Twitter Thread by Benjamin Young Savage (■■■■■)



Benjamin Young Savage (■■■■■)
@benjancewicz



I went to DC with @thejoecardamone today to document the militarization of DC.

We spent almost 4 hours walking, and covered over 6 miles, skirting the barricaded perimeter.

#DCLockdown



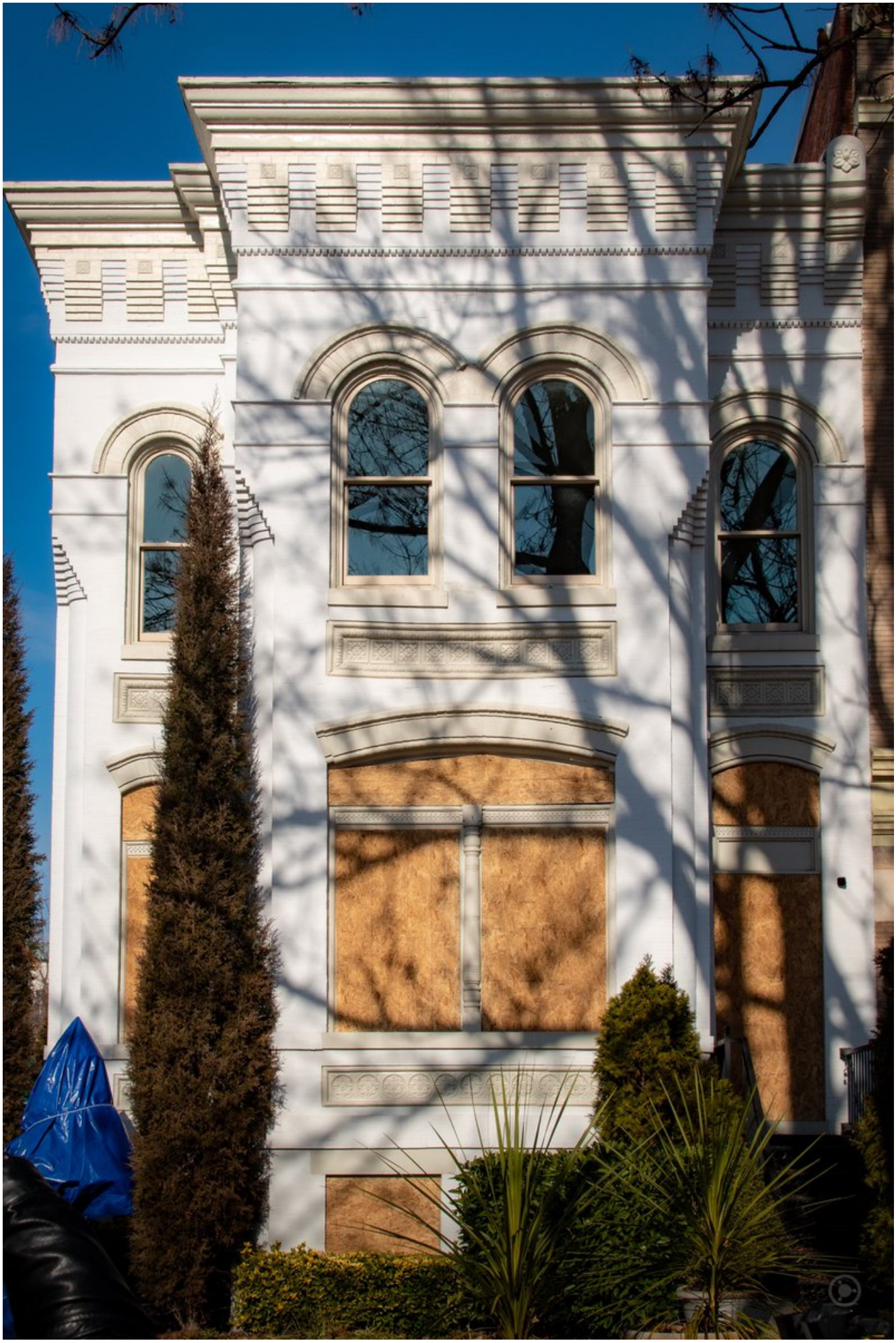
Everything was covered with multiple layers of security, from metal fences, to flip up barricade.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto


STOP

Even some of the very expensive local residences were boarded up, with custom fitted plywood boards that matched their arches.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



I enjoy shooting with Joe.

