

Still on the hunt, the FBI shares new details about pipe bombs placed ahead of Jan. 6

Carrie Johnson

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Heard on Morning Edition



The FBI released this image with a size chart showing the height of the alleged pipe bomber — 5 foot 7 inches.

FBI

The FBI is releasing new details about the person who planted pipe bombs in Washington, D.C., on the night before the riot at the U.S. Capitol nearly four years ago, in hopes of solving a long-standing mystery.

FBI officials are still trying to identify the individual who placed the devices — which did not detonate — near the headquarters of the Republican National Committee and the Democratic National Committee on the evening of Jan. 5, 2021. Authorities say they have conducted 1,000 interviews, reviewed 39,000 video files and sifted through some 600 tips. But the alleged bomber remains elusive, despite a \$500,000 reward for information leading to the capture and the conviction of a suspect.

For the first time, they're sharing a height estimate about the person — who is approximately 5 feet 7 inches tall — and providing new footage of the person placing a bomb at the DNC.

"This case involves an unknown person placing two pipe bombs that could have killed someone, not just near the Democratic and Republican National Committee headquarters, but in a neighborhood, a place where people live, a place where people work," David Sundberg, assistant director in charge of the FBI's Washington Field Office, said in an interview this week. "This is not something that the FBI is going

to let go of. We simply can't have a case that we stop working that involves someone placing explosive devices inside a neighborhood in any American town or city."

Because the alleged bomber is wearing a medical mask and nondescript clothing like a gray hooded sweatshirt and black gloves, it's been challenging for investigators to find that person. One of the few distinctive features of their garb that day is the shoes: a pair of black and light gray Nike Air Max sneakers with a yellow logo. The FBI says only about 25,000 pairs of those shoes had been sold at the time of the mob scene at the Capitol in early 2021.

Authorities said they need to find the person involved before they can determine a motive, as well as to assess the strength of any link to the effort to delay the certification of the 2020 election the following day in Congress.

"We are convinced there are people that still know something," Sundberg said. "And over four years, allegiances might change. Relationships might change. People might recognize that what doesn't seem as important to them might be a piece of this investigation that we could really use."

They're asking for tips to be shared by phone at 1-800-CALL-FBI or online at tips.fbi.gov. That information can be shared anonymously, the FBI said.

Other notorious bombing cases have taken years to resolve. Eric Rudolph, who planted a bomb at the Atlanta Olympics site in 1996, eluded investigators until his capture in 2003.

Unabomber Ted Kaczynski sowed fear for nearly two decades until his brother recognized some of his anonymous writings and alerted authorities. Kaczynski pleaded guilty to criminal charges and killed himself in a federal prison in 2023.

Sundberg, the current FBI official, said the Bureau has a long memory and a long reach.

The Ted K Archive

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[npr.org/2025/01/02/nx-s1-5244008/fbi-pipe-bomb-jan6-dnc-rnc](https://www.npr.org/2025/01/02/nx-s1-5244008/fbi-pipe-bomb-jan6-dnc-rnc)

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