

POLITICS

# Assistant Capitol Police chief accused by Rep. Massie of thwarting congressional J6 pipe-bomb investigation retires

STEVE BAKER & JOSEPH M. HANNEMAN  
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Ashan M. Benedict blocked two USCP officers tied to DNC bomb discovery from testifying before U.S. House panel, Rep. Thomas Massie charges.

Ashan M. Benedict, the assistant U.S. Capitol Police chief who a congressman alleges prevented two special agents involved in the discovery of a pipe bomb at the Democratic National Committee building from testifying before a U.S. House panel, has retired from the department, Blaze News has learned.

Rumors of Benedict’s retirement came one day after Blaze News published an investigation showing unexplained activity by the Capitol Police officers who discovered that bomb, who were overseen by Benedict. The announcement surprised some at the Capitol Police because his contract with the department was set to expire at the end of the month, on Dec. 1. Benedict came to the Capitol Police on Dec. 4, 2023, as assistant chief for protective and intelligence operations, which includes counter-surveillance teams. He later became assistant chief for standards and training operations.

## ‘They never looked for a third or fourth or fifth pipe bomb.’

Before he joined the USCP, Benedict was the DNC pipe-bomb incident commander for the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. In that post, he oversaw ATF’s response to the J6 pipe-bomb threat.

Capitol Police Chief Michael Sullivan distributed a bulletin Monday, Nov. 24, announcing Benedict’s retirement after less than two years with the USCP. Word had already circulated around the department on the Wednesday before that Benedict was leaving, two sources told Blaze News.

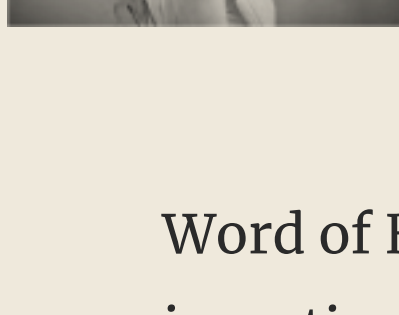
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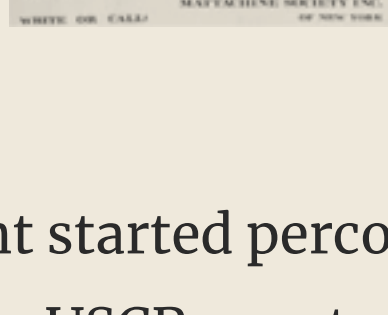
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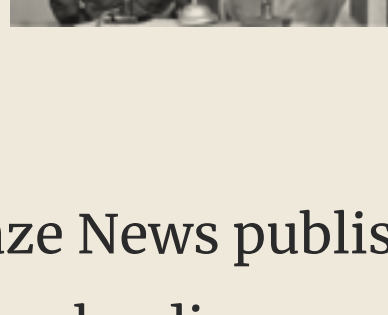
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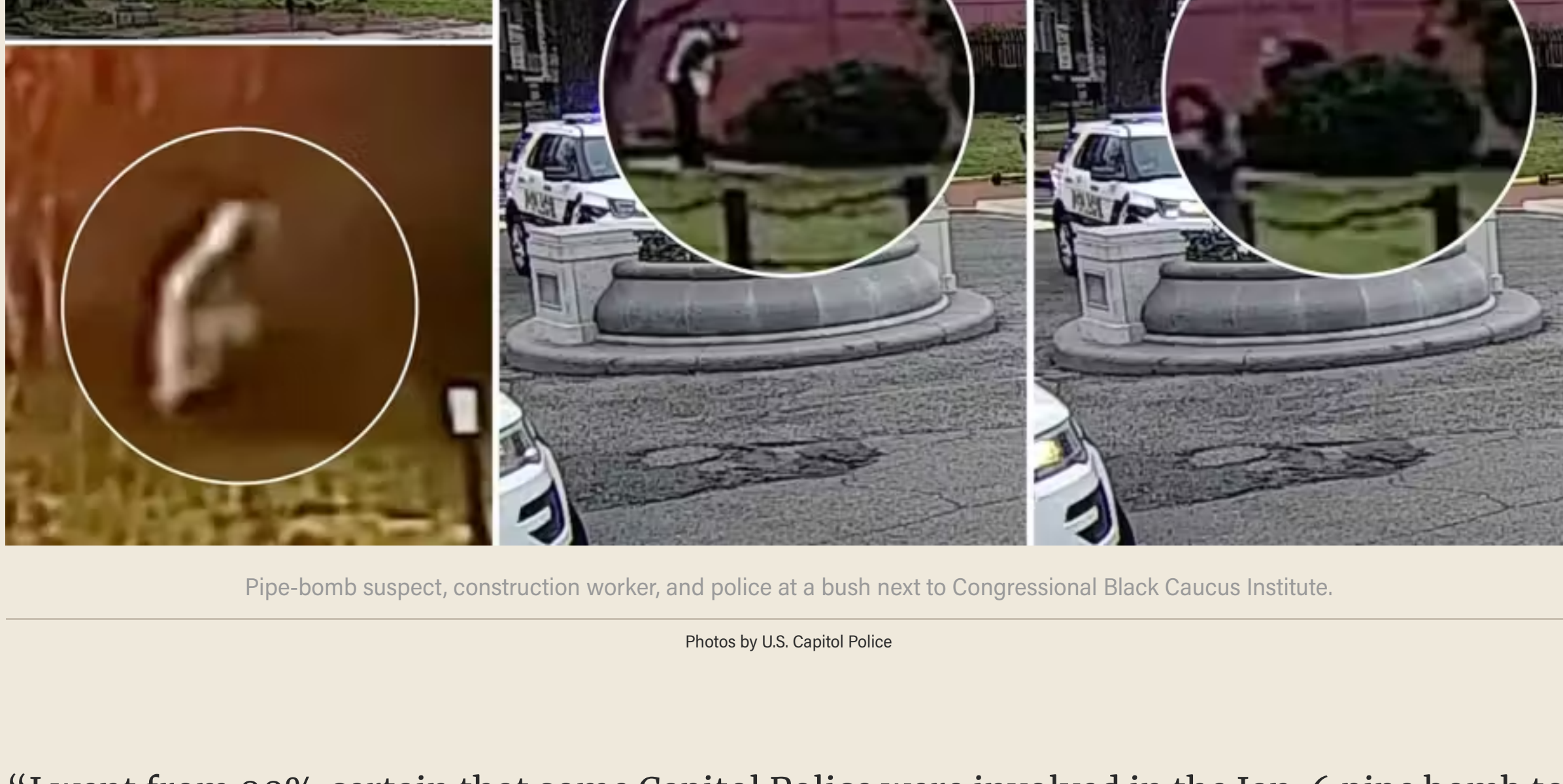


