

# [***The Hollywood Actor Who's Trying to Change the "Insurrection" Narrative***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKR-TYJ1-DY68-12HD-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 1730 words

**Byline:** Paul Bond

**Highlight:** President Biden says the "truth" of the Capitol riot should not be buried. Actor Nick Searcy agrees, and has made a third documentary on the topic.

**Body**

Actor Nick Searcy is best known for his role on the TV series *Justified* and, more recently, he starred alongside Nicolas Cage in the western, *The Old Way*, now streaming on [*Netflix*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/netflix?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships).

He was also at the Capitol on January 6, 2021, and his passion since then is to challenge the narrative that it was a violent insurrection meant to overturn the election of President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/joe-biden?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and install [*Donald Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/donald-trump?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) for a second consecutive term.

Hence, he starred last year in *Police State*, a [*Dinesh D'Souza*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/dinesh-dsouza?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) documentary largely about the arrests of January 6 "peaceful protesters." Prior to that he produced his own film with roughly the same theme dubbed *Capitol Punishment*. Its tagline: "Everything they told you is a lie."

Now he has made a sequel, *Capitol Punishment 2: The War on Truth,* aimed at countering other narratives about the events of January 6th. On that day, Searcy said he was "on the peaceful side of the Capitol, near the [*Supreme Court*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/supreme-court?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships). I saw people singing songs and waving flags; I didn't know there was violence until I saw it on TV."

He added: "I know these are decent Americans who had no intention of violence, and now they're being treated like serial killers or members of a drug cartel."

Searcy said his movie was funded by "wealthy people who care about the future of our country, not necessarily conservatives." He declined to state names or monetary figures.

The movie comes on the heels of Biden's March 7 State of the Union Address where he noted that Trump and some of the [*Republicans*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/republicans?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) in attendance "seek to bury the truth of January 6th."

He added that participants that day were "insurrectionists," though Searcy vehemently disagrees, noting that no one at the riot that day were charged as such.

**Alleged bad actors of January 6**

In the soon-to-stream sequel, one focus is to promote the theme that there were government operatives and left-wing agitators from [*Black Lives Matter*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/black-lives-matter?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and Antifa posing as pro-Trump protesters to rile up the crowd.

"These are Antifa," one protester is seen shouting to cops that day. "They're trying to get us to attack you guys. It's not us. We love you, man."

That scene gives way to video of John Sullivan, a self-described supporter of BLM who has praised Antifa and admitted he was at the Capitol posing as a Trump supporter, saying outside the Capitol doors, "Let me through, I got a knife."

Sullivan said at his trial that he was at the riot as a journalist. His 90 minutes of video included the shooting of Babbitt, which he sold to a variety of news outlets for $90,000.

"I brought my megaphone to instigate s\*\*t," he says on video that prosecutors played at his trial, adding that he wants to "make those Trump supporters f\*\*k s\*\*t up."

In November, Sullivan was convicted of five felonies and two misdemeanors. He awaits sentencing.

There's a couple clips in particular that detractors might pounce on.

One, for example, shows Jon Berry (spelled "John Barry" in the film) in a video he made saying: "I had a difficult time pulling off the act ... I'm making this video because I want to confess that I was paid to pretend to protest today. I can't say by who, but I'll just say that it's an organized effort."

Berry at the time ran his own YouTube channel. He has since called his video "a silly goof," according to Reuters, and said his "Antifa" association is with his own "Anti-Farting" organization.

Searcy told *Newsweek* that he uses the clip regardless because, "Well, which time did he tell the truth? We certainly show evidence there were people there posing as Trump supporters and committing violence. We show video of Antifa changing their clothes in the bushes."

Landon Kenneth Copeland, identified in the movie as an Antifa activist, says in the movie: "Antifa was disguised as Trump supporters today" as video shows him brawling with cops outside the Capitol.

Copeland accepted a plea deal and was sentenced in May to three years in prison and in June he told the *Gateway Pundit* that there were 100 Antifa protesters present on January 6, 18 of whom were with him, and some were legitimate Trump supporters, as is he.

Not included in the film is that Copeland, an Iraq war veteran, engaged in an expletive-laced rant at a hearing that prompted a judge to order a mental health examination. He was ultimately deemed fit to aid in his own defense.

And Siaka Moussaquoi, identified as an actor and conservative activist, is shown in the movie identifying an individual as Chad Loder, whom he says he recognized from Antifa protests in Southern California.

Loder, whom the media usually describes as an anti-fascist researcher, is known for identifying January 6 participants and calling them out on their X (previously [*Twitter*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/twitter?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)) account, though the @chadloder account was suspended 15 months ago.

Loder, though, tells *Newsweek* that Moussaquoi is mistaken.

"I wasn't there," he said. "It's a common argument from the right: 'I didn't do it, and if I did do it, it wasn't my fault.' And Antifa is the bogeyman."

Loder also says that any insinuation — which the film doesn't make — that he works with law enforcement isn't true. "I just publish my research and others do what they want to do. An [*FBI*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/fbi?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) agent did leave me a card once, but I didn't answer it," he told *Newsweek*.

