

The Honorable Barbara J. Rothstein

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT SEATTLE

10 PARLER, INC.,

11 Plaintiff,

12 v.

13 AMAZON WEB SERVICES, INC.,

14 Defendant.

Case No 2:21-cv-00031-BJR

15 DECLARATION OF AMBIKA K.
DORAN IN SUPPORT OF
AMAZON WEB SERVICES,
INC.'S OPPOSITION TO
PARLER'S MOTION FOR
TEMPORARY RESTRAINING
ORDER

1 I, Ambika Kumar Doran, declare:

2 1. I am a partner in the law firm Davis Wright Tremaine LLP, counsel for Defendant
3 Amazon Web Services, Inc. I make this declaration from personal knowledge, publicly available
4 databases and information, and records my firm keeps in the regular course of business, and I
5 could testify competently to the same. I make this declaration in support of Amazon Web
6 Services, Inc.'s Opposition to Parler's Motion for a Temporary Restraining Order.

7 2. Attached as **Exhibit A** is a true and correct copy of Parler's homepage from
8 October 10, 2020, retrieved from The Internet Archive on January 11, 2021.

9 3. Attached as **Exhibit B** is a true and correct copy of Parler's December 4, 2020
10 Community Guidelines.

11 4. The May 19, 2019 FoxNews interview with Parler CEO, John Matze, is available
12 at <https://www.foxnews.com/media/parler-john-matze-no-censorship-election> (statement at 2:02)
13 and attached as **Exhibit C**.

14 5. Attached as **Exhibit D** is a true and correct copy of a CNBC article published
15 June 27, 2020 and updated June 28, 2020, *Trump fans are flocking to the social media app*
16 *Parler—its CEO is begging liberals to join them*, available at <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/06/27/parler-ceo-wants-liberal-to-join-the-pro-trump-crowd-on-the-app.html>.

18 6. The November 5, 2020 KUSI News interview with Mr. Matze is available at
19 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=F8IcjsFHwc8> (statements at 4:48, 5:42) and
20 attached as **Exhibit E**.

21 7. Attached as **Exhibit F** is a true and correct copy of a January 6, 2021 New York
22 Times article, *The storming of Capitol Hill was organized on social media*, available at
23 <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/06/us/politics/protesters-storm-capitol-hill-building.html>.

24 8. Attached as **Exhibit G** is a true and correct copy of a January 8, 2021 Vox article,
25 *How Trump's internet built and broadcast the Capitol insurrection*, available at
26 <https://www.vox.com/recode/22221285/trump-online-capitol-riot-far-right-parler-twitter-facebook>.

1 9. Attached as **Exhibit H** is a true and correct copy of a January 7, 2021 ProPublica
2 article, *Capitol Rioters Planned for Weeks in Plain Sight. The Police Weren't Ready*, available at
3 <https://www.propublica.org/article/capitol-rioters-planned-for-weeks-in-plain-sight-the-police-werent-ready>.

5 10. Attached as **Exhibit I** is a true and correct copy of a January 10, 2021 New York
6 Magazine Intelligencer article, *Feds Arrest Pro-Trump Insurrectionists Around the Country*,
7 available at <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2021/01/capitol-riot-feds-round-up-pro-trump-insurrectionists.html>.

9 11. Attached as **Exhibit J** is a true and correct copy of Mr. Matze's January 9, 2021
10 statement regarding Parler's potential operational downtime.

11 12. Attached as **Exhibit K** is a true and correct copy of Mr. Matze's January 9, 2021
12 statement regarding Parler's preparation and other hosting options.

13 13. Attached as **Exhibit L** is a true and correct copy of a January 10, 2021 Guardian
14 article, '*Hang Mike Pence*': Twitter stops phrase trending after Capitol riot, available at
15 <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/10/hang-mike-pence-twitter-stops-phrase-trending-capitol-breach>.

17 14. Attached as **Exhibit M** is a true and correct copy of a January 11, 2021 Gab post
18 by Joseph A. Camp publishing my personal information, available at <https://gab.com/JoeyCamp2020/posts/105540970660256881>.

20 15. Attached as **Exhibit N** is a true and correct copy of a January 9, 2021 New York
21 Times article, *Amazon, Apple and Google Cut Off Parler, an App That Drew Trump Supporters*,
22 available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/09/technology/apple-google-parler.html>.

23 16. Attached as **Exhibit O** is a true and correct copy of the transcript of the January 7,
24 2021 New York Times podcast Sway, hosted by Kara Swisher, *If You Were on Parler, You Saw the Mob Coming*, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/07/opinion/sway-kara-swisher-john-matze.html?showTranscript=1>.

I declare under perjury of penalty that the foregoing is true and correct.

Signed at Mercer Island, Washington, this 12th day of January, 2021.

/s/ Ambika Kumar Doran

Ambika Kumar Doran

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on January 12, 2021, I electronically filed the foregoing with the Clerk of the Court using the CM/ECF system which will send notification of such filing to those attorneys of record registered with the CM/ECF system. All other parties (if any) shall be served in accordance with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure

DATED at Mercer Island, Washington this 12th day of January, 2021.

By s/Ambika Kumar Doran
Ambika Kumar Doran, WSBA # 38237

EXHIBIT A

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the world's town square

Speak freely and express yourself openly, without fear of being “deplatformed” for your views. Engage with real people, not bots. Parler is people and privacy-focused, and gives you the tools you need to curate your Parler experience.

Join Parler Today

Join today and start enjoying social media the way you always wanted it to be.

[create new account](#)

Already have an account?

[Log In](#)

Parler protects our community members'



rights and privacy. Parler is here to help people with varying life experiences, and from all walks of life communicate on a platform which treats them as equals.

Parler believes that people are entitled to security, privacy, and freedom of expression. All personal data is kept confidential, and never sold to third parties. Our concise Community Guidelines are based on fair and just legal precedent, and are enforced by a Community Jury.



The Parler community is built on trust. Our verification process helps to keep out bots, and encourages civil discourse. Take the next step in pursuing these important values by becoming a Verified Parler Citizen.



customize your experience

Follow your favorite public figures, brands, family and friends in your customized account feed. Curate and moderate your own feed, using the robust set of tools we put at your disposal.



moderate your own world

Customize what you see and who you interact with by filtering out sensitive material, bots (or accounts that identify as bots) -- or even particular keywords you'd rather not see in



receive weekly team updates

Parler takes the next step in transparency, giving users the option to sign up for regular updates including news, site announcements, and tips. We also ask you to share any concerns or

comments to your parleys. Whatever you'd rather not see on your profile or feed, we give you the tools you need to do your own "shadow-banning" — while still leaving everyone else free to decide for themselves what they wish to see on their profiles and feeds.

feedback you have to help make Parler better.

User Support	Inquiries	Careers	Legal
Please message @ParlerSupport on Parler. If you need assistance logging into your account, please email support@parler.com.	Submit media inquiries to media@parler.com. For CCPA inquiries, please click here.	Think you have what it takes to make the internet amazing again? Submit your resume to jobs@parler.com.	Privacy Community Guidelines Terms of Service

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EXHIBIT B

Community Guidelines

12/04/2020

Our Guidelines govern your relationship with Parler, your use of Parler, as well as your access to our services and products. By accessing Parler, you agree to these terms. These Guidelines are designed to enable productive, polite discourse among people with differing interests, life experiences, and viewpoints.

Our goal is to provide all community members with a welcoming, nonpartisan Public Square. While the First Amendment does not apply to private companies such as Parler, our mission is to create a social platform in the *spirit* of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

We prefer that removing community members or member-provided content be kept to the absolute minimum. We prefer to leave decisions about what is seen and who is heard to each individual. In no case will Parler decide what will content be removed or filtered, or whose account will be removed, on the basis of the opinion expressed within the content at issue. Parler's policies are, to use a well-known concept in First Amendment law, *viewpoint-neutral*.

We do not curate your feed; we do not pretend to be qualified to do so. We believe only you are qualified to curate your feed, and so we give you the tools you need to do it yourself. To that end, Parler offers a number of features—including the ability to mute or block other members, or to mute or block all comments containing terms of the member's choice—and we encourage you to use these tools whenever the content you would rather not encounter here, is not otherwise addressed by what follows.

At Parler, we're committed to continuous improvement toward fulfilling our mission. Accordingly, these Guidelines are subject to modification, unilaterally by Parler, at any time.

Principle #1:

Parler will not knowingly allow itself to be used as a tool for crime, civil torts, or other unlawful acts. We will remove reported member content that a reasonable and objective observer would believe constitutes or evidences

such activity. We may also remove the accounts of members who use our platform in this way.

Sometimes the law properly requires us to exclude content from our platform once it is reported to us or to our Community Jury—content we would make it a priority to exclude anyway. Obvious examples include: child sexual abuse material, content posted by or on behalf of terrorist organizations, intellectual property theft.

However, even when the law may not require us to flag or remove reported content, or to ban a member, we will nonetheless do so when we deem it necessary to prevent our services from being used by someone in the commission of a crime or civil tort—particularly when these are likely to interfere with our mission of providing a welcoming, nonpartisan Public Square. Examples include criminal solicitation, fraud, and nuisance.

Finally, while Parler allows the posting of some “Not Safe For Work” content, we provide a double-filter system to help ensure this content is viewed neither by minors nor by those who choose not to see it.

Principle #2:

Posting spam and using bots are nuisances and are not conducive to productive and polite discourse. In addition, it is unjust to our Influencers and creators, who have put time and effort into building their following and goodwill, and who deserve unfettered enjoyment of the effects of their hard work. The use of our mute and block features, by individual users, is often adequate to address problems with spam. But whenever it is not, and particularly when the behavior negatively affects the ability of those participating in our Influencer Network to monetize themselves, Parler will remove accounts of those who engage in this behavior.

A detailed discussion of the types of actions encompassed by these two principles is available here: <https://legal.parler.com/documents/Elaboration-on-Guidelines.pdf>

Reporting Violations

Parler relies upon its community members to report violations of these Guidelines. Read more about how it works here:

<https://legal.parler.com/documents/Parler-Community-Jury.pdf>

Last Updated: December 4, 2020

EXHIBIT D



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TECH

Trump fans are flocking to the social media app Parler — its CEO is begging liberals to join them

PUBLISHED SAT, JUN 27 2020 1:14 PM EDT | UPDATED SUN, JUN 28 2020 3:25 PM EDT



Ari Levy
@LEVYNEWS

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Republican politicians and conservative pundits have flocked to the app, in large part to protest what they say is unfair censorship by Twitter.

"If you can say it on the street of New York, you can say it on Parler," Matze said.



Parler CEO John Matze

EpochTimes

Jim Jordan, Elise Stefanik and [Nikki Haley](#) all have something in common, other than a strong affection towards President Trump.

The three Republican politicians joined social media app Parler this week, adding their profiles to a site that's emerged as the new digital stomping ground for anti-[Twitter](#) conservatives. Sen. [Ted Cruz](#) of Texas arrived earlier this month and Rep. Devin Nunes of California started in February, while Sen. [Rand Paul](#) of Kentucky has been a member since 2018, the year the app launched.

"It's about time y'all joined me on [@parler_app](#)," Paul tweeted on Wednesday. "What's taking the rest of you so long?!"

To be fair, Trump campaign manager Brad Parscale has also been on Parler since 2018.

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election campaign heats up. The Journal named Parler as a possible alternative.

Two days later, Parler was the top-ranked iPhone app in the news category, ahead of Twitter and Reddit, and 24th overall, just behind Venmo and WhatsApp, according to App Annie. User growth surged to 1.5 million from 1 million over the course of about a week, said [John Matze](#), Parler's 27-year-old founder and CEO.

"We're a community town square, an open town square, with no censorship," Matze said in an interview on Thursday, from his home in Las Vegas. "If you can say it on the street of New York, you can say it on Parler."

VIDEO 02:09

Twitter places public interest notice on Trump tweet for violating policy

Parler is playing into the hands of conservatives, who have become more vocal in their criticism of Twitter since the site started [flagging Trump's tweets](#) for promoting violence or abusive behavior or making false claims that could confuse voters. Trump supporters have long argued that the dominant Silicon Valley platforms have been out to censor conservative voices, even as those very same people continue to post on those sites and rack up followers by the thousands.

Rep. Jordan of Ohio told his 1.4 million Twitter followers on Friday to come over to Parler, where they "don't censor or shadow ban," referring to the practice of banning users in a way that's not apparent to them. By late afternoon he had about 3,100

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join him on Parler if they're "tired of left wing censorship of big tech." Nunes has an infamous relationship with Twitter, after [attempting to sue](#) the company for defamation and negligence and naming as defendants two anonymous parody accounts, "Devin Nunes' Mom" and "Devin Nunes' Cow."

"With Devin Nunes came a whole pack of haters," said Matze. He said that parody accounts are fine and even welcome, but Parler draws a line when it comes to spammers. "You can't spam people's comment sections with unrelated content," he said.

That's not the only no-no on Parler, which has a fairly thorough set of [community guidelines](#). The app doesn't allow terrorist organizations or support for terrorism, the sharing of false rumors, violent language (what the site describes as "fighting words") toward others, blackmail or pornography.

For verification, Parler awards a gold badge to public figures to distinguish them from parody accounts, which get a purple badge.

'Progressive bounty'

Matze, a computer scientist who founded the company in 2018, is grateful for the growth even if all the new verifications are creating a lot of extra work for his 30-person team.