Even though sometimes our shots overlap, we definitely sharpen each other's craft.

And no matter what, it's impossible for us to get the EXACT same shot, since we see things in different ways.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



It was fascinating to see how city politics is later into how the barricades went up, which still made sure bike lanes were preserved, even though the streets were devoid of any automobiles save for military and law enforcement.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



There were people with all types of uniforms standing around with long guns. I wasn't able to identify most of them, but @thejoecardamone spotted several divisions he recognized.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



It was tough to see the Capitol building, let alone get close to it.

When we asked the guards at the gate, they told us only people with congressional press passes were permitted in.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



High black metal fences lined everything, contrasting sharply with what was otherwise a pleasant warm January afternoon.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



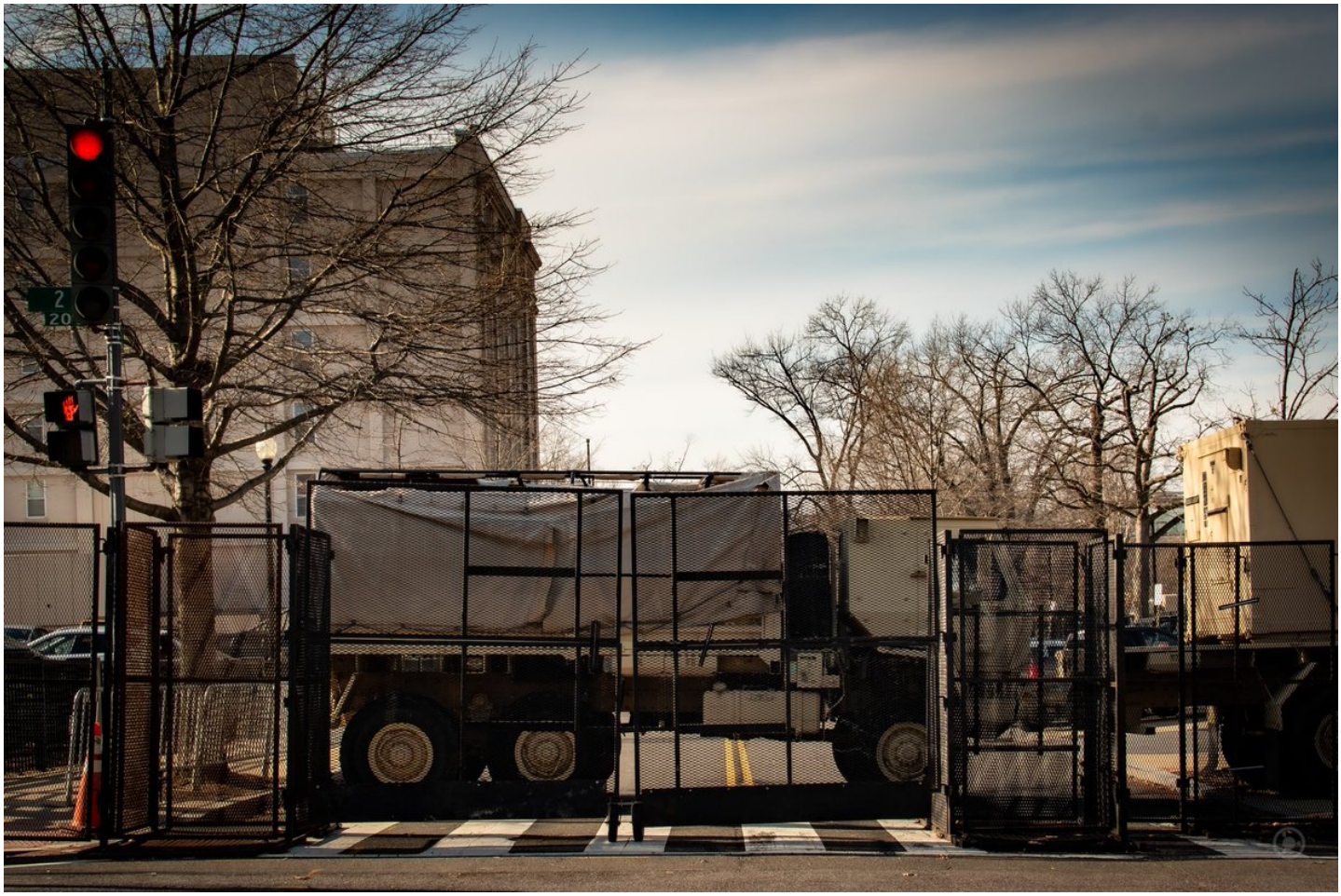
There’s already a stark contrast to the enormity of the marble and granite buildings to the ornate brick houses of Washington DC, but the fences drew a thick dark line down the border.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



