

First, thank you for the opportunity to speak before the committee today and thank you all for your service to our country.

My name is Captain Carneysha C. Mendoza and I have served with the United States Capitol Police for almost 19 years. I take a lot of pride in my job. Prior to serving with the Capitol Police I served as an active duty soldier in the United States Army. My last duty station was split between the Pentagon and the Washington Area Criminal Investigation's Division. I've received various awards from the Army and the Capitol Police, including an award for recovery "efforts" during the Pentagon attack. Unfortunately, I didn't save any lives or anything, but there are certain lessons that always stuck with me after 9/11. One of those lessons is knowing the unthinkable is always possible; so be ready. So, I always take my job very seriously, as 9/11 is always in the back of my mind.

With the Capitol Police, I have served in various operational, administrative, and collateral assignments. I'm currently serving as a captain in the Special Operations Division where I have various responsibilities to include serving as a field commander as well as a field force commander when the Civil Disturbance Unit (CDU) is activated.

Throughout my career, I have responded to and managed various critical incidents and events from Congressional and member security related issues to shootings to armed carjackings. I have served as the CDU field force commander for multiple events, including the November 14th Million MAGA March.

In my career, I have been activated to work demonstrations with various controversial groups. I've been called some of the worst names, so many times that, I'm pretty numb to it now.

As an agency, we have trained for and handled numerous demonstrations. It's something we do on a regular basis and it's something I have always felt we've excelled at.

During the Million MAGA March, multiple white supremacist groups (to include the Proud Boys and others) converged at the Supreme Court along with counter groups. The Civil Disturbance Unit fought hard that day; physically breaking up fights and separating the various groups. I literally woke up the next day unable to move without being in pain.

On January 6th, we anticipated an event similar to the Million MAGA March that took place on November 14th, where we would likely face groups fighting among one another. Additional Civil Disturbance Units were activated. I was working the evening shift and had planned to report in at 3PM. I was prepared to work a 16-hour shift and assume Field Force Commander should the event continue into the evening and overnight shifts.

It was approximately 1:30 in the afternoon. I was at home eating with my 10 year old, spending time with him before what I knew would likely be a long day, when a fellow captain contacted me and told me things were bad, and that I needed to respond in. I literally dropped everything to respond in to work a bit early.

I arrived within 15 minutes and I contacted dispatch to ask what active scenes we had. I was advised that things were “pretty bad.” I asked where assistance was needed and was advised of six active scenes.

There was an explosive device at the Democratic National Committee Building (DNC), a second explosive device at the Republican National Committee Building (RNC), and large hostile groups at different locations outside the Capitol Building. I advised the dispatcher I would respond to the explosive device at the DNC, since that building was closest to where I was at the time.

En route, I heard officers at the Capitol Building calling for immediate assistance. So, I proceeded past the DNC to the Capitol.

As I arrived to the East Front Plaza of the Capitol, I heard an officer yell there was a breach at the Rotunda Door and I heard various other officers calling for assistance in multiple locations throughout the building.

Many of the doors to the building were not accessible due to the size of the crowd. I was able to enter a lower level door with the assistance of a Capitol Division officer.

Once inside the Memorial Door, I immediately noticed a large crowd of possibly 200 rioters yelling in front of me. Since I was alone, I turned to go back out so I could enter through another door, but within the few seconds it took to walk back to the door I entered, there were already countless rioters outside banging on the door. I had no choice but to proceed through the violent crowd already in the building.

I made my way through the crowd by yelling and pushing people out of my way until I saw Capitol Police Civil Disturbance Units in riot gear holding a line in the hallway, to keep rioters from penetrating deeper into the building. I immediately jumped in line with them to assist them with holding the crowd of rioters.

At some point, my right arm got wedged between the rioters and railing along the wall. A CDU sergeant pulled my arm free and had he not, I’m certain it would have been broken.

Shortly after that, an officer was pushed and fell to the floor. I assisted the officer to a safer location and got back in line. At some point, the crowd breached the line officers worked so hard to maintain. Civil Disturbance Units began to re-deploy to keep rioters from accessing other areas of the building.

I proceeded to the Rotunda where I noticed a heavy smoke-like residue and smelled what I believed to be military grade CS gas – a familiar smell. It was mixed with fire extinguisher spray deployed by the rioters. The rioters continued to deploy CS inside the rotunda.

Officers received a lot of gas exposure, which is a lot worse inside the building versus outside, because there’s nowhere for it to go. I received chemical burns to my face that still have not healed to this day.

I witnessed officers being knocked to the ground and hit with various objects that were thrown by rioters. I was unable to determine exactly what those objects were.

I immediately assumed command in the Rotunda and called for additional assets. Officers began to push the crowd out the door. After a couple of hours, officers were able to clear the Rotunda, but had to physically hold the door closed because it had been broken by the rioters. Officers begged me for relief as they were unsure of how long they could physically hold the door with the crowd continually banging on the door attempting to regain entry. Eventually, officers were able to secure the door with furniture and other objects.

I'm proud of the officers I worked with on January 6. They fought extremely hard. I know some said the battle lasted three hours, but according to my Fitbit, I was in the exercise zone for 4 hours and 9 minutes, and many officers were in the fight before I even arrived.

I am extremely proud of the United States Capitol Police. I'm especially proud of the officers, who are the backbone of this agency and who carry out day-to-day operations. I know with teamwork, we can move forward.

The night of January 7 into the very early morning hours of my birthday, January 8, I spent at the hospital comforting the family of our fallen officer and met with the medical examiner's office, prior to working with fellow officers to facilitate a motorcade to transport Officer Sicknick from the hospital.

Of the multitude of events I've worked in my nearly 19-year career on the Department, this was by far the worst of the worst. We could have had 10 times the amount of people working with us and I still believe this battle would have been just as devastating.

As an American and an Army veteran, it's sad to see us attacked by our fellow citizens. I'm sad to see the unnecessary loss of life sustained, I'm sad to see the impact this has had on Capitol Police officers, and I'm sad to see the impact this event has had on our agency and on our country.

Although things are still raw, and moving forward will be a difficult process, I look forward to healing and moving forward together as an agency and as a country.

In closing, I want to acknowledge Chief Sund's leadership. I served under his command as a watch commander for three years and was able to personally see his hard work and dedication. He was fully dedicated to the United States Capitol Police and he cared about every employee on the Department. I often hear employees on the Department praise his leadership and his ability to inspire others. He has made a significant impact on our agency.

Thank you.