But Matze doesn't want the app to be just an echo chamber for conservative voices. Personally, he says he doesn't like either political party and he wants to see more healthy debate. He's so intent on getting some liberals onto the platform that he's offering a \$20,000 "progressive bounty" for an openly liberal pundit with 50,000 followers on Twitter or Facebook to start a Parler account.

The company will judge the best one, based on engagement with the community, and pay that person the reward. Matze said there's been such little response that he increased the original proposed payment from \$10,000 to \$20,000.

"The whole company was never intended to be a pro-Trump thing," Matze said. "A lot of the audience is pro-Trump. I don't care. I'm not judging them either way."

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Brad Parscale, manager of U.S. President Donald Trump's re-election campaign, speaks during a rally for U.S. President Donald Trump in Des Moines, Iowa, U.S., on Thursday, Jan. 30, 2020.

Al Drago / Bloomberg / Getty Images

Where Matze is in full agreement with the Parler audience is in his opinion of Twitter. He thinks the company is targeting conservatives with censorship.

"I don't see why you need to censor the president's tweets," he said. "If you don't like what he has to say, vote him out of office."

Matze expects Parler to become a more attractive site for a more diverse audience over time because he sees Twitter continuing down a path of alienating right-wing voices, and "no one is going to want to stay on Twitter if the conservatives are gone."

But he recognizes that the political tone of his platform will probably make it hard for him to raise money from investors in Silicon Valley, which leans Democratic and is decidedly anti-Trump. Thus far, he's funded the company with angel money and said he'll soon be looking to raise a first institutional round of financing.

"I can only speculate that they wouldn't be interested unless they're ideological," he said, referring to traditional venture investors.

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VIDEO 07:22

These people are refusing to repay their student loans

His bigger challenge, and one that venture capitalists know well, is the difficulty in turning a big audience into a massive audience and turning that into a business. Few ad-supported companies have managed that feat. Matze said the site has a nascent ad business, but that revenue has not been a focus of the company. One model he's considering is a revenue share, so that users can monetize their own fanbase without all of the benefits going to the company.

There's much more to do first, though, on the product side. For example, sharing content isn't as easy as on other networks. If you share a post with a friend via a text message, the other person can't view it without being logged in. Matze says he's "fully intent on opening the platform" but user growth has gotten in the way of building it out.

For the Trump campaign, that appears to be a significant hurdle. Parscale, who has 159,000 followers on Parler, compared to almost 700,000 on Twitter, made a number of suggestions to the company last month, like recommending that it spend money to lure more media members and hire a designer.

With just a few months until the election and Trump sinking in the [polls](#), he's not hiding his ultimate goal.

"It must be buttoned up," he wrote on May 29. "I want to love it. I want to use it, I want to help. However, more than anything I want to win in November."

WATCH: [Trump to sign executive order aimed at cracking down on Facebook, Twitter](#)

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EXHIBIT F

◀ Today's Rampage at the Capitol, as It Happened

The storming of Capitol Hill was organized on social media.



Jan. 6, 2021

By Sheera Frenkel

Just after 1 p.m., when President Trump ended his speech to protesters in Washington by calling for them to march on Congress, hundreds of echoing calls to storm the building were made by his supporters online.

On social media sites used by the far-right, such as Gab and Parler, directions on which streets to take to avoid the police and which tools to bring to help pry open doors were exchanged in comments. At least a dozen people posted about carrying guns into the halls of Congress.

Calls for violence against members of Congress and for pro-Trump movements to retake the Capitol building have been circulating online for months. Bolstered by Mr. Trump, who has courted fringe movements like QAnon and the Proud Boys, groups have openly organized on social media networks and recruited others to their cause.

On Wednesday, their online activism became real-world violence, leading to unprecedented scenes of mobs freely strolling through the halls of Congress and uploading celebratory photographs of themselves, encouraging others to join them.

On Gab, they documented going into the offices of members of Congress, including that of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Dozens posted about searching for Vice President Mike Pence, who had been the target of Mr. Trump's ire earlier in the day.

At 2:24 p.m., after Mr. Trump tweeted that Mr. Pence "didn't have the courage to do what should have been done," dozens of messages on Gab called for those inside the Capitol building to hunt down the vice president. In videos uploaded to the channel, protesters could be heard chanting "Where is Pence?"

As Facebook and Twitter began to crack down groups like QAnon and the Proud Boys over the summer, they slowly migrated to other sites that allowed them to openly call for violence.

Renee DiResta, a researcher at the Stanford Internet Observatory who studies online movements, said the violence Wednesday was the result of online movements operating in closed social media networks where people believed the claims of voter fraud and of the election being stolen from Mr. Trump.

"These people are acting because they are convinced an election was stolen," DiResta said. "This is a demonstration of the very real-world impact of echo chambers."

She added: "This has been a striking repudiation of the idea that there is an online and an offline world and that what is said online is in some way kept online."

EXHIBIT G

Vox

recode

How Trump's internet built and broadcast the Capitol insurrection

Online extremists started planning the chaos of January 6 months ago.

By [Rebecca Heilweil](#) and [Shirin Ghaffary](#) | Jan 8, 2021, 5:00pm EST



People associated with far-right online movements such as QAnon breached the Capitol on Wednesday. | Saul Loeb/AFP via Getty Images

OPEN
SOURCED

Ali Alexander, a far-right activist and conspiracy theorist, posted a video to YouTube on Christmas Day, urging people to come to Washington, DC, on the day that Congress would finalize Joe Biden's election to the US presidency.

With a triumphant soundtrack, the video features President Trump at a rally declaring, "We will never give in. We will never give up, and we will never back down. We will never ever surrender." It urges people to register to attend on a website, [WildProtest.com](#), directing them to get to the Capitol building by 1 pm on the day of the event. The website even offered to help people find rides to get there.

This was just one of a slew of efforts from online communities that came together for the insurrection at the United States Capitol on Wednesday that left at least five people dead and many more injured. Many of these groups had been building enthusiasm online for such an event for years. They planned Wednesday's event on social media and, as it was happening, gleefully livestreamed the destruction.

The events represent a turning point for the nation in its reckoning with the impact of online extremism. While misinformation researchers have warned for years of the growing influence of groups like QAnon, the Proud Boys, and neo-Nazis, Wednesday's storming of the Capitol was the clearest evidence yet that these movements threaten to destabilize American democracy.

It's now undeniable that extremists online, ignited and enabled by Trump, have a real-world impact on US politics. And although Facebook and Twitter have taken unprecedented action to limit Trump's accounts in the wake of this disaster, many of the president's social media supporters have already established deeply intertwined networks of online communities that continue to encourage future chaos and sow doubt in the democratic process.

The Capitol mob began organizing weeks ago for the violence that occurred on January 6, planning inside conspiracy theory and far-right online communities on platforms like Parler and Gab. Groups that typically live in the darker corners of the

Vox

recode

For the many experts who have long warned that internet platforms had not done enough to curb extremism and misinformation, the event demonstrated how online radicalization could lead to violence and even threaten US democracy.

The disarray and violence in Washington on January 6 drew a big audience, too. More than 23 million people watched the event on cable news stations — it was the most-watched day in CNN's 40-year history, averaging 5.22 million viewers — and millions more followed along online via livestreams. There were more than 4.6 million mentions of unrest at the Capitol between 12 am and 6:30 pm ET that day, according to Zignal Labs, a firm that tracks online misinformation. The number of mentions first spiked after Trump spoke at the “Save America” rally in front of the White House and then surged after the mob breached the Capitol.

While the tumult was stunning, it was not surprising. The groups that stormed Capitol Hill this week have long been active on platforms like Gab and 4chan, and more recently, they've adopted newer tools like the lightly moderated social media site Parler and the anonymous messaging service Telegram to organize. Some have continued to use mainstream platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. Still, some say these disparate online communities linking up and taking to the streets on live TV was inevitable.

“Online extremism isn’t ever just online,” said Nina Jankowicz, a researcher on online misinformation at the Woodrow Wilson Center. “We’ve seen so many examples this year of hate speech and incitement spilling over into real life. What happened yesterday is another extension of that.”

Years of online radicalization led to the Capitol riot

For years, members of movements like QAnon, the Proud Boys, and the Three Percenters, a far-right militia group — not to mention hordes of white supremacists and conspiracy theorists — have been allowed to accumulate and grow on platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. While the mainstream social networks have taken action to restrict and even ban the groups, many had already achieved a significant level of organization, leaving critics to say that the crackdown came too late.

“Social media platforms, for years, have allowed their algorithms to boost disinformation and far-right organizing,” said Fadi Quran, campaign director at the human rights group Avaaz. “In DC, we saw QAnon conspiracists and other militias that would never have grown to this size without being turbo-charged by Facebook and Twitter.”

He added, “The platforms are still reacting with Band-Aid policies instead of the surgical procedures needed to fix this problem, like detoxing their algorithms and providing clear retroactive corrections.”

Violent events like the “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, the attack at the Christchurch mosque, and the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting often have their roots in anger and bigotry that festers online. It’s also undeniable that Trump and his high-profile followers have become instigators. By spreading misinformation and false claims that the election was stolen — and by giving tacit approval to groups like QAnon and the Proud Boys — Trump’s online rhetoric excited his base and encouraged the storming of the Capitol.

Pro-Trump pages on mainstream sites like Facebook and Twitter amped up the event, with some latching onto Trump’s December tweet claim that January 6 would be “wild.”

Meanwhile, a host of pro-Trump websites, including trumpmarch.com, wildprotest.com, and stopthesteal.us, boosted interest in the event. There’s also evidence that specific instructions for taking the Capitol appeared on sites like Parler, 4chan, and Gab.

“These are unmoderated closed spaces where only people with fringe and extremist ideologies spend their time,” said

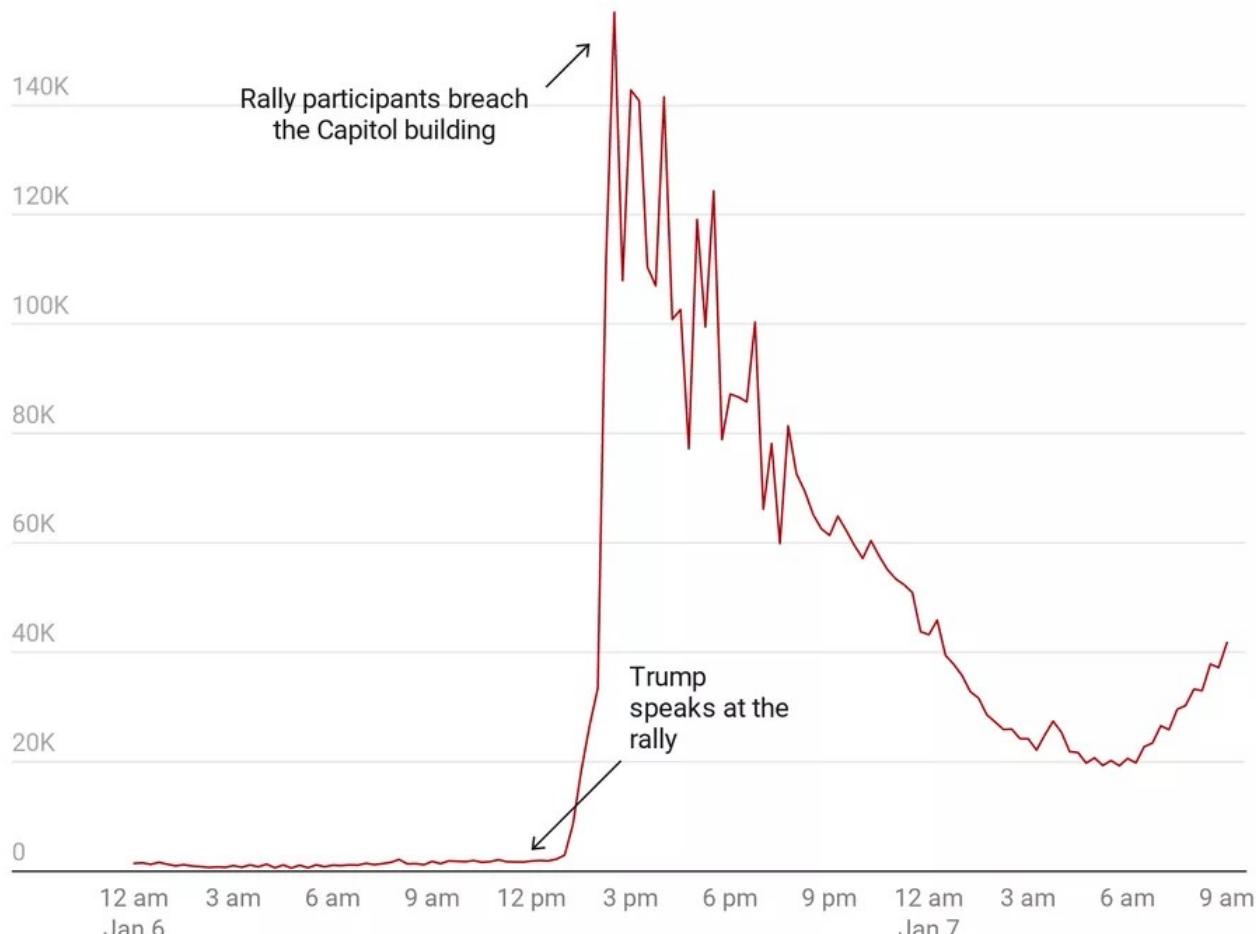
Vox

recode

These were the spaces where people who planned to attend the rally openly discussed potential violence at Trump's "Save America" rally on January 6. In one Facebook group called Red-State Secession, which was eventually taken down, people posted about the weapons they planned to carry with them to the event, according to the New York Times. Telegram, Parler, Reddit, and sites like TheDonald.win, a forum that's an offshoot of a banned Donald Trump subreddit, also hosted discussion about sneaking guns into the event.