"His whole raison d'être is to bash conservatives. I don't put a lot stock in what Chad Loder says," Searcy told *Newsweek*.

**Government involvement questioned**

Likewise, government officials have repeatedly denied that many of Searcy's assertions are accurate, and the filmmaker doesn't skirt that issue, showing FBI director Christopher Wray testifying before [*Congress*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/congress?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) that "we have not, to date, seen any evidence of anarchist violent extremists, people subscribing to Antifa, in connection with the sixth."

As for operatives employed by the U.S. government, Searcy shows [*Republican*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/republican?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) congressman Clay Higgins of Louisiana grilling Wray as he shows two buses he alleges were filled with FBI informants on January 6 parked at Union Station, though Wray denies the accusation.

"Your day is coming, Mr. Wray," the congressman says. "These buses are nefarious in nature and filled with FBI informants dressed as Trump supporters deployed into our Capitol on January 6."

Wray is shown in the film telling Higgins: "If you are asking whether the violence at the Capitol on January 6 was part of some operation that was orchestrated by FBI sources and or agents the answer is, emphatically, 'no.'"

The movie cites a defense attorney claiming there were at least 40 undercover informants at the riot, and Republican congressman [*Thomas Massie*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/thomas-massie?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) from Kentucky is shown grilling U.S. Attorney General [*Merrick Garland*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/merrick-garland?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) over the matter.

"If there were any, I don't know how many. I don't know if there are any," Garland tells members of Congress.

"I think you may have just perjured yourself; that you don't know if there were any?" says Massie. "You've had two years to find out."

**Interview with January 6 families**

The film also includes video of protester Ashli Babbitt being shot and killed as she climbed through a broken window near the Speaker's Lobby. She was shot once in the shoulder and neck by U.S. Capitol Police Officer Michael Byrd.

Searcy interviews her mother, Micki Witthoeft who, at the time, had protested for 260 nights in a row outside of the D.C. jail where January 6 defendants are housed and have been singing *The National Anthem* at 9 p.m. nightly. She calls the location where she and others have been demonstrating, "Freedom Corner."

While the Capitol Police deemed the shooting "lawful and within Department policy," Witthoeft doesn't see it that way, noting that her daughter was unarmed when she was shot.

Witthoeft is seen telling Searcy that she was "just living my happy housewife life" and not paying much attention to ***politics*** when her daughter was killed.

"It's shaken my foundation," she says. "Things I believed to be true aren't true. My only daughter has been murdered, and nobody has to answer for that, and that will take you to such a bitter place."

Searcy supplied *Newsweek* a one-minute clip from the movie for the purpose of including in this story, and he says it makes the point that prosecutors are biased against January 6 defendants. The clip is a portion of a longer segment about Ronald Colton McAbee, who was a deputy on medical leave from the Sheriff's Department in Williamson County, Tennessee, when he attended the riot.

In the one-minute clip, an officer is heard thanking McAbee for his assistance. The longer segment shows his wife noting that at an initial hearing prosecutors showed video but excluded the audio. "I'm trying to help you, man," McAbee tells a cop. "I know, I know. Help me up," says the cop, according to video used in Searcy's film.

Louie Gohmert, at the time a Republican Congressman from Texas, is seen addressing Congress on November 16, 2022 saying: "If you listen to the audio as you watch the video you find out he was helping a Capitol policeman who was down ... And yet this judge has the audacity to say, 'we are not listening to the audio'."

McAbee was denied bail and spent 31 months in jail before heading to prison for an additional 39 months on March 7. The [*Department of Justice*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/department-justice?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) told *Newsweek* that at trial, which took place after Gohmert's Congressional remarks, both the audio and video were played.

Prosecutors argued that McAbee was "dressed for battle," with a bullet-proof vest and a glove with brass knuckles. They said he pulled a downed officer by his leg toward a violent crowd and "swung his arms and hands" towards a different officer, making contact with him.

The film also makes the case, using video and an interview with his wife, Sarah McAbee, that her husband attempted to resuscitate Roseanne Boyland, who died at the riot of amphetamine acute amphetamine intoxication as she laid beneath a pile of about a dozen others.

In the movie, Sarah McAbee says they also paid $150,000 in legal fees. "They want to go after your wallet, and they want to break you," she says.

As for Searcy, he tells *Newsweek* that he's done making political documentaries, focused now on his upcoming autobiography dubbed, *Justify This: A Career Without Compromise*. He also plays a role in *The Perfect Couple*, a Netflix miniseries starring Nicole Kidman, and he's developing a movie about the Battle of Kings Mountain that was fought between Patriots and Loyalists in 1780 during the American Revolutionary War.

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2364636/nick-searcy-chris-burgard.jpg)

**Graphic**

Nick Searcy and Chris Burgard

Courtesy of Nick Searcy

Nick Searcy, left, is seen with Chris Burgard. Searcy has made multiple movies about the January 6, 2021 riot at the Capitol building. His latest was directed by Burgard.

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