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Word of Benedict’s retirement started percolating a day after Blaze News published an investigation showing the two USCP counter-surveillance agents who discovered the DNC bomb on Jan. 6, 2021, seemingly acting in a suspicious manner. The cops parked their car that afternoon and walked straight past a pipe bomb to another location, which Blaze News’ investigation discovered that the pipe-bomb suspect visited the night before. Then the officers returned to the DNC building, where one of them discovered the device.



“I went from 90% certain that some Capitol Police were involved in the Jan. 6 pipe bomb to 95% certain, and now I’m at 99% certain after this new story,” Rep. Thomas Massie (R-Ky.) told Blaze News last week in an interview with Steve Baker broadcast on Matt Kibbe’s “Free the People” podcast and posted to X.

“I’m doing this on probability. The probability may even be higher than that.”

The officers were not seen searching any other areas for explosives in any of the extensive video available and reviewed by Blaze News, and they did not continue searching after the DNC device was found at 1:05 p.m. on Jan. 6.

The USCP has since confirmed that one of its agents found the pipe bomb near the DNC park bench, but there is no video showing that because key cameras were turned away from the DNC building at the time. The fact that the DNC bomb was discovered by plainclothes Capitol Police officers, and not merely a pair of passersby, was not made public until Blaze News broke that news in January 2024.

Following that story, Massie told Blaze News he was determined to interview the agents, but did not get much cooperation from Capitol Police. Massie referred to the agents as “man-bun guy” and “backpack guy” (the one who discovered the bomb). By this time, the agents were under Benedict’s command.



The Capitol Police never made “backpack guy” available to Massie, but on Jan. 30, 2024, they did eventually send his partner, accompanied by Benedict, to speak with the congressman in a meeting that was not recorded or transcribed.

“So they came over to my office, but not ‘backpack guy,’” Massie said. “‘Man-bun guy’ came over, and he had a handler, who would often interrupt and answer questions for him.”

## ‘They just kind of wander off. Their job was done. They had found the second pipe bomb.’

Two congressional investigators sat in on the meeting alongside Benedict, the police officer, and Massie. “In the conversation with the counter-surveillance officer in my office, Ashan Benedict would frequently interrupt the officer, answer before the officer could reply, or qualify the officer’s answers,” Massie told Blaze News. “There was an effort by our committee staff to get Benedict to sit for a transcribed interview, but he successfully evaded that effort.”