In the weeks and days leading up to January 6, a slew of hashtags implied that violence could occur at the rally. Many posted #Jan6 encouraging excitement about the date, but others implied even further disruption, including #wildprotest (presumably referencing Trump's "wild" tweet), #fightback, and #midnightride, according to research from First Draft, a misinformation and disinformation research firm.

Mentions of unrest jumped after Trump's "Save America" rally speech



Zignal Labs tracked mentions of unrest-related terms like "storm the Capitol" on social media and across the internet.

Source: Zignal Labs

recode BY Vox

Vox**recode**

4chan as well as online factions, like the Proud Boys, white supremacist extremists, and communities associated with QAnon.

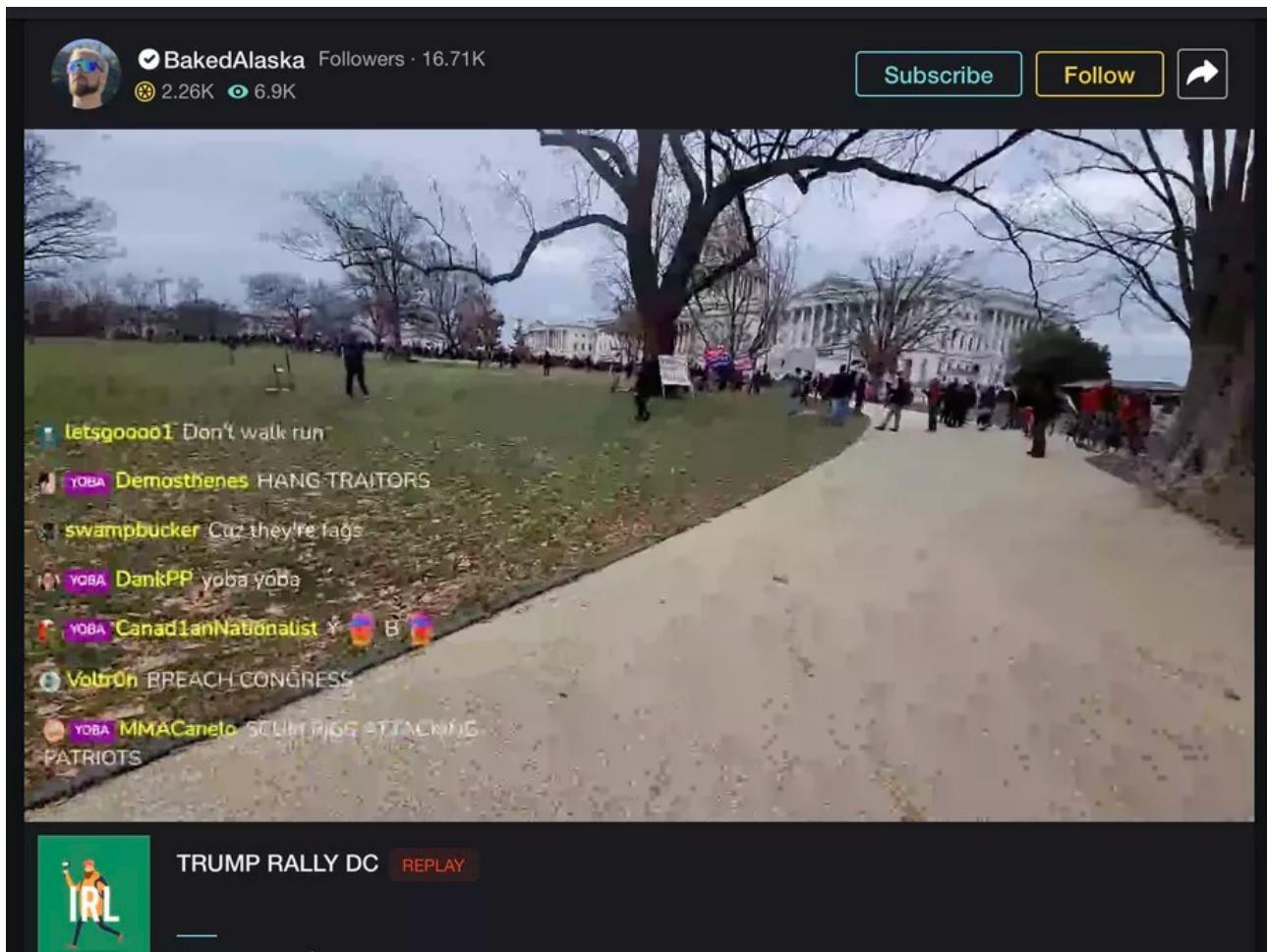
Meanwhile, the president continued to rile up his base. Trump said in a tweet that Washington was “being inundated with people who don’t want to see an election stolen.” And if the fuse for an explosive situation had been laid out in the weeks preceding the event, Trump lit the match when he concluded his speech at the rally by declaring that he and his supporters were going to give Republicans the “kind of pride and boldness that they need to take back our country.” Trump urged the crowd to “walk down Pennsylvania Avenue.”

The mob stayed online during the violence

As the rally turned into the insurrection on Capitol Hill, swaths of online agitators remotely encouraged violence of the event. As the mob streamed video and posted about their activities on social media, commenters urged them to break into the Capitol building.

Tim Gionet, who goes by the handle Baked Alaska online, was one of the more prominent livestreamers present. The 33-year-old was not unknown before January 6: Gionet had already been labeled as a white nationalist by the Southern Poverty Law Center, and he’d previously been booted from both Twitter and YouTube. On the day of the Capitol insurrection, he turned to the platform DLive, a blockchain-based service where he has more than 16,000 followers.

One video, viewed about 7,000 times, shows Gionet wearing a brown jacket and black hat, walking around the Capitol, while the livestream’s viewers encourage him to go inside the building.



Vox**recode**

"They're storming the Capitol," one user wrote to Gonet. Another wrote: "TRUMP GAVE YOU AN ORDER STORM THE CAPITOL NOW." Soon after, Gonet followed another group of Trump supporters closer to the building. That feed eventually ended, but Gonet then posted a new video from inside the building. In it, he attempted to call President Trump on a congressional phone while commenters demanded more violence. "SMASH THE WINDOW," wrote one. "HANG ALL THE CONGRESSMAN," wrote another. (Gonet eventually streamed himself being kicked out of the Capitol building by law enforcement.)

Also in attendance in Washington that day was Ali Alexander, a prominent promoter of "stop the steal" demands on social media, which are predicated on the conspiracy theory that the election was somehow stolen from Trump. In the days before the rally, Alexander warned his 41,000 followers on Parler, "If DC escalates ... so do we." He told his followers that on the day of the rally, "DC becomes FORT TRUMP." And on January 6, Alexander urged attendants to "keep each other safe & rowdy."

Kristen Doerer
@k2doe

This is Ali Alexander, leader of the so-called Stop the Steal campaign, saying: "I don't disavow this. I do not denounce this."

3:11 PM · Jan 6, 2021

554 410 people are Tweeting about this

After the event, another "stop the steal" Parler account with nearly 200,000 followers celebrated the taking of the Capitol as "one of the biggest gatherings in history."

The rest of the mob shared their stories to smaller audiences with posts on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. As Recode's

Vox

recode

involvement.

While many people viewing these images were shocked to see US democracy physically in peril, people in extremist social media circles were celebrating — emboldened and empowered by visuals of the rioting, looting, and harm. Almost immediately after news spread that a person was killed, some users on social media depicted her as a martyr of their cause, rather than someone who participated in what's been called an act of domestic terrorism.

The digital footprint left by the perpetrators of Wednesday's violence is serving as a kind of fodder fueling further extremism. And so far, social media companies have not been fully able, or willing, to stop that. Posts celebrating the events of Wednesday will continue to proliferate and could help encourage other similar events in the future, according to Robert Evans, an investigative journalist at the research collective Bellingcat.

"The kind of experience that a lot of people, especially the more extreme people, had on the 6th is not completely dissimilar to a drug," Evans said. "They got a very powerful high from storming the Capitol and they will be looking for the next high, the ones at least who don't wind up in custody."

Things could get worse

In response to the events of Wednesday, social media companies said they were amping up their response to take down calls for violence on their platforms. They also took more severe measures against President Donald Trump than they've ever taken before, with Facebook blocking his ability to post until the end of his presidency if not permanently. But many say it's too late, and not enough.

"The platforms haven't taken action over the past four years," said Jankowicz, of the Woodrow Wilson Center. "We've seen a couple standout incidents. But for the most part, it's been, 'Yeah, it's okay to post hate speech, we're just going to ignore it.' Finally, that line has been crossed."

That said, while limiting Trump's ability to post amounts to action, it doesn't come close to solving the problem of online extremism. And as Morgan, the Yonder CEO, argues about social media companies' role in all this, "There's no action that they can take in any given crisis that's going to undo the underlying problem that they created." Several members of Congress have echoed similar statements.

"These isolated actions are both too late and not nearly enough," said Sen. Mark Warner in a statement. "As I have continually said, these platforms have served as core organizing infrastructure for violent, far right groups and militia movements for several years now — helping them recruit, organize, and coordinate and in many cases (particularly in respect to YouTube) generate profits from their violent, extremist content."

Sen. Joe Manchin, meanwhile, called on Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey to suspend Donald Trump from Twitter for the remainder of his presidency, following Facebook's decision to do so.

Even if mainstream platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube further restrict Trump and the violent rhetoric of some of his followers, those followers may just migrate and empower fringe platforms like Gab and Parler, who welcome them with open arms. But it's clear that a reckoning with the platforms will continue and that their role in what led to the events of Wednesday will only be further scrutinized.

"We are going to be dealing with the implications of this for some time," Jankowicz said. "It doesn't matter that Trump's account on Facebook is frozen for the next two weeks. That infrastructure and behavior is part of society now, and the line between offline and online extremism — if there ever really was one — has been blurred."



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FEATURED VIDEOS FROM VOX

EXHIBIT H



Police intervene as supporters of President Donald Trump breach security and enter the Capitol on Wednesday. (Mostafa Bassim/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images)

Capitol Rioters Planned for Weeks in Plain Sight. The Police Weren't Ready.

Insurrectionists made no effort to hide their intentions, but law enforcement protecting Congress was caught flat-footed.

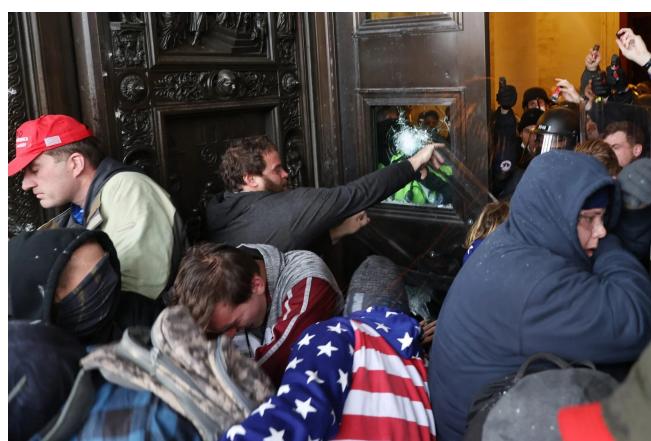
by Logan Jaffe, Lydia DePillis, Isaac Arnsdorf and J. David McSwane, Jan. 7, 12:24 a.m. EST

ProPublica is a nonprofit newsroom that investigates abuses of power. Sign up to receive our biggest stories as soon as they're published.

This story is part of an ongoing collaboration between ProPublica and FRONTLINE that includes an upcoming documentary.

The invasion of the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday was stoked in plain sight. For weeks, the far-right supporters of President Donald Trump railed on social media that the election had been stolen. They openly discussed the idea of violent protest on the day Congress met to certify the result.

“We came up with the idea to occupy just outside the CAPITOL on Jan 6th,” leaders of the Stop the Steal movement wrote on Dec. 23. They called their Wednesday demonstration the Wild Protest, a name taken from a tweet by Trump that encouraged his supporters to take their grievances to the streets of Washington. “Will be wild,” the president tweeted.



Trump supporters storming the doors of the Capitol on Wednesday. (Tasos Katopodis/Getty Images)

Ali Alexander, the founder of the movement, encouraged people to bring

tents and sleeping bags and avoid wearing masks for the event. "If D.C. escalates... so do we," Alexander wrote on Parler last week — one of scores of social media posts welcoming violence that were reviewed by ProPublica in the weeks leading up to Wednesday's attack on the capitol.

Thousands of people heeded that call.

For reasons that remained unclear Wednesday night, the law enforcement authorities charged with protecting the nation's entire legislative branch — nearly all of the 535 members of Congress gathered in a joint session, along with Vice President Mike Pence — were ill-prepared to contain the forces massed against them.

On Wednesday afternoon, a thin line of U.S. Capitol Police, with only a few riot shields between them and a knot of angry protesters, engaged in hand-to-hand combat with rioters on the steps of the West Front. They struggled with a flimsy set of barricades as a mob in helmets and bulletproof vests pushed its way toward the Capitol entrance. Videos showed officers stepping aside, and sometimes taking selfies, as if to usher Trump's supporters into the building they were supposed to guard.



