

Professor on Jan 6 Insurrection Narrative: They Don't Look Like Trump Supporters

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This is a tale of two narratives, both by the same man.

The first is a fairly straightforward academic paper, "[American Face of Insurrection](#)," by University of Chicago Political Science Professor Robert A. Pape, saying those breaching the Capitol January 6 were not crazy right-wing kooks, but were closer to the mainstream.

The second is an article, "[The January 6 Insurrectionists Aren't Who You Think They Are](#)," in Foreign Policy by Pape that says, given the mainstream dimension of those involved at the Capitol, the insurrectionist next door is working with the Republican Party to "rationalize political violence in the future," as in the upcoming midterm elections.

It is quite a tale. And speaking of telling tales, before we begin, I want to write a few words on words. Words mean things. As a result, when I write the word "[insurrection](#)" or "insurrectionists," I am quoting or paraphrasing what someone has said.

Because the claim that an insurrection against the United States of America occurred on January 6, 2021, is a lie.

It was an incursion, a riot, a false-flag operation, political theater, a trap for conservatives, a demonstration that got out of hand, an orchestrated media event or whatever. [You choose](#). Or be agnostic about it, if you wish.

In the wake of ongoing [BLM](#) and [antifa](#) rioting and open borders, it was not an insurrection.

That said, Professor Pape's paper is an analysis of the characteristics of 716 "individuals [who] have been charged with illegally entering the Capitol or Capitol grounds on January 6."

Pape notes a stereotype leftist's hold of the participants in the event, quoting from an article [The Atlantic](#):

"Here they were, a coalition of the willing: deadbeat dads, YouPorn enthusiasts, slow students, and MMA fans. They had heard the rebel yell, packed up their Confederate flags and Trump banners, and GPS-ed their way to Washington.

"After a few wrong turns, they had pulled into the swamp with bellies full of beer and Sausage McMuffins, maybe a little high on Adderall, ready to get it done."

Not so, Pape wrote. Most arrested were under age 55, many were business owners, had college degrees and came from urban, not rural, counties that voted for Joe Biden in 2020.

He based his research on the demographics of those arrested with the demographics of 1) individuals arrested in recent years as “right-wing violent offenders,” 2) the U.S. electorate in general, and 3) Trump supporters.

In his paper, Pape and his associates found “The insurrectionists closely reflect the U.S. electorate on most socio-economic variables and, hence, come from the mainstream, not just the fringe of society.”

And, if they weren’t involved in orchestrating the event, what might give Democrats pause is Pape wrote that the January 6 incursion “appears driven by Millennials and Gen Xers.”

As conservative University of California at Berkeley Professor Steven Hayward noted in the [Powerline blog](#): “And if the energy of the so-called ‘insurrection’ is mostly among younger people, well it means liberals are in for several tough decades ahead.” While all arrested were Trump activists, there was hardly a baby boomer to be found – only 15 percent were over age 55, compared to 49 percent between ages 35 to 54 and 36 percent under age 35, Pape said.

Pape’s analysis could trace about 500 occupations of the 716 arrested. Significantly, 26 percent were business owners and another 10 percent described themselves as self-employed.

That means more than a third of those arrested don’t fit what might be the stereotype of an individual in a high-pressure [demonstration](#) – someone unemployed, underemployed or a student.

Indeed, the unemployment rate among those arrested following the January 6 event was 7 percent, close to the national rate of 6 percent and much lower than the 25 percent of people arrested as “right-wing extremists” in other situations from 2015 to 2020.

While past arrests of “right-wing extremists” found 48 percent belonged to militia-type organizations, of those arrested January 6 there were 51 Proud Boys, 24 Oath Keepers, 18 Three Percenters, along with nine belonging to other groups.

Pape doesn’t touch claims that FBI informants may have been involved. He does note that there were no arrests of members of antifa and says nothing about BLM.

While the general narrative is that those arrested January 6 came from the reddest states, that’s not true, according to Pape. Rather, “Most insurrectionists came from counties that Biden won. Most insurrectionists came from counties that are less white than the national county average. Most insurrectionists came from urban, not rural, counties. Most insurrectionists do not come from counties with higher than average unemployment,” he said.

Pape suggested his “insurrectionists” came from counties with a declining white population. That decline “has a galvanizing effect, and counties that have had higher rates of non-Hispanic white population decline in the last half-decade are likely to produce insurrectionists at a higher rate.”

As Berkeley’s Hayward noted, “It suggests that the Biden Administration’s relentless drive for open borders is going to drive a lot more mainstream Americans into opposition.”

