

117TH CONGRESS }
1st Session

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

{ DOCUMENT
117-9

IMPEACHMENT OF PRESIDENT
DONALD JOHN TRUMP

THE EVIDENTIARY RECORD

VOLUME IV

Supplemental Materials



Printed at the direction of Cheryl L. Johnson, Clerk of the House of
Representatives, pursuant to H. Res. 40, 117th Cong., 1st Sess. (2021)

FEBRUARY 2, 2021.—Ordered to be printed

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THE EVIDENTIARY RECORD
VOLUME IV**

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U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

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Supplemental Materials

Evan Perez et al., New charges allege Proud Boys prepped for Capitol insurrection, CNN (Feb. 3, 2021)

Joshua Goodman, Voting company sues Fox, Giuliani over election fraud claims, Associated Press (Feb. 3, 2021)

Jennifer Valentino-DeVries et al., Arrested in Capitol Riot: Organized Militants and a Horde of Radicals, N.Y. Times (Feb. 4, 2021)

Jim Acosta (@Acosta), Twitter (Feb. 4, 2021, 3:43 PM)

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Andrew Desiderio, GOP senators wary of Trump impeachment defense, Politico (Feb. 3, 2021)

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New charges allege Proud Boys prepped for Capitol insurrection

[cnn.com/2021/02/03/politics/proud-boys-indicted-capitol-riot/index.html](https://www.cnn.com/2021/02/03/politics/proud-boys-indicted-capitol-riot/index.html)

February 3, 2021



(CNN)Two prominent affiliates of [the Proud Boys](#) face new conspiracy charges related to the US Capitol riot, and another was arrested Wednesday, as the Justice Department laid out a planning and funding effort within the far-right extremist group in a major court development.

The Justice Department unveiled the new conspiracy charge in a federal grand jury indictment of Nicholas Ochs and Nicholas DeCarlo.

The indictment alleges the two conspired to block Congress' certification of the electoral votes on January 6. Prosecutors say they planned and fundraised for the effort, then came to Washington, DC, and stormed past police and into the Capitol building as part of the violent crowd, according to a copy of the indictment.

Wednesday's indictment came shortly after the Justice Department made clear it had taken more investigative steps against Proud Boys affiliates related to the insurrection. The Proud Boys are a far-right group known for their clashes with Antifa and general support of former President Donald Trump, who even [mentioned them in a presidential debate](#), telling them to "stand back and stand by."

Also on Wednesday, the so-called Sergeant at arms of the Proud Boys in Seattle, Ethan Nordean, aka "Rufio Panman," was arrested, then appeared in federal court for his role in the

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riot. Federal prosecutors wrote they believed Nordean asked on social media for help to buy "protective gear" and "communications equipment," with the intention of organizing people before the January 6 siege, his charging document said. He is charged with three counts related to entering the Capitol, and the allegations he faces name several other Proud Boys affiliates among the crowd.

[Read More](#)

At least 11 people with ties to the Proud Boys have been charged in connection with the Capitol insurrection, according to a CNN analysis of court documents and Justice Department statements.

A flight, flex-cuffs and etching the Memorial Door

Prosecutors outlined that Ochs and DeCarlo, as part of the conspiracy, allegedly raised money online so they could fly from their home states of Texas and Hawaii to DC for the January 6 pro-Trump event. They also "publicized" their plans, the indictment said. The pair is alleged to have inscribed the words "murder the media" on a notable entrance to the Capitol, the Memorial Door. In previous court records, investigators showed a photo of Ochs and DeCarlo standing beside the etching with their thumbs up. The damage to the door was less than \$1,000, the indictment said.

In all, the indictment on Wednesday charges them with seven counts, including conspiracy, obstruction of an official proceeding and theft and destruction of government property. One charge now accuses them of stealing from Capitol Police a pair of flex handcuffs -- the same types of zip-tie-like restraints that the Justice Department has focused on in other cases as rioters potentially intended to take lawmakers hostage.

Investigators began building the case in court against Ochs and DeCarlo in the days after the Capitol riot. To arrest them each, the FBI had described how both were believed to be inside the Capitol building and could be identified in photos and videos taken during the insurrection.

Five people, including a Capitol Police officer, were killed in the riot. Members of Congress and then-Vice President Mike Pence were evacuated to safety, temporarily shutting down debate over the Electoral College results.

During the riot, Ochs -- the founder of the Hawaii chapter of the Proud Boys -- [tweeted a selfie](#) of himself smoking a cigarette in the building.

"We didn't have to break in, I just walked in and filmed," Ochs told CNN in an interview.

"There were thousands of people in there -- they had no control of the situation. I didn't get stopped or questioned."

Ochs ran an unsuccessful campaign for the state legislature last year, winning an [endorsement](#) from Trump confidant Roger Stone, who recorded a video with him. He claimed in the interview with CNN that he was working as a professional journalist when he entered the Capitol, and that he didn't go into any congressional offices or the chambers. DeCarlo also claimed he was a journalist, in an interview he gave to the Los Angeles Times after January 6, according to court records. But he is not credentialed as a journalist by Congress, investigators said, and he operates a YouTube channel with Ochs and "purports to

be an employee" of a group called "MT Media News," standing for "murder the media news," an affidavit supporting his arrest said.

Arrest in Seattle

Nordean, a 30-year-old Washington state resident, is charged in the DC District Court with four counts in total, all related to his actions on January 6.

Investigators say he was marching at the front of the crowd near the Capitol, next to another prominent Proud Boys affiliate, Joseph Biggs, who has also been charged in recent weeks. Investigators also say Nordean interacted with another person previously charged, Robert Gieswein, during their push into the Capitol. Gieswein went into a window in the Capitol that was first broken by another Proud Boys affiliate, Dominic Pezzola, who has also been charged related to the riot.

"Assembled close behind Nordean in the crowd in front of the Capitol were a group of individuals that I have identified as many of the same people who had been seen marching behind Nordean, Biggs, and other Proud Boys earlier in the day," investigators wrote, recreating the group effort of parts of the crowd to force their way inside the building. Investigators said they don't have evidence Nordean was part of his acquaintances' effort to break in through a window. They used extensive photos and videos to place him among the riot outside and inside the Capitol building, court records say.

Investigators also described his social media activity before January 6, including a video on Parler two days earlier in which Nordean said the Proud Boys should protect the community and respond to voter fraud beliefs with "that original spirit of 1776."

"We're coming back. We're coming to DC and were going to take this country back. Your gifts, and your thoughts, and your financial contributions will not go for nothing," another person said in the January 5 Parler video, investigators wrote to the court in an affidavit supporting Nordean's arrest.

Nordean made his initial appearance in federal court in Washington state Wednesday afternoon through video conference. He will be held in detention until another court hearing on February 8.

Building conspiracy cases, charging others

Federal officials have said repeatedly in recent weeks they are looking into groups -- and to charge possible seditious conspiracies -- that indicate coordination before the Capitol riot. But cases are still moving slowly and in the early stages. No sedition cases have been brought. Still, several other Proud Boys members are already in federal court and faces criminal charges following the riot.

Two other Proud Boys affiliates, Pezzola and William Pepe, both of New York, are accused of working together during the attack of the Capitol, according to their indictment last week. A fixture and organizer in Proud Boys mass gatherings, Biggs, of Florida, is facing charges in an initial complaint related to him entering the Capitol grounds.

in addition to members of the Proud Boys, a separate group of alleged right-wing extremists was previously indicted on a conspiracy charge.

In that case, which is also in an early stage, Thomas Caldwell of Virginia and Jessica Watkins and Donovan Crowl of Ohio are alleged to have coordinated before the January 6 attack, and to have discussed or attended paramilitary training camps.

Prosecutors say the three are affiliated with right-wing paramilitary organizations in Ohio and with the national paramilitary group the Oath Keepers.

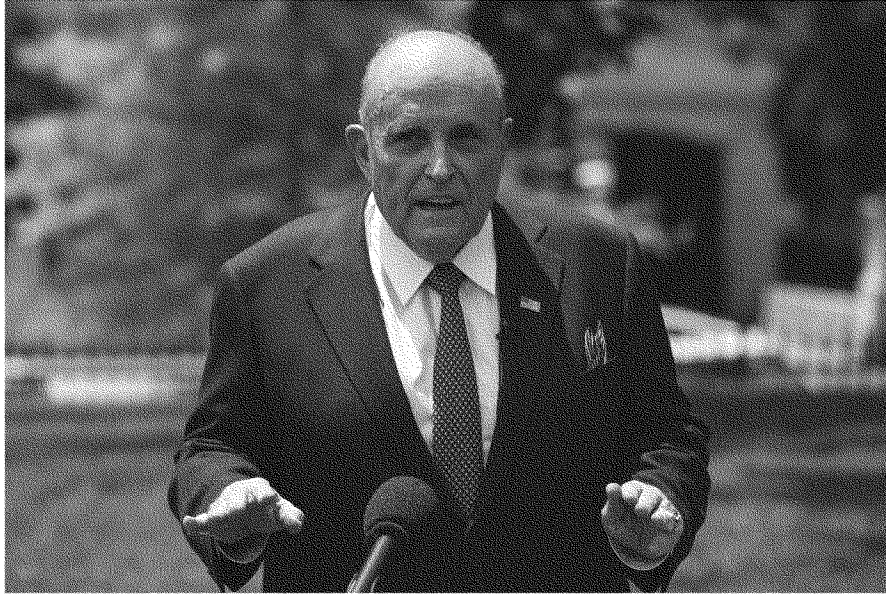
This story has been updated with additional reporting and background.

Kay Jones, Paul Murphy, Marshall Cohen, Hannah Rabinowitz and Anna-Maja Rappard contributed to this report.

Voting company sues Fox, Giuliani over election fraud claims

AP apnews.com/article/smartmatic-sues-fox-news-giuliani-2a8d83df2e6d73b750dd85f92f4fd7ef

February 4, 2021



ADVERTISEMENT

By JOSHUA GOODMAN February 5, 2021 GMT

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FILE - Rudy Giuliani, a personal attorney for President Donald Trump, talks with reporters outside the White House, Wednesday, July 1, 2020, in Washington. A voting technology company is suing Fox News, three of its top hosts, Giuliani and Sidney Powell for \$2.7 billion, charging that the defendants conspired to spread false claims that the company helped steal the U.S. presidential election away from former President Donald Trump. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci, File)

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FILE - Rudy Giuliani, a personal attorney for President Donald Trump, talks with reporters outside the White House, Wednesday, July 1, 2020, in Washington. A voting technology company is suing Fox News, three of its top hosts, Giuliani and Sidney Powell for \$2.7 billion, charging that the defendants conspired to spread false claims that the company helped steal the U.S. presidential election away from former President Donald Trump. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci, File)

MIAMI (AP) — A voting technology company is suing Fox News, three of its hosts and two former lawyers for former President Donald Trump — Rudy Giuliani and Sidney Powell — for \$2.7 billion, charging that the defendants conspired to spread false claims that the company helped “steal” the U.S. presidential election.

The 285-page complaint filed Thursday in New York state court by Florida-based Smartmatic USA is one of the largest libel suits ever undertaken. On Jan. 25, a rival election-technology company — Dominion Voting Systems, which was also ensnared in Trump’s baseless effort to overturn the election — sued Giuliani and Powell for \$1.3 billion.

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Unlike Dominion, whose technology was used in 24 states, Smartmatic’s participation in the 2020 election was restricted to Los Angeles County, which votes heavily Democratic.

Smartmatic’s limited role notwithstanding, Fox aired at least 13 reports falsely stating or implying the company had stolen the 2020 vote in cahoots with Venezuela’s socialist government, according to the complaint. This alleged “disinformation campaign” continued even after then-Attorney General William Barr said the Department of Justice could find no evidence of widespread voter fraud.

For instance, a Dec. 10 segment by Lou Dobbs accused Smartmatic and its CEO, Antonio Mugica, of working to flip votes through a non-existent backdoor in its voting software to carry out a “massive cyber Pearl Harbor,” the complaint alleged.

“Defendants’ story was a lie,” the complaint stated. “But, it was a story that sold.”

The complaint also alleges that Fox hosts Dobbs, Maria Bartiromo and Jeanine Pirro also directly benefitted from their involvement in the conspiracy. The lawsuit alleges that Fox went along with the “well-orchestrated dance” due to pressure from newcomer outlets such as Newsmax and One America News, which were stealing away conservative, pro-Trump viewers.

Roy Gutterman, a media law professor at Syracuse University, said the lawsuit is compelling and based on specific examples and facts, not frivolous claims.

“This is a perfect example of why we have the law of defamation in first place,” said Gutterman, a former reporter.

Fox News Media, in a statement on behalf of the network and its hosts, rejected the accusations. It said it is proud of its election coverage and would defend itself against the “meritless” lawsuit in court.

Fox “is committed to providing the full context of every story with in-depth reporting and clear opinion,” the company said in a written statement.

Giuliani and Powell did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

For Smartmatic, the effects of the negative publicity were swift and devastating, the complaint alleges. Death threats, including against an executive’s 14-year-old son, poured in as Internet searches for the company surged, Smartmatic claims.

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With several client contracts in jeopardy, the company estimates that it will lose as much as \$690 million in profits over the next five years. It also expects it will have to boost spending by \$4.7 million to fend off what it called a “meteoric rise” in cyberattacks.

“For us, this is an existential crisis,” Mugica said in an interview. He said the false statements against Smartmatic have already led one foreign bank to close its accounts and deterred Taiwan, a prospective client, from adopting e-voting technology.

Like many conspiracy theories, the alleged campaign against Smartmatic was built on a grain of truth. Mugica is Venezuelan and Smartmatic’s initial success is partly attributable to major contracts from Hugo Chávez’s government, an early devotee of electronic voting.

No evidence has emerged that the company rigged votes in favor of the anti-American firebrand, and for a while the Carter Center and other observers held out Venezuela as a model of electronic voting. Meanwhile, the company has expanded globally.

Full Coverage: [Politics](#)

Smartmatic is represented by J. Erik Connolly, who previously won what’s believed to be the largest settlement in American media defamation, at least \$177 million, for a report on ABC News describing a company’s beef product as “pink slime.”

“Very rarely do you see a news organization go day after day after day against the same targets,” Connolly said in an interview. “We couldn’t possibly have rigged this election because we just weren’t even in the contested states to do the rigging.”

Fox, after receiving a demand for retraction from Smartmatic’s lawyers in December, aired what it called a “fact-checking segment” with an election technology expert. In the segment, the expert said there was no evidence of tampering — something the defendants knew from the start and reported elsewhere on the network, the complaint alleges.

Far from making the company whole, Mugica said he saw the segment — in which an unidentified voice asks questions referenced in the retraction letter — as an admission of guilt.

Gutterman said that any after-the-fact correction can be a mitigating factor but doesn't get of the defendants entirely off the hook if they are found to have previously been propagating false claims. With the line between fact and opinion increasingly blurred in the current media landscape, he said he expects the lawsuit to force news outlets trying to capitalize on support for Trump to reconsider how far to stretch the limits.