Rep. Jason Crow, D-Colo., comforts Rep. Susan Wild, D-Pa., while taking cover as protesters disrupt the joint session of Congress to certify the Electoral College vote on Wednesday. (Tom Williams/CQ-Roll Call, Inc via Getty Images)

A former Capitol policeman well-versed in his agency's procedures was mystified by the scene he watched unfold on live television. Larry Schaefer, a 34-year Capitol Police veteran who retired in December 2019, said his former colleagues were experienced in dealing with aggressive crowds.

"It's not a spur-of-the-moment demonstration that just popped up," Schaefer said. "We have a planned, known demonstration that has a propensity for violence in the past and threats to carry weapons — why would you not prepare yourself as we have done in the past?"

A spokesperson for the Capitol Police did not respond to a request for comment.

In recent years, federal law enforcement agencies have stepped up their focus on far-right groups, resulting in a spate of arrests. In October, the FBI arrested a group of Michigan extremists and charged them with plotting to kidnap the state's governor. On Monday, Washington police arrested Enrique Tarrio, the leader of the far-right group the Proud Boys, on charges of burning a Black Lives Matter banner.

Conversations on right-wing platforms are monitored closely by federal intelligence. In September, a draft report by the Department of Homeland Security surfaced, identifying white supremacists as the biggest threat to national security.

The warnings of Wednesday's assault on the Capitol were everywhere —

perhaps not entirely specific about the planned time and exact location of an assault on the Capitol, but enough to clue in law enforcement about the potential for civil unrest.

On Dec. 12, a poster on the website MyMilitia.com urged violence if senators made official the victory of President-elect Joe Biden.

"If this does not change, then I advocate, Revolution and adherence to the rules of war," wrote someone identifying themselves as l3DI. "I say, take the hill or die trying."

Wrote another person: "It's already apparent that literally millions of Americans are on the verge of activating their Second Amendment duty to defeat tyranny and save the republic."

The easily overpowered police force guarding the Capitol on Wednesday posed a stark contrast to the tactics deployed by local

ELIJAH SCHAFFER

@ElijahSchaffer



IMPORTANT: this is exact moment the siege of the Capitol building began as the two men in front ripped down a preliminary barrier & rushed officers who were behind a 2nd barrier

They then encouraged others to follow their lead. Officers appeared to be taken completely off guard

3:46 PM · Jan 6, 2021



16.1K 11.2K people are Twe...

About This Partnership



This story is part of an ongoing collaboration between ProPublica and FRONTLINE that includes an upcoming documentary.

police during this summer's Black Lives Matter protests. Then, the city felt besieged by law enforcement.



Protesters are tear-gassed as the police disperse them near the White House on June 1.
(Roberto Schmidt/AFP/Getty Images)

On June 1, following a few days of mostly peaceful protests, the National Guard, the Secret Service and the U.S. Park Police fired tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse a nonviolent crowd in Lafayette Square outside the White House to allow Trump to pose with a Bible in front of a nearby church.

"We need to dominate the battlespace," then-Secretary of Defense Mark Esper said on a call with dozens of governors, asking them to send their National Guard forces to the capital.



Members of the D.C. National Guard on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington on June 2 monitoring demonstrators during a peaceful protest against police brutality and the death of George Floyd, who died in police custody. (Win McNamee/Getty Images)

On June 2 — the day of the primary election in Washington — law enforcement officers appeared on every corner, heavily armed in fatigues and body armor. Humvees blocked intersections. Buses full of troops deployed into military columns and marshaled in front of the Lincoln Memorial in a raw show of force. Police kettled protesters in alleys. Choppers thudded overhead for days and sank low enough over protesters to generate gale-force winds.

Such dominance was nowhere in evidence Wednesday, despite a near-lockdown of the downtown area on Tuesday night. Trump supporters drove to the Capitol and parked in spaces normally reserved for congressional staff. Some vehicles stopped on the lawns near the Tidal Basin.



A Trump supporter who breached the Capitol sits inside the office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi as insurrectionists halted congressional debate of the electoral vote certification. (Saul Loeb/AFP via Getty Images)



Insurrectionists in the rotunda of the Capitol on Wednesday after breaching security. (Saul Loeb/AFP via Getty Images)

The contrast shook Washington's attorney general, Karl Racine, who seemed to be almost in disbelief on CNN Wednesday evening.

"There was zero intelligence that the Black Lives Matter protesters were going to 'storm the capitol,'" he remembered, after ticking down the many police forces present in June. "Juxtapose that with what we saw today, with hate groups, militia and other groups that have no respect for the rule of law go into the capitol. ... That dichotomy is shocking."

The question of how law enforcement and the national security establishment failed so spectacularly will likely be the subject of intense focus in coming days.

David Carter, director of the Intelligence Program at Michigan State University, said that sometimes, the best intelligence in the world doesn't translate into adequate preparedness. Perhaps the security officials responsible for protecting the Capitol simply could not envision that a crowd of Americans would charge through a police line and shatter the glass windows that stood as the only physical barrier to entering the building.

"I go back to the 9/11 commission report," Carter said. "It was a failure of imagination. They didn't imagine something like this. Would you imagine people were going to break into the Capitol and go into the chambers? That failure of imagination sometimes makes us drop the ball."

Maya Eliahou contributed reporting.



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EXHIBIT I

Intelligencer

CAPITOL RIOT | UPDATED JAN. 10, 2021

Feds Arrest Pro-Trump Insurrectionists Around the Country

By Justin Miller and Matt Stieb

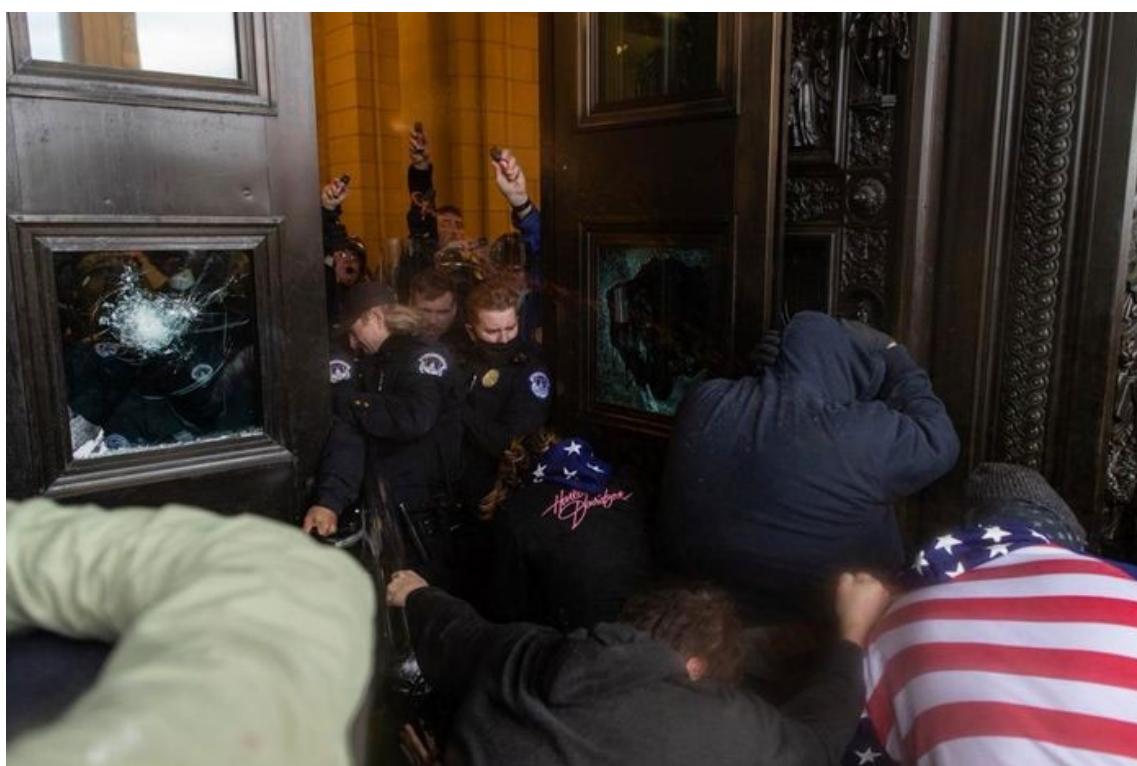


Photo: Anadolu Agency/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images

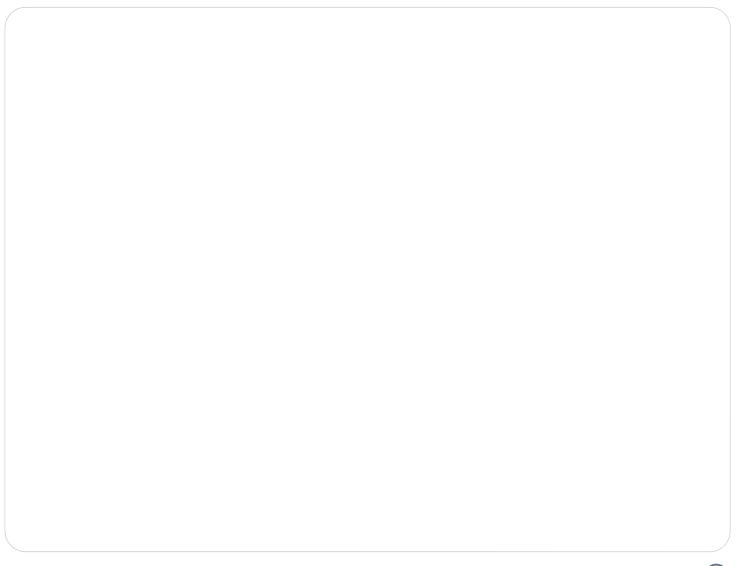
Dozens of members of the pro-Trump mob who attacked the U.S. Capitol have now been charged for the seige on Wednesday which left five dead. Many more will be charged in the coming weeks, according to acting U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia Michael Sherwin, who told NPR on Sunday that “hundreds” more could face criminal charges, ranging from destruction of federal property to murder.

The federal charges began on Friday, when the Department of Justice announced it had charged 13 people involved in the attack. Two of the insurrectionists are accused of illegal possession of weapons, including one man who is said to have brought 11 Molotov cocktails to Capitol Hill. The rest were hit with a variety of charges alleging they unlawfully entered the Capitol grounds and assaulted law-enforcement officers. (At least 40 others have been arrested and charged in D.C. court already on similar charges.) Among them are Richard Bennett of Arkansas, who was infamously photographed seated with his feet on House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s desk. Bennett was taken into custody, as was Lonnie Coffman of Alabama, who feds say brought the Molotovs and two firearms.



 **Matthew Rosenberg** 
@AllMattNYT

That's Richard "Bigo" Barnett, 60, from Gravette, Ak., showing off the personalized envelope he took from Speaker Pelosi's office. He insisted he didn't steal it — "I left a quarter on her desk."



West Virginia lawmaker Derek Evans, a Republican, was also charged, according to the AP and taken into custody by FBI agents at his home. On Saturday, Evans submitted a letter of resignation to the state's Governor Jim Justice.

#BREAKING WV Delegate Derrick Evans has been taken into federal custody.

He's charged after allegedly entering a restricted area of the US Capitol with rioters Wednesday.

A woman saying he was his grandmother came out telling us to leave as he was put in a car. #WSAZ
pic.twitter.com/wK2RqFcaF7

— Chad Hedrick (@WSAZChadHedrick) January 8, 2021

Other insurrectionists seen in widely-distributed photos this week were arrested over the weekend. On Saturday, the Department of Justice announced that Jacob Anthony Chansley, the Arizona man who entered the Capitol shirtless and wearing a fur headdress with horns, was arrested on charges of "knowingly entering or remaining in any restricted building or grounds without lawful authority, and with violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds on Saturday."

 Aditya Raj Kaul 

@AdityaRajKaul



The shirtless man photographed during US Capitol Hill violence, Jake Angeli, was taken into custody today and charged by federal court for riots.

1:26 PM · Jan 10, 2021



In the same statement, the DOJ announced that Adam Johnson — the man seen stealing with Nancy Pelosi's lectern — is in custody and has been charged with “one count of knowingly entering or remaining in any restricted building or grounds without lawful authority; one count of theft of government property; and one count of violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds.”

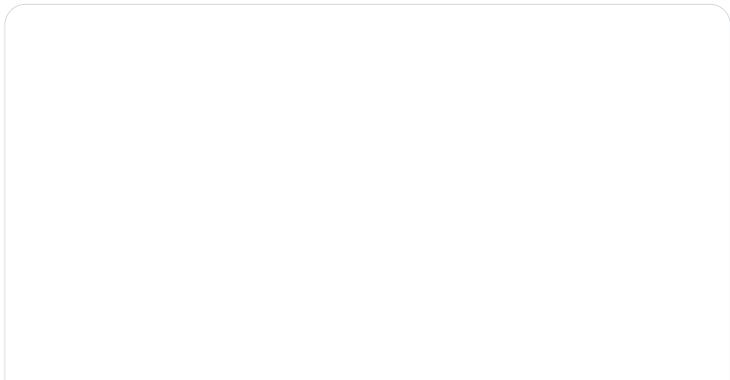
 New York Magazine 

@NYMag



The picture of a white man roaming the halls of Congress with Nancy Pelosi's podium reflects the America Black people know: an America of ignorant white people secure in the knowledge that nothing bad will happen to them.

[@jimstgermain89 writes](#)



Hang This Image in the National Portrait Gallery
It reflects the America Black people know.

 vulture.com

12:58 PM · Jan 8, 2021



Doug Jensen, the Iowa man who allegedly led the push toward the Senate chamber, was arrested by the FBI and is facing five federal charges, including trespassing and disorderly conduct.