For the most part, Pape’s paper is straightforward in presenting its findings, although, unlike a lot of academic papers, it’s easy to read. Presumably, that’s because Pape wants Democrat leaders to actually read it, rather than sinking in unintelligible multisyllable academic word traps.

But the foreword on his paper gives his agenda away by using language like, “The violent assault on the U.S. Capitol...is a major act of domestic political violence the like of which is unfamiliar in recent U.S. history.”

Pape also wrote: “It is also vital to understand who we are dealing with in the new movement and targeting pre-2021 far-right organizations will not solve the problem.

“Political violence coming from a new mass movement requires new political solutions,” he said.

That’s a summary of the first of Pape’s narratives. To find out more of what he’s saying, we need to go to the second narrative, where he steps away from the charade of academic neutrality.

In the Foreign Policy article published, of course, on the first anniversary of the January 6 incursion, Pape reiterates that the old way of thinking about right-wing extremists no longer applies.

“The insurrectionist movement is mainstream, not simply confined to the political fringe,” he said.

Of those arrested for the Capitol incursion, “more than half are business owners, including CEOs, or from white-collar occupations, including doctors, lawyers, architects, and accountants.

“...In other words, these were people who had something to lose when they went to Washington and carried out this violence,” Pape wrote.

Besides his paper on January 6, Pape cited research from the University of Chicago’s [Project on Security and Threats](#), conducted last summer and fall, that estimated millions of Americans believed Joe Biden was not a legitimate president and that “the use of force to restore Donald Trump to the presidency is justified.

“With a margin of error of 2.9 percent this insurrectionist movement could be as small as 13 million or as large as 28 million.”

Note that Pape said believing something makes one an insurrectionist, whether acted upon or not.

Using a figure of 21 million, Pape said these people “are active and dangerous; an estimated 2 million of them have attended a protest in the past 12 months, 4 million have prior military service, and 8 million own guns.”

Do you see where this is going? Have you attended any protests, [comrade?](#) Hmmmm? Marched against abortion last week? Or maybe against rezoning for a new commercial district in your neighborhood? Are you a veteran? And do you own one of those caliber-measured devices-that-must-not-be-named?

And there’s more. Despite leftist criticism that conservatives are captive to the thoughts of conservative media (42 percent of those with so-called “insurrectionist sentiments” had as their main media source Fox News, Newsmax or One America News Network), 32 percent watch CNN and MSNBC, Pape said. Only 10 percent, he said, get their news mainly from right-wing social media like Gab or Telegram.

“Fringe social media matters,” he wrote in his FP article, “But the insurrectionist movement is mainly consuming mainstream media.”

Pape’s research on January 6 and the surveys conducted in mid-to-late 2021 bring him to these conclusions:

[Insurrectionists are mainstream.](#) And they’re everywhere. And they have diabolical plans for 2022.

“The United States is now moving into a highly volatile 2022 election season. The insurrectionist movement is akin to a stockpile of combustible material, much like a vast amount of dry wood that can be set off from a lightning strike or a spark, causing a wildfire.

“The 2022 election season is a tinderbox, where there could be many sparks at the local levels made even worse by the recent changes in election laws in Georgia, Texas, and other states where the counting of the vote has been greatly politicized.”

Democrats are already [telegraphing](#) that [Republicans](#) will steal the midterm elections. After all, requiring that voters show ID, be properly registered, [be citizens](#) and demonstrate residence other than a cemetery show evil aims on the part of the GOP.

So if Democrats get trounced, they can cry foul and sue for recounts and do what it takes to do what they know so well: steal elections.

And Professor Pape is paving the way, preparing us for the insurrectionists at the local precinct.

“...Many millions of Americans sympathize with the rioters who attacked the U.S. Capitol,” he has said.

Of course, what Pape does not acknowledge is that every conservative individual commenting on the events of January 6 disavows what happened. We all do.

Having reservations about how [the 2020 election](#) was conducted or pipe-dreaming about how malfeasance might be remedied does not constitute insurrection. And, given his claim of the mainstreaming of protest at the Capitol, if Pape’s analysis is correct, maybe it reflects that government officials have lost the consent of the governed.

That’s being remedied, to be sure, at the local level, as voters — including those in liberal districts — are questioning decisions of their school boards, public health policymakers and elected officials up to the level of President of the United States.

Nobody’s calling for violence.

The people are getting ready to vote, and to make sure their votes count.

That’s not insurrection. That’s America.

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