

EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

The Bulletin
AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPERHeidi Wright Publisher
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Disgrace at the Capitol

A mob stormed the Capitol intent on disrupting the legitimate transfer of power and incited by the president of the United States.

It was a pioneering event dragging the nation in a direction it should never go. It's a disgrace. We are heartsick.

At a moment of maximum danger, President Trump then chose to provoke, unyielding in his nonsensical claims that he won the election. He told rioters who occupied the Capitol: "We love you. You're very special." After that, it seemed almost vulgar for him to ask protesters to go home. He should have urged law enforcement to find any who committed crimes and prosecute them.

The mob heard: "We love you. You are very special."

The results of the presidential election were met with a steadily

stoked cloud of legal challenges made of vapor, not substance. Democrats and Republicans said the challenges failed. There was absolutely no justification to seize the Capitol. None. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell warned if the election was overturned, "democracy would enter a death spiral."

This country has stood down terrible enemies and terrible events in the past. We have great faith it will do so again now. Our freedoms will not long endure if elections can be decided by mobs.

As for President Trump, it is not hard to know his heart. We cannot wait to see him go.

Police chief is right to want more health professionals to improve police response

What law enforcement in Bend should look like gets a lot of interest. So when Bend Police Chief Mike Krantz talked about it this week we paid attention.

Krantz gave a presentation to the county's public safety coordinating council. The council is made up of representatives across the county's justice system who meet together to help solve problems. Wells Ashby, presiding judge for the Deschutes County Circuit Court, leads the meetings. District Attorney John Hummel attends. There's representation from law enforcement, juvenile justice, city and county officials and more. The meetings are public.

Krantz was giving a presentation about a Bend community survey and listening session on policing. He wasn't there to lay out his vision for law enforcement in Bend. He did mention a few things, though, that could be important.

He wants more health professionals to serve alongside police. Bend has a handful of officers dedicated full-time to what is called its community response team. They are dispatched to certain calls by 911 and have more training in how to deal with mental illness and addiction. Those officers have one licensed, professional counselor embedded with them who responds to calls with a police officer. Krantz would like to see a counselor embedded with every member of the response team, not just one. Of course, that

would take money. Does the new Bend City Council want to make that investment?

Krantz also believes his department must do a better job of talking about what it does and how it works. Other officers in the department have mentioned that to us, as well. When there are incidents in the community, it can be easy for some to immediately assume the worst about the police if there is not a baseline of understanding. For instance, do people in the community even know about the community response team? Do people have any idea about police training and rules? The department does have a public information officer staffed by a police officer. Does it need more? Does that person need to be a police officer?

Many people have different ideas about what the police chief's advisory council should be, Krantz said. Diverse. Independent. Transparent. Those are all words people have used. There's also been some discussion that there should be some sort of local, formal oversight authority over the police. No final decisions have been made.

There are finite limits to what police can do with increasing calls involving mental health and addiction. Police can't solve that by themselves, Krantz said. Police can de-escalate. Police can put a Band-Aid on some problems. Police can help. Solutions take a community approach, he said. And he's right.



My Nickel's Worth

Bentz made a mistake

Bentz said in a statement Dec. 15, "I have joined many of my colleagues in asking for a congressional investigation and review into what has happened in states where election irregularities have been observed."

That is his first mistake, and he made the decision over 2 weeks before being sworn into his position as U.S. representative for the 2nd District of Oregon. Apparently, Rep. Bentz wasn't planning on taking his oath to uphold the Constitution seriously. He has aligned himself with a number of right-wing politicians who are thinking about their careers' and not their constituents. There are no proven election irregularities — yes, there have been many allegations, and none of them have been substantiated.

Vice President Pence, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and former U.S. Rep. for Oregon's 2nd district Greg Walden have all stated that the November election was a fair election. Our country is in the middle of a pandemic, and we need our elected officials to be working together. The far right is far wrong, Mr. Bentz, please work to help your district and not just establishing yourself with the far wrong.

—Joe Craig, Bend

Subverting an election

Welcome Cliff Bentz. Your participation in the GOP attempt to subvert a fair and legitimate election is a choice to sanction attacks on our democracy. It is clear now and should have been clear before this, that joining in this act has fueled the domestic

terrorist attack on our Capitol. To call it a "demonstration gone bad" as you have, is deeply irresponsible just as it is to ignore that the POTUS has encouraged violence for years.

Your record as a legislator has started with a significant choice to align with party leadership that has welcomed and propagated support from the lawless, the pathologically angry and the violent. In contrast, Mitt Romney provides rational and honest GOP leadership. Mr. Romney very clearly describes your choice of leadership and accountability in this situation when he asks "Has ambition so eclipsed principle?" There is a way forward through the deep divisions in our state and our country. As Romney says: "The best way we can show respect for the voters who are upset is by telling them the truth. That is the burden, and the duty, of leadership." Please tell us the truth Mr. Bentz.

—Jean Sullivan Carlton, Bend

Bentz should be ashamed

Rep. Cliff Bentz should, at the very least, be ashamed he and other Republicans fell under Trump's spell and were more interested in their personal gain than in their constituents' interests. It is time to denounce Trump's treasonous speech and actions as well as call for his removal from office immediately through Article 25.

—Bonnie Kenner, Redmond

Promoting lies brought Capitol assault

The insurrection Wednesday was the inevitable result of promoting Trump's lies that the election was

stolen. The news media somewhat misstate the case when they call the rioters at the Capitol "Trump supporters." Rather, they are Trump believers — they believe themselves to be patriots; they sincerely believe the presidential election was stolen. Their love of country is being manipulated by people who know better, such as our congressional Rep. Cliff Bentz. Mr. Bentz, like myself, is an attorney. He is perfectly capable of reading the numerous court opinions rejecting Trump's challenges to the Pennsylvania election; he certainly understands they had no merit. Instead of telling his constituents the truth, he has knowingly and deliberately affirmed Trump's lies by voting to question the Pennsylvania vote.