 **Clare Foran** 
@ckmarie

The man seen chasing a Black Capitol police officer up the stairs during the Capitol attack is Doug Jensen, according to a CNN comparative analysis of his booking photo and posts on social media. Jensen is one of the individuals now facing federal charges.

Man seen chasing Black Capitol police officer in video faces charges
The man seen chasing a Black Capitol police officer up the stairs during ...


1:53 PM · Jan 10, 2021 

 942  268 people are Tweeting about this

On Sunday, the FBI arrested Eric Gavelek Munchel, the 30-year-old Tennessee man photographed carrying zip ties inside the Senate chamber. He is facing a federal charge of “knowingly entering or remaining in any restricted building or grounds without lawful authority” and one count of violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds. In the same announcement, the Department of Justice stated it had arrested another man, Larry Rendell Brock of Texas, on the same charges. Brock also allegedly entered the Capitol in tactical gear with flex cuff restraints.

 **JJ MacNab** 
@jjmacnab

The F.B.I. arrests a man who had carried zip ties into the Capitol.

The F.B.I. arrest two men who had carried plastic restraints into the Capitol.


2:03 PM · Jan 10, 2021 

The search for suspects in the Capitol riot continues, with the FBI receiving over 40,000 digital media tips in the first four days after the attack. “Just because you’ve left the D.C. region, you can still expect a knock at the door, if we find out you were part of the criminal activity at the Capitol,” said Steven D’antuono, the No. 2 in the FBI’s Washington Field Office, according to Politico. “We are sparing no expense or personnel or effort to root those perpetrators out and find them.” The FBI is offering a \$50,000 reward for the suspect who planted pipe bombs outside the headquarters of the Republican and Democratic parties.

Military and law enforcement investigators are also turning the focus on their own ranks. On Sunday, U.S. Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy told Rep. Jason Crow that at least 25 domestic terrorism cases have been opened into military personnel allegedly on the scene on Wednesday. Police departments in Virginia, Washington, and Pennsylvania have begun investigations into their own officers who traveled to D.C. for the rally.

Federal investigators are also reportedly investigating the death of U.S. Capitol Police officer Brian Sicknick as murder. Four members of the mob also died in the attack, including a 35-year-old Air Force veteran Ashli Babbitt, who was shot by a Capitol police officer when she climbed through a window leading to an entryway outside of the House chamber.

This post has been updated throughout.

TAGS: CAPITOL RIOT DONALD TRUMP

76 COMMENTS



THE Intelligencer FEED

22 MINS AGO CAPITOL RIOT

House Introduces Article of Impeachment: Live Updates

By INTELLIGENCER STAFF

The House has charged President Trump with “incitement of insurrection.”

25 MINS AGO

The president hasn't been heard from in days

I'm told the White House is discussing the idea of President Trump making remarks on camera today about big tech, but no decisions have been made.

—@EamonJavers

11:14 A.M. BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

All of President-elect Joe Biden's Cabinet Nominees

By INTELLIGENCER STAFF

A running list of Biden's announcements and reported picks as the incoming administration begins to take shape.

MOST POPULAR

1. Senior Trump Official: We Were Wrong, He's a 'Fascist'

By OLIVIA NUZZI

2. Capitol Police Officer Who Responded to Pro-Trump Riot Dies by Suicide

*By MATT STIEB***3. The Silence of the Damned***By OLIVIA NUZZI***4. The Lab-Leak Hypothesis***By NICHOLSON BAKER***5. White House Forced Out U.S. Attorney Amid Effort to Overturn Election in Georgia***By CHAS DANNER***9:40 A.M. CAPITOL RIOT****Read Melania Trump's Letter About the Capitol Riot***By BENJAMIN HART*

She condemns political violence — and critical media coverage of herself.

7:55 A.M.**David Ignatius on William Burns, Biden's pick to lead the CIA**

President-elect Joe Biden plans to nominate William J. Burns, a former career diplomat who has served both parties and won respect at home and abroad, to run a CIA that has been badly battered by the Trump administration.

The choice of Burns is the incoming administration's last major personnel decision, and it highlights the qualities that characterize Biden's foreign policy team. Burns is an inside player — brainy, reserved, collegial — and loyal to his superiors, sometimes to a fault, as he conceded in his 2019 memoir.

Though a diplomat, not a spy, Burns is a classic "gray man" like those who populate the intelligence world. And he has often served as a secret emissary: The title of his memoir, "The Back Channel," refers in part to his role as the covert intermediary in the initial contacts with Iran that led to the 2015 nuclear agreement.

For an agency that lives on personal trust, Burns is an apt choice. As I wrote nearly two years ago in reviewing the memoir, Burns "is widely viewed as the best Foreign Service officer of his generation."

Biden plans to nominate William J. Burns, a former career diplomat, to run the CIA

—Washington Post

7:00 A.M. THE NATIONAL INTEREST**Why Republicans Are Finally Trying to Wash Off the Trump Stink***By JONATHAN CHAIT*

Better way, way, way too late than never.

1/10/2021 AVIATION**Two-Mile Nosedive by an Indonesian 737 Unexplained As of Yet***By JEFF WISE*

Black box data should reveal why Sriwijaya Air Flight 182 plunged rapidly on Saturday, striking the Java Sea at nearly 500 miles per hour.

1/10/2021 CAPITOL RIOT**Capitol Police Officer Who Responded to Pro-Trump Riot Dies by Suicide***By MATT STIEB*

Howard Liebengood, 51, was the second member of the Capitol Police to die in the past week.

1/10/2021 CAPITOL RIOT

Feds Arrest Pro-Trump Insurrectionists Across the Country

By JUSTIN MILLER AND MATT STIEB

Many of the figures in the most widely-distributed photos from Wednesday are already facing federal criminal charges.

1/10/2021 SOCIAL MEDIA

Amazon, Apple, and Google Cut Off Parler, Citing Failure to Moderate Extremism

By CHAS DANNER

The site, which has been a haven for many on the far right, may not be long for this world in the aftermath of the Capitol riot.

1/9/2021 GEORGIA

White House Forced Out U.S. Attorney Amid Effort to Overturn Election in Georgia

By CHAS DANNER

The top federal prosecutor in Atlanta, Byung Pak, was reportedly told to resign because Trump was upset he didn't help find voter fraud in Georgia.

1/9/2021 THE SWAMP

The Silence of the Damned

By OLIVIA NUZZI

Without his tweets, it's like Trump's presidency is already over.

1/9/2021 GEORGIA

Trump Also Made Call to Pressure Georgia Election Investigator

By CHAS DANNER

The president called the state's top elections investigator on December 23 and urged them to "find the fraud."

1/9/2021 CAPITOL RIOT

A Domestic Terrorism Law Can't Solve Right-Wing Violence

By SARAH JONES

The idea is back after the Capitol riot, but the enemies of democracy could use such a statute as a tool against the left.

1/8/2021 POLITICS

Twitter Bans Trump for Life

By JUSTIN MILLER

The president got banned from his personal account, then got busted using the White House and campaign accounts.

1/8/2021 THE SWAMP

Senior Trump Official: We Were Wrong, He's a 'Fascist'

By OLIVIA NUZZI

"The legacy of the Trump administration is going to be that the president sparked an insurrection and people died."

1/8/2021 CAPITOL INSURRECTION**'It Was No Accident'***By REBECCA TRAISTER*

Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal on surviving the siege.

1/8/2021 POLITICS**Will Donald Trump Try to Take His Act to TikTok?***By CHRIS STOKEL-WALKER*

I asked the company whether he'd be welcome on the platform. Its silence raises some interesting questions.

1/8/2021 CAPITOL RIOT**Democrats Keeping It Simple on Basis for Impeachment***By ED KILGORE*

The draft article, which could come to a vote by next week, has one article focused on Trump's incitement to insurrection on January 6.

1/8/2021 BIDEN INAUGURATION**Trump Will Be the First President in 152 Years to Skip Successor's Inauguration***By ED KILGORE*

Another one-term impeached president, Andrew Johnson, snubbed Ulysses S. Grant.

1/8/2021 CAPITOL RIOT**Biden's Top Hill Allies: We Got This, You Focus on Taking Over***By GABRIEL DEBENEDETTI*

The incoming president struck a milder tone than Democrats in Congress who want to expel Republicans and impeach Trump again.

1/8/2021 BIDEN INAUGURATION**Everything We Know About Joe Biden's Inauguration***By CHARLOTTE KLEIN*

Biden's inauguration was already set to look drastically different due to COVID, and after the Capitol riot, security concerns have skyrocketed.

1/8/2021 CAPITOL RIOT**Trump Supporters Harass Lindsey Graham at Airport***By CHARLOTTE KLEIN*

The president's loyalists chanted "traitor" and heckled the Republican lawmaker on Friday.

1/8/2021**David Perdue concedes**

Photo: @AdamBassWCCS

1/8/2021 THE NATIONAL CIRCUS**The Trashing of the Republic***By FRANK RICH*

The only response to the carnage in Washington is to banish Trump and his traitorous collaborators from civil society.

1/8/2021 CAPITOL RIOT**What Experts on Extremism Want From the Biden Administration***By JAMES D. WALSH*

Debating the utility and perils of a domestic-terrorism statute.

1/8/2021**Several more arrests today**

NEW: @derrickevans_WV, a Republican member of West Virginia's legislature, has been charged for playing part in the pro-Trump assault on the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday, Justice Department officials say on a press call.

—@C_Sommerfeldt

1/8/2021 CAPITOL RIOT**Impeachment Could Ban Trump From Running in 2024***By ED KILGORE*

It's too late for Congress to remove Trump before Inauguration Day. But a post-presidential impeachment and conviction could prevent a Trump comeback.

1/8/2021 CORONAVIRUS VACCINE**Biden to Release Nearly All Available COVID-19 Vaccine Doses***By CHARLOTTE KLEIN*

In a major break from current policy, Biden will stop holding back second doses "to ensure the Americans who need it most get it as soon as possible."

READ MORE ON THE**Intelligencer****HOMEPAGE**

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EXHIBIT J



John Matze @John

1 min ago • 13k

Sunday (tomorrow) at midnight Amazon will be shutting off all of our servers in an attempt to completely remove free speech off the internet. There is the possibility Parler will be unavailable on the internet for up to a week as we rebuild from scratch. We prepared for events like this by never relying on amazons proprietary infrastructure and building bare metal products.

We will try our best to move to a new provider right now as we have many competing for our business, however Amazon, Google and Apple purposefully did this as a coordinated effort knowing our options would be limited and knowing this would inflict the most damage right as President Trump was banned from the tech companies.

This was a coordinated attack by the tech giants to kill competition in the market place. We were too successful too fast. You can expect the war on competition and free speech to continue, but don't count us out.

#speakfreely

EXHIBIT K



John Matze @John

22 mins ago • 532k

How to Help

- 1) Tuesday come back to Parler . Com OR use the side loaded version of android OR use your already installed versions of Parler. (or maybe we will be back on the stores 😊)
- 2) Check your email and spam for messages from Parler
- 3) Call, write and email your congressman and senators and expose this anti-competitive behavior. On both sides of the isle.
- 4) Cancel your Amazon subscriptions and dump Apple. Google/android is not much better, but it will have to do until the Linux phones are finally ready.
- 5) DO NOT leave angry messages however DO complain politely to Amazon, Google, Apple via mail and via phone.

We should be operational with less than 12 hours of downtime after Amazon abruptly pulls our access. This is unprecedented.

EXHIBIT L



Twitter

'Hang Mike Pence': Twitter stops phrase trending after Capitol riot

Martin Pengelly in New York

Twitter @MartinPengelly

Sun 10 Jan 2021 12.21 EST

Twitter stopped the phrase “Hang Mike Pence” trending on Saturday, but not before it trended on the social media platform in the aftermath of the company’s decision to suspend Donald Trump’s account.

The chant was **heard** in the US Capitol on Wednesday, as a mob incited by the president attempted a putsch, roaming the halls, confronting law enforcement and in some cases apparently planning to kidnap lawmakers.

Jim Bourg, a Reuters picture editor in Washington, **said** on Twitter: “I heard at least three different rioters at the Capitol say that they hoped to find Vice-President Mike Pence and execute him by hanging him from a Capitol Hill tree as a traitor. It was a common line being repeated. Many more were just talking about how the VP should be executed.”

Five people died as a result of the attack , including a Capitol police officer reportedly struck with a fire extinguisher and a rioter shot by law enforcement. **Multiple arrests were made**, among them men who brought firearms and explosives to Washington.

Twitter **suspended Trump's account** late on Friday, over his incitement of the mob.

Pence was at the Capitol at the time of the riot, to preside over the counting of electoral college results which Trump has tried to overturn, claiming without evidence that his defeat by Joe Biden was the result of electoral fraud.

The president repeatedly tweeted claims that Pence had the authority to overturn the results. He did not.

Trump supporters outside the Capitol brandished a gallows and noose.

Inside, lawmakers hid from rioters who invaded offices and the House and Senate chambers. One member of the mob, a retired air force officer, was **pictured** carrying plastic “zip tie” handcuffs.

American Times Film
@ExportedFromMI

Video of the mob chanting "hang Mike Pence."

8:35 PM · Jan 8, 2021

17.1K likes 10.7K people are Tweeting about this

In a statement on Saturday, a **Twitter** spokesman said: “We blocked the phrase and other variations of it from trending.

