

Canadian County Sheriff Chris West defends participating in protest at U.S. Capitol, says he didn't join in violent mob action

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By Austin Breasette/KFOR

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CANADIAN COUNTY, Okla. (KFOR) – Canadian County Sheriff Chris West held a news conference Friday afternoon to discuss his thoughts on mob violence at the U.S. Capitol and debunk social media rumors about his trip to Washington, D.C. on Wednesday.

West said he took his personal car to D.C. to be a part of the protest at Liberty Square. He said he also deleted his social media while he was there at his wife's request to protect their family and not let anyone know he was going. However, he did march to the capitol and did not take part in what many lawmakers are labeling insurrection.

“The egregious crimes on our beacon and bastion of last hope for our nation, breaking into that and terrorizing it,” West said. “I rebuke all of that, every bit of it.”

West denounced the violence in Washington, D.C. He said he was there though and that the picture circulating of a man that appears to be wearing a tactical helmet and is wanted by federal agents is not him.

“It's ridiculousness,” he said. “I want the citizens of Canadian County to know that is not their sheriff.”

According to West, he took part in the rally at Liberty Square Wednesday morning as a “private citizen.” He said he went to be patriotic and support the president, adding that he carried a Trump flag as he walked to the capitol with the crowd.

“Did you at all at any point step foot in that Capitol?” KFOR asked.

“Oh, absolutely not,” he said.

“Were you going at all against the electoral votes?” a reporter asked.

“Against the electoral vote?” West said. “I was going to support Trump and I'll leave it at that.”

West denied crossing police lines and said he did not see the storming of the capitol. He shared this picture below and said it was as close as he got.

“I believe all that stuff was going on before we ever left Liberty Square,” he said. “I didn’t see the violence; I don’t know when it happened.”

West admitted he was shouting outside the Capitol.

“Oh, I was hollering stuff!” West said.

“Don’t you feel like you should step in?” KFOR asked.

“No, not there,” West said. “I don’t have any jurisdiction there. There were professionals there. I was Chris West the private citizen.”

“Right, but you were still there and walking toward a capitol where violent attacks are happening,” KFOR said.

“That’s right,” West said.

He claimed to have left the capitol at around 3-4 o’clock in the afternoon, which is when the riot was still taking place. He did not want to speculate as to who was inside.

“I’m not going to go there, because I’m not investigating it,” West said. “I don’t have enough information.”

However, he went on to say that “just because you have some memorabilia doesn’t mean that you are.”

He even said that when they were walking back to his hotel that “we encountered some, what I believe may have been some...I’m not going to name any names; it was another protest group.”

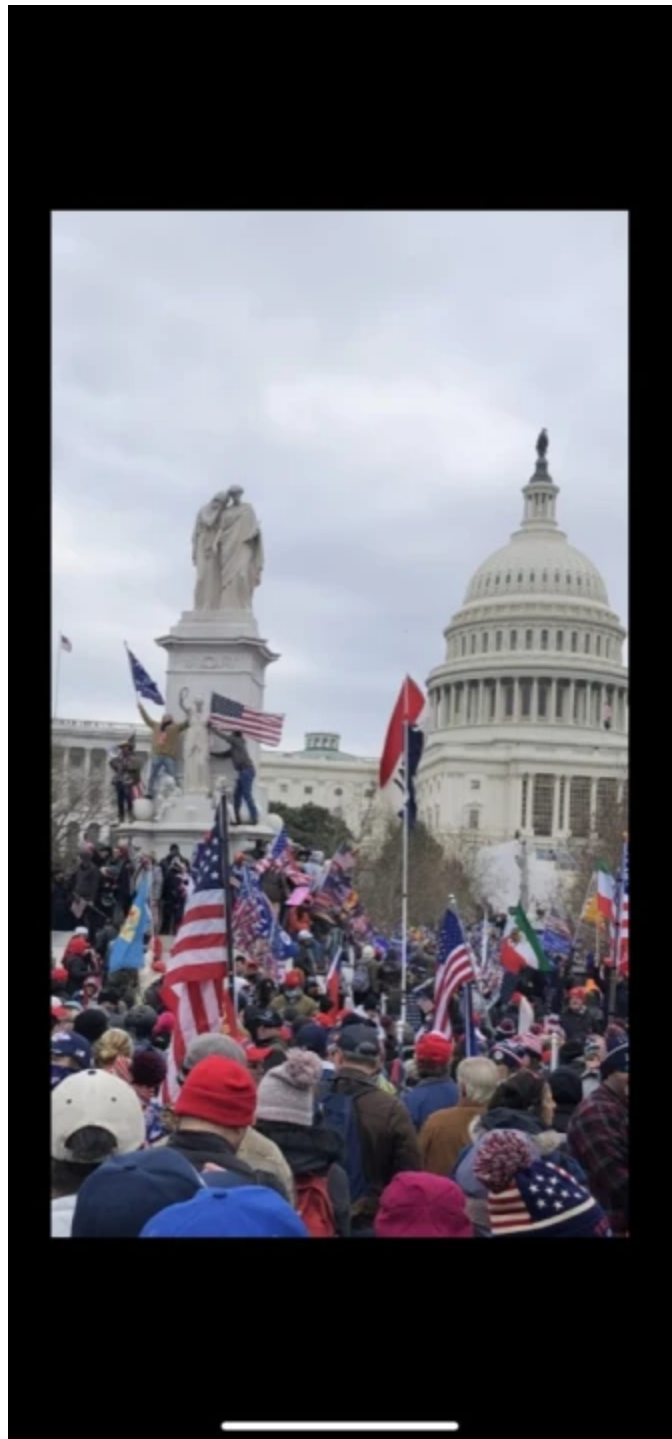


Photo by Chris West

In fact, West said his experience in Washington was great.

“99.9 percent of the people were patriotic, good Americans,” he said.

The riots ended, claiming five lives and massive damage to the capitol building. One woman was shot, three died from medical emergencies and a capitol police officer died Thursday from injuries suffered Wednesday afternoon. The Associated Press reported the officer was hit in the head by a fire extinguisher. The FBI has said they’ve found no evidence that ANTIFA activists were involved.

West made a reference to past Black Lives Matter protests in comparison to Wednesday’s events.

“In contrast to the riots that we’ve seen and how they’ve attacked statues and tore them down, it was in direct contrast to that,” he said. “It was freedom-loving Americans.”

West added that he doesn’t regret being in attendance and called the online petition calling for his job “preposterous.” He denounced all social media rumors about him.

Here is the raw footage of West’s news conference. The beginning of the event was not captured due to technical difficulties:

The President of the Oklahoma Second Amendment Association released the following statement Friday evening:

“As president of OK2A and on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Second Amendment Association, we fully support Sheriff Chris West of Canadian County.”

DON SPENCER, OKLAHOMA SECOND AMENDMENT ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT



January 8th, 2021

As president of OK2A and on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Second Amendment Association, we fully support

Sheriff Chris West of Canadian County.

Don Spencer

President
Oklahoma Second Amendment Association

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