This insurrection, this loss of life, was the inevitable result of such conduct. Mr. Bentz, and all the other Trump supporters who persist in perpetrating this fraud, have blood on their hands.

—Karon Johnson, Bend

COVID and Mayor Endicott

Thank you, Richard Lance, for your "My Nickel's Worth" on Jan. 7. You question how seriously Redmond's Mayor George Endicott takes this COVID-19 health crisis. I think it best to let Mayor Endicott answer that in his own words. In a recent Bulletin, Mayor Endicott is quoted as saying, "In some respects, losing your livelihood is akin to losing your life." Too bad we can't get a response to that quote from some of the many Oregonians that have lost their lives to COVID-19.

—Carla Gullickson, Redmond

Letters policy

We welcome your letters. Letters should be limited to one issue, contain no more than 250 words and include the writer's signature, phone number and address for verification. We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject poetry, personal attacks, form letters, letters submitted elsewhere and those appropriate for other sections of The Bulletin. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

Guest columns

Your submissions should be between 550 and 650 words; they must be signed; and they must include the writer's phone number and address for verification. We edit submissions for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject those submitted elsewhere. Locally submitted columns alternate with national columnists and commentaries. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

How to submit

Please address your submission to either My Nickel's Worth or Guest Column and mail, fax or email it to The Bulletin. Email submissions are preferred.

Email: letters@bendbulletin.com

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Editorials reflect the views of The Bulletin's editorial board, Publisher Heidi Wright, Editor Gerry O'Brien and Editorial Page Editor Richard Coe. They are written by Richard Coe.

One image from the Capitol riot highlighted smugness

BY MONICA HESSE

The Washington Post

I don't know what the lasting images are going to be from Wednesday's breach of the U.S. Capitol, but the one seared in my mind is the man casually lounging behind a desk in Nancy Pelosi's office. I wrote her a nasty note, put my feet up on her desk and scratched my balls, the man, 60-year-old Richard "Bigo" Barnett, later boasted to Matthew Rosenberg of the New York Times. The note, he recalled: "Nancy, Bigo was here you bitch."

As his fellow insurrectionists roamed the complex breaking windows, scaling balconies and attempting to replace American flags with Trump flags, Barnett somehow meandered through the maze of corridors into the House speaker's personal office. Once there, he settled into the position in which he was photographed: His booted foot was propped atop the desk — which wasn't actually Pelosi's. He leaned back in the chair. With one finger he proudly gestured to himself, as a fisherman might

while posing with the big catch. In his other hand, his cellphone. At that moment an Agence France-Presse photographer snapped the picture.

The photo was arresting for a few reasons, but primarily this: Violence is easy enough to picture in a coup. The heaving bodies, the smashed glass, the chants, the rants — all of those are the easily identifiable markers of civil unrest that we see when CNN covers Belarus, or apparently, Washington.

What you never picture is the smugness. The gleeful entitlement on individual faces.

The Trump supporters who stormed the Capitol believed were owed this opportunity to terrorize their elected representatives. They were allowed. They were the true guardians of democracy, not the officials whom voters had chosen for the job. After a summer of hearing their leader harangue Black Lives Matter protesters for "lawlessness," the rioters broke a dozen laws without batting an eye and claimed that it was their

right and duty. And then? They were praised for it. "We love you," President Donald Trump told his supporters by video, in an anemic feint at quelling the violence after a woman, who died later, had been shot in the Capitol. "You're very special."

In six words, the president managed to encapsulate and exacerbate the problem. The men and women who had come to storm the Capitol had spent five years being told by their leader that they were very special — that their distrust and anger were very special. They were more special than the immigrants Trump said would take their jobs, more special than the "low-income people" he said would ruin their suburbs, more special than the pollworkers he said would steal their elections and, above all else, more special than the liberals he said would destroy their country.

Their country. He took their grief, their grievances and their woundedness and he sold them a fantasy in which all of it was those evil people's fault. He deemed

them special snowflakes, every one.

Indoctrination like that doesn't go away with an election, no matter how sincere President-elect Joe Biden sounded when he went on television and insisted that the scenes from the Capitol "do not represent who we are." With apologies to the president-elect, they apparently do represent some of us, and we are well beyond the point of healing platitudes.

We are in for a reckoning that is going to last for years, or until we can drum in the lesson that should have been taught in preschool: Nobody is more special than anyone else.

I'm not sure we can do it.

I don't hold this pessimistic view because people were angry at the Capitol. I don't even believe it because they stormed the Capitol.

I believe it because of what happened when they got inside.

Did they release a detailed manifesto to the news media? Did they set up an immediate shadow government, with a mock vote?

No. They did none of this. They instead aimlessly wandered the halls, taking selfies with law enforcement officers, poking around, grabbing stuff. Some of them were shirtless or in lounge wear, like night owls who had wandered into their own kitchen for a snack rather than members of a mob that had stormed the U.S. Capitol.

And Richard Barnett found a desk that he believed belonged to the most powerful woman in the country and smugly kicked up his boots between her coffee mug and her bowl of paper clips. Bigo was here you bitch.

Lawmakers have rushed to explain that these people don't represent America. Frankly, I don't think these people want to represent America — a country full of immigrants and liberals and low-income people, a majority of whom voted to boot Trump out of Washington. They couldn't represent America if they tried. I think they just want to act like they own the place.

■ Monica Hesse is a columnist for The Washington Post's Style section.