



Hutchinson's Hearsay Testimony Debunked

The explosive testimony of Cassidy Hutchinson, an aide to then-Trump White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows, that President Donald Trump tried to grab the steering wheel of his presidential limousine on January 6, 2021 and assaulted a Secret Service agent when agents refused to take him to the Capitol building during the riot is being disputed by some of those very agents.

First of all, Hutchinson was not in the vehicle when the alleged incident took place, and she testified to the hand-picked (by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi) committee only as to what she claims she was told. In other words, her testimony is what is referred to as “hearsay” evidence, which is only rarely admitted in a court of law. Some of those who were actually in the vehicle during the alleged incident have said they were not asked by the committee to testify, but they would be willing to do so now.



AP Images

Former White House aide Cassidy Hutchinson

According to Hutchinson's hearsay testimony, Trump demanded that his Secret Service agents drive his limousine to the Capitol, where the infamous riot was taking place. It is not clear what Trump intended to do when he got to the Capitol, but the agents have reportedly confirmed that he was irate and that he did want them to take him to the Capitol. The agents, however, refused to do so, arguing that it was unsafe for him to go.

It is known that presidents and their Secret Service detail have not always agreed on security measures, but it should be noted that it is the job of the Secret Service to protect the life of the president, and to keep him out of harm's way. Secret Service agents are sworn to do pretty much whatever is necessary to keep presidents safe — for example, agent Timothy McCarthy stepped in front of President Ronald Reagan in 1981 and took the bullet intended for Reagan. In 1963, President John Kennedy overruled his agents who wanted to use the glass “bubble top” on his Lincoln convertible as it was driven through downtown Dallas. The agents argued it would offer some protection against a potential assassination attempt, but Kennedy believed the open car would allow people to see him better.

Hutchinson also claimed that Trump wanted the Secret Service to allow some of his supporters who were carrying rifles to be allowed to his rally speech outside the White House, and to stop screening with metal-detectors known as magnetometers. According to Hutchinson, Trump said, “Take the effing mags away; they're not here to hurt me,” arguing that he wanted as big a crowd as possible for television. If true, this would certainly be irresponsible of Trump, but he has denied her claim. And Hutchinson did not hear Trump say this — she said this is what she was told by Tony Ornato, a Secret



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Service officer who was the chief of staff for operations for Trump.

Of course, the most serious accusation of Hutchinson's is that Trump tried to take the steering wheel away from a Secret Service agent, and when the agent grabbed Trump's arm, the president grabbed the agent by the throat. But according to sources within the Secret Service, cited by NBC and *The New York Times* (neither a right-wing media outlet), Robert Engel, the chief of Trump's security detail, and the limousine driver were both willing to testify under oath that Trump never lunged for the steering wheel. Ornato is also willing to dispute Hutchinson's hearsay testimony under oath.

Trump also weighed in on Hutchinson's testimony. "Her Fake story that I tried to grab the steering wheel of the White House limousine in order to steer it to the Capitol Building is 'sick' and fraudulent," he wrote on his social media app, Truth Social.

The Secret Service has issued a statement that it is willing to cooperate fully with the committee. "U.S. Secret Service has been cooperating with the Select Committee since its inception in spring 2021, and will continue to do so, including by responding on the record to the Committee regarding the new allegations surfaced in today's testimony."

Hutchinson's assertion that she wrote the note reading "Anyone who entered the Capitol without proper authority should leave immediately" was also disputed by a former White House lawyer, Eric Herschmann. He said that it was he, not Hutchinson, who wrote the note. ABC News reported, "Herschmann is claiming that a handwritten note regarding a potential statement for then-President Donald Trump to release during the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol was written by him during a meeting at the White House that afternoon, and not by White House aide Cassidy Hutchinson. At Tuesday's Jan. 6 committee hearing, Rep. Liz Cheney (R-Wyo.) displayed a handwritten note which Hutchinson testified she wrote after Trump chief of staff Mark Meadows handed her a note card and pen to take his dictation."

A spokesman for Herschmann told ABC, "All sources with direct knowledge and law enforcement have and will confirm that it was written by Mr. Herschmann." There are also reports that multiple witnesses are prepared to testify — under oath — that the handwriting is Herschmann's, not Hutchinson's.

Of course, in a court case, lawyers often try to demonstrate that an opposing witness' testimony is not trustworthy by using examples of the witness' false statements in other instances. But then again, such "hearsay" evidence such as that offered by Hutchinson would not even be allowed in a court case.

It is abundantly clear that the primary purpose of the January 6 committee is not to conduct an actual investigation into the events of that day. From the beginning, it has been what is often called a kangaroo court — one in which the outcome is predetermined. The purpose is to find some crime committed by Donald Trump so as to send him to prison, or, failing that, to damage his reputation so badly that he would be no threat to defeat the Democratic presidential candidate in 2024. It is also to divert attention away from the failures and policies of the Democrats since the 2020 presidential election, in order to help their chances in the 2022 midterms.

Regardless of what one thinks of Trump, the willingness of the Democrats and their quislings within the Republican Party, such as Liz Cheney, to deny due process in the committee hearings, to stack the committee with all Democrats but for two virulently anti-Trump Republicans, and to present to national TV audiences a slanted version of events, is something that all Americans should be alarmed about.



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