

OPSEC SHAMING MISSES THE TERRORISTS FOR THE FOREST OF BOZOS THEY HID BEHIND

It has been amusing reading the affidavits justifying the arrest of the January 6 insurrectionists to see how easy many of them made it for the FBI.



Yesterday's favorite example is Samuel Camargo. He posted a picture with some kind of trophy stolen from the Capitol building to his Instagram account and a confession that he had been in the riot on Facebook. After some of his associates reported him and then an FBI agent interviewed him, Camargo posted to his Facebook account claiming – notwithstanding the agent's view that, "Camargo [had become] uncooperative, questioning your affiant's loyalty to the constitution, and advised the interviewing agent he had no information to provide" – that he had

been cleared of any crime related to the insurrection.

It didn't work out that way.

InfoSec and cyber journalists are beginning to report on it, too. This happens to be one example, though I'm seeing a number of examples.

But while federal law enforcement has significant legal and technical resources at its disposal – like the ability to get warrants to phone or tech companies to see whose phones were in an area at a specific time, for instance – that's proven unnecessary for a number of people who have been charged so far.

It goes on to review the OpSec failures of nine different coup-conspirators (and Camargo is not one of them).

I get the sense of schadenfreude that the seeming certainty among insurrectionists that they would not only be victorious but their victory celebrations would be risk-free has instead led to their arrests. I'm especially sympathetic to communities of color for whom similar behavior might have gotten them killed.



But with a few exceptions, notably the identification of “zip tie guys” Larry Rendall Brock (by his ex-wife) and Eric Munschel, as well as the identification of Proud Boys member, “Spaz,” as

the retired Marine Dominic Pezzola (the latter of whom was arrested with the help of two seeming insider cooperating witnesses), few of the arrests so far have been of the most dangerous insurrectionists.

For example, even though the FBI posted this image of the person suspected of placing bombs at both the RNC and DNC on the day of the attack, there’s no public indication that the FBI has any leads on who it is.

According to former Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund, the discovery of the bombs distracted his leadership team from the growing riot at a key moment on January 6.

Sund told NPR on Friday that he increasingly believes the insurrection was part of a coordinated, planned attack on the Capitol. Specifically, Sund believes that reports of pipe bombs planted at the headquarter offices of the Republican National Committee and

the Democratic National Committee in southeast Washington were part of an effort to distract police as the violent mob approached the Capitol complex. The Justice Department said it has “no direct evidence of kill or capture teams” but is still looking into what kind of planning there was.

Sund said moments before those reports came through, he was in the operations center for Capitol Police and watching the rally with President Trump at the Ellipse.

“We had the volume up a little bit so I can kind of hear what was going on, listening for anything – anything that was going on down there,” Sund said. Then “we had to turn the volume down to, you know, again, to direct our attention toward the first pipe bomb that was over at the Republican National Committee.”

The FBI has said the first pipe bomb was reported at 1 p.m. ET at the RNC in southeast Washington, followed by a report of a second pipe bomb at the DNC at 1:15 p.m. A suspect in that case has not been identified.

“I think that’s all part of the concerted and coordinated efforts that led to the violent attack,” Sund said. “Those were diversionary tactics to pull resources away from the Hill in advance of that attack. I honestly believe that.”

Likewise, I’ve seen no indication that the FBI has leads on members of a team of men who quietly snaked through the loud mouths on the stairs and into the Capitol in military formation, even though they wore insignia from the Oath Keepers, one of the most closely watched right wing terrorist groups.

As President Donald Trump's supporters massed outside the Capitol last week and sang the national anthem, a line of men wearing olive-drab helmets and body armor trudged purposefully up the marble stairs in a single-file line, each man holding the jacket collar of the one ahead.

The formation, known as "Ranger File," is standard operating procedure for a combat team that is "stacking up" to breach a building – instantly recognizable to any U.S. soldier or Marine who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. It was a chilling sign that many at the vanguard of the mob that stormed the seat of American democracy either had military training or were trained by those who did.

[snip]

A close examination of the group marching up the steps to help breach the Capitol shows they wore military-style patches that read "MILITIA" and "OATHKEEPER." Others were wearing patches and insignias representing far-right militant groups, including the Proud Boys, the Three Percenters and various self-styled state militias.

Thus far, most of the charges involve illegal entry and interfering with cops. It would be easy for law enforcement to focus on the chum along with the murderers of Brian Sicknick, while concentrating less closely on the people whose good OpSec has not only allowed them to delay capture, but seems to have succeeded in ensuring the Capitol would be as vulnerable as possible. Worse still, with limitations on resources in the DC District Court – most notably a scarcity of grand jury time because of COVID – the flood of idiots entering the system might delay the pursuit of more dangerous terrorists.

Yes, let's have our fun. Let's use the ease with which some have been caught as a way to scare the terrorism tourists from showing up on Inauguration Day or in their state capitals, to say nothing of exposing them to shame in their communities.

But let's remember that, to a significant extent, the people taking selfies and trophies from the Capitol building were largely the camouflage behind which more dangerous men appear to have hidden.

Update: After I posted on Sunday, the government arrested several more more dangerous people. Most were all still identified via public videos. But working through these networks will likely lead to those who avoided closer video scrutiny.