

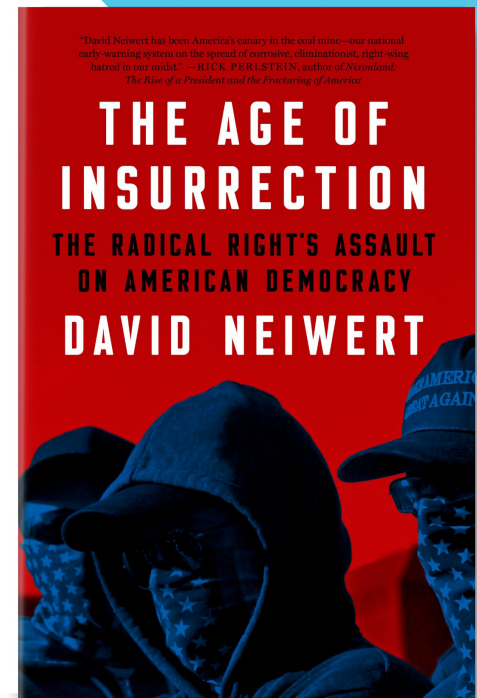
THE AGE OF INSURRECTION

The Radical Right's Assault on American Democracy

David Neiwert

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“ Equal parts enlightening and terrifying, this is imperative reading for anyone in the United States. — *Library Journal*, **STARRED review**

“ Now in his fifth decade of reporting on right-wing extremism in the U.S., this expert on authoritarianism warns that the taste of power will propel extremists to continue their assault on democracy... Well-written, impeccably researched, easy to digest, and vivid in its profiles of far-right radicals, *The Age of Insurrection* is a key source for readers trying to make sense of it all.” — **Booklist**, **STARRED review**

NOTE TO THE READER

While the attack on the U.S. Capitol by a mob seeking to overturn the 2020 election results shocked and surprised most Americans, journalist David Neiwert was one of the voices warning against the growing likelihood of just such an event for some time. Now he is warning that January 6, 2021, was just the opening salvo in a running campaign to take down American democracy.

In *The Age of Insurrection*, Neiwert argues that January 6 was not simply the culmination of long-gathering trends in American politics, but also the beginning of a dedicated campaign to hollow out American democratic institutions and replace them with an authoritarian autocracy revolving around conspiracism and Christian nationalism. Moreover, he maps out their evolving strategy—by targeting local democratic institutions such as school boards, libraries, city councils, and state legislatures for violent harassment as well as surreptitious takeover.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Was your impression of the January 6 Capitol siege that it was simply a political protest that got out of hand? Were you aware of Donald Trump's plans to nullify the election result by persuading Congress to stop counting Electoral College ballots?
2. When you hear right-wing activists refer to each other as "Patriots," what do you think they're saying? Are you familiar with the use of the word outside of its generic meaning—that is, as a reference to the far-right "militia" movement?
3. Had you heard of the Oath Keepers and the Proud Boys prior to January 6? If so, what were your impressions of them? Did you consider them dangerous? What are your views afterwards?
4. What's your view of the post-January 6 narrative dismissing the Capitol as insignificant, "not an insurrection," and similar to an ordinary tourist visit? Do you consider the claims that "antifa" was involved credible? How about the theory that the whole event was orchestrated by the FBI?

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5. Neiwert addresses the theory held by white-nationalists that nonwhite immigrants are being deliberately imported to America as a way to dilute and eventually overwhelm the white majority. Discuss the racist assumptions and anti-Semitic foundations that have perpetuated this unfounded conspiracy theory.
6. When did you first hear of “antifa”? What was the context? What was the source? And what was your impression? Can you accurately describe it or its motivations even now?
7. What was your impression of the protests against racist policing that broke out in the summer of 2020 after the murder of George Floyd? Did you see them as overwhelmingly violent? Who did you consider responsible for that violence and why?
8. What role do the police play in the proliferation of far-right extremist groups in the U.S.? Are you concerned by the mounting numbers of stories involving police officers secretly affiliating with white supremacist movements and organizations? How does this affect how you view the police?
9. If far-right activists show up to threaten a drag-queen story hour for “grooming” children, or a school board meeting for supposedly teaching “critical race theory,” how should your community respond?
10. Similarly, if far-right activists surreptitiously or openly seek public office with local government entities like school, library, and health boards or city and county councils, do you consider it important to make their extremism a public issue? How would you go about dealing with these attempts at infiltration?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Neiwert is an award-winning investigative journalist and the author of several books, including *Red Pill, Blue Pill: How to Counteract the Conspiracy Theories that are Killing Us* (Prometheus 2020), *Alt-America: The Rise of the Radical Right in the Age of Trump* (Verso 2017), *Of Orcas and Men: What Killer Whales Can Teach Us* (Overlook 2016), and *And Hell Followed With Her: Crossing the Dark Side of the American Border* (Nation Books 2013).

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