Massie asked the agent who sent him and his partner to the DNC building, as opposed to some other high-visibility potential target.

“How did you know to go look there?” Massie said he asked. “And it wasn’t a real good answer, something like, ‘That was my sector’ or something. You know, ‘We’re assigned sectors, and that’s just the sector that I look in.’”

According to the January 2025 report of the Committee on House Administration Subcommittee on Oversight, three two-man Capitol Police counter-surveillance teams were dispatched to look for other bombs after discovery of the Capitol Hill Club device.

Massie said he showed a video to the men, depicting the slow, nonchalant response from the Secret Service, Metropolitan Police Department, and Capitol Police to the discovery of a bomb that potentially could have killed them all.

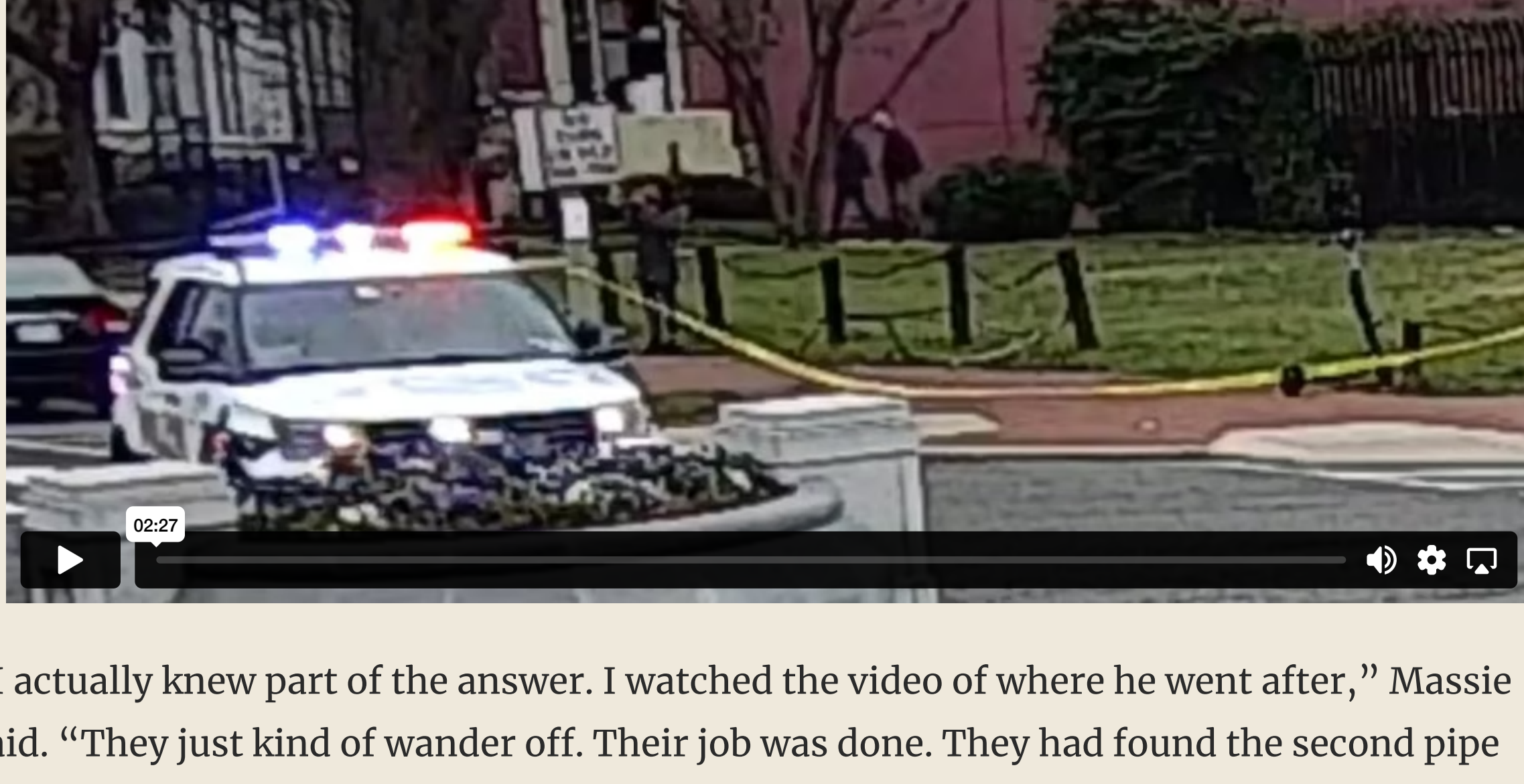
## ‘He never told me about this other bush.’