“We want trends to promote healthy discussions on Twitter. This means that at times, we may prevent certain content from trending. As per our Help Center, there are rules for trends - if we identify accounts that violate these rules, we’ll take enforcement action.”

After the Capitol was secured, Pence presided over the confirmation of Joe Biden’s election victory. Since then, the vice-president has been the subject of calls to invoke the 25th amendment to the constitution, which provides for the removal of a president deemed incapable of fulfilling his duties.

On Sunday, NBC News reported that Pence and Trump had not spoken since the Capitol riot.

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EXHIBIT M



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UPDATE: Parler v. Amazon lawsuit:

S

Amazon lawyer Ambika Kumar Doran has been called a champion of the First Amendment. She defends a clients content according to her profile online.

M

Amazon to answer pleadings by 01/12/2021.

e

Davis Wright Tremaine LLP
Attorneys for Amazon Web Services, Inc.

n

By /s/ Ambika Kumar Doran

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EXHIBIT N

Amazon, Apple and Google Cut Off Parler, an App That Drew Trump Supporters

The companies pulled support for the “free speech” social network, all but killing the service just as many conservatives are seeking alternatives to Facebook and Twitter.



By **Jack Nicas** and **Davey Alba**

Published Jan. 9, 2021 Updated Jan. 11, 2021, 11:10 a.m. ET

Parler, a social network that pitches itself as a “free speech” alternative to Twitter and Facebook, is suffering from whiplash.

Over the past several months, Parler has become one of the fastest-growing apps in the United States. Millions of President Trump’s supporters have flocked to it as Facebook and Twitter increasingly cracked down on posts that spread misinformation and incited violence, including muzzling Mr. Trump by removing his accounts this past week. By Saturday morning, Apple listed Parler as the No. 1 free app for its iPhones.

But, by Saturday night, Parler was suddenly fighting for its life.

First, Apple and Google removed the app from their app stores because they said it had not sufficiently policed its users’ posts, allowing too many that encouraged violence and crime. Then, late Saturday, Amazon told Parler it would boot the company from its web-hosting service on Sunday night because of repeated violations of Amazon’s rules.

Amazon’s move meant that Parler’s entire platform would soon go offline unless it was able to find a new hosting service on Sunday.

“Big tech really wants to kill competition,” John Matze, Parler’s chief executive, said in a text message. “And I have a lot of work to do in the next 24 hours to make sure everyone’s data is not permanently deleted off the internet.”

In a statement online, Mr. Matze added that the tech giants had acted in a “coordinated effort” to “completely remove free speech off the internet.” Parler, he said, would probably be unavailable on the internet for up to a week, starting at midnight on Sunday. But, he went on, the company had “prepared” by not relying on Amazon’s proprietary infrastructure and was looking for a new hosting provider.

A day earlier, Parler appeared poised to capitalize on growing anger at Silicon Valley in conservative circles and was even a logical choice to become Mr. Trump’s next megaphone after he was kicked off Twitter. Now its future is looking bleak.

In a letter to Parler on Saturday, Amazon said that it had sent the company 98 examples of posts on its site that encouraged violence and that many remained active. “It’s clear that Parler does not have an effective process to comply with” Amazon’s rules, the company said in the letter. Amazon “provides technology and services to customers across the political spectrum, and we continue to respect Parler’s right to determine for itself what content it will allow on its site. However, we cannot provide services to a customer that is unable to effectively identify and remove content that encourages or incites violence against others.”

On Friday, Apple gave Parler 24 hours to clean up its app or face removal from its App Store. Parler appeared to take down some posts over that period, but on Saturday, Apple told the company its measures were inadequate. “We have always supported diverse points of view being represented on the App Store, but there is no place on our platform for threats of violence and illegal activity,” Apple said in a statement.

“This is very huge,” Amy Peikoff, Parler’s policy chief, told Fox News after Apple gave its warning on Friday. Without access to the App Store, she said, “we’re toast.”

ON TECH WITH SHIRA OVIDE: Your guide to how technology is transforming our lives — in the time of coronavirus and beyond.

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Several Parler executives accused the tech companies’ moves as being politically motivated and anticompetitive.

Mr. Matze pointed to the fact that Twitter had recently promoted the phrase “Hang Mike Pence” as a trending topic. (The majority of the discussion on Twitter was about rioters chanting the phrase about the vice president on Wednesday.) “I have seen no evidence Apple is going after them,” Mr. Matze said. “This would appear to be an unfair double standard as every other social media site has the same issues, arguably on a worse scale.”

The actions against Parler were part of a wider crackdown by tech companies on President Trump and some of his most extreme supporters after Wednesday's deadly riot in Washington. But unlike Twitter and Facebook, which make decisions about the content that appears on their own sites, Amazon, Apple and Google weighed in on how another company was operating.

Amazon Web Services supports a large share of the websites and apps across the internet, while Apple and Google make the operating systems that back nearly all of the world's smartphones. Now that the companies have made it clear that they will take action against sites and apps that don't sufficiently police what their users post, it could have significant side effects.

Several upstarts have courted Mr. Trump's supporters with promises of "unbiased" and "free speech" social networks, which have proven to be, in effect, free-for-all digital town squares where users hardly have to worry about getting banned for spreading conspiracy theories, making threats or posting hate speech. The tougher enforcement from the tech companies could preclude such apps from becoming realistic alternatives to the mainstream social networks. They now face the choice of either stepping up their policing of posts — undercutting their main feature in the process — or losing their ability to reach a wide audience.

That may reinforce the primacy of the social-media incumbents, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. It also gives those companies' decisions more teeth. If they ban a pundit for violating their rules, that person will lack a strong alternative.

Amazon, Apple and Google's moves could also spur other apps to strengthen their enforcement.

DLive, a livestreaming site that rioters storming the Capitol used to broadcast the moment, said on Friday that it had indefinitely suspended seven channels and permanently removed over 100 previous broadcasts of the mob. It added that the "lemons," a DLive currency that can be converted into real money, sent to the suspended channels would be refunded to donors in the next few days.

Other platforms that host posts by right-wing influencers, including CloutHub and MyMilitia — a forum for militia groups — adjusted their terms of service recently to ban threats of violence.

DLive was pressured by Tipalti, a payment company that helps it operate. Tipalti said in a statement that it had suspended its service until DLive removed the accounts that had broadcast the riots on Wednesday.

Such third-party companies that help apps and websites function, from payment processors to cybersecurity firms to web-hosting providers like Amazon, have used their positions to influence how their customers handle extremist or criminal activity. In 2019, Cloudflare, a company that protects sites from cyberattacks, effectively delivered the death knell to 8chan, an anonymous online message board that hosted the manifesto of a mass shooter, by halting its protections for the site. After Cloudflare backed away from 8chan, the site struggled to find other service providers that could keep it active.

Parler could have the same problem now that it lacked a way to host its website, particularly as the company suddenly became a pariah after Wednesday's riot, which was partially planned on Parler. Amazon had faced pressure from its own employees and at least one member of Congress before it pulled its support for Parler, and other companies could fear unwanted attention if they took its business.

BuzzFeed News first reported Amazon's decision to pull its support for Parler.

If Parler is able to find a provider and resume its service, it will still have an uphill journey to find new users without a place in the major app stores. Apple's decision blocks iPhone owners from downloading the Parler app. People who already have the app will still be able to use it — if it comes back online — but their versions of the app will soon become obsolete as Apple updates the iPhone software.

Google cut Parler out of its flagship Android app store, but it also allows apps to be downloaded from elsewhere, meaning Android users would still be able to find the Parler app, just with a bit more work. If Parler finds a new web-hosting provider, its website would also be available via web browsers on phones and computers.

After Apple had given the company 24 hours to improve its moderation to avoid removal from the App Store, it appeared that Parler had tried to remove some posts that seemed to call for violence.

For instance, L. Lin Wood, a lawyer who had sued to overturn Mr. Trump's election loss, posted on Parler on Thursday morning: "Get the firing squad ready. Pence goes FIRST." The post was viewed at least 788,000 times, according to a screenshot on the Internet Archive. By Saturday morning, the post had been removed.

In a text message, Mr. Matze said the post had been removed "in compliance with Parler's terms of service and rules against incitement of violence."

In a notice to Parler on Saturday, Apple said that it had "continued to find direct threats of violence and calls to incite lawless action" on the app. Apple told the company its app would not be allowed on the App Store until "you have demonstrated your ability to effectively moderate and filter the dangerous and harmful content on your service."

In an interview, Jeffrey Wernick, Parler's chief operating officer, blamed "a cancel culture" at the tech companies for his company's dimming prospects. He said he would advise other platforms not to try to compete on Apple's App Store. "Because if you raise money and get investors and end up like Parler, what's the point?" he said.

EXHIBIT O

Sections

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Tuesday, January 12, 2021

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TRANSCRIPT

If You Were on Parler, You Saw the Mob Coming

Hosted by Kara Swisher

It is a go-to social media site for the right, with users calling to “burn D.C. to the ground.” The C.E.O., John Matze, says it’s not his job to police speech.

Thursday, January 7th, 2021

[MUSIC PLAYING] (SINGING) When you walk in the room, do you have sway?

kara swisher

This is Sway. I’m Kara Swisher and I’m recording on Wednesday evening in the middle of a coup attempt in our nation’s Capitol. As of right now, Washington is on lockdown with senators and members of the House sheltering in place after a mob incited by President Trump stormed Congress. The attack shocked the nation. But if you’re a far-right Trump supporter, if you think the election was stolen, then you may have been planning for this day. And you may have been planning for it on social media.

Three decades ago and 30 miles away, I started covering the nascent internet. I was at the headquarters of a company interviewing a group of quilters who had met online and made a quilt together without ever meeting in person. It was sweet and hopeful, which is how it was back then in tech. The company was America Online. Well, America is online now, and it's been a downward slide into what can only be called a toxic swamp of hate, conspiracy theories, and anger, all presided over by the troller-in-chief, Donald Trump. Today he egged on the crowd of his MAGA fans to march over to the Capitol, and Trump continued to add fuel to the fire via Twitter, just as his successor Joe Biden was in the process of being certified as president. I wish I could say I was surprised. On my other podcast yesterday, I said that I expected violence at the Capitol after I spent time on a variety of social media sites where you could see it coming.

In my first column for The New York Times, I wrote about all these tech field communications tools and their dangers. I said, quote, "[They] have become the digital arms dealers of the modern age... They have mutated human communication, so that connecting people has too often become about pitting them against one another, and turbocharged that discord into an unprecedented and damaging volume. They have weaponized social media. They have weaponized the First Amendment. They have weaponized civil discourse. And they have weaponized, most of all, politics."

When I wrote that column in 2018, a new social media site was just launching. It was called Parler. Now it's called Parler. Parler has since become the darling of the far right. Ted Cruz is active on it. He says Parler quote, "gets what free speech is all about." The site is nowhere near as big or powerful as Twitter or Facebook, but it's a platform of choice for some people who, frankly, scare me. Parler's C.E.O is a guy named John Matze. I've been wanting to have him on the show. And as I watched the insurrection unfold on TV, I thought now's the time. We spoke for a while about the dangerous power he's unleashing. By the way, minutes after we hung up, Twitter locked Trump's feed temporarily and threatened to take more drastic action if he continued to violate its rules. That's something Matze suggested Parler would not do. Here's our conversation about that and more.

So there is an effective coup attempt happening in our nation's Capitol to stop a vote that was occurring there. It moved all the legislators out of the Capitol. Are you surprised at all by what's happening?

john matze

Well, I don't know what I would describe it as. I guess I'm kind of surprised, because it's surreal, if that makes sense.

kara swisher

Sure is.

john matze

But I'm also not surprised, because if you put yourself in the shoes of a lot of these people, they feel like an election was stolen once. And then they feel like an election was stolen again yesterday. And so they are left thinking, well, what am I supposed to do? So they hear this rhetoric. They don't believe, they don't trust the results. They feel like they've been fed a lot of propaganda. They feel like they can't trust the media.

kara swisher

Well, they certainly have. But go ahead.

john matze

Well, I believe that almost everybody is. But you have to be able to judge that for yourself and make your own decisions, weigh the pros and cons. But that being said, a lot of these people feel like they can't trust anything, but they do genuinely believe that the election was stolen. So if you put yourself in their shoes, I'm not exactly surprised they're doing this.

kara swisher

All right, John, if you feel like you're in a restaurant, you don't get good service, do you feel like you can break the windows and invade people's homes? I'm just curious that this just doesn't seem to be —

john matze

No, I go home.

kara swisher

Yes, exactly.

john matze

In fact, I don't even like going to restaurants. I like staying home.

kara swisher

OK, but let me ask you a question. This is not this — first of all, feelings aren't facts. And I want to know if you were watching it on Parler, which is a site you run, which you are the C.E.O of. Have you been seeing this organizational stuff?

john matze

Well, you know I don't necessarily monitor a lot of this stuff. I participate and watch Parler just as anybody else does. If people are breaking the law, violating our terms of service, or doing anything illegal, we would definitely get involved. But if people are just trying to assemble or they're trying to put together an event — which is what a lot of people tried to do at this event today — there's nothing particularly wrong about that. Now I had noticed a long time ago that there were some accounts trying to get people off to private telegram groups and things of that nature, where Parler couldn't witness what's going on or it wouldn't be public. But, you know, for the most part, I haven't seen a whole lot of illegal activity. And if it was, it would have been taken down. We've had multiple doxxing attempts that have resulted in some of the people organizing these movements have actually had their accounts taken down due to doxxing. But organizing an event isn't illegal.