The fences were almost as high as the medium tactical vehicles they used to bar gateways, almost giving them the appearance of caged elephants.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



Humvees rumbled by encampments where housing challenged people had gathered for protection.

I wondered what the cost of all this extra security was.

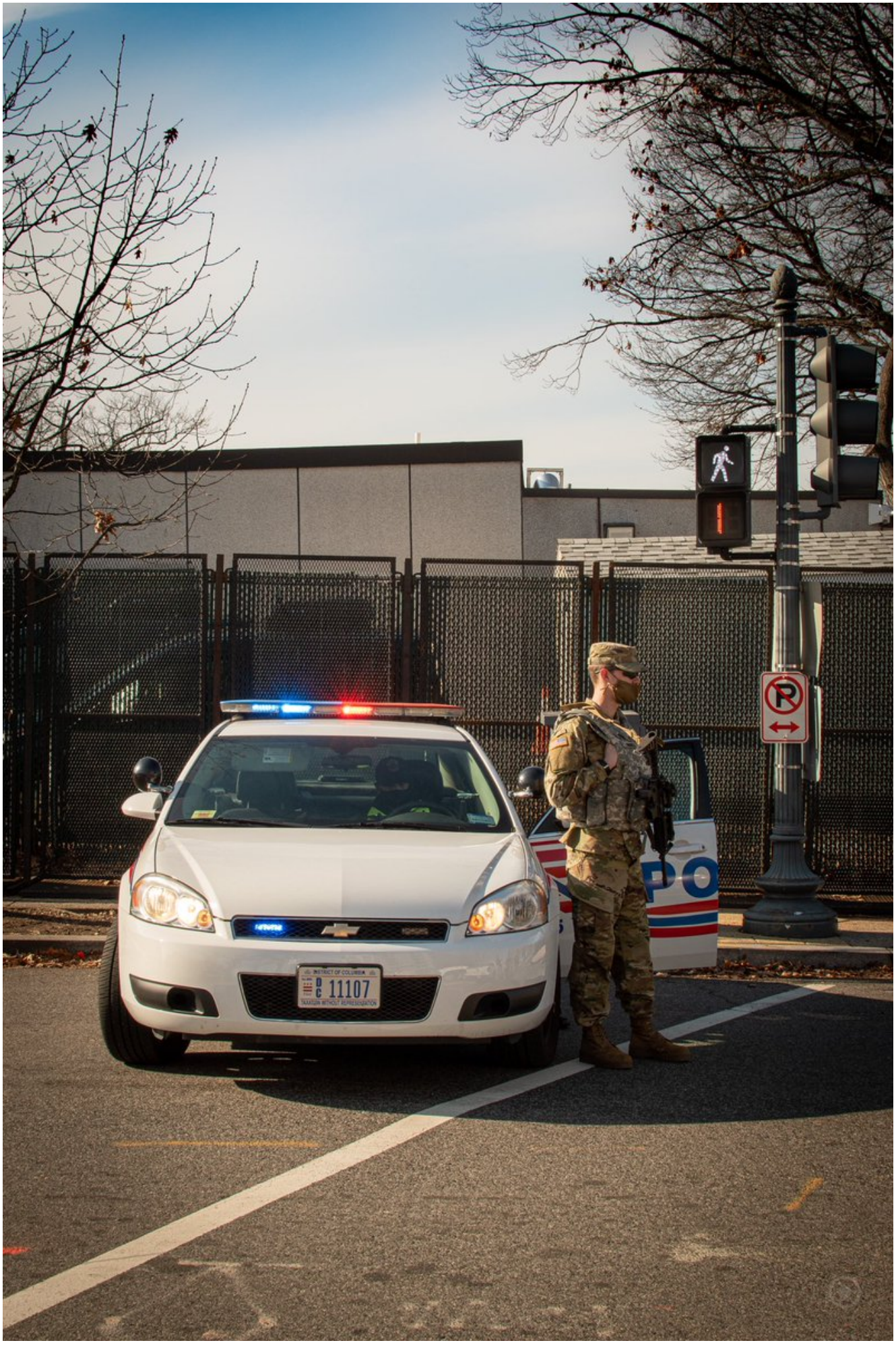
I wondered what the budget for housing people in DC is.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



