol Breach Cases” and found only five individuals charged with firearms offenses: Christopher Michael Alberts, Lonnie Leroy Coffman, Mark Sami Ibrahim, Guy Wesley Reffitt, and Cleveland Grover Meredith, Jr. Various media organizations have pointed to one or more of these cases as proof of their armed-insurrection thesis. In each of these cases, however, the firearms in question were located outside of the Capitol, in a vehicle or at a motel. Pretty thin cover for “armed insurrection.”

## **Tourists or Terrorists?**

Since Joe Biden brought it up (“This wasn’t a group of tourists. This was an armed insurrection.”), let’s



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take a look at the charge through the eyes of a liberal-left *New York Times* reporter. The *Times*, naturally, has been one of the most virulently anti-Trump media sources promoting the “armed insurrection” lie. Nevertheless, occasionally they trip up and belie themselves.

*New York Times* reporter Alan Feuer did this while being interviewed by Kevin Roose for the *Times*’ online program The Daily on May 17, 2021. Feuer noted that the majority of the 500 people who had been arrested at that time were totally peaceful, and many “were absolutely ushered in by the cops.” He divided the protesters into three “buckets,” the largest of which was the peaceful bucket.

“So you could kind of collect them into three main buckets,” Feuer said. “The first, which is probably most of the people who were at the Capitol that day and have been arrested, were people who went into the building. Sometimes they were absolutely ushered in by the cops. They walked in. They broke nothing. They hurt no one. They took some selfies. They did a livestream, and they walked out. There are a lot of those people.”

The second bucket included people who engaged violently with the Capitol Police and damaged property, and the third bucket included people charged with pre-planning the violence. Alan Feuer’s assessment of the peaceful “bucket” of January 6 protesters confirms what anyone can observe on numerous video postings on the internet: “MAGA Moms” and other citizens casually, peacefully strolling through the Capitol, exchanging friendly greetings with the Capitol Police, perhaps totally unaware of the violence and mayhem that had occurred earlier or in other parts of the building. For those of us who have been in the Capitol many times, this “bucket” of peaceful protesters looks little different from the tourists who throng the halls any other day of the year. And if that applies to the majority of those who “breached” the Capitol, it applies even more to the thousands who remained outside of the building, and even more to the many tens, if not hundreds, of thousands who attended the Ellipse rally and didn’t even come to the Capitol.



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