kara swisher

Understandably, and organizing a peaceful protest is also perfectly fine. A lot of the stuff I saw Parler was actually organizing bringing guns into the district — which is illegal, as you know, carrying guns — organizing exactly what's happened on the Capitol. How did you deal with that?

john matze

Well, the way we work on our platform is we put everything to a community jury. So everyone's judged by a jury of their peers in determining whether the action is illegal or against our rules. And so if reported, it goes to a jury of people's peers. And if it's deemed illegal, promptly deleted. But, you know, the jury of five people get to decide. And it's a random jury, so they don't know each other. They don't know what they're voting. They just get the independent facts of the situation and they make their own judgment call. We've actually been inviting journalists and other people to join the jury as well, so that we have a nice transparent jury system.

kara swisher

All right, but what I'm asking specifically, there were specific postings and quite a few of them — and we have dozens of them to look at — which is talking about doing just what they did today on the Capitol. Were these adjudicated, if that's the right word? And if they pass muster, is that a particularly good jury, if these are illegal activities what's happening right now in the Capitol?

john matze

Well, for violence, and advocacy of violence, or violence specifically, it needs to be a clear and imminent threat. And I don't know — I've been witnessing what happened today a little bit, but I'm not really too much in the weeds on this stuff. I haven't seen a whole lot of illegal activity. Maybe there has been some, but it's a minority of the cases.

kara swisher

Well, I do believe having been to the Capitol dozens of times that if you do anything that not go through their metal detectors, you don't follow the rules, you break windows, you run through the other people's offices, you take pictures of their offices, you sit-in their seats, I believe that's all illegal.

john matze

Yes, but I do want to push back a little bit on this here. Because if you go back six months ago, you had a lot of the media putting out full stop — including The New York Times — saying in defense of looting where they came out and said it's acceptable to loot. And looting and all this stuff needs to be — there's even a book written and promoted. But it was during the time when there was a lot of people on the left looting and angry.

kara swisher

The New York Times does not promote — I'm going to push back on you. The New York Times was absolutely not promoting looting. That is untrue.

john matze

Well, my —

kara swisher

You can say it. This is — you can say it. It's untrue. It's 100% true. It's not true.

john matze

Well, I don't know the specifics of the —

kara swisher

No, don't do the I don't know the specifics. You don't know the specifics. I'm telling you it's untrue. And unless you have a specific, you can't make that allegation. I'm talking about the activities today. And I do want to understand what was happening on your platform. And again, it was happening on Twitter and other places. But do you feel any responsibility if people were organizing to

— protests are very different. And you're absolutely right. Everyone gets to run around with whatever flag they want to fly, and whatever coat they want to wear, and whatever chant they want to have. But going into the Capitol building to do this, if it was organized on your site, what should happen on your site?

john matze

Look, if it was illegally organized and against the law and what they were doing, they would have gotten it taken down. But I don't feel responsible for any of this and neither should the platform, considering we're a neutral town square that just adheres to the law. So if people are organizing something, that's more of a problem of people are upset. They feel disenfranchised. They need their leaders to stop provoking this partisan hate. They need to come together and have a discussion on a place like Parler.

kara swisher

So I want to finish this with specifically there were a lot of examples of people calling for what they did today. Do you believe what happened within the Capitol today, if you were the judge and jury as you do on Parler, would this be the thing you would think is legal? Not that they feel bad and I think I'll break something. Do you think this was legal what happened to the people that moved into the Capitol and trespassed?

john matze

I mean, it's obviously illegal. What their actions that they took, yes.

kara swisher

And if they were organizing on your platform, do you think it should have been taken down on Parler? It sounds like you do not think that.

john matze

If they were organizing specifically saying, tomorrow, we're going to go out and we're going to bust this window. Hey, by the way, guys, there's an area we can

climb up in and break into that window. If that is what they were doing, yeah, of course, that would get taken down. But that's not what people were doing. They were saying let's peacefully protest for the President. That's what a lot of people were saying, not just on Parler, on Twitter, on Facebook, on every major social network. And including ones that we will have no ability to police. Now you have to take into consideration that everything on Parler, Twitter, Facebook, all of these places are very public. But what happens when people use direct messaging apps that are two-way encrypted that even the service providers don't know what these groups are talking about? How do you address those situations? And you can't do it using authoritarian measures. You must do it using the media, the politicians, the leaders. They have to come out and have a discussion with the people and show that they care, that they want to discuss these things. And that is why I think Parler provides those platforms to do that. Because people can come out and transparently say what they believe and they can be transparently addressed by those in charge. However, there is a large movement of people who want to push for authoritarian measures and censorship. And it just puts gas right on the fire. And we need people to come out and set examples.

kara swisher

So your point that they get driven underground if they don't have a wide open space, public space to do this in?

john matze

Yeah, I think so. Do you disagree?

kara swisher

Sometimes. Sometimes not. It depends. I think if people are actually calling for civil war on your platform or pushing egregious lies that lead to violence, down it goes. It's very — and I think you should be responsible for it, not some jury. I think you have some responsibility for what's happened on your platform.

john matze

Well, how would you do it then? Would you put together an authoritarian task force or?

kara swisher

I think it's super — well, if you want to use the word authoritarian, everybody has rules. Restaurants have rules. Retail places have rules. Everywhere you go in life has different rules that you adhere to or you don't. Or you don't do it and then you suffer the consequences.

john matze

I think that you have a few options. One is you can be proactively monitoring, and spying on people, and surveilling them, which is what some platforms have decided to do to some extent. Although, most surveillance is limited into capturing data about people in order to sell products and manipulate them. But nobody has yet really done the surveillance thing, as far as I'm aware, in order to stifle speech. They have gotten into it a little bit. But it's a difficult question. You have 12 million, 13 million people on Parler, for example, and you can't watch what all of them are doing. And I don't think it's our obligation to. Society needs to work together in a democracy to get through things like this.

kara swisher

Let's talk about — so how do you want to monitor your site? Not at all? Let people say civil war? Let people say — you think that's great, you think that's — not great — what do you think when people are saying it's time for civil war, I'm bringing my guns to Washington? You think you just let them say that?

john matze

Well, if it was up to me we wouldn't be in this situation where two sides hate each other this much.

kara swisher

I get it, but here we find ourselves.

john matze

Whether or not it's Parler, it's Twitter, it's Facebook, it's Google, it's telegram, WhatsApp, whatever it might be, you can't stop people and change their opinions by force by censoring them. They'll just go somewhere else and do it. So as long as it is legal, it's allowed.

kara swisher

We'll be back in a minute.

So when did you become aware of the events at the Capitol?

john matze

I saw it early around, I guess, my time would be 10, 11 AM my time. So a few hours ago. I was alerted when — because I was on conference calls all morning. And so by the time I found out about this, it was due to a traffic spike. And I was like, what do you mean traffic spike? It's a random Wednesday. What are you talking about?

kara swisher

But you had a server outage earlier today. What happened? Was it because of the slam of people trying to use it or what?

john matze

Well, we're in the middle of an upgrade. So it's not an ideal time. We're trying to optimize a few things. And so then you get an influx of millions of people, 3 million people by two o'clock Eastern today.

kara swisher

Then what were they doing? What were they doing? Were they talking about going into the Capitol or were they talking about protesting?

john matze

No, most people were watching it. Most people were trying to understand what was happening. They were like, where are the videos? What's going on? What are people doing? It's interesting, the reaction is half of the people were actually — that I was following, so I follow a diverse set of people. I follow some very hardcore progressives, some conservatives, and a lot of libertarians, and some people were apolitical. A lot of the reactions that I saw at first had been condoning what's going on. And then some people paranoid saying, oh, this isn't really Trump supporters. It's a bunch of — this is organized by some conspiracy theories, which I think are completely ludicrous, because —

kara swisher

That was Trump supporters.

john matze

I think people have been stoking themselves up for something like this.

kara swisher

So when you think about these conspiracy theories, you think you should just let them fly, and let this autonomous jury, or let the discussion just have out?

john matze

It's not against the law to have a conspiracy theory. But if they have a conspiracy theory, people should call them out for it. And people should build their own reputations as being a reliable source, rather than us trying to become the reliable source. And so that's a huge differentiator between Parler and Twitter and Facebook is they want to be the authoritative reliable source of information.

kara swisher

, Well let's work through your guidelines then. What are your community guidelines exactly?

john matze

Well, we have a few major rules. But let's go over the most violated or the most kind of touched upon.

kara swisher

Yes, all right. Let's talk about that.

john matze

The one that we have absolutely no tolerance for under any circumstances is doxxing personal information like home addresses, phone numbers, unless is like a call your Congressman kind of thing. You can put their phone number there or send them a letter to their P.O. box.

kara swisher

So no home addresses. Also a problem on all the other platforms too.

john matze

Yes, but that, we don't even warn people. That just gets taken down immediately, because that's an imminent threat. Like you can't — what are you doing? You're posting someone's home address, so what? You can mail them cookies? No, they want to hurt them.

kara swisher

So, that's one, doxxing or personal information.

john matze

Yes, and then illegal activity, of course, will get taken down, as long as it's illegal. And so the difference is if someone says something mean or violent, it's not necessarily illegal. It has to cross that threshold.

kara swisher

You said a majority of the activity today was observational, but not all of it. Can you acknowledge that people today do use Parler to go organize and plan to go to the Capitol?

john matze

I don't think it's really good for planning events, to be honest. The way the format's set up, it's more for announcements like, hey, we have an event. The planning was mostly done on things like Facebook groups, or like a telegram, or a WhatsApp would probably be better for planning.

kara swisher

But are they using it to plan? Do you think they use it for organization?

john matze

I'm sure some people do.

kara swisher

OK. Can you acknowledge that people in the Capitol right now are, in fact, violating the law? They're carrying guns, breaking windows. Are they threatening law and order from your perspective?

john matze

I'm sure some are.

kara swisher

OK.

john matze

I haven't actually seen any videos of anybody protesting that had guns. I saw a protester that got shot. But I didn't actually see the protesters doing any shooting. I haven't seen any videos like that yet.

kara swisher

Yeah, a woman has now died.

john matze

Yes, she was a protester I believe, though. She was shot by the — I think it was the — I don't know who she was shot by, though. I didn't actually see that.

kara swisher

How long does it take between a message threatening violence and sedition, for example, or anything else, how long does it take to flag to you as a C.E.O that gets to you? Do these things get to you? Because they do get to Jack Dorsey, a lot of the more problematic ones.

john matze

Sometimes they do. It just depends on how nasty, how violent, and whether or not the authorities were needed to get involved. And it just depends on a lot of factors and how many people it reached. If you come out and you say something incredibly nasty and violent, but you get no votes and no impressions, the likelihood of being on the platform longer is higher, because we aren't surveilling people or figuring it out on our own.

kara swisher

But you don't have any algorithmic catching of words and things like that? Like I'm going to kill blank kind of thing.

john matze

No, the only algorithm that we have for catching words is for pornography and nudity and things like that.

kara swisher

But it takes 48 hours, because of the fully automated jury process. Is that correct?

john matze

It can. It depends on how inundated the jury is and how many jurors are active. Most days, it takes less than five minutes. But some days, like today, it'll probably take 24 hours.

kara swisher

That's a long time on the internet, long enough for violence. Does that policy work? Do you see it scaling as you get larger?

john matze

It has scaled well so far. It's scaled a lot better than trying to hire out teams. Because if you imagine, if we have to hire people, they've got to go through a period of interviews, and background checks, and building up a whole team. And Facebook, I don't know how many people they have. But I do know that I've heard numbers as high as 20,000 people doing the moderation. And so scaling out teams like that, it's very time-consuming, and difficult, and expensive.

kara swisher

Well, yes, but you could anticipate you might need them. These self-appointed juries, they're judging millions of people?

john matze

Yes, I don't know how many people at this point are part of the jury. I have asked to grow the jury over 2000 people. I don't know how far along we are getting it to that size, but it's pretty substantial.

kara swisher

Do you know how many flags today? Do you have any idea of how many flags today?

john matze

I'd have to ask the database engineer.

kara swisher

They spend a lot of time picking juries, so they are somewhat neutral. Although, it's almost impossible to do it. How do you do that if most of the people on your site are of the same political bent, which is more conservative?

john matze

Well, we have a lot of jury training, and jurors are picked by their tenure. and there's very specific things that they — buttons they have to select to categorize the violation. That being said, we also have internal metrics. So if somebody is marking more things or less things as a violation compared to the norm or they're outliers, then they get kicked from the jury pool.

kara swisher

So what would be illegal? So saying, let's raid the Capital would not be illegal just because they're saying it?

john matze

Well, it's hard to get into the specifics. But I can give you an example. I guess, if you said I know where you live. I'm going to come to your house and I'm going to hurt you. That's a clear and imminent threat, because you clearly know where that person lives. You're going to their house. You're going to hurt them. So that is an example. But I don't generally like to get into specifics, because it can get really touchy.

kara swisher

Right, but community guidelines around harmful and violent speech, that you would consider harmful and violent speech?

john matze

Yes. Yeah, anything that presents a clear and imminent threat, that would be violent.

kara swisher

And how do you compare it to what's happening — I'm going to use Twitter as the example, because I think a lot of people don't focus on you as a Facebook killer, more as a Twitter rival, essentially. How do you consider what they're doing with the labeling of President Trump?

john matze

I think it's inappropriate. I do. And I think it undermines a lot of what they're trying to do. And so you have to put yourself in the shoes of the people who are following President Trump. And so if you put yourself in their shoes — which, by the way, I am not a conservative, and I'm not a Trump voter. In fact, I didn't even vote in the last election. I just didn't want to bring myself to doing it. But I just I can't do it. I didn't want to participate in all of this.

kara swisher

Because?

john matze

Well, one, I think I actually am pretty neutral on a lot of this stuff. And two, it just feels like a mess. I don't really want to participate in this mess.

kara swisher

In a mess?

john matze

Yeah.

kara swisher

Gosh, it feels like a privilege to me.

john matze

Well, I don't know. This whole year has been a mess. A lot of people fighting. One side fighting each other. And it's like I'll call out the people on either side.

