

ON JANUARY 6

Aquilino Gonell had this to say in a NYT column.

I never wanted to be a whistle-blower or a troublemaker. I grew up poor in the Dominican Republic, came to this country legally at age 12 and became the first in my family to finish high school and college. I lived in Brooklyn, just a few miles from where Mr. Trump grew up in Queens, yet the metaphoric distance between us was vast. My dad was a taxi driver who could give me only \$100 to help pay for college. Mr. Trump's father was a real estate developer who bequeathed him at least \$413 million over the years. While Mr. Trump escaped the Vietnam draft with a medical exemption for bone spurs and never served in the military, I finished my degree with the help of the G.I. Bill after I enlisted and served in the Middle East. What I experienced defending the Capitol against rioters was worse than the combat I saw in Iraq.

[snip]

Although I don't blame all Trump supporters – some of my own relatives support him – I do detest what MAGA extremism did to me and my team on Jan. 6. I resent the ongoing whitewashing of the barbarity and the collective amnesia of right-wing politicians who aren't willing to hold Mr. Trump accountable. I can't bear to hear Republicans describe themselves as the "law and order" party.

Mr. Trump is returning to the presidency at 78, while I had to leave the career I'd worked for my whole life at 42 as a result of injuries suffered while doing my job. I sometimes wonder why I risked my life to defend our elected officials from a mob inspired by Mr. Trump, only

to see him return to power stronger than ever. It's hard to witness a rich white man get rewarded for treachery while I'm punished for fulfilling my duty. Maybe that's why so many people don't do the right thing – because it's hard and it hurts.

Michael Fanone shared some bitterness with Brandi Buchman.

Fanone said his experience as a police officer has taught him that accountability is what actually keeps people in line. The threat of going to jail, he said, or the threat of monetary fines can be meaningful deterrents.

But now, he said, “we have a situation where, openly, a political party says, ‘If you're with us, there's no accountability.’ That's proven with those promises for pardons. Just be a Trump supporter, and ‘we got your back,’” Fanone said. “Well, that's not fucking law and order.”

[snip]

Today, Fanone said he's looking for work and often is told that he's a hero and that he's loved.

But, he said, he's also told by prospective employers that they don't want “potential workplace distraction” or “fallout” and are worried that they too will be targeted simply because they employ him.

Turning to the future, Fanone said he “doesn't think so highly of myself to impart some life lesson on the American people,” but he could share, unfiltered, what he's learned in the last four years.

“I no longer believe in American exceptionalism. I certainly did before

Jan. 6. I don't any longer. I think there's a lot of decent Americans – I've served with them in the police department, known them in the military and in other areas, that are deeply devoted to this country and the Constitution and to just being decent humans. But I don't think those are the prevailing characteristics of the average American. I think the average American is cowardly and selfish."

I linked this yesterday, but NYT's report on how Trump retconned January 6 is quite good.

Don Moynihan describes all the Republican failures to hold Trump to account.

There was nothing inevitable about where we are today. In key moments key Republicans said, essentially, that Jan. 6 was not a big deal, or even a positive event. It is hard not to conclude that the people who occupy key institutions in newer democracies were simply less willing to take those democracies for granted. By contrast, American democracy seems to be of such little value to many of its leaders that they did nothing to defend it.

Merrick Garland pays tribute to the investigators who've fought for accountability for January 6.

The public servants of the Justice Department have sought to hold accountable those criminally responsible for the January 6 attack on our democracy with unrelenting integrity. They have conducted themselves in a manner that adheres to the rule of law and honors our obligation to protect the civil rights and civil liberties of everyone in this country.

Tom Joscelyn and Norm Eisen catalog Kash Patel's conspiracy theories about January 6.

The role that the Proud Boys played instigating the January 6th attack has long been known. There is no credible evidence that suggests they were somehow duped into storming the Capitol. Yet Patel has repeatedly attempted to shift blame away from then President Donald Trump and rightwing extremists and onto the FBI.

For instance, Patel advocated for this conspiracy theory during a March 2023 interview with rightwing YouTuber Tim Pool. Brandishing his law enforcement credentials, Patel explained how he and others could “defeat the insurrection narrative” by pointing to the presence of FBI informants on January 6th.

“I think, as a former federal prosecutor and a public defender who defended a lot of these types of cases, what you need to show is whether or not the FBI and government agents were using undercover operatives and informants on the day of January 6th,” Patel said. Patel implied that the FBI's conspiracy was long in the making, arguing it takes “a six-month buildup” at a minimum to place operatives or informants in extremist groups.

CNN confirms earlier NYT reporting that prosecutors chased leads between Trump and the crime scene in 2021, which ended up being dry holes. (Note, CNN gets the dates on overt grand jury activity wrong: subpoenas started going out in May 2022 and the Executive Privilege fight began in June 2022.)