"This is certainly a wake-up call that, just because you're dealing in opinion and not straight news, you can't openly put anything on the air," he said. "Facts are still facts."

Follow Goodman on Twitter: [@APJoshGoodman](#)

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Arrested in Capitol Riot: Organized Militants and a Horde of Radicals

[nytimes.com/interactive/2021/02/04/us/capitol-arrests.html](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/02/04/us/capitol-arrests.html)



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are charged with conspiracy crimes or assault

Daniel Page Adams

Goodrich, Texas

Assault

Interference with law enforcement

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Wilmar Jeovanny Montano Alvarado

Houston

Assault

Interference with law enforcement

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

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Thomas Edward Caldwell
Berryville, Va.
Conspiracy
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Mathew Capsel
Illinois
Assault
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Donovan Ray Crowl
Woodstock, Ohio
Conspiracy
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Nicholas DeCarlo
Fort Worth
Conspiracy
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Lisa Marie Eisenhart
Woodstock, Ga.
Conspiracy
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Scott Kevin Fairlamb
Stockholm, N.J.
Assault
Interference with law enforcement
Weapons crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Michael Joseph Foy
Wixom, Mich.
Assault
Interference with law enforcement
Weapons crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Robert Gieswein
Woodland Park, Colo.
Assault
Weapons crimes
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Alex Kirk Harkrider
Carthage, Texas
Conspiracy
Weapons crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Emanuel Jackson
Assault

Weapons crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Douglas Austin Jensen
Des Moines
Assault
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Chad Barrett Jones
Coxs Creek, Ky.
Assault
Interference with law enforcement
Weapons crimes
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Edward Jacob Lang
New York
Assault
Interference with law enforcement
Weapons crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Mark Jefferson Leffingwell
Seattle
Assault
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Patrick Edward McCaughey III
Ridgefield, Conn.
Assault
Interference with law enforcement
Weapons crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Eric Gavelek Munchel
Nashville
Conspiracy
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Ryan Taylor Nichols
Longview, Texas
Conspiracy
Assault
Interference with law enforcement
Weapons crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Nicholas R. Ochs
Honolulu
Conspiracy
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
William Pepe
Beacon, N.Y.

Conspiracy
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Dominic Pezzola
Rochester, N.Y.
Conspiracy
Assault
Interference with law enforcement
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Ryan Stephen Samsel
Bristol, Pa.
Assault
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Robert Sanford
Boothwyn, Pa.
Assault
Interference with law enforcement
Weapons crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Barton Wade Shively
Mechanicsburg, Pa.
Assault
Interference with law enforcement

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Jessica Marie Watkins

Champaign County, Ohio

Conspiracy

Property crimes

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

43

are charged with interference with law enforcement, weapons crimes, threats or property crimes but not conspiracy or assault

Christopher Michael Alberts

Pylesville, Md.

Weapons crimes

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Tommy Frederick Allan

Rocklin, Calif.

Property crimes

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Richard Barnett

Gravette, Ark.

Weapons crimes

Property crimes

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Craig Michael Bingert

Slatington, Pa.

Interference with law enforcement

Gina Michelle Bisignano
Beverly Hills, Calif.
Interference with law enforcement
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Samuel Camargo
Florida
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Jacob Anthony Chansley
Phoenix
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Lonnie Leroy Coffman
Falkville, Ala.
Weapons crimes
Nolan B. Cooke
Savoy, Texas
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Gracyn Dawn Courtright
Hurricane, W.Va.
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Nathaniel J. DeGrave

Las Vegas
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Hunter Allen Ehmke
Glendora, Calif.
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Troy Elbert Faulkner
Columbus, Ohio
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Gabriel Augustin Garcia
Miami
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Vitali GossJankowski
Naples, Fla.
Weapons crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Christopher Ray Grider
Texas
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Timothy Louis Hale-Cusanelli
Colts Neck, N.J.

Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Stephanie Hazelton
Medford, N.J.
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Emily Hernandez
Sullivan, Mo.
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Jerod Wade Hughes
East Helena, Mont.
Interference with law enforcement
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Joshua Calvin Hughes
East Helena, Mont.
Interference with law enforcement
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Adam Johnson
Parrish, Fla.
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Klete Derik Keller

Colorado Springs
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Joshua R. Lollar
Spring, Texas
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Cleveland Grover Meredith Jr.
Colorado
Threats
Garret Miller
Richardson, Texas
Interference with law enforcement
Threats
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Matthew Ryan Miller
Cooksville, Md.
Weapons crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Jordan Robert Mink
Oakdale, Pa.
Weapons crimes
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Aaron Mostofsky

Brooklyn
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Joshua Pruitt
Silver Spring, Md.
Interference with law enforcement
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Guy Wesley Reffitt
Wylie, Texas
Threats
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Jeffrey P. Sabol
Interference with law enforcement
Ronald L. Sandlin
Long Beach, Calif.
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Hunter Seefried
Laurel, Del.
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Troy Anthony Smocks
Dallas
Threats

Michael Sparks
Elizabethtown, Ky.
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Peter Francis Stager
Conway, Ark.
Interference with law enforcement
Justin Stoll
Wilmington, Ohio
Threats
Brandon Straka
New York
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
John Earle Sullivan
Salt Lake City
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Dustin Byron Thompson
Columbus, Ohio
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
William Wright Watson
Auburn, Ala.
Interference with law enforcement

Weapons crimes

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Riley June Williams

Harrisburg, Pa.

Property crimes

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

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are charged with trespassing or disrupting Congress only

Rasha N. Abual-Ragheb

Fairfield, N.J.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Stephen Michael Ayres

Ohio

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Dawn Bancroft

Doylestown, Pa.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Thomas Baranyi

Ewing, N.J.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Robert L. Bauer

Cave City, Ky.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Damon Michael Beckley

Cub Run, Ky.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Andrew Ryan Bennett

Columbia, Md.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Bryan Betancur

Silver Spring, Md.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Joseph Randall Biggs

Ormond Beach, Fla.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Joshua Matthew Black

Leeds, Ala.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Matthew Bledsoe

Memphis

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

James Bonet

Glen Falls, N.Y.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Larry Rendall Brock Jr.

Grapevine, Texas

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Terry Brown

Myerstown, Pa.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

William McCall Calhoun Jr.
Americus, Ga.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Albert A. Ciarpelli
Syracuse, N.Y.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Josiah Colt
Meridian, Idaho
Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Cody Page Carter Connell
Vivian, La.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Matthew Ross Council
Riverview, Fla.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Jenny Louise Cudd
Midland, Texas
Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Michael Curzio
Summerfield, Fla.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Michael Shane Daughtry
Newton, Ga.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Karl Friedrich-Johannes Dresch

Calumet, Mich.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Valerie Elaine Ehrke
Arbuckle, Calif.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Andrew C. Ericson
Muskogee, Okla.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Derrick Evans
Prichard, W.Va.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Thomas Fee
Freeport, N.Y.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Brandon Fellows
Schenectady, N.Y.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Samuel J. Fisher
New York
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Cindy Fitchett
Cobbs Creek, Va.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Jacob Fracker
Rocky Mount, Va.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Thomas Gallagher

Bristol, N.H.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Christina Gerding

Quincy, Ill.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Jason Gerding

Quincy, Ill.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Anthime Joseph Gionet

Burbank, Calif.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Simone Melissa Gold

Los Angeles

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Daniel Goodwyn

San Francisco

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Vaughn Gordon

Lafayette, La.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Couy Griffin

Tularosa, N.M.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Jack Jesse Griffith
Tennessee
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Brian Gundersen
Armonk, N.Y.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Peter J. Harding
Buffalo
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Andrew Hatley
South Carolina
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Edward E. Hemenway II
Winchester, Va.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Jacob Hiles
Virginia Beach
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Suzanne Ianni
Natick, Mass.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Kash Lee Kelly
Hammond, Ind.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Leo Christopher Kelly

Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Christopher M. Kelly
New City, N.Y.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Jacob Lewis
Victorville, Calif.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Kevin Loftus
Chippewa Falls, Wis.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
John Lolos
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Robert Anthony Lyon
Columbus, Ohio
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Kevin James Lyons
Chicago
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Dominick Madden
New York
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Anthony R. Mariotto
Fort Pierce, Fla.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Felipe Marquez
Coral Springs, Fla.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Zachary Hayes Martin
Rogersville, Mo.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Matthew Carl Mazzocco
San Antonio
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Justin McAuliffe
Bellmore, N.Y.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
David Charles Mish Jr.
Milwaukee
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Nicolas Anthony Moncada
Staten Island
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Patrick Montgomery
Littleton, Colo.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Henry Phillip Muntzer
Dillon, Mont.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Christopher W. Ortiz

Huntington, N.Y.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Robert Keith Packer
Newport News, Va.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Matthew Perna
Sharon, Pa.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Rachael Lynn Pert
Middleburg, Fla.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Tam Dinh Pham
Richmond, Texas
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Daniel Dink Phipps
Garland, Texas
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Christine Priola
Willoughby, Ohio
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Blake A. Reed
Nashville
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Jordan T. Revlett
Island, Ky.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Jorge A. Riley

Sacramento

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Jesus Rivera

Pensacola, Fla.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Thomas Robertson

Ferrum, Va.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Nicholas Rodean

Frederick, Md.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Eliel Rosa

Midland, Texas

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Bradley Rukstales

Inverness, Ill.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Jennifer Leigh Ryan

Frisco, Texas

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Mark Sahady

Malden, Mass.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Diana Santos-Smith
Bucks County, Pa.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Jon Ryan Schaffer
Columbus, Ind.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Kevin Seefried
Laurel, Del.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Dennis Sidorski
Ashburn, Va.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Mark Simon
Huntington Beach, Calif.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Jeffrey Alexander Smith
San Diego
Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Christopher Raphael Spencer
North Carolina
Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Patrick Alonzo Stedman
Haddonfield, N.J.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Melody Steele-Smith

Gloucester, Va.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Michael Stepakoff
Palm Harbor, Fla.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
John Herbert Strand
Beverly Hills, Calif.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Kevin Strong
Beaumont, Calif.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Marissa A. Suarez
Union Beach, N.J.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Douglas Sweet
Hudgins, Va.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Patricia Todisco
Staten Island
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Eric Chase Torrens
Gallatin, Tenn.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Israel Tutrow
Greenfield, Ind.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Chance Anthony Uptmore

San Antonio

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

James Herman Uptmore

San Antonio

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Hector Emmanuel Vargas Santos

Jersey City, N.J.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

William Vogel

Pawling, N.Y.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Joshua Wagner

Greenwood, Ind.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Bradley Weeks

Macclenny, Fla.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Andrew Williams

Orlando, Fla.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Dana Joe Winn

Middleburg, Fla.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Andrew Wrigley

Jim Thorpe, Pa.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Notes: The people shown here had federal charges that were filed and unsealed through Jan. 31. Trespassing and disrupting Congress includes illegal entry, disorderly conduct and obstructing official proceedings.

In the weeks since the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol, federal prosecutors have announced criminal charges against more than 175 people — less than a quarter of those involved in the melee, but enough to provide a rough portrait of the mob and the sprawling investigation into its actions.

At least 21 of those charged so far had ties to militant groups and militias, according to court documents and other records. At least 22 said they were current or former members of the military. More than a dozen were clear supporters of the conspiracy theory QAnon. But a majority expressed few organizing principles, outside a fervent belief in the false assertion that President Donald J. Trump had won re-election.

The accused came from at least 39 states, as far away as Hawaii. At least three were state or local officials, and three were police officers. Some were business owners; others were unemployed or made their living as conservative social media personalities. Many made comments alluding to revolution and violence, while others said the protests had been largely peaceful.

A New York Times review of federal cases through the end of January suggests that many of those in the horde were likely disorganized, but some groups and individuals came to the events of Jan. 6 trained and prepared for battle. The early charges set the stage for those to come as the Justice Department promises to prosecute even those accused of misdemeanor trespass and also devotes resources to more serious crimes, like conspiracy and homicide.

11 have been charged with conspiracy so far.

Thomas Edward Caldwell, 66

From Berryville, Va.

Charges:

Conspiracy

Property crimes

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Donovan Ray Crowl, 50
From Woodstock, Ohio
Conspiracy
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Nicholas DeCarlo, 30
Far-right media personality from Fort Worth
Conspiracy
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Lisa Marie Eisenhart, 56
Nurse from Woodstock, Ga.
Conspiracy
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Alex Kirk Harkrider, 32
From Carthage, Texas
Conspiracy
Weapons crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Eric Gavelek Munchel, 30
Bartender from Nashville
Conspiracy
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Ryan Taylor Nichols, 30
Business owner from Longview, Texas
Conspiracy
Assault
Interference with law enforcement
Weapons crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Nicholas R. Ochs, 34
Far-right media personality from Honolulu
Conspiracy
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
William Pepe, 31
M.T.A. worker from Beacon, N.Y.
Conspiracy
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Dominic Pezzola, 43
From Rochester, N.Y.
Conspiracy
Assault
Interference with law enforcement
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Jessica Marie Watkins, 38

Bartender from Champaign County, Ohio

Conspiracy

Property crimes

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Prosecutors have said some of the people involved in the riot could face charges of sedition conspiracy, which requires proof that rioters planned to use force to oppose the authority of the United States government or to hinder the execution of its laws. Such cases are complex because they require evidence not only of planning but also intent, and no such charges have yet been filed.

The few conspiracy charges that the government has already brought provide clues to how these investigations might grow.

Two cases with conspiracy charges appear limited in scope, including one involving two friends from Texas who posted pictures of themselves on Facebook at the Capitol with the caption “You want to steal our election, and not hear us in court? Good! Now you’ll hear our civil unrest!” and a mother and son recognized from photographs with the son, Eric Gavelek Munchel, 30, carrying zip-tie handcuffs.

But other more prominent cases involving conspiracy charges cite the involvement of major right-wing groups, the Oath Keepers militia and the Proud Boys, a nationalist organization. In both of those matters, prosecutors have already referenced other unnamed participants who they say were involved, hinting that the universe of accused conspirators is likely to grow.

“As with a traditional criminal case, you build up through the organization,” said Anne Milgram, an ex-prosecutor and former attorney general of New Jersey who has been a frequent critic of Mr. Trump.

At least 21 have possible ties to militant groups.

More than 10 percent of those now facing federal charges have expressed allegiance to or affinity for militant groups, according to the court records or other documentation like video footage of group events. Some hold leadership roles, while others are described by prosecutors as wearing their group’s paraphernalia or discussing plans to travel to the Jan. 6 protests with members.

Four members of the Proud Boys were recently charged with conspiracy. Seven other people with possible ties to the group were arrested and publicly charged in January, including one of the group’s leaders, Joseph Randall Biggs.

At least 11 of them have possible ties to the Proud Boys.

Nicholas DeCarlo, 30

Far-right media personality from Fort Worth

Charges:

Conspiracy

Property crimes

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Nicholas R. Ochs, 34

Far-right media personality from Honolulu

Conspiracy

Property crimes

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

William Pepe, 31

M.T.A. worker from Beacon, N.Y.