“Look, there’s pedestrians still walking around, and this is allegedly a pipe bomb,” Massie said. “And that’s when his handler [Benedict] stepped in and said, ‘Well, you don’t want to alarm people when you have a lot of crowds. You know, when you find a bomb or something, you can’t yell, ‘Bomb!’ You gotta just play it cool.’”

Video showed there were no crowds near the DNC bomb site. Occasional pedestrian traffic continued on the sidewalk within feet of the bomb, and vehicle traffic was not immediately stopped on nearby streets. Commuter trains continued to rumble over the adjacent train trestle for 15 minutes after discovery of the bomb.

Massie said his next question “elicited the oddest capital language I’ve ever seen in a meeting and no real answer.”

“Well, so then you obviously went looking for another pipe bomb, right?” Massie recalled. “You found two of them within 30 minutes. You must believe the whole place is riddled with them if you’re finding them this quickly.”



“I actually knew part of the answer. I watched the video of where he went after,” Massie said. “They just kind of wander off. Their job was done. They had found the second pipe bomb. They never looked for a third or fourth or fifth pipe bomb, and they didn’t have an answer to me for why the search for pipe bombs was over once they found the second pipe bomb. No answer. Weirdest meeting in the world.”

Massie said he still wants to see the officer who actually found the bomb and interview him, his partner, and Benedict under oath for transcribed interviews. “Those need to be transcribed interviews. They need to be sworn in. I feel very strongly about that,” he said.

“But the reality is the FBI should be doing these things.”

“How did they know exactly where to look, including the place [Congressional Black Caucus Institute bush] where the pipe bomber tried to place a bomb?” Massie asked. “It was police, it was Capitol Hill Police that found these bombs, and they got there. But ... I hope they went and bought lottery tickets after finding these, after going to these two locations.

“But when you take them all together, and the fact that I got to interview these, it’s at least one of these guys [who discovered the bomb], and he never told me about this other bush,” Massie said. “He didn’t have answers for why they didn’t look for more bombs after they found the second one. And then we’ve got the ATF person in charge of the bomb stuff happening on Jan. 6 is now at Capitol Police handling the interview?”

Sources have said the two special agents, who are now at Blaze News, are still with the Capitol Police. The one who discovered the bomb is now the Capitol Police’s liaison to the FBI — the agency charged with investigating the pipe bombs. His partner, who accompanied Benedict to meet with Massie, still works in the intelligence section.

Benedict’s retirement is just the latest disclosure in two months of developments in the long-unresolved pipe-bomb case.

Questions and requests for comment sent to Benedict and the two officers were not returned in time for publication.

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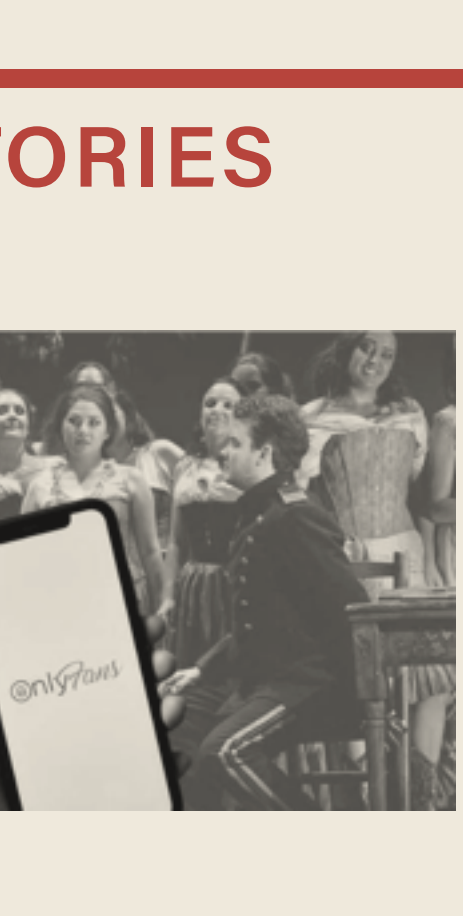
58 Comments