I was struck at how comfortably the military and DC Metro police folded neatly into each other, jovially keeping each other company and trading Starbucks orders.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto


DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
11107
TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION

Most of the military personnel seemed to range from mildly amused to bored at their assignment.

They awkwardly smiled at people who rushed up to them to thank them for their service or ingratiate themselves to authoritarianism in the streets.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



I couldn't help but wonder what January 6th would have been like if these metal fences and military trucks had been installed earlier.

Would 5 people not be dead. I'm not sure. But white supremacists would be less emboldened.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



That, to me, is the lasting damage.

Not that there is white supremacy, and that they are armed and crazed, but that they showed to the world how easily it was to almost murder representatives of the people.

I fear these changes will be permanent.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



And I also fear than in less than two months time, this increasingly militarized force will be used against the Black protestors that have been petitioning to not be killed in the #BlackLivesMatter Plaza on the other side of this building.

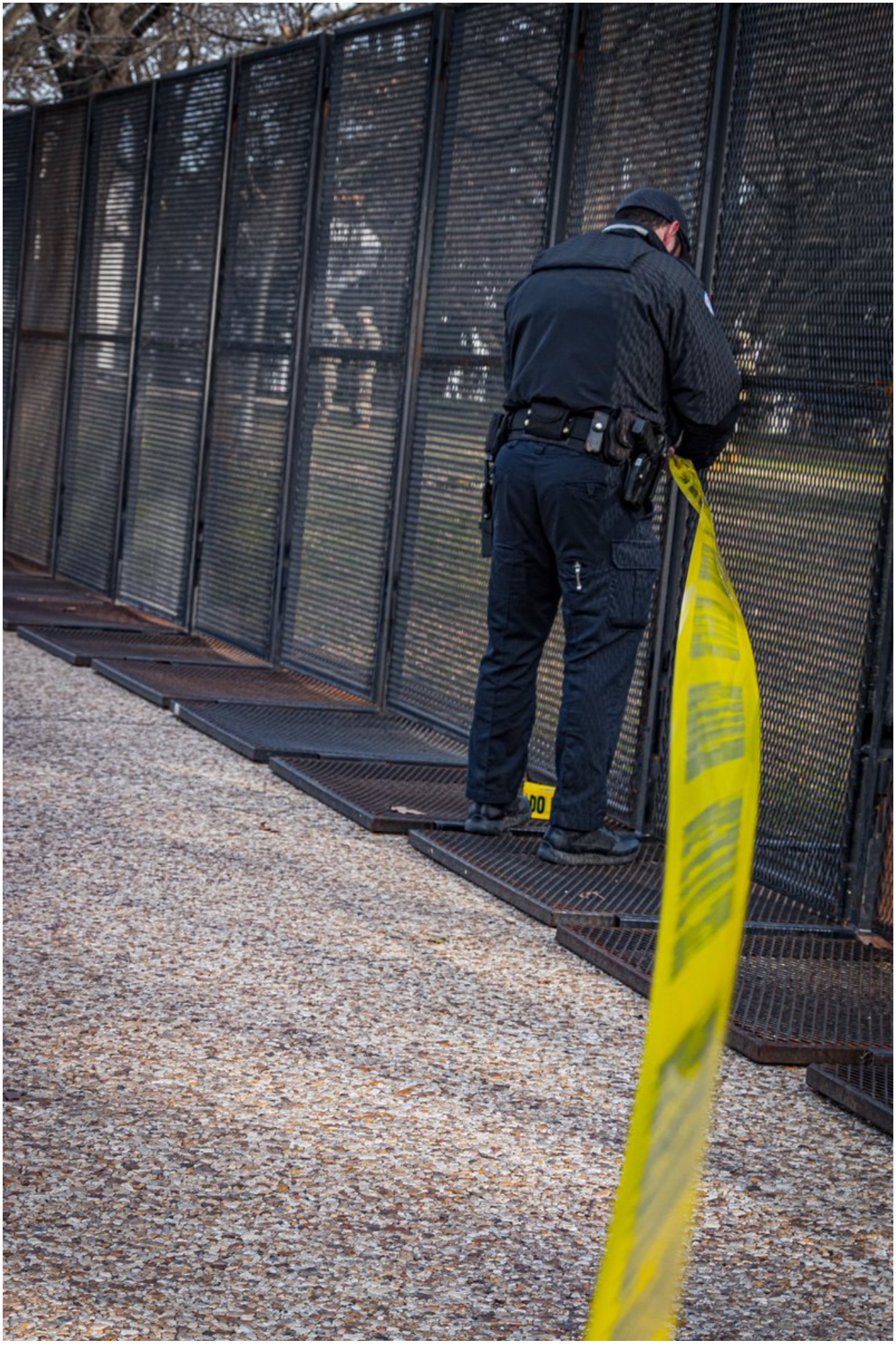
#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