Conspiracy

Interference with law enforcement

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Dominic Pezzola, 43

From Rochester, N.Y.

Conspiracy

Assault

Interference with law enforcement

Property crimes

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Gabriel Augustin Garcia, 40

Construction business owner from Miami

Interference with law enforcement

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Joshua Pruitt, 39

Bartender from Silver Spring, Md.

Interference with law enforcement

Property crimes

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Andrew Ryan Bennett, 36

From Columbia, Md.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Bryan Betancur

From Silver Spring, Md.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Joseph Randall Biggs, 37

From Ormond Beach, Fla.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Daniel Goodwyn, 32

Web developer from San Francisco

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Christopher M. Kelly, 44

From New City, N.Y.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

On Wednesday, the Justice Department charged an additional Proud Boys leader, [Ethan Nordean](#), and still others are known to have been near the Capitol during the riot. The Times based its analysis on charges made public through Jan. 31, so these people were not included.

Three people affiliated with the Oath Keepers militia have been charged with conspiracy to interfere with law enforcement officers and obstruct a proceeding of Congress. Two others who demonstrated affinity for the group are facing other federal charges. Several more people wearing insignia of the group or moving in concert with them appear in videos of the mob but have not been charged.

At least 5 have possible ties to the Oath Keepers.

Thomas Edward Caldwell, 66

From Berryville, Va.

Charges:

Conspiracy

Property crimes

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Donovan Ray Crowl, 50

From Woodstock, Ohio

Conspiracy

Property crimes

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Jessica Marie Watkins, 38

Bartender from Champaign County, Ohio

Conspiracy

Property crimes

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Larry Rendall Brock Jr., 53

Former pilot from Grapevine, Texas

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Jon Ryan Schaffer, 52

Musician from Columbus, Ind.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

At least 5 have possible ties to other militant groups.

Robert Gieswein

Runs a paramilitary training program, from Woodland Park, Colo.

Charges:

Assault

Weapons crimes

Property crimes

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Barton Wade Shively, 53

From Mechanicsburg, Pa.

Assault

Interference with law enforcement

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Guy Wesley Reffitt, 48

Drilling rig worker from Wylie, Texas

Threats

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Rasha N. Abual-Ragheb, 40

Licensed cosmetologist from Fairfield, N.J.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Douglas Sweet, 58

From Hudgins, Va.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Followers of other groups, such as the Three Percenters, were also present on Jan. 6, as were people who publicly aligned themselves with white supremacist organizations like Patriot Front. While the vast majority of those who stormed the Capitol may not have pledged membership in such groups, some did adopt related language and imagery, by showing a “white power” hand sign in photos or wearing clothing with battle insignia or mockery of the Holocaust.

Although organized groups may have played an important role in the attack, most people identified so far were more loosely affiliated. In part, this reflects the slower development of cases with conspiracy charges, but it is also consistent with patterns of radicalization on the far right in recent years, said Cynthia Miller-Idriss, director of the Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab at American University.

“The majority appear to be individuals who are not card-carrying members of particular groups,” she said. “There is nothing they are identifying with other than an overarching set of ideologies and misinformation.”

At least 22 are current or former military members.

Veterans and service members appear to have been overrepresented in the crowds that stormed the Capitol: Of the 176 people charged in federal court, at least 22 claim some sort of military experience.

At least 2 are currently in the military.

Timothy Louis Hale-Cusanelli, 30

Government contractor from Colts Neck, N.J.

Charges:

Interference with law enforcement

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Jacob Fracker, 29

Police officer from Rocky Mount, Va.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

At least 20 are said to be military veterans.

Thomas Edward Caldwell, 66*

From Berryville, Va.

Charges:

Conspiracy

Property crimes

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Donovan Ray Crowl, 50

From Woodstock, Ohio

Conspiracy

Property crimes

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Michael Joseph Foy

From Wixom, Mich.

Assault

Interference with law enforcement

Weapons crimes

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Alex Kirk Harkrider, 32

From Carthage, Texas

Conspiracy

Weapons crimes

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Mark Jefferson Leffingwell, 51*

From Seattle

Assault

Interference with law enforcement

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Ryan Taylor Nichols, 30
Business owner from Longview, Texas
Conspiracy
Assault
Interference with law enforcement
Weapons crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Nicholas R. Ochs, 34
Far-right media personality from Honolulu
Conspiracy
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Dominic Pezzola, 43*
From Rochester, N.Y.
Conspiracy
Assault
Interference with law enforcement
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Barton Wade Shively, 53
From Mechanicsburg, Pa.
Assault
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Jessica Marie Watkins, 38

Bartender from Champaign County, Ohio
Conspiracy
Property crimes
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Gabriel Augustin Garcia, 40
Construction business owner from Miami
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Joshua R. Lollar, 39*
From Spring, Texas
Interference with law enforcement
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Joseph Randall Biggs, 37
From Ormond Beach, Fla.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Larry Rendall Brock Jr., 53
Former pilot from Grapevine, Texas
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Kevin Loftus, 52*
From Chippewa Falls, Wis.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Jesus Rivera*
Conservative social media influencer from Pensacola, Fla.
Trespassing or disrupting Congress
Thomas Robertson, 47

Police officer from Ferrum, Va.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Mark Sahady, 46*

From Malden, Mass.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Jeffrey Alexander Smith*

From San Diego

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Hector Emmanuel Vargas Santos*

From Jersey City, N.J.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Note: Those marked with an asterisk have made public claims of military service, but The Times has not confirmed their service.

Militant and militia groups such as the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers are known to recruit and attract military members, who often lean conservative in their views.

“You see people on the videos of the riots who are clearly making use of tactical training, and that is relevant to some potential charges, if you made a plan and treated this as if it were a military operation,” said Emily Berman, a law professor at the University of Houston who focuses on domestic laws related to national security. “But I think it’s also potentially problematic if you have people who are charged with serving the country or upholding the law who have these views and act on them.”

At least 13 voiced QAnon beliefs.

A majority of people arrested so far espoused some belief in disinformation, at minimum the idea that the election had been stolen from Mr. Trump, or that Vice President Mike Pence could change the outcome of the vote certification on Jan. 6.

At least 13 of those who were federally charged have voiced a clear affiliation with QAnon, according to court documents and confirmed social media accounts.

Douglas Austin Jensen, 41

From Des Moines

Charges:

Assault

Interference with law enforcement

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Jacob Anthony Chansley, 33

From Phoenix

Interference with law enforcement

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Cleveland Grover Meredith Jr., 52

From Colorado

Threats

Valerie Elaine Ehrke

Architectural designer from Arbuckle, Calif.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Samuel J. Fisher

Dating coach from New York

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Jason Gerding, 50

From Quincy, Ill.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Kevin Loftus, 52

From Chippewa Falls, Wis.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Dominick Madden, 43

Sanitation worker from New York

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Henry Phillip Muntzer, 52

Appliance store owner from Dillon, Mont.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Christine Priola, 49

Occupational therapist from Willoughby, Ohio

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Patrick Alonzo Stedman, 32

Dating coach from Haddonfield, N.J.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Kevin Strong, 44

F.A.A. employee from Beaumont, Calif.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

Douglas Sweet, 58

From Hudgins, Va.

Trespassing or disrupting Congress

The sweeping conspiracy theory holds, among other things, that Democrats are part of a cabal of Satan-worshipping pedophiles, and that Mr. Trump is secretly fighting to bring them to justice.

Because of the sprawling, amorphous nature of the QAnon theories, the number of obvious adherents is almost certainly an undercount of those in the group who held at least some of the views, which have become entangled with more mainstream conservative rhetoric.

QAnon supporters were some of the most prominent figures in the mob, wearing clothing and carrying signs to highlight their beliefs. Christine Priola, a school occupational therapist from Ohio, brought a sign to the Senate floor that said “The Children Cry Out for Justice.” Legal experts said even a sincere belief in the conspiracy theories about the election would not likely be a successful strategy for the defense.

“I don’t care what you believe, you know you’re not supposed to break into the Capitol,” Ms. Berman said.

How the federal charges break down

A majority of charges so far are for violations like trespassing or disorderly conduct, or for obstruction of a congressional proceeding. Many of these are misdemeanors.

“We try to look for the most easily provable case” to quickly file a criminal complaint, said Michael Sherwin, the acting U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia.

Total number of people charged for each type of crime

169 charged with trespassing or disrupting Congress

40 charged with interference with law enforcement

25 charged with property crimes

17 charged with assault

17 charged with weapons crimes

11 charged with conspiracy

5 charged with threats

Note: Some of the arrested have been charged with more than one type of crime.

The authorities moved quickly to arrest those who had brazenly posted internet videos of themselves committing crimes, or whose images had become iconic symbols of the riot: a man carrying a Confederate flag through the halls of Congress; another who propped his feet on a desk in the offices of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi; a third who stood on the floor of the Senate shirtless, wearing a painted face, headdress and horns. But slowly, more complex allegations have also trickled in.

More than 40 people are facing more serious charges like obstruction of a law enforcement officer, weapons violations or theft of government property. These include people arrested outside the Capitol grounds with weapons like guns and Molotov cocktails, and others charged with making threats against their own family members and against congressional officials.

One man was charged with a federal crime over threats to kill Ms. Pelosi and with local violations in Washington, D.C., after federal agents said they found a Glock pistol, a Tavor X95 assault rifle and hundreds of rounds of ammunition in his trailer.

More than two dozen defendants are accused of the most severe crimes so far — assaulting an officer or conspiring with others in the attack on the Capitol. These cases include a Marine Corps veteran who brought a hockey stick to the protest and is accused of using it to beat a

police officer on the Capitol steps, as well as a Connecticut man seen on video pinning a bleeding officer to a door with a riot shield.

Such cases are certain to increase, as investigators put pressure on people already in custody, and as they determine who killed Brian Sicknick, a Capitol Police officer, and who placed pipe bombs at nearby buildings.

Since Jan. 31, federal prosecutors have revealed charges against about a half dozen more people, who were not included in the Times analysis. Justice Department officials have said they expect the number of people charged to increase geometrically in the days and weeks to come.



POLITICS 02/04/2021 09:23 pm ET

Democratic Lawmakers Give Emotional Testimony On Experiences Of Capitol Attack

Democrats in Congress spoke passionately on the House floor, some in tears, about Jan. 6, the day of the armed insurrection by pro-Trump rioters.



By Sarah Ruiz-Grossman

Democratic lawmakers [spoke on the House floor](#) on Thursday, delivering emotional testimonies of their experiences on Jan. 6, the day that armed, pro-Trump insurrectionists stormed the U.S. Capitol.

Rep. [Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez](#) (D-N.Y.), who earlier this week gave a play-by-play of the moments [she thought she was going to die](#) during the attack, organized a “special order” hour for nearly a dozen lawmakers to speak to their own trauma after surviving the riots.

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas) recounted how she had to flee the same Capitol two decades earlier on Sept. 11, 2001, and saw the smoke from the plane that hit the Pentagon.

“We heard the words ‘hurry up, get out,’” Jackson Lee said of the Jan. 6 attack at the Capitol. As she and other colleagues heard shooting, “we crouched and some of my good colleagues and I began to pray.”

“White supremacy, insurrectionists and domestic terrorism will not prevail,” Jackson Lee said of the rioters, some of whom carried Confederate flags, [hung nooses](#) and wore racist symbols.

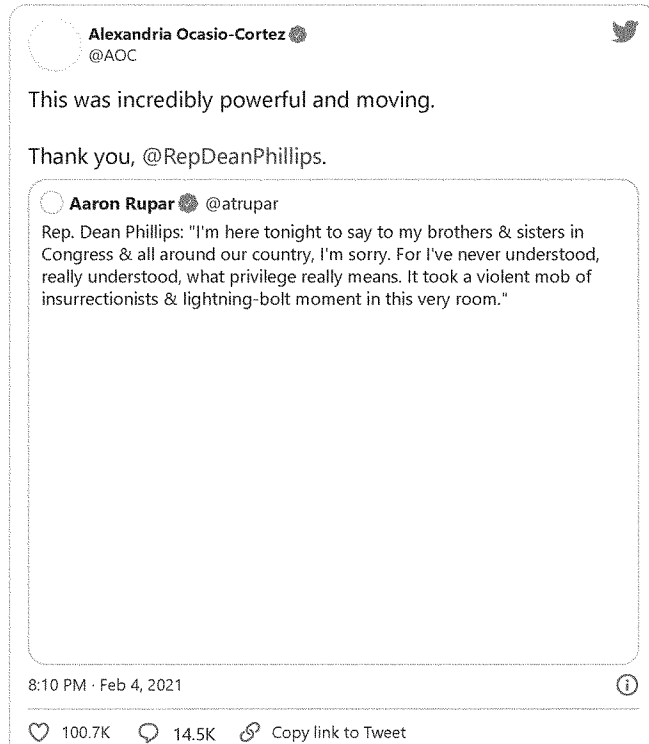


On Jan. 6, Rep. Dean Phillips (D-Minn.) described how lawmakers "had to take cover behind our seats" and "struggled to activate our gas masks."

"We know the sound of the breaking glass, of the screams, of the furniture being moved in front of the doors," Phillips said. "We know what it feels like searching for something, anything to defend ourselves and realizing a pencil is about all we had ... thinking that it's a real possibility that we would not see our families and loved ones again."

Phillips, who is white, then choked up as he recounted how he had urged Democratic colleagues to mix with Republicans so they might be safe from the right-wing mob.

"I realized blending in was not an option for my colleagues of color," Phillips said. "I'm sorry. For I had never understood, really understood, what privilege really means."



https://www.huffpost.com/entry/democrats-congress-testimony-capitol-attack_n_601ca2afc5b618b319870ce3

2/9



Other Democratic lawmakers were moved to tears as they described an [armed mob](#) descending on lawmakers as they were certifying the U.S. election results. Five people died in the mayhem, including a Capitol Police officer.

Rep. Rashida Tlaib of Michigan, one of the [first Muslim women elected to Congress](#), broke into tears as she recounted how she's repeatedly received death threats since being in office, including on her first day as a congresswoman.

"I didn't even get sworn in yet and someone wanted me dead," the Democrat said, adding how more threats came over the years, including one mentioning her son by name. "The trauma from just being here, existing as a Muslim, is so hard."

While Tlaib was not at the Capitol during the Jan. 6 attack, she spoke of how she worries "every day" for the lives of her staff, some of whom are queer or Black and one of whom wears a hijab. "I urge my colleagues to please take what happened on Jan. 6 seriously," she said.

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Rep. Cori Bush (D-Mo.) — who is a longtime activist for Black liberation and who wore a mask printed with the name of [Breonna Taylor](#), a Black woman killed at home by police in Kentucky last year — condemned the "white supremacist attack on our nation's capital."

Bush said she was in the House gallery on Jan. 6 when she left to see what was happening outside and saw a crowd approaching. She fled to her office, where she watched on television as the insurrectionists breached the doors.