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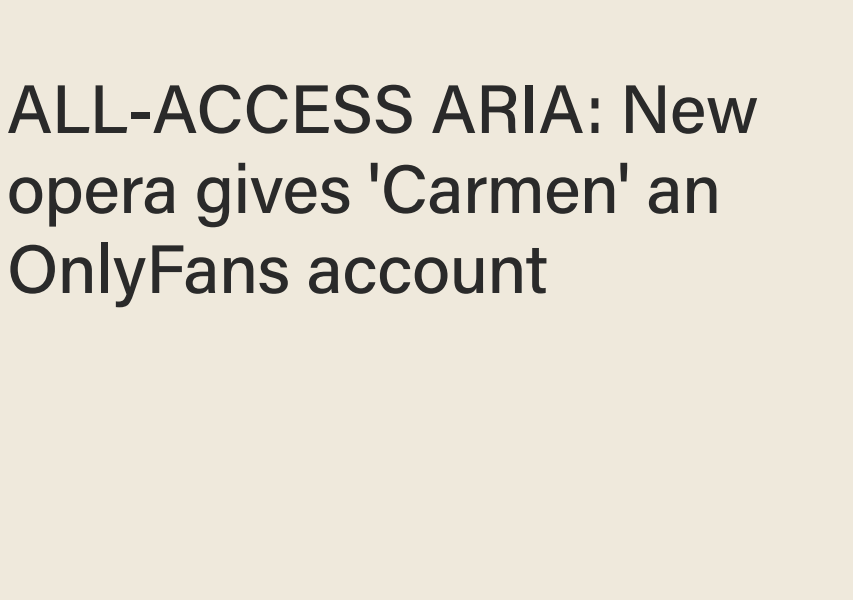


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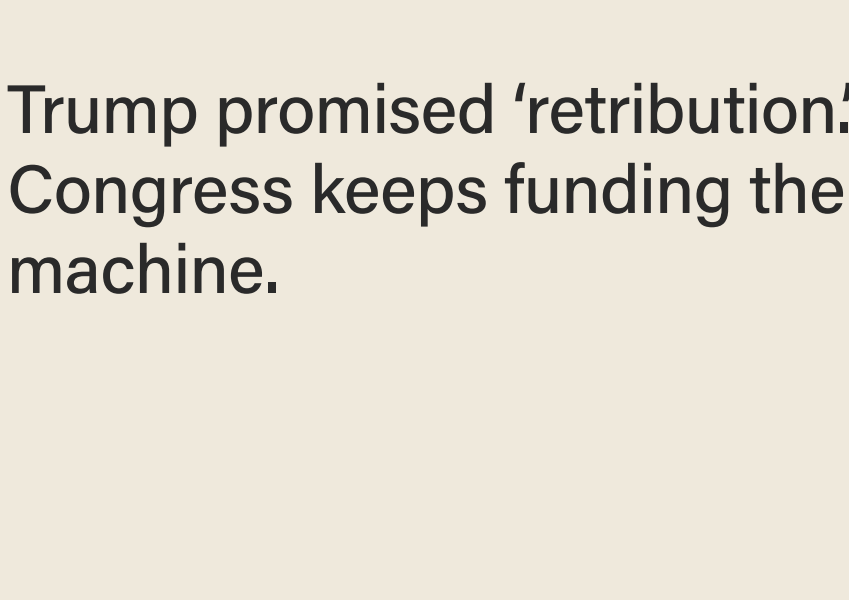
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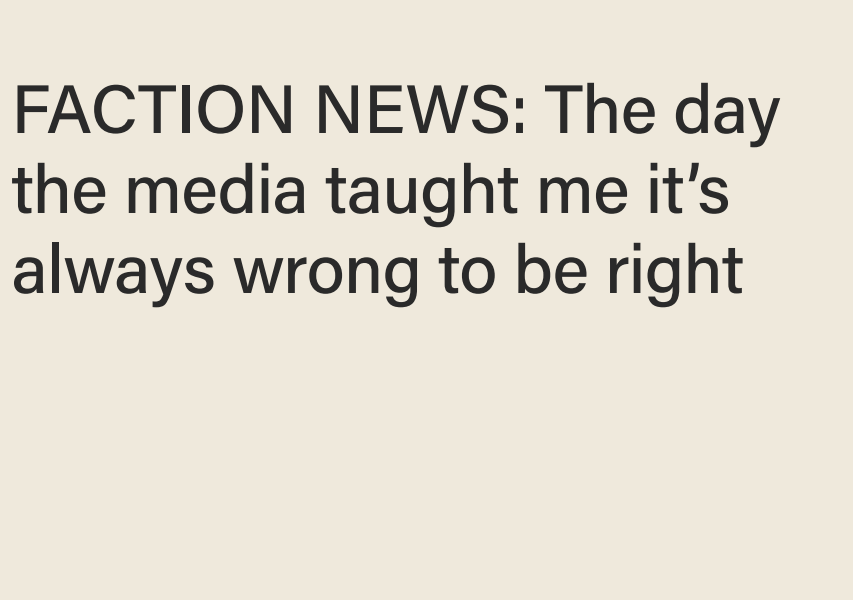
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