A cop began string up extra police tape directly in front of me, getting direction from another further down.

“Go as far as you can!” they shouted, “the tape just makes people uncomfortable so they stay away.”

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



Most of the medium tactical vehicles were running, coughing diesel fumes as they sat, with soldiers inside almost universally bored on their phones.

They had to remain running, so they could be moved like a gate at a moment’s notice.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto


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Nearly every business near the fences was boarded over, protecting glass from whatever the owners were afraid of.

This business even wrapped up the sign to make it unidentifiable.

A sign was posted; “HATE IS NOTHING TO BE PROUD OF”.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto


HATE
IS NOTHING
TO BE
PROUD OF

Some boards offered messaging, like the @Teamsters building;

TEAMSTER LIVES INCLUDE BLACK LIVES.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto


TEAMSTER
LIVES
INCLUDE
BLACK
LIVES

As we walked, the boundaries kept advancing on us.

Trucks of freshly fabricated fencing rumbled in and were rapidly unloaded by forklifts.

Teams of Spanish speaking men slammed them together, securing blocks in less than half an hour.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



Meanwhile, fleets of black SUVs with police lights would drift in and out of lanes in formation, while locals carried on like nothing put of the ordinary was happening.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



Makeshift checkpoints stood every few blocks, where armed guards went through every pocket of every knapsack, pocketbook, and jacket.

We found out later a white supremacist got caught in one, with fake inauguration credentials and a gun.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto


POLICE
POLICE
02PN20/EZHD
www.ceia.net

Layers kept getting added as we rounded the northwest wide of the Capitol building, and though the view was clearer, at least 6 barriers separated us from the steps that insurrectionist had climbed just over a week earlier.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



It was remarkably empty.

It was the first time in months that I had been in DC and hadn’t seen a single MAGA hat.

They had lost.
And they knew they lost.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



Scores of additional soldiers streamed out of trucks as we watched, with instructions being barked at them.

Other soldiers weaved in and out of of those standing watch, handing out gum, chapstick, water, and snacks.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



On a warm Saturday afternoon, the National Mall would usually be packed with people.

But the military presence was so large that they blocked off the entirety of the park, turning it into bases of operation.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



Rose, another amazing Baltimore photographer, met up with us (ro.rya on IG), and we playfully shot each other shooting things.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



The streets were not completely devoid of tourists, and the few that were there wanted selfies with the fences.

Authoritarianism became the backdrop to their Instagram photos.