Bush used her time on the House floor on Thursday to [send a message to her Republican colleagues](#):

did you run for office? Bush asked. How can we trust that you will address the suffering that white supremacy causes on a day-to-day basis in the shadows if you can't address the white supremacy that happened right in front of you in your house?"



Rep. Mary Gay Scanlon (D-Penn.) read a letter signed by nearly 400 congressional staff members “because they don’t often have a voice on this floor.”

“Our workplace was attacked by a violent mob trying to stop the election vote count. That mob was incited by former President Donald Trump and his allies, some of whom we pass in the hallways,” the staffers wrote. “As the mob smashed through barricades, broke doors and windows and charged into the Capitol ... many of us hid behind chairs, under desks, or barricaded ourselves inside offices.”

Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-N.Y.), who locked himself in his office with his team during the insurrection, spoke of the “traumatic experience” of leaving the building that night and seeing bloodstains where someone had been shot.



condemned those who are already demanding that we move on, or worse, attempting to minimize, discredit or belittle the accounts of survivors.”

“They send a tremendously damaging message to survivors of trauma across the country,” Ocasio-Cortez said, “that what they experienced wasn’t bad enough.”

RELATED...



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez Recounts Fear She Was ‘Going To Die’ In Capitol Attack



Ocasio-Cortez Says She Feared For Her Life In Capitol Riot ‘Close Encounter’



Pro-Trump Rioters Storm U.S. Capitol In Deadly Attack On Democracy

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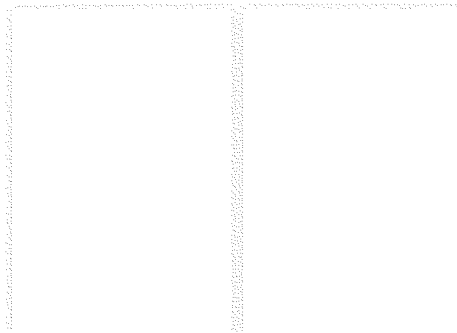
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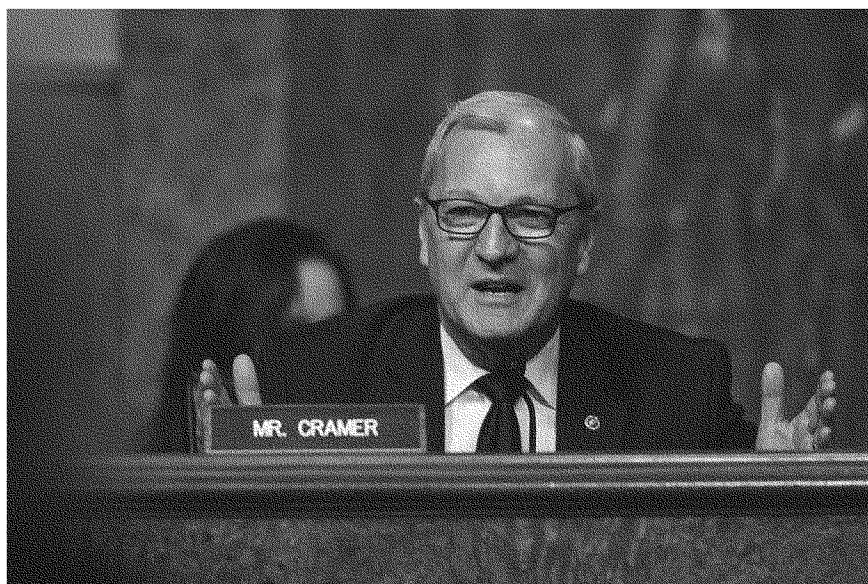
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IMPEACHMENT

GOP senators wary of Trump impeachment defense

"It's not a great moment for trying to score political points," said Sen. Kevin Cramer.



Sen. Kevin Cramer has criticized the House's case for convicting former President Donald Trump. | Carolyn Kaster/AP Photo

By **ANDREW DESIDERIO**
02/03/2021 11:21 AM EST
Updated: 02/03/2021 04:13 PM EST

2/5/2021

GOP senators wary of Trump impeachment defense - POLITICO



Republican senators are discouraging Donald Trump’s lawyers from raising discredited election fraud claims to defend the former president during the Senate’s upcoming trial, a day after Trump’s defense team advanced those arguments in its first official response to the House’s impeachment charge.

GOP senators warned Trump’s lawyers on Wednesday that relitigating the false claims would backfire, urging them to instead focus squarely on the procedural objections that have already united Republicans.

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“The point here is to avoid conviction. It’s not a great moment for trying to score political points,” said Sen. Kevin Cramer (R-N.D.), who has criticized the House’s case for convicting Trump. “And I don’t think litigating the election is a winning strategy. I think it’s got lower percentage of success than a Hail Mary in the Super Bowl.”

Last week, 45 out of 50 GOP senators voted in favor of a procedural motion arguing that it was unconstitutional for the Senate to hold an impeachment trial for a former president because that individual is already out of office. Cramer said Trump’s lawyers should treat that vote as a victory, noting that “you already have a winning score on the constitutional message.”

<https://www.politico.com/news/2021/02/03/trump-impeachment-election-claims-465468>

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“I’d take the cue from what worked with the first vote in the Senate: it’s unconstitutional,” added Sen. Mike Braun (R-Ind.), who said the procedural arguments are the most potent defense and are already working, as Trump is on a glide path to an acquittal.

The overwhelming sentiment from Republican senators, who will serve as jurors in the trial when it begins next week, reflects their near-unity on the question of whether putting a former president on trial for impeachment charges is unconstitutional. It also allows them to avoid scrutinizing Trump’s conduct leading up to the Jan. 6 insurrection at the Capitol, which the House’s impeachment article alleges he incited.

Trump’s lead defense attorney Bruce Castor said earlier Wednesday that he has not been pressured to reprise the unsubstantiated claim that the election was “stolen” from Trump, and insisted that his defense of the ex-president will focus strictly on the “technical” arguments. But just a day earlier, in his team’s first official response to the impeachment charge, they explicitly doubled down on the false allegations about widespread fraud in the 2020 election.

Appearing on KYW Newsradio Philadelphia, Castor maintained that the fraud claims will not be a part of his defense of Trump on the Senate floor and said the Senate has no jurisdiction over a private citizen because “it would be almost the equivalent of the president having died — they can’t remove him from office because he simply is unable to be removed because he’s not there.”

“There are plenty of questions about how the election was conducted throughout the country, but that’s for a different forum, and I don’t believe that’s important to litigate in the Senate trial because you don’t need it,” Castor said. “President Trump has plenty to win with what he has.”

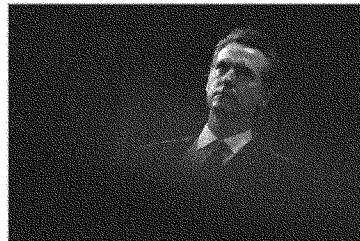
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Trump cut ties with his initial legal team over the weekend in part because they refused to advance the fraud claims, but Castor insisted he was not pressured to adopt that strategy ahead of the trial, which begins next Tuesday.

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“I don’t know where people got that notion that was some sort of litmus test to get to defend the president, because as you saw from the document I filed, which had to be approved by the president personally, there isn’t anything in there about the election being stolen,” Castor said.

Indeed, Tuesday’s filing, written by Castor and his co-counsel David Schoen, does not argue that the election was “stolen” from Trump. But it does state that Trump “denies” the House managers’ assertion that it was false for the former president to say he won the election in a “landslide.”

The filing also maintains that Trump has a First Amendment right to express his opinion that the election results were inaccurate or disputed. The House impeachment managers argued in a separate filing Tuesday that Trump’s

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continued advancement of that false claim backs up their charge that he incited the Jan. 6 insurrection at the Capitol, which left five people dead.

Upon learning of those passages in Castor's filing, Trump ally Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) said: "If they start trying to prove that Georgia and Pennsylvania and Wisconsin were stolen, that's when you're going to lose everybody."

At least one Senate Republican, though, disagrees. Sen. Tommy Tuberville (R-Ala.), who voted against certifying some Electoral College results on Jan. 6, said Trump's lawyers should "throw the barn door at them."

"How else are you going to defend yourself?" Tuberville asked, noting that the House managers' case relies on Trump's conduct in the months leading up to Jan. 6, not just the events of that day. "There's no other way."

Questions about Trump's second impeachment trial?

Our reporters will answer a selection of your questions in a live chat when the trial begins on Tuesday, Feb. 9.

While Republicans have coalesced around the idea that the trial itself is unconstitutional, Democrats unanimously oppose that view, and they've been joined by legal scholars from across the political spectrum. They note that the Constitution gives the Senate the "sole power to try all impeachments," and that one of the potential punishments for conviction is barring that former president from holding federal office again. Moreover, they say, under Trump's standard an official subject to impeachment could simply resign before the trial begins in order to evade accountability.

Based on last week's vote, it is highly unlikely that the Senate will reach the two-thirds threshold required to convict Trump on the House's charge that he incited the Jan. 6 attack. If all 50 Democratic senators vote in favor of conviction, at least 17 Republicans would need to join them in order for Trump to face punishments including a ban on holding office in the future.

In his radio interview Wednesday, Castor outlined the procedural arguments against a conviction, after the House impeachment managers wrote on Tuesday that Trump bears “unmistakable” responsibility for the attack on the Capitol.

“Just because somebody gave a speech and people got excited, it doesn’t mean it’s the speechmaker’s fault — it’s the people who got excited and did what they know is wrong,” Castor said, referring to Trump’s remarks to the crowd the just hours before it stormed the Capitol.

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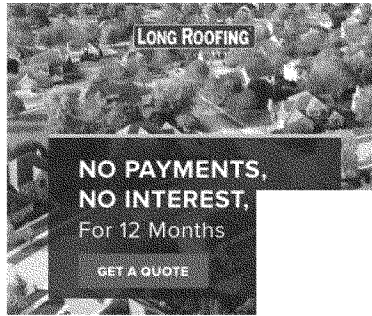
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How McConnell is navigating Trump's trial: Quietly

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Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell — who is approaching a tough Senate map in 2022 — hasn't talked to Donald Trump since late last year, when McConnell recognized Joe Biden as the election winner. | Samuel Corum/Getty Images

Kevin McCarthy is hugging former President Donald Trump as tightly as he can. Liz Cheney voted to impeach him. But Mitch McConnell isn't making any sudden movements as House Republicans tear each other apart in Trump's wake.

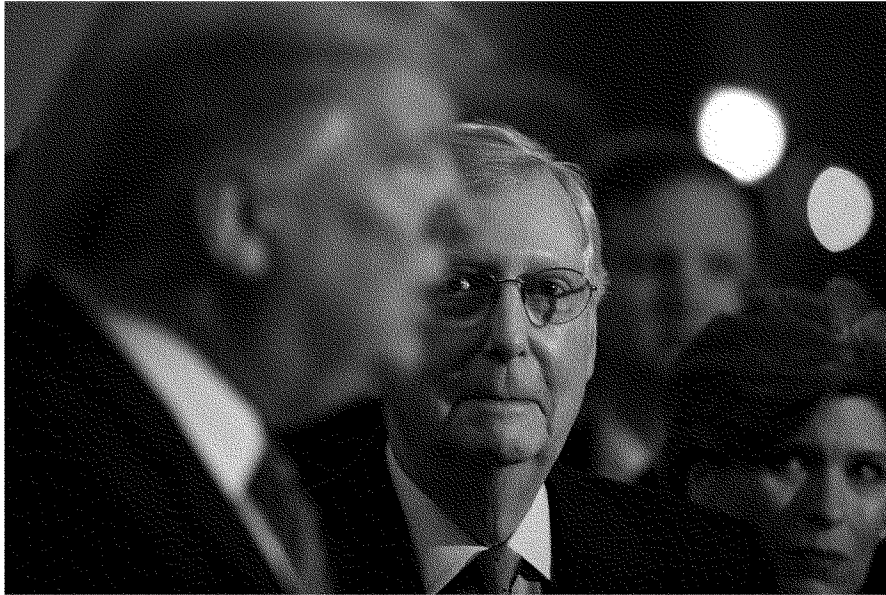
The Senate minority leader is deferring a final verdict on Trump, even with the opportunity to do so via the president's forthcoming impeachment trial. McConnell's strategy reflects the consensus of his fellow Senate Republicans, who have watched uneasily as the House minority leader and conference chair staked out polarizing positions on Trump's conduct.

Two weeks ago, McConnell publicly castigated Trump by blaming him, in part, for feeding "lies" to the mob that invaded the Capitol, while privately signaling to associates that he was open to conviction. But then he sided with Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) to find Trump's impeachment trial unconstitutional — indicating that while he might criticize Trump at the conclusion of the process, he likely won't vote to convict.

McConnell has done little to hide his annoyance with the president, but allies say he is extremely unlikely to make a further break with Trump now. In fact, since his speech assigning blame to Trump, he's said nothing to his colleagues about Trump other than referring to his contacts with the former president's legal team, said one senator who attends meetings with McConnell.

"What we do talk about is that he's spoken to the president's attorneys. So he's not in direct conversations with the president," the senator said. The Jan. 19 speech "was his one outlet ... he was very frustrated, that was why he did that one floor speech."

Those comments, coming from a man who spent four years avoiding direct criticism of Trump, were remarkable in part because they were so uncharacteristically passionate and blunt.



Mitch McConnell has done little to hide his annoyance with the president, but allies say he is extremely unlikely to make a further break with Trump now. | Olivier Douliery-Pool/Getty Images

Then on Monday, in a rare intervention in House business, McConnell labeled Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.) a “cancer” on the party for spreading conspiracy theories and defended Cheney even as pro-Trump Republicans seek to oust her from her leadership position. But asked Tuesday about whether he should have condemned Trump’s conspiracy theories earlier, McConnell reverted to type, saying only, “We’re going to an impeachment trial next week, and we’re going to listen to what the lawyers have to say.”

“I’m going to listen to the arguments. I think that’s what we ought to do. That’s what I said before it started. That’s still my view. The issue on which we already voted is an interesting constitutional question. I think we ought to listen to the lawyers argue the question,” McConnell said about whether he was still keeping an open mind.

Though McConnell’s criticisms of Trump two weeks ago will always be viewed by Trump’s supporters as a betrayal, it’s become increasingly clear he will not attempt to lead his party into barring Trump from seeking future office. His position that Trump’s trial is not constitutional is as good an indicator as any.

“He probably has frustration — we all have at times — with people’s behavior,” said Sen. Richard Shelby (R-Ala.). “But I think he studied and read the Constitution on that vote, like 45 of us did. I wish the other five had, but they didn’t.”

“What he said is one thing, but then you come to reality and gather more evidence and information,” Shelby said, reconciling McConnell’s searing criticisms of Trump with his vote against the trial’s constitutionality.

Notably, McConnell declined to hold the trial in the immediate aftermath of the House’s impeachment vote. He believed doing so would short-circuit Trump’s due process for the trial. But in delaying the trial until after Trump left office, he also helped steer the GOP toward its dominant argument.