And frankly, I think — I don't know that it's my place to weigh in. And so that by being neutral and actually kind of living a little bit more neutral, I think it's —

kara swisher

All right, let me make something a little easier. What happened to Alex Jones on the platforms? He was active for a long time until Apple moved and then the rest of them moved rather quickly afterwards. How do you look at someone like an Alex Jones and what happened with Twitter, Apple, Facebook, and others?

john matze

Well, I think it's a little bit wrong that — not just a little bit, it's extremely wrong that everybody just purged him all at the same time. If he says something crazy — I mean, he says a lot of crazy stuff all the time — that's a great time to reinforce for somebody who's trusted with the mainstream and elsewhere to reinforce hey, this guy is crazy. These ideas are crazy. Look at what he just said. That's a great opportunity. But purging him — the people who follow him, A, they want more. They get more devout in my opinion. And furthermore, it's wrong. It's like a collective digital kind of purging of him, and his existence, and his ideas. It's really — it's authoritarian and it's wrong that everybody, once one person bans them, everybody bans them. It's horrible. It sets a horrible precedence.

kara swisher

So you would have left him up? You're not of the school that thinks that as he gets to say more, he converts more people, the lies he tells get worse, and that more people start to believe his conspiracy theories?

john matze

Well, why should I weigh in as an authoritative source, as an authority figure? What if I, as a person, was against a certain group whether race, religion, or whatever it was, and we aimed our platform — and not just me let's say, Mark Zuckerberg, let's say Jack Dorsey, any of the other tech companies. What if any of

us said, we don't like this particular religion, or race, or group, and then targeted them and took them off the internet? How horrible would that be?

kara swisher

So tell me, when you talk about people taking things down off of things like Facebook, or Twitter labeling things, a lot of people say that's a free speech violation. In fact, they are private companies and they can do whatever they want. Do you think it's OK that they do that? Do you think they should be allowed to do that given these are private companies and not public squares?

john matze

Well, it's a little bit of a sticky situation, because you can't violate the company's right to free speech. They don't have to do business with everybody. You can't force somebody to work for somebody else. But at the same time, we are in a country that likes free speech. So you are limited on what you can say online. A lot of people go there thinking that it's an open place, a town forum. They think that they're private, or at least, that their information is not being stored and sold and all of this. But they're also wrong. And so what we wanted to do is be a community town square for free speech. As long as it's legal, they can go ahead and talk about it online. And that's how we've marketed ourselves. That's how we've behaved. That's how we are.

kara swisher

All right, now you say you're neutral, but your members are primarily conservative at this moment. And you do want to make it bigger — I've seen lots of interviews where you talked about it — but your co-founder is Rebekah Mercer, a major Republican Party donor, very early Trump backer. Are you actually neutral or are you seeing right now, as a right-wing publisher, all the people affiliated with you are more on the right? How do you change that? And tell me about the ownership structure.

john matze

Well, today everybody — a lot of people on the platform are on the right. And we have appealed to people on the right, because they are primarily the victims of online censorship right now, the way I see it.

kara swisher

You know there's no actual evidence of that happening, just them saying it?

john matze

There's also no actual evidence of it not happening either.

kara swisher

Oh my God. Come on. That's Loch Ness Monster talk.

john matze

You can't say that, though. You can't say that.

kara swisher

I would like to see evidence of it. Just like I'd like to see more evidence of widespread election fraud, which, of course, you don't see in courts of — courts already are saying, too.

john matze

Well, yeah. So I don't want to get into the election thing. But let's put it this way, people feel that they are being censored online and they can't get their voice out.

kara swisher

Again, feelings are not facts. But OK. They're over there. They've moved over there. They're hurt by something that Twitter's done, although they certainly can't resist it on many levels.

john matze

In capitalism, we vote with our dollars. So — and online and on social media, our presence equates to our dollars, because being able to present ads allows people to sell products to them. And therefore by voting with their feed, they are essentially voting with in this example. And so their feelings do matter in this case, because whether or not it's factually happening, that's what they feel. And the way I see it, is today it is a conservative issue. A lot of conservatives feel that they are censored, and they're not living up to their free speech values. Tomorrow, it may be the left. Today, it may be a foreign country, which there has been other foreign countries that have had these issues too. We saw a large influx from Saudi Arabia. We've seen a large influx in Brazil. So there are other countries where people feel that they are being censored online too.

kara swisher

OK. So that's what you're appealing to? So your ownership, Rebekah Mercer — who else is ownership? Is it Dan Bongino?

john matze

So primarily, it's me and our co-founders, which would be Jared and Rebekah. And then you have Dan Bongino is also an investor. And you also have Jeffrey Wernick in his group, who've publicly come out. And that's basically the extent of everybody involved in the company.

kara swisher

Is she the principal funder in this case, financial funder?

john matze

At this point, no. We have more people involved in the financing of the company. And now we have actually ad revenue doing a lot of our — covering a lot of our monthly overhead.

kara swisher

So who are your advertisers right now then?

john matze

Anybody can create an ad as long as they have a badge on the platform. So the badge system is where they prove their identity to us. Once they do that, they can then advertise.

kara swisher

What are the most of the ads? What do they focus on?

john matze

Most of it's national brands. So it's anything that can be sold anywhere in the U.S. for the most part.

kara swisher

Who's your biggest advertiser?

john matze

Might be hard to say. We've had a lot of political ads.

kara swisher

Yeah, I bet.

john matze

It's been a large, probably the largest sector.

kara swisher

But more right or left?

john matze

Republican leaning.

kara swisher

Republican. How do you then assess President Trump's behavior online on social media, especially Twitter?

john matze

I think actually they should not flag his stuff. They shouldn't censor him. They shouldn't let him — force them to hold back.

kara swisher

Well, they didn't for a very long time, for most of his —

john matze

No, they didn't for a while, but he's also ramped up more recently too. But if you don't get involved, if you don't censor, if you don't — you just let him do what he wants, then the public can judge for themselves. Don't weigh in. Just sit there and say, hey, that's what he said. What do you guys think?

kara swisher

What about him saying things right now that seem to be inciting violence?

john matze

OK, well, let's break it down this way. Do you feel that Twitter has a responsibility to get involved?

kara swisher

Right at this moment where there is violence happening and he seems to be encouraging it? Yes, I do think there is some role. But I would say, when he lies incessantly, flagging it is not — it's not censoring. It's linking to better information. And that's their judgment, because it's their company.

john matze

Yeah, but isn't that kind of the role of a journalist and a publication?

kara swisher

It's their company. The New York Times doesn't print every crazy email we get, do we? We print the ones we think are valuable.

john matze

But they've billed themselves as a free place for people to contribute —

kara swisher

Not anymore.

john matze

— their own content.

kara swisher

No.

john matze

They did historically, but maybe not anymore.

kara swisher

Historically. You're absolutely right.

john matze

But then don't you view Twitter, then, in that case, as a competitor of —

kara swisher

Yes, I think they're a media company. I've always thought that. I think Facebook is too. I think they like to have it both ways. On ParlerTakes right now, which is the one on Twitter that talks about Parler, things that are on Parler, a video of MAGA-ers chanting hang Mike Pence, one user Joel Fischer is saying, looks like Republicans have full control of the House and the Senate. Now there's a collection of a fund to bail out a member of the Proud Boys who's been arrested. Is this normal day?

john matze

No, that's pretty extreme. I think by any metric that's pretty extreme.

kara swisher

Right. Hang Mike Pence should stay there?

john matze

I don't know. They'd have to report it.

kara swisher

What do you think? If you were the jury?

john matze

I would take it down. If I was a jury member, I'd vote against it. But that's my opinion. So you've got to get four out of five people to share my view. I think they probably would. But it's pretty clear there's a clear and imminent threat of danger, considering they're literally raiding buildings and then —

kara swisher

Talking about hanging.

john matze

Spreading a message to hurt somebody.

kara swisher

OK. You said you didn't vote in the last election. Will you vote in the next one?

john matze

Probably not.

kara swisher

Because?

john matze

I don't know. I kind of subscribe to the theory that, I guess — I don't know how to word this. Let's see.

I don't know that I really am interested in participating too much in it. One is I'd like to remain neutral, but also I don't really have a whole lot of confidence in the system. That's really what it comes down to.

kara swisher

Because you don't believe in the system?

john matze

Yeah.

kara swisher

So how do you feel today about democracy?

john matze

Well, it's not the idea of democracy. It's — because the idea of democracy is a great idea.

kara swisher

How do you feel about our democracy today?

john matze

I think that we're destined to go towards more of a socialist progressive state. I think it's just inevitable, and whether you vote or not, it's heading that way. And I don't think there's much anybody can do about it.

kara swisher

And not an authoritarian, which is another direction?

john matze

It could be authoritarian. I'm not sure if it will or will not be. It just depends on who comes into power and how strong-willed they are.

kara swisher

All right. Yes, well, we'll see how that turns out. This great experiment continues, the United States of America. It is sad when you get really — today, I don't know if you've noticed on Twitter or not, maybe on Parler — a lot of foreign leaders just say — it's just go look on Twitter.

john matze

Oh, they're probably laughing.

kara swisher

Yes, well, laughing is not what I would say they're doing.

john matze

Well, mocking.

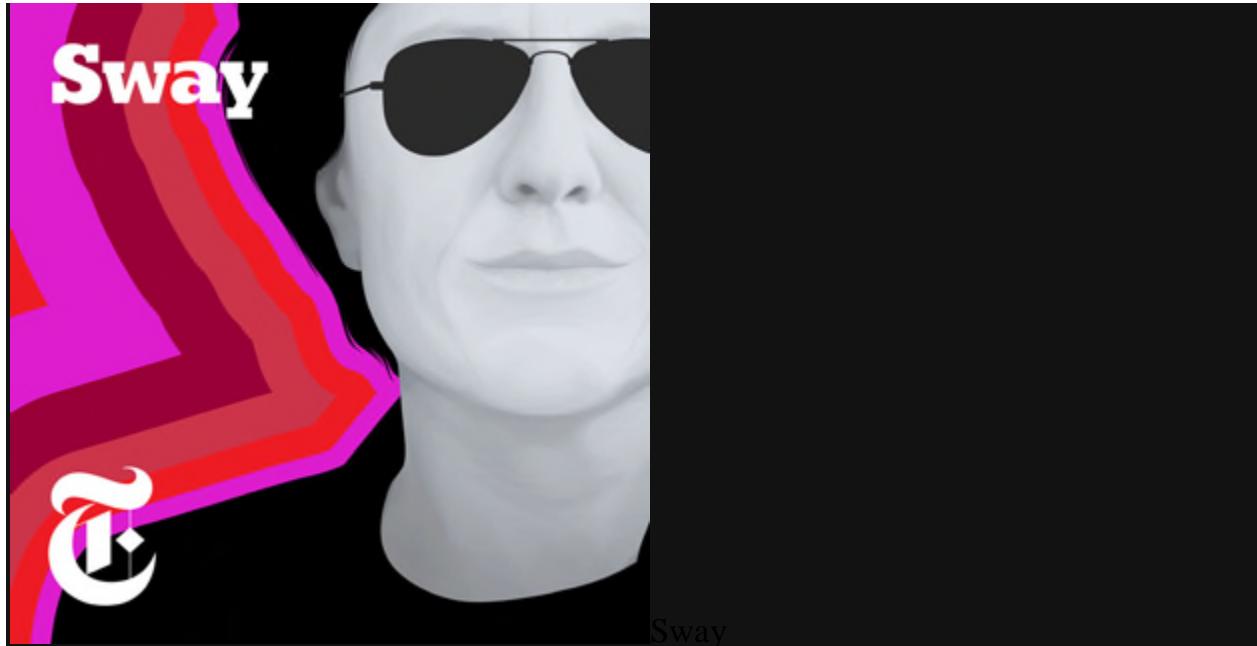
kara swisher

I think disappointment. I think disappointment. I would say I think, no. It's not mocking. It's oh my God. You were the last hope kind of thing. We thought you were better. I don't know. We'll see. Anyway, I think it's quite genuine what they're saying, and I don't think they're happy at all. I don't think many people are today. It's not a good day for America.

Sway is a production of New York Times opinion. It's produced by Nayeema Raza, Heba Elorbany, Matt Kwong, and Vishakha Darbha. Edited by Paula Szuchman with original music by Isaac Jones, mixing by Erik Gomez, and fact-checking by Kate Sinclair and Michelle Harris. Special thanks to Renan Borelli, Liriel Higa, and Kathy Tu.

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Jan. 7, 2021

If You Were on Parler, You Saw the Mob Coming

It is a go-to social media site for the right, with users calling to “burn D.C. to the ground.” The C.E.O., John Matze, says it’s not his job to police speech.

Hosted by Kara Swisher
Transcript

Back to Sway
-0:00

TRANSCRIPT