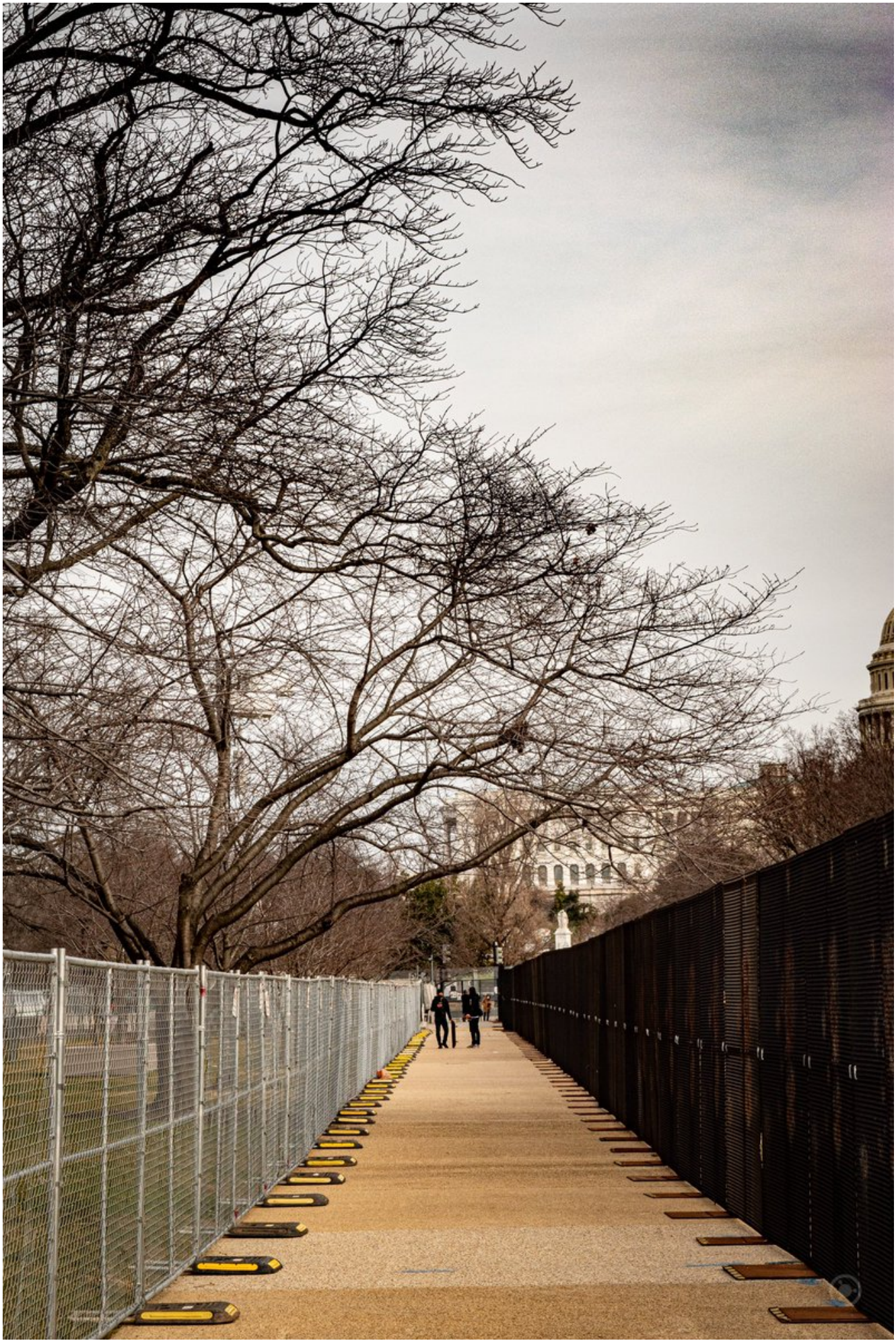
#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



The layers of fencing went up so rapidly that people often got caught and lost in between the maze of barricades.

A couple skateboarders met such a fate, and had to be shooed our by multiple guards.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



Squirrels seemed to be the only being unencumbered by the fencing, scurrying under the gaps to scavenge nuts and discarded food.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



The museums were remarkably bare of barricades. Fencing went up to the buildings, and stopped.

I guess the assumption was that Trump supporters have little care for the fine arts.