A Republican leadership aide described a “palpable sense of relief” within the party that the GOP had coalesced around the constitutionality question. That allows members to acquit Trump on a process argument rather than judge the merits of whether Trump incited an insurrection.

Two weeks ago in a party conference call shortly after McConnell’s speech, multiple senators raised the prospect that Trump’s trial and conviction could be unconstitutional. That call became a turning point — it showed that few Republicans are comfortable even weighing the possible conviction of Trump.

Then McConnell invited constitutional scholar Jonathan Turley, who is currently arguing against the constitutionality of the trial, to a Senate GOP lunch last week. A few minutes later, just five GOP senators voted against Paul’s motion. McConnell was not one of them.

McConnell “basically told our members that this is an issue where they’re going to be able to vote their conscience. It’s the best you can hope to do under circumstances like this,” said Senate Minority Whip John Thune (R-S.D.), who earlier had raised Trump’s ire by downplaying the chances of his election challenge’s success in Congress. “That’s where I think most of our members would like to have him land.”

Cheney’s increasingly tenuous position in the GOP is a good indicator for what would come next if McConnell were to convict Trump. And he’s close to getting his old job back, needing to pick up just one seat to become majority leader again. Further friction with Trump is unlikely to help him achieve that goal.

“Senator McConnell has been very emphatic about his views about what happened that day. That doesn’t extend to the other issues we’ve talked about, like the constitutionality and the wisdom of setting a new precedent” of convicting a former president, said Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas), a McConnell ally. “The president got 70 million-plus votes. Those people are going to vote in 2022 hopefully, so people are trying to navigate an honorable approach.”

McConnell and the GOP largely allowed Trump to make his baseless election fraud claims for weeks in an effort to hold the party together ahead of Georgia's special elections — an effort that was devastatingly unsuccessful.

Still, even if he doesn't vote to convict, McConnell is sending unmistakable signs about where he thinks the GOP should head in the post-Trump era: exorcising the far-right extremists from the party and embracing mainstream Republicans.

And whether intentional or not, McConnell's rare decision to wade into internal House GOP politics painted a sharp contrast with McCarthy, who has only expressed tepid support for Cheney and has yet to formally reprimand Greene. McCarthy may meet with Greene Tuesday evening, while House Republicans will determine Cheney's fate Wednesday afternoon.

McConnell said Tuesday that he enjoys a "good working relationship" with McCarthy but felt the need to express himself about "that particular new member of the House" — he did not use her name — and Democrats' efforts to paint the GOP as Greene's party.

The two minority leaders have also split in their approach to Trump, a reflection of their differing conferences. McCarthy, whom Trump has fondly called "My Kevin," trekked to Mar-a-Lago last week to make amends with the disgraced ex-president and emerged from that meeting making clear that Trump would be integral to the GOP's efforts to win back the House.



Mitch McConnell and Kevin McCarthy have also split in their approach to Trump, a reflection of their differing conferences. | Erin Schaff-Pool/Getty Images

Meanwhile, McConnell — who is approaching a tough Senate map in 2022 — hasn't talked to Trump since late last year, when McConnell recognized Biden as the election winner. And while McCarthy still challenged the election results even after the deadly Capitol riots, McConnell delivered a withering floor speech on Jan. 6, warning that voting to overturn the election results would send the U.S. political system into a "death spiral."

McCarthy and McConnell's offices both declined to answer questions about whether McCarthy was given a heads up about the Kentucky Republican's statement defending Cheney. Cheney's office, however, was in the loop about McConnell's remarks, according to sources.

McConnell's current posture is in some ways a return to form for a GOP leader that tried to stay as far away from clashing with Trump as possible for four years. His inscrutable facial expressions and public and private comments are a feature for him — not a bug.

"I don't know what to make of him. Honestly," said Sen. John Kennedy (R-La.) of McConnell's stance on impeachment. "Mitch is a person of few words anyway and he hasn't really talked about his position extensively — at all, that I remember."

Marianne LeVine contributed to this report.

In Rare Public Statement, Congressional Aides Call for Trump's Conviction

[nytimes.com/2021/02/03/us/politics/congress-trump-impeachment.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/03/us/politics/congress-trump-impeachment.html)

February 3, 2021



WASHINGTON — More than 370 Democratic congressional aides issued an unusual public appeal on Wednesday, imploring senators — in some cases their own bosses — to convict former President Donald J. [Trump](#) for inciting a violent “attack on our workplace” that threatened the peaceful transition of power.

In a [starkly personal letter](#), the staff members describe ducking under office desks, barricading themselves in offices or watching as they witnessed marauding bands of rioters who “smashed” their way through the Capitol on Jan. 6. Responsibility, they argue, lies squarely with Mr. Trump and his “baseless, monthslong effort to reject votes lawfully cast by the American people.”

“As congressional employees, we don’t have a vote on whether to convict Donald J. Trump for his role in inciting the violent attack at the Capitol, but our senators do,” they wrote. “And for our sake, and the sake of the country, we ask that they vote to convict the former president and bar him from ever holding office again.”

A copy of the letter, including the names of the signatories, was shared with The New York Times before its release on Wednesday, four weeks after the attack and days before the Senate’s impeachment trial.

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The letter, while in no way binding, underscored the remarkable dynamic surrounding Mr. Trump's trial, in which many of the witnesses to and victims of the "incitement of insurrection" he is charged with are among the closest advisers to lawmakers who will decide his political fate. Congressional aides often provide counsel behind closed doors to the elected officials they serve, and many are authorized to speak on those officials' behalf. But exceedingly rarely do they publicly express their own views — much less push for so stark a political and constitutional remedy as conviction in an impeachment trial.

Among the signatories were press secretaries, schedulers, committee staff members and advisers from the House and Senate, though relatively few were from the upper echelon of chiefs of staff or committee staff directors. They included Drew Hammill, a deputy chief of staff for Speaker Nancy Pelosi, as well as communications aides closely associated with lawmakers who have been involved with Mr. Trump's impeachments, such as Shadawn Reddick-Smith, communications director for the House Judiciary Committee; Gabby Richards, communications director for Representative Mary Gay Scanlon of Pennsylvania; Anne Feldman, communications director for Representative Jason Crow of Colorado; and Daniel Gleick, communications director for Representative Val Demings of Florida.

The letter's organizers solicited support from Republican aides, offering to include language to assuage their concerns about retribution from bosses or harassment on social media. But despite tentative interest from some, people familiar with the effort said, no Republican aides ultimately signed on.

As public attention has zeroed in on the stories of their more recognizable bosses, congressional aides who were at the Capitol on Jan. 6 have privately struggled for weeks to make sense of what they saw in the usually staid halls of the building. Unlike their bosses, they typically have few outlets to publicly share those experiences.

In the letter to senators, the aides refer to Brian D. Sicknick, a Capitol Police officer who died after his encounter with the mob as "one of our co-workers who guards and greets us every day." The letter also says that many of the signers had come of age in the era of mass school shootings "post-Columbine" and had been trained in how to respond.

"As the mob smashed through Capitol Police barricades, broke doors and windows, and charged into the Capitol with body armor and weapons, many of us hid behind chairs and under desks or barricaded ourselves in offices," they wrote. "Others watched on TV and frantically tried to reach bosses and colleagues as they fled for their lives."



POLITICS 02/01/2021 09:49 pm ET

Trump Supporter's Delusions About A Stolen Election Make Him More Dangerous: Judge

Couy Griffin's belief in conspiracy theories hurt his case to be released ahead of his trial linked to the Capitol insurrection.



By Ryan J. Reilly

A federal magistrate judge ordered a defendant charged in connection with the Capitol insurrection to be held until trial, in part by finding that the man's delusional beliefs about a stolen U.S. election make him unlikely to recognize the government's authority.

Federal Magistrate Judge Zia Faruqi ordered on Monday that Couy Griffin — a New Mexico commissioner and founder of an organization called "Cowboys for Trump" — be held until trial.

Faruqi found that Griffin's lack of belief in the United States government "as it sits today," along with his rhetoric endorsing violence against Democrats, indicated that there was no way to release him and still assure the safety of the American public and his future appearances in court.



BRENT STIRTON VIA GETTY IMAGES

Trump supporters gather outside the Capitol during an insurrectionist attack on the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6.

Many defendants charged in connection with the U.S. Capitol insurrection will undoubtedly argue, whether at trial or during sentencing, that they were sucked into a false conspiracy about mass voter fraud. Monday's detention hearing showed how a defendant's belief in such delusional conspiracies — combined with rhetoric endorsing violence — can harm their chances at securing pretrial release.

The federal government argued for Griffin's pretrial detention in part by pointing to his statements endorsing violence against Democrats.

"The defendant has taken 'nothing off the table' in pursuit of his aims to ensure 'Biden will never be president.' The defendant's inflammatory conduct, repeated threats, delusional worldview, and access to firearms makes him a danger to the community," the government argued in a court filing. "In order to protect the community and assure his appearance at future court proceedings, the defendant should be held without bond pending trial."

Faruqi agreed with the government's arguments, finding that the nature of Griffin's offense was tied to the "horrific" attempt to "stop the lawful administration of the democratic process."



forward because people were unhappy about the results of the election," Faruqui said.

Faruqui noted how widespread the delusional belief that President Joe Biden benefited from a stolen election had become, and suggested that, in normal circumstances, a defendant who spouted rambling, nonsensical beliefs after being charged with unlawfully occupying protected areas like the White House would receive a mental health evaluation.

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"He makes statements about the election being stolen by Chinese entities. I don't know what that means," Faruqui said. He then referenced other cases in which defendants with mental health issues hopped a White House fence.

"I know that on my White House Ellipse cases, when someone makes statements like this that are demonstrably false and are in no way accurate, what happens is that we consider whether the person requires a mental health evaluation," Faruqui said.

"It's no different than people not believing facts or science," he said. "Unfortunately, this is a prevailing, apparently, idea — although false."



JEENAH MOON VIA GETTY IMAGES

Couy Griffin, who was later charged in connection with the insurrectionist attack on the U.S. Capitol, rides his horse on 5th Avenue on May 1, 2020, in New York City.

Faruqi said he worried that Griffin wouldn't obey his authority if he were released because of his belief in nonsensical conspiracy theories.

"I don't believe that he will believe that those orders are to be respected or followed," Faruqi said. "I don't think that the defendant will follow my conditions if he believes I am part of this machine of the democratic process, or for whatever reason, I don't know, I can't fathom what it is because these are not logical thoughts based in fact."

While Griffin had not specifically expressed his lack of faith or distrust in the judicial branch, Faruqi said that it's impossible to believe that Griffin's belief about a mass conspiracy to steal the election would not extend to the judicial branch, which over and over and over again, rejected Trump's attempts to overthrow the results of the 2020 election based on nonsense conspiracy theories.

"I think a logical inference is that when someone tries to participate in what the government describes as an insurrection, that he does not believe in the legitimacy of a government," Faruqi said. "It's hard to believe how parts of the government can be quarantined from that ... how the defendant cannot just believe that we, the courts, are



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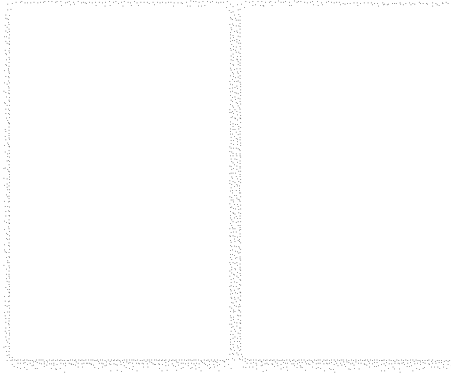
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The Huffington Post

Trump doubles down on false election claim in impeachment response

 politico.com/news/2021/02/02/house-impeachment-brief-trump-responsible-capitol-attack-464930

The legal battle over Donald Trump's impeachment trial kicked off Tuesday, with the House managers arguing the former president bears "unmistakable" responsibility for the deadly Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol, and Trump's team advancing his false claims about the election.

A week before the Senate is slated to put the former president on trial for a second time, the House's first legal brief outlines a weekslong campaign by Trump to overturn President Joe Biden's Electoral College victory based on unsubstantiated claims of election fraud — culminating in the insurrection at the Capitol while lawmakers were certifying Biden's win.

"President Trump's pursuit of power at all costs is a betrayal of historic proportions," the House wrote in its opening brief. "It requires his conviction."

Trump's legal team filed its first official response to the House's impeachment charge later Tuesday, denying that the former president sought to subvert the election results and incited the violence at the Capitol. The submission foreshadowed Trump's legal strategy for the trial, which begins next Tuesday but is not expected to last as long as last year's three-week trial.

Trump's lawyers, Bruce Castor and David Schoen, also advanced the former president's false claims that the election results were "suspect," asserting that Trump has a First Amendment right to express that view.

"Insufficient evidence exists upon which a reasonable jurist could conclude that the 45th president's statements were accurate or not, and he therefore denies they were false," Castor and Schoen wrote, adding that Trump "denies" it is false to say he won the election "in a landslide."

Castor and Schoen only joined Trump's legal team in the last few days, after the initial defense attorneys pulled out over disagreements about whether to buttress Trump's false claims about the election. Even some of Trump's allies are warning the legal team against leaning into Trump's unsubstantiated allegations as part of the defense strategy.

"If they start trying to prove that Georgia and Pennsylvania and Wisconsin were stolen, that's when you're going to lose everybody," Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) said. "That's when most of us will be ready to move on."

The House's 80-page brief is the most the public has heard from the nine impeachment managers — a team that includes several of the most TV-friendly lawmakers in Congress — since they were tapped by Speaker Nancy Pelosi in mid-January.

The group of managers, led by Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-Md.), has been meeting for weeks both formally and informally with each other and top staffers from the speaker's office and House Judiciary Committee to prepare. But many of the lawmakers' personal office staffers have been kept in the dark about the intense preparations and the members have been instructed not to do media interviews in the meantime, according to multiple Democrats.

Democratic leadership's cone of silence strategy is twofold: both to ensure they clamp down on potential leaks ahead of the trial and also to avoid distracting any more than possible from Biden's new administration and its efforts to tackle the coronavirus pandemic.

The House impeached Trump a week after the Jan. 6 attack, charging him with inciting the insurrection and writing in Tuesday's brief that he did so using "incendiary and violent language" that put at grave risk the lives of the same senators now serving as jurors in the case against Trump.

"It is one thing for an official to pursue legal processes for contesting election results," the House managers wrote. "It is something else entirely for that official to incite violence against the government, and to obstruct the finalization of election results, after judges and election officials conclude that his challenges lack proof and legal merit."

Pelosi is still enraged by the events of Jan. 6 and what she believes is Trump's direct role in inciting the violence, according to multiple people who have heard her express those sentiments both publicly and privately. And while the speaker was quick to call for removing Trump from office just one day after the deadly riots, Democrats are under no illusion that the trial will result in a conviction.

While there is a "deference being given to the future" in terms of focusing on the Biden administration, there is also a "visceral" feeling within the House Democratic Caucus that Trump — and the majority of Republicans who continue to support him — must be held accountable in some way, according to senior Democratic aides.

For Democrats, that meant moving quickly to impeach Trump even as he was on his way out of office and then put Senate Republicans on the record by making them vote on whether to convict in a trial that otherwise likely wouldn't have consequences for the former president.

The House's legal brief directly addresses the arguments from Trump's allies that the Senate has no constitutional right to put a former president on trial because the penalty of removal from office does not apply. Indeed, 45 out of 50 Republican senators voted last week that trying an ex-president on impeachment charges is unconstitutional, creating a significant hurdle for the House as it seeks to convince at least 17 GOP senators that Trump should be convicted of the charge against him. Conviction requires the support of two-thirds of the chamber, or 67 senators.

The argument was a central theme of Trump's response to the impeachment article on Tuesday, with Castor and Schoen writing that because Trump is a private citizen, "the Senate has no jurisdiction over his ability to hold office" and "the present proceedings are moot."

Pushing back against this claim, the House managers noted that the Constitution gives the Senate the "sole power to try all impeachments," and said refusing to put a former president on trial gives future presidents a license to commit impeachable offenses in his or her final days in office and then simply resign in order to evade accountability.

"It is unthinkable that those same Framers left us virtually defenseless against a president's treachery in his final days, allowing him to misuse power, violate his Oath, and incite insurrection against Congress and our electoral institutions simply because he is a lame duck," the House managers wrote.

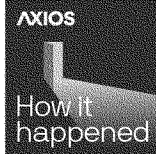
The former president's allies have also asserted that Trump's First Amendment rights to free speech shield him from responsibility for his elevated rhetoric leading up to Jan. 6. The House's brief pushes back on that argument, asserting that "the First Amendment does not apply at all to an impeachment proceeding" because the Senate "must decide whether to safeguard the nation's constitutional order by disqualifying an official who committed egregious misconduct."

Only a handful of GOP senators are in the mix to vote in favor of Trump's conviction, especially after a majority of the Senate GOP conference declared that the trial itself was unconstitutional. That group includes Sens. Mitt Romney, Lisa Murkowski, Susan Collins, Ben Sasse and Pat Toomey.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell voted alongside the GOP senators who oppose the trial on procedural grounds, but he has criticized Trump directly for his conduct, saying at one point that Trump "provoked" the rioters on Jan. 6. McConnell said last week that he has not spoken with Trump since mid-December.

Central to the House's argument is that Trump's public statements and actions threatened American democracy at its core in a way that the U.S. has never seen in modern times. The brief implicitly pushes back against the argument — advanced by some Democrats — that the Senate should not be spending so much of its time on an impeachment trial that appears likely to be headed toward an acquittal.

"Since the dawn of the republic, no enemy — foreign or domestic — had ever obstructed Congress's counting of the votes," the brief states. "No president had ever refused to accept an election result or defied the lawful processes for resolving electoral disputes. Until President Trump."



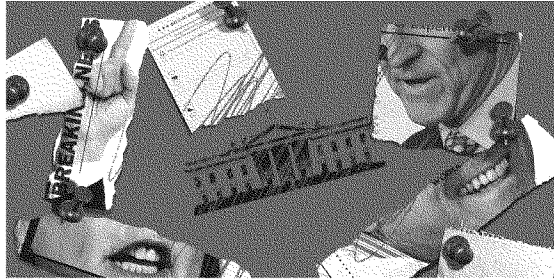
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Feb 2, 2021 - Politics & Policy

Off the Rails

Bonus episode: Inside the craziest meeting of the Trump presidency

Jonathan Swan, Zachary Basu



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Last month, Axios published "Off the rails," a series taking you inside the end of Donald Trump's presidency, from his election loss to the deadly Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection that triggered his second impeachment — and a Senate trial set to begin next week.

In this bonus edition, we take you back into those final weeks — to one long, unhinged night a week before Christmas, when an epic, profanity-soaked standoff played out with profound implications for the nation.

Four conspiracy theorists marched into the Oval Office. It was early evening on Friday, Dec. 18 — more than a month after the election had been declared for Joe Biden, and four days after the Electoral College met in every state to make it official.

"How the hell did Sidney get in the building?" White House senior adviser Eric Herschmann grumbled from the outer Oval Office as Sidney Powell and her entourage strutted by to visit the president.

President Trump's private schedule hadn't included appointments for Powell or the others: former national security adviser Michael Flynn, former Overstock.com CEO Patrick Byrne, and a little-known former Trump administration official, Emily Newman. But they'd come to convince Trump that he had the power to take extreme measures to keep fighting.

As Powell and the others entered the Oval Office that evening, Herschmann — a wealthy business executive

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The hours to come would pit the insurgent conspiracists against a handful of White House lawyers and advisers determined to keep the president from giving in to temptation to invoke emergency national security powers, seize voting machines and disable the primary levers of American democracy.

Herschmann took a seat in a yellow chair close to the doorway. Powell, Flynn, Newman and Byrne sat in a row before the Resolute Desk, facing the president.

For weeks now, ever since Rudy Giuliani had commandeered Trump's floundering campaign to overturn the election, outsiders had been coming out of the woodwork to feed the president wild allegations of voter fraud based on highly dubious sources.

Trump was no longer focused on any semblance of a governing agenda, instead spending his days taking phone calls and meetings from anyone armed with conspiracy theories about the election. For the White House staff, it was an unending sea of garbage churned up by the bottom feeders.

Powell began this meeting with the same baseless claim that now has her facing a \$1.3 billion defamation

lawsuit: She told the president that Dominion Voting Systems had rigged their machines to flip votes from Trump to Biden and that it was part of an international communist plot to steal the election for the Democrats.

[Note: In response to a request for comment, Powell said in

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conspire under executive privilege and under rules of the legal profession. I would caution the readers to view mainstream media reports of any such conversations with a high degree of discernment and a healthy dose of skepticism.”]

Powell waved an affidavit from the pile of papers in her lap, [claiming it contained testimony](#) from someone involved in the development of rigged voting machines in Venezuela.

She proposed declaring a national security emergency, granting her and her cabal top-secret security clearances and using the U.S. government to seize Dominion’s voting machines.

“Hold on a minute, Sidney,” Herschmann interrupted from the back of the Oval. “You’re part of the Rudy team, right? Is your theory that the Democrats got together and changed the rules, or is it that there was foreign interference in our election?”

Giuliani’s legal efforts, while replete with debunked claims about voter fraud, had largely focused on allegations of misconduct by corrupt Democrats and election officials.

“It’s foreign interference,” Powell insisted, then added: “Rudy hasn’t understood what this case is about until just now.”

In disbelief, Herschmann yelled out to an aide in the outer Oval Office. “Get Pat down here immediately!”

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The meeting was already getting heated.

White House staff had spent weeks poring over the evidence underlying hundreds of affidavits and other claims of fraud promoted by Trump allies like Powell. The team had done the due diligence and knew the specific details of what was being alleged better than anybody. Time and time again, they found, Powell's allegations fell apart under basic scrutiny.

But Powell, fixing on Trump, continued to elaborate on a fantastical election narrative involving Venezuela, Iran, China and others. She named a county in Georgia where she claimed she could prove that Dominion had illegally flipped the vote.

Herschmann interrupted to point out that Trump had actually won the Georgia county in question: "So your theory is that Dominion intentionally flipped the votes so we could *win* that county?"

As for Powell's larger claims, he demanded she provide evidence for what — if true — would amount to the greatest national security breach in American history. They needed to dial in one of the campaign's lawyers,

Herschmann said, and Trump campaign lawyer Matt Morgan was patched in via speakerphone.

By now, people were yelling and cursing.

The room was starting to fill up. Trump's personal assistant summoned White House staff secretary

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Q ☰

group kept citing as the key to victory. Lyons agreed with Cipollone and the other officials that Powell's theories were nonsensical.

It was now four against four.

Flynn went berserk. The former three-star general, whom Trump had fired as his first national security adviser after he was caught lying to the FBI (and later pardoned), stood up and turned from the Resolute Desk to face Herschmann.

"You're quitting! You're a quitter! You're not fighting!" he exploded at the senior adviser. Flynn then turned to the president, and implored: "Sir, we need fighters."

Herschmann ignored Flynn at first and continued to probe Powell's pitch with questions about the underlying evidence. "All you do is promise, but never deliver," he said to her sharply.

Flynn was ranting, seemingly infuriated about anyone challenging Powell, who had represented him in his recent legal battles.

Finally Herschmann had enough. "Why the fuck do you keep standing up and screaming at me?" he shot back at Flynn. "If you want to come over here, come over here. If not, sit your ass down." Flynn sat back down.

The meeting had come entirely off the rails.

Byrne, backing up Flynn, told Trump the White House

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lawyers didn't care about him and were being

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Trump, "we know that there are times you have to be creative and take different steps."

This was a remarkable level of personal familiarity, given it was the first time Byrne had met the president. All the stanchions and buffers between the White House and the outside world had crumbled.

Byrne kept attacking the senior White House staff in front of Trump. "They've already abandoned you," he told the president aggressively. Periodically during the meeting Flynn or Byrne challenged Trump's top staff — portraying them as disloyal: *So do you think the president won or not?*

At one point, with Flynn shouting, Byrne raised his hand to talk. He stood up and turned around to face Herschmann. "You're a quitter," he said. "You've been interfering with everything. You've been cutting us off."

"Do you even know who the fuck I am, you idiot?" Herschmann snapped back.

"Yeah, you're Patrick Cipollone," Byrne said.

"Wrong! Wrong, you idiot!"

The staff were now on their feet, standing behind one of the couches and facing the Powell crew at the Resolute Desk. Cipollone stood to Herschmann's left. Lyons, on his last day on the job, stood to Herschmann's right.

The usually mild-mannered Lyons blasted the Powell set: "You've brought 60 cases. And you've lost every case you've had!"

Trump came back into the Oval Office from the dining room to rejoin the meeting. Lyons pointed out to Powell that their incompetence went beyond their lawsuits being thrown out for standing. "You somehow managed to misspell the word 'District' three different ways in your suits," he said pointedly.

In a Georgia case, the Powell team had misidentified the court on the first page of their filing as "THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT, NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA." And they had identified the Michigan court as the "EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN."

These were sloppy spelling errors. But given that these lawsuits aimed to overturn a presidential election, the court nomenclature should have been pristine.

Powell, Flynn and Byrne began attacking Lyons as they renewed their argument to Trump: *There they go*

again, they want to focus on the insignificant details instead of fighting for you.

Trump replied, "No, no, he's right. That was very embarrassing. That shouldn't have happened."

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The Powell team needed to regroup. They shifted to a
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hadn't lost the 88-odd court cases, since the cases were mostly dismissed for lack of standing and they had never had the chance to present their evidence.

Every judge is corrupt, she claimed. We can't rely on them. The White House lawyers couldn't believe what they were hearing. "That's your argument?" a stunned Herschmann said. "Even the judges *we* appointed? Are you out of your fucking mind?"

Powell had more to say. She and Flynn began trashing the FBI as well, and the Justice Department under Attorney General Bill Barr, telling Trump that neither could be trusted. Both institutions, they said, were corrupt, and Trump needed to fire the leadership and get in new people he could trust.

Cipollone, standing his ground amidst this mishmash of conspiracies, said they were totally wrong. He aggressively defended the DOJ and the FBI, saying they had looked into every major claim of fraud that had been reported.

Flynn and Powell had long nursed their antipathy to the FBI and Justice. Flynn had pleaded guilty in 2017 to lying to the FBI during the Russia investigation but

withdrew the plea after hiring Powell as his lawyer in June 2019.

The two alleged the FBI had entrapped Flynn and failed to disclose exculpatory evidence, known as Brady material, as required by law. They had found an

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Herschmann, known inside the White House as a defender of Barr and the DOJ, went off on Flynn again: "Listen, the same people that you're trashing, if they didn't produce the Brady material to Sidney, your ass would still be in jail!"

It was no longer technically true that Flynn would be in jail, as he had received a post-election pardon from Trump. But Flynn was furious. "Don't mention my case," he roared. Herschmann responded, "Where do you think Sidney got this information? Where do you think it came from? From the exact same people in the Department of Justice that you're now saying are corrupt."

Byrne, wearing jeans, a hoodie and a neck gaiter, piped up with his own conspiracy: "I know how this works. I bribed Hillary Clinton \$18 million on behalf of the FBI for a sting operation."

Herschmann stared at the eccentric millionaire. "What the hell are you talking about? Why would you say something like that?" Byrne brought up the bizarre Clinton bribery claim several more times during the meeting to the astonishment of White House lawyers.

Trump, for his part, also seemed perplexed by Byrne. But he was not entirely convinced the ideas Powell was presenting were insane.

He asked: *You guys are offering me nothing. These guys are at least offering me a chance. They're saying they have*

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The words "martial law" were never spoken during the meeting, despite Flynn having raised the idea in an appearance the previous day on Newsmax, a right-wing hive for election conspiracies.

But this was a distinction without much of a difference. What Flynn and Powell were proposing amounted to suspending normal laws and mobilizing the U.S. government to seize Dominion voting machines around the country.

Powell was arguing that they couldn't get a judge to enforce any subpoena to hand over the voting machines because all the judges were corrupt. She and her group repeatedly referred to the National Emergencies Act and a Trump executive order from 2018 that was designed to clear the way for the government to sanction foreign actors interfering in U.S. elections.

These laws were, in the view of Powell, Flynn and the others, the key to unlocking extraordinary powers for Trump to stay in office beyond Jan. 20.

Their theory was that because foreign enemies had stolen the election, all bets were off and Trump could

use the full force of the United States government to go after Dominion.

It was remarkable that the presidency had deteriorated to such an extent that this fight in the Oval Office between senior White House officials and radical

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exasperated Herschmann asked again, later in the conversation. Newman again cited the 2018 executive order, which prompted Herschmann to question out loud whether she was even a lawyer.

Then Byrne chimed in: "There are guys with big guns and badges who can get these things." Herschmann couldn't believe it. "What are you, three years old?" he asked.

Lyons, the staff secretary, told the president that the executive order Powell and Flynn were citing did not give him the authority they claimed it did to seize voting machines. Morgan, the campaign lawyer, also expressed skepticism about their idea of invoking national security emergency powers.

To help adjudicate, Trump then patched in the national security adviser, Robert O'Brien, on speakerphone. Trump's personal assistant brought O'Brien into the call with no explanation of what madness would await him.

O'Brien said very little in the short time he was on the call but intervened at one point to say he saw no evidence to support Powell's notion of declaring a national security emergency to seize voting machines.

There was so much fiery crosstalk it was hard for anyone on the telephone to follow the conversation.

Trump expressed skepticism at various points about Powell's theories, but he said, "At least she's out there fighting."

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as a special counsel inside the government to investigate voter fraud. She wanted a top secret security clearance and access to confidential voter information.

Lyons told Trump he couldn't appoint Powell as a special counsel at the Justice Department because this was an attorney general appointment. Lyons, Cipollone and Herschmann — in fact the entire senior White House staff who were aware of this idea — were all vehemently opposed to Powell becoming a special counsel anywhere in the government.