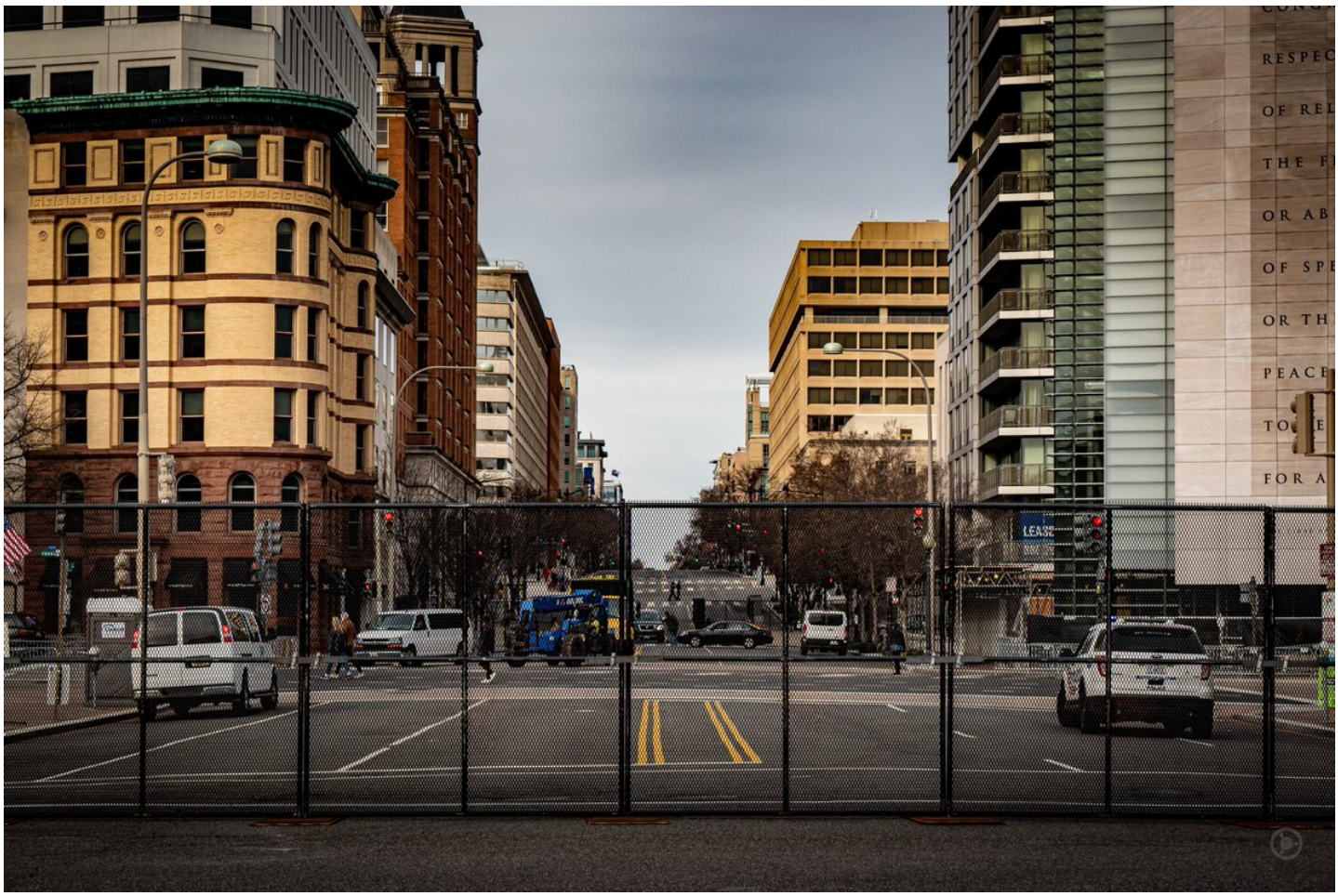
#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto


National Gallery of Art
West Building

Some fencing zigzagged across streets with no apparent direction, other than just to be a show of force.

DC streets bisect at angles and wedges, and some of the fencing stood in odd places that could easily be walked around.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



Other areas were blocked at their ends, but otherwise open.
People meandered up and down them without inhibition.
On a normal day, these streets would be constipated with vehicles.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



As we headed back, we often had to pick slightly different routes, as the fencing advanced on areas just a half hour before we had walked freely.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



Medium Tactical Vehicles stood waiting the arrival of more fencing, appearing almost as a child’s forgotten toy, out of place on the empty city blocks.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



As the sun sank into a cool haze, even our starting point was inaccessible. The barriers of authority were ever moving outward, and it didn’t seem like they were stopping any time soon.

#DCLockdown #BenjaPhoto



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