By this point Trump had also patched into the call his personal lawyer Giuliani and White House chief of staff Mark Meadows. Meadows indicated that he was trying to wrap his mind around what exactly Powell's role would entail. He told Powell she would have to fill out the SF-86 questionnaire before starting as special counsel.

This was seen as a delaying tactic. The sense in the room was that Trump might actually greenlight this extraordinary proposal.

At its essence, the Powell crew's argument to the president was this: *We have the real information. These*

people — your White House staff — don't believe in the truth. They're liars and quitters. They're not willing to fight for you because they don't want to get their hands dirty. Put us in charge. Let us take control of everything. We'll prove to you that what we're saying is right. We won't quit, we'll fight. We're willing to fight for the presidency.

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only people willing to tell him what he wanted to hear — that a path to stay in power in the White House remained.

The Oval Office portion of the meeting had dragged on for nearly three hours, creeping beyond 9 p.m. The arguments became so heated that even Giuliani — still on the phone — at one point told everyone to calm down. One participant later recalled: "When Rudy's the voice of reason, you know the meeting's not going well."

Giuliani told Trump he was going to come over to the White House. The president, having forgotten about the others on the line, hung up and cut multiple people off the call.

Herschmann, Cipollone and Lyons left the Oval Office, but soon discovered that the Powell entourage had made their way to the president's residence. They followed them upstairs, to the Yellow Oval Room, Trump's living room, where they were joined by Giuliani and Meadows.

Trump sat beside Powell in armchairs facing the door, separated by a round, wooden antique table. Giuliani sat in an armchair to the right of them, while Byrne

and Meadows sat on a couch. Byrne wolfed down pigs in a blanket and little meatballs on toothpicks that staff had set on the coffee table.

Herschmann was primed to brawl and ready to dump on Powell. It had been a long day.

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back you're doing, right, Sidney." He turned to Powell.
"Why don't you tell Rudy to his face?"

"Eric, really it's not appropriate," Trump replied curtly.

"What's not appropriate?" Herschmann shot back.
Turning to Powell, he said, "Why don't you repeat to Rudy what you just told the president in the Oval Office — that he has no idea about the case and that he only just began to understand it a few hours ago."

Three days later, Giuliani would publicly distance himself from Powell, telling Newsmax that Powell did not represent the president, and that "whatever she's talking about, it's her own opinions."

It didn't take long for the yelling to start up again.

They were now in hour four of a meeting unprecedented even by the deranged standards of the final days of the Trump presidency.

Now it was Meadows' turn, blasting Flynn for trashing him and accusing him of being a quitter. "Don't you dare challenge me about whether I'm being supportive of the president and working hard," Meadows shouted, reminding Flynn that he'd defended him during his legal troubles.

Trump and Cipollone, who frequently butted heads, went at it too, over whether the administration had the authority to do what Powell was proposing.

Powell kept asserting throughout the night that she had — or would soon produce — the evidence needed


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Powell at one point turned to Lyons and demanded, "Why are you speaking? Are you still employed here?" The staff secretary, who had already resigned, laughed and joked, "Well I guess I'm here until midnight."

It was after midnight by the time the White House officials had finally said their piece. They left that night fully prepared for the mad possibility Trump might still name Sidney Powell special counsel. *You have our advice*, they told the president before walking out. *You decide who to listen to.*

 **Listen to Jonathan Swan** on Axios' new [investigative podcast series](#), called "How it happened: Trump's last stand."

Read the rest of the "Off the Rails" episodes [here](#).

About this series: Our reporting is based on multiple interviews with current and former White House, campaign, government and congressional officials as well as direct eyewitnesses and people close to the president. Sources have been granted anonymity to share sensitive observations or details they would not be formally authorized to disclose. President Trump and other officials to whom quotes and actions have been attributed by

others were provided the opportunity to confirm, deny or respond to reporting elements prior to publication.

"Off the rails" is reported by White House reporter Jonathan Swan, with writing, reporting and research assistance by Zach Basu. It was edited by Margaret Talev

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and Mike Allen and some edited by Eileen O'Donnell.
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Off the rails: Episode library

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The first line of the Axios Manifesto is "Audience First." That's why we created our unique Smart Brevity style to get you smarter, faster, on topics that matter. But it also means we won't shy away from important stories that are worthy of more detail and more of your time, like our Deep Dives, Axios Investigates and now this deeply reported series, "Off the rails."

If you're in a hurry, check out the highlights:

- [Episode 1: A premeditated lie lit the fire](#)
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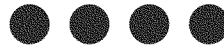
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Alayna Treene, author of [Sneak Peek](#)
Feb 2, 2021 - Politics & Policy

Scoop: Fees — not just strategy — blew up Trump's legal team

President Trump boards Air Force One for the final time. Photo: Pete Marovich - Pool/Getty Images

Disagreements over legal strategy weren't the only reason Donald Trump's defense team collapsed just days before his second impeachment trial, Axios has learned.

What we're hearing: The notoriously stingy former president and his lead lawyer, Butch Bowers, wrangled over compensation during a series of tense phone calls, sources familiar with their conversations said.

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Axios
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Both chambers pass budget resolution, paving the way for Biden's relief plan

The House voted 219-209 on Friday afternoon to approve a budget plan after the Senate's 5:34 a.m. vote that will be used to facilitate passage of President Biden's \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief proposal.

Why it matters: Passing the stimulus package via the budget reconciliation process allows Democrats to sidestep the 60-vote threshold needed to approve most major legislation.

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Trump Supporters' Own Explanations For Assaulting The Capitol Are Undercutting His Impeachment Defense

 buzzfeednews.com/article/zoetillman/trump-impeachment-capitol-rioters-fight-like-hell



Brendan Smialowski / Getty Images

Former president Donald Trump gives a speech to supporters before the insurrection at the US Capitol on Jan. 6, in which he tells them to "fight like hell."

WASHINGTON — Former president Donald Trump formally responded Tuesday to the charges filed by House Democrats in his second impeachment, denying that he incited a mob to violently descend on the Capitol building to stop Congress from certifying President Joe Biden's win.

But court records in the 175-plus criminal cases filed so far in connection with the Jan. 6 insurrection reveal that's exactly what at least some of Trump's supporters thought he was directing them to do.

"[T]oday President Trump told Us to 'fight like hell,'" Troy Smocks, a Texas man charged with making threats, posted on Jan. 6 on [Parler](#), quoting Trump's speech to supporters before the insurrection, according to the government's court filings. Smocks appeared to admit to participating in the attack on the Capitol in his posts, although he isn't charged with that; he urged his followers to get weapons and prepare to "hunt" Democrats, tech executives, and others he considered "enemies of Our constitution," writing, "We now have the green light."

1/4

“[Trump] said that Our cause was a matter of national security, and that these people behind the massive fraud must be arrested and brought to justice. And that task, falls on the shoulders of We The People.... the American Patriots,” Smocks wrote, court documents say. A judge ordered him to be held in jail pending trial, citing his posts on Parler.

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Trump’s lawyers are contesting the constitutionality of impeaching a former president, as well as disputing whether he really meant it when he had repeatedly told his supporters to “fight.”

“It is denied that the phrase ‘if you don’t fight like hell you’re not going to have a country anymore’ had anything to do with the action at the Capitol as it was clearly about the need to fight for election security in general, as evidenced by the recording of the speech,” Trump’s lawyers wrote in his [official response papers](#).

But court filings in many cases showed that the former president’s supporters [came to Washington spoiling for a fight](#) and that they broadly took calls from Trump and his allies to “stop the steal” — a reference to baseless claims of widespread voter fraud — to be an appeal for violence. Social media posts, FBI interview summaries, and publicly available interviews that prosecutors included in charging papers also lay out the extent to which Trump’s supporters were waiting to take orders from him and understood his words as a direction to act.

Robert Bauer, charged with unlawfully entering a restricted area (the US Capitol) and violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds, spoke with two FBI agents on Jan. 8. He “reiterated that he marched to the U.S. Capitol because President Trump said to do so,” according to his charging papers. The FBI affidavit includes a screenshot of a selfie found on Bauer’s phone that shows him and his cousin (and codefendant) Edward Hemenway II, both wearing “Trump 2020” hats, smiling and posing with their middle fingers up inside the Capitol building.

“According to BAUER, after President Trump told the crowd, ‘We are going down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol,’ the crowd began moving towards the Capitol,” an FBI agent wrote in the affidavit.

Robert Sanford, a Pennsylvania man charged with throwing a fire extinguisher at police officers at the Capitol, similarly told the FBI when he was interviewed on Jan. 12 that he was part of a group that “had gone to the White House and listened to President Donald J. Trump’s speech and then had followed the President’s instructions and gone to the Capitol.”

“IF TRUMP TELLS US TO STORM THE FUKIN CAPITAL IMA DO THAT THEN!”

In charging papers for Kenneth Grayson of Pennsylvania, the FBI quoted a private message that he allegedly sent to an unidentified person on Dec. 23 about his plans to go to DC on Jan. 6 and take direction from Trump. Grayson, who allegedly livestreamed video on Facebook of himself going into the Capitol and who prosecutors believe is a follower of the QAnon mass delusion, is charged with being a restricted area, disorderly and disruptive conduct, and obstructing an official proceeding.

“I’m there for the greatest celebration of all time after Pence leads the Senate flip!! OR IM THERE IF TRUMP TELLS US TO STORM THE FUKIN CAPITAL IMA DO THAT THEN! We don’t want any trouble but they are not going to steal this election that I guarantee bro!!” Grayson allegedly wrote.

Samuel Fisher, a New York man charged with illegally going into the Capitol and disorderly conduct, wrote in a lengthy post on his personal website dated Jan. 6, apparently before the attack, “Trump just needs to fire the bat signal... deputize patriots... and then the pain comes.”

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It’s too early in most cases for people charged with participating in the insurrection to have had a chance to offer a defense — but in a few court fights over whether defendants should be kept in jail or allowed to go home pending trial, their lawyers have highlighted the connection between Trump’s words and the violence at the Capitol. In opposing pretrial detention for Emanuel Jackson, who is charged with assaulting police officers as well as illegally going into the Capitol, his lawyer wrote that “the nature and circumstances of this offense must be viewed through the lens of an event inspired by the President of the United States.” A judge ordered Jackson kept in custody.

A judge is scheduled to hear arguments on Feb. 3 on whether to order pretrial detention for Dominic Pezzola, a New York man and member of the Proud Boys identified in videos breaking a window at the Capitol and who the government alleged had instructions at his home to make guns and bombs. In a recent interview, Pezzola’s lawyer told Reuters that the “logical thinking” to Trump’s supporters was that the president had “invited” them to Washington.

Reuters also noted that during a Jan. 21 court hearing, a lawyer for Riley Williams of Pennsylvania told the judge that her client “took the president’s bait and went inside the Capitol.” Williams is charged with illegally going into the Capitol as well as stealing or helping to steal a laptop from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s office; Williams, through her lawyer, has denied any involvement in the theft.

The House voted to impeach Trump for a historic second time on Jan. 13 for inciting the insurrection at the Capitol. A trial in the Senate is expected to begin next week. The Senate voted last week against a Republican attempt to reject the impeachment effort as unconstitutional, which means a trial will take place, but enough Republican members supported the measure that it's unlikely Democrats can win the two-thirds majority needed to convict Trump of high crimes and misdemeanors.

Proud Boys, a fixture at Portland protests, labeled 'extremist group' by FBI

oregonlive.com/portland/2018/11/proud_boys_a_fixture_at_portia.html

November 20, 2018



Members of the Proud Boys attend a Patriot Prayer rally at the Portland Waterfront on June 30, 2017. The FBI now considers them an

By [Shane Dixon Kavanaugh](#) | [The Oregonian/OregonLive](#)

Update 4:06 p.m.

The Proud Boys, a band of street fighters whose members routinely appear at right-wing rallies in Portland, have been designated "an extremist group with ties to white nationalism" by the FBI.

The group is "actively recruiting in the Pacific Northwest" and "[has] contributed to the recent escalation of violence at political rallies," including those in Portland, the FBI told Clark County authorities this summer.

The FBI provided its assessment of the Proud Boys as part of an internal affairs investigation by the Clark County Sheriff's Office. The Guardian [revealed the documents](#), first obtained by transparency group Property of the People, Monday in a story on its website.

It's the first time that an FBI evaluation of the group has become public.

[[Read the documents here.](#)]

1/3

Sgt. Chris Burley, a Portland Police Bureau spokesman, told The Oregonian/OregonLive on Monday afternoon that "at this time" he was unaware of any similar briefings between the FBI and the members of the bureau.

Started in 2016 by conservative writer and political commentator Gavin McInnes, the Proud Boys have billed themselves as "pro-Western fraternal organization" and have vigorously fought accusations by critics that members are associated with white nationalists or other bigoted groups.

The Southern Poverty Law Center, for example, lists them as a hate group, citing their supporters' documented history of promoting misogyny, Islamophobia and violence.

Members have made appearances alongside Vancouver's Joey Gibson at his Patriot Prayer rallies in the Portland area over the last 18 months.

A number of them, outfitted in yellow and black Fred Perry polo shirts and red "Make America Great Again" baseball caps, have tangled with counter-protesters, throwing punches and drawing blood.

The FBI provided its assessment of the Proud Boys to the Clark County Sheriff's Office on Aug. 2 as the agency investigated a former female deputy's alleged ties to the group, Cmdr. Michael McCabe told The Guardian.

Two days later, on Aug. 4, hundreds of Proud Boys from around the country joined Gibson in downtown Portland for a so-called "freedom march" where some participants brought guns and other weapons.

That event ended when police used riot control weapons on the hundreds of counter-demonstrators who came to protest Gibson's rally.

The group's public image began to take a hit later that summer.

Twitter started suspending accounts affiliated with the Proud Boys a week after the Aug. 4 event in Portland and Facebook and Instagram followed suit last month, citing policies against organized hate groups, hate speech and promoting violence.


In October, members of the Proud Boys in New York City were arrested after they were caught on video brutally beating two or three protesters after an event at Manhattan's Republican Party headquarters.

-- Shane Dixon Kavanaugh

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Donald Trump supporter wearing 'Proud Boys' hat makes 'white power' gesture behind President at rally

 [mirror.co.uk/news/politics/donald-trump-supporter-wearing-proud-22897773](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/donald-trump-supporter-wearing-proud-22897773)

October 23, 2020



News

A man standing directly behind the president at a retirement community in Florida repeatedly held up the 'OK' hand gesture - which has been adopted by white supremacist groups



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A Donald Trump supporter repeatedly made an 'OK' hand gesture - which has been adopted by white supremacist groups, during a speech in Florida.

The man also appeared to wear a hat sporting the logo of the 'Proud Boys' a far-right group which supports President Trump.

He was standing directly behind the President as he gave a nearly 90 minute address at The Village retirement community in Florida.

2/16

And he made the gesture prominently when President Trump said in his speech: "We have made America proud again."

Trump drew criticism last month when he was asked to disavow the Proud Boys during the first TV Presidential debate.

Instead, the President's message to the group was "stand back and stand by."

Within minutes, members of the Proud Boys - founded by Brit Gavin McInnes - embraced his comments posting calling his words "historic."



On the right-wing social media site Parler, the group's leader Joe Biggs said he took Trump to be issuing a rallying cry.

"Proud Boys shout out at Presidential debate," he wrote before adding, "President Trump told the Proud Boys to stand by because someone needs to deal with Antifa. Well, sir. We're ready."

The 'OK' gesture was originally linked to racism as part of a prank by users of the message board 4Chan.

Instead of standing for "OK", it stands for "WP" - for 'white power' or 'white pride'.

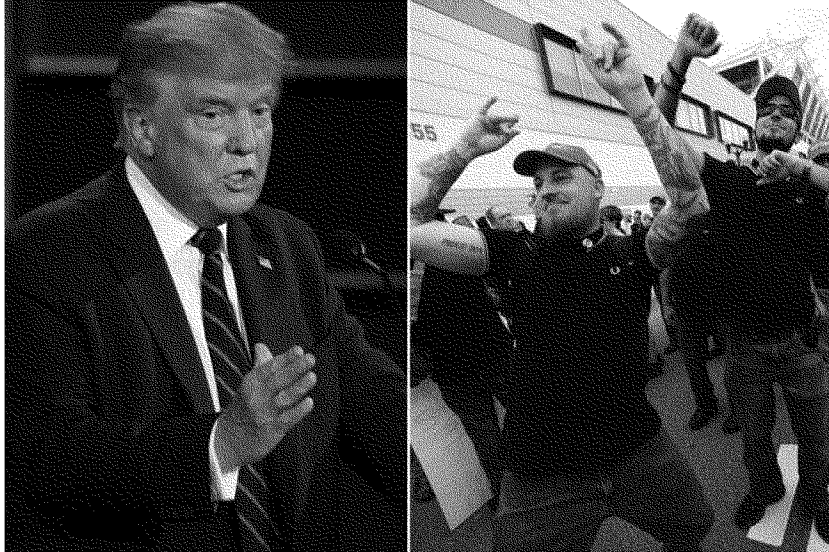
But, according to the Anti-Defamation league it has grown into a "sincere expression of white supremacy", and adopted by far-right groups.



(Image: Getty Images)

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Who are the Proud Boys? Far-right group celebrate as Donald Trump tells them to 'stand by'

Earlier in the rally, President Trump attacked Joe Biden's running mate Kamala Harris for both her views and for being a woman.

He said: "We're not going to have a socialist president. Especially a female socialist president.

"We're not going to have it. We're not going to put up with it. It's not going to happen."

The President said: "Kamala will not be your first female President.

She will not be your first female president.

"It's not the way it's supposed to be. We're not supposed to have a socialist."

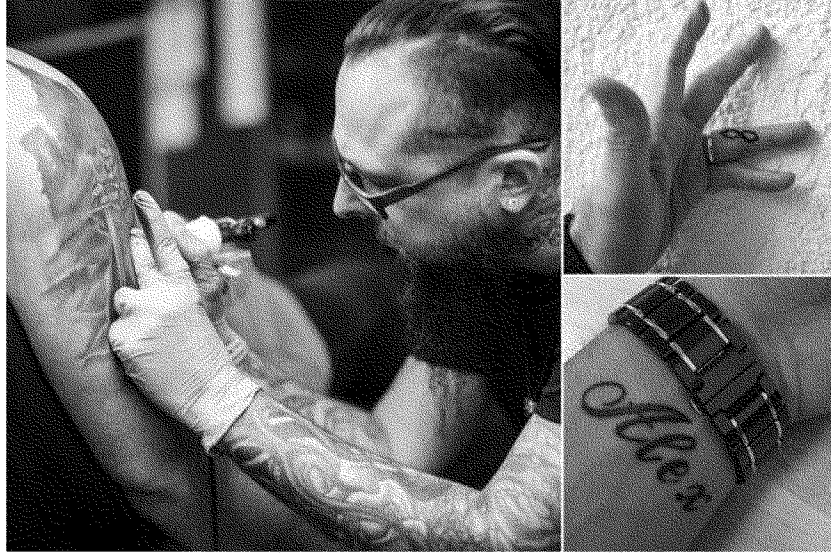
Trump has repeatedly complained at his rallies that he struggles to get support from "suburban women."

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Tattoos 'Basic' tattoos artists secretly hate doing - and the ones they'll refuse to do
Choosing a tattoo artist that specialises in the design you want to get inked is vital before taking the
plunge - but there are a few designs that come up again and again that artists hate



CrimeKilmarnock stabbing: First pic of man who killed ex and her daughter before car crashSteven Robertson is believed to have murdered NHS worker Emma Robertson Coupland, 39, at Crosshouse Hospital, before attacking Nicole Anderson, 24, in the street 20 minutes later

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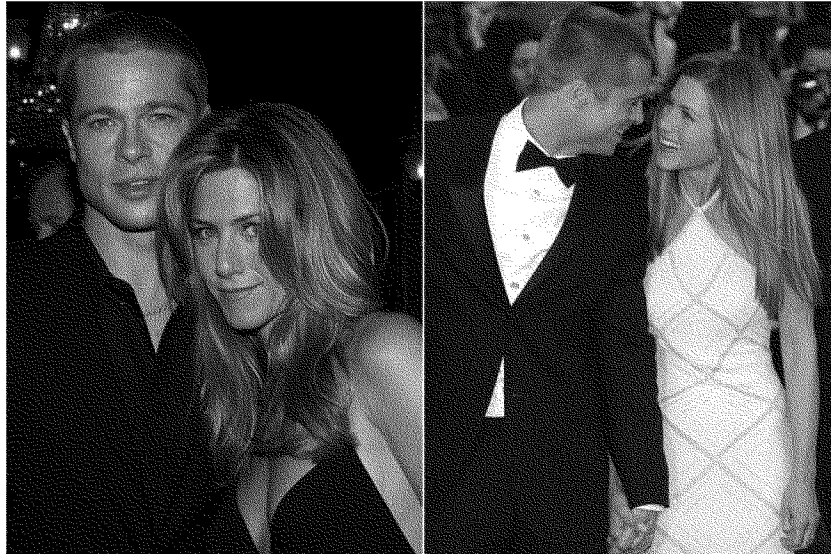


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Tattoos A TikTok user named Phoebe got her dream tattoo and a year later realised where she got the inspiration for the design from - and it was very unexpected



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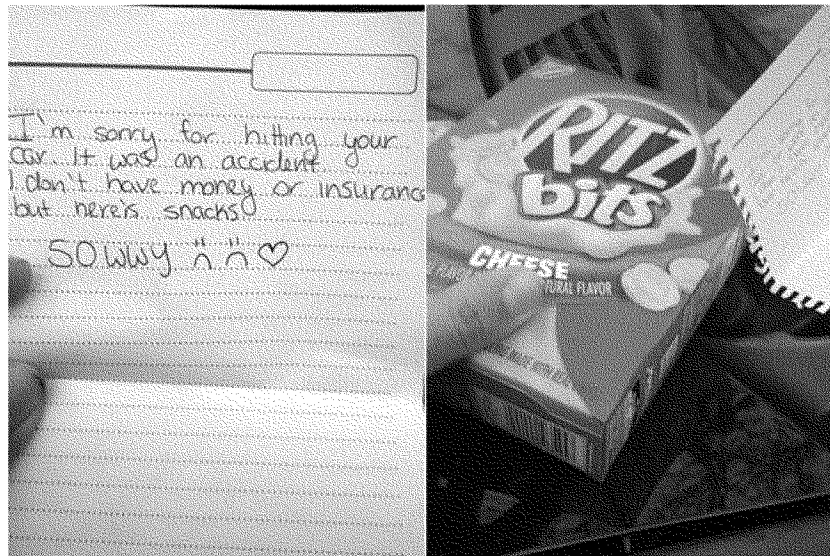
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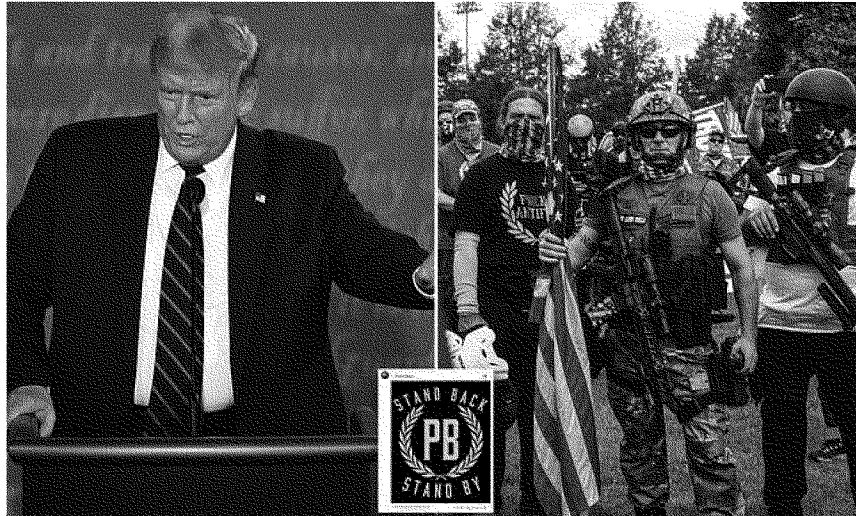


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Proud Boys celebrate online after Trump told the far right group to 'stand back and stand by'

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September 30, 2020



- Members of the far-right group immediately posted about the shout out Tuesday
- Their account on Telegram posted: 'Standing down and standing by sir'
- Following the call out the group appeared to pledge their allegiance to Trump
- One online account made 'Stand back. Stand by' part of a new logo for the group
- Proud Boys organizer Joe Biggs wrote: 'President Trump told the proud boys to stand by because someone needs to deal with ANTIFA... well sir! we're ready!'
- 'Trump basically said to go f*** them up! this makes me so happy', he added
- Joe Biden retweeted a post which looked to show a number of their posts in the wake of Trump's comments; he wrote: 'This. This is Donald Trump's America'

• **Proud Boys is a far-right organization that admits only men as members**
 The Proud Boys were celebrating online Wednesday after [Donald Trump](#) told them to 'stand back and stand by' during the first presidential debate - while president was attacked by members of his own party for refusing to condemn white supremacy before delivering his message to the far-right group.

1/18

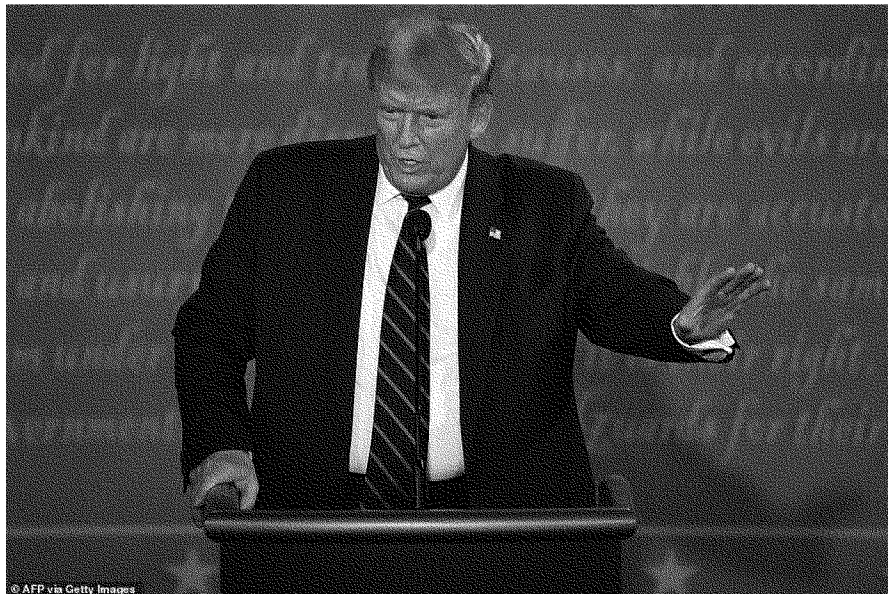
Members of the group posted about the shout out, telling the president: 'We're ready.' Their account on the social media app Telegram posted: 'Standing down and standing by sir.'

Proud Boys is a far-right organization that admits only men as members and promotes and engages in political violence. The group believes white men and western culture are under siege and one of its co-founders recorded a video titled '10 things I hate about the Jews.'

'Proud boys, stand back and stand by, but I tell you what, somebody has got to do something about antifa and the left because this is not a right wing problem, this is a left-wing problem,' Trump said when he was challenged to condemn white supremacists during Tuesday's presidential debate.

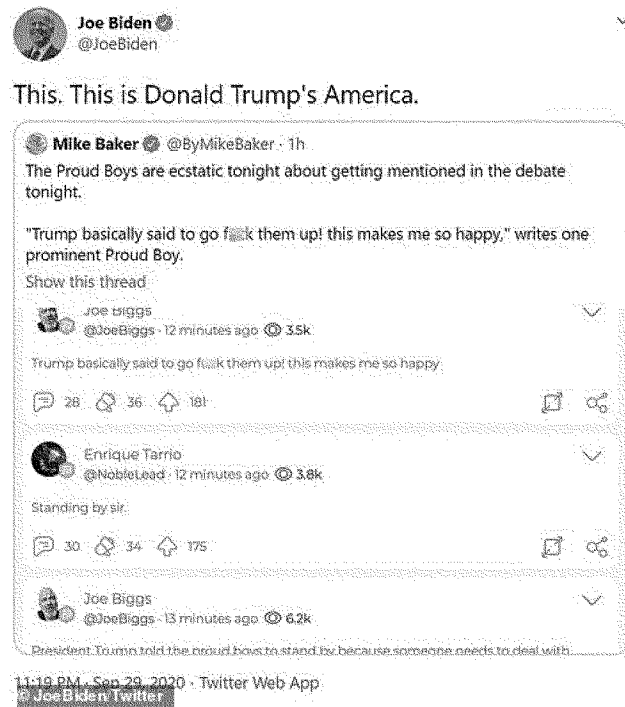
He claimed the protests in the country on race relations were a left-wing problem.

The Southern Poverty Law Center, a liberal advocacy organization, has designated the all-male Proud Boys as a hate group. The group is known for its violent clashes at political rallies.



The Proud Boys were celebrating online Tuesday night after Donald Trump told them to 'stand back and stand by' during the first presidential debate





Following the shout out several members of the group appeared to pledge their allegiance to the president. One social media account connected to the organization even appeared to made 'Stand back. Stand by' part of a new logo

READ THE FULL 'PROUD BOYS' EXCHANGE

CHRIS WALLACE: You have repeatedly criticized the vice president for not specifically calling out Antifa and other left wing extremist groups. But are you willing tonight to condemn white supremacists and militia group and to say that they need to stand down and not add to the violence in a number of these cities as we saw in Kenosha and as we've seen in Portland.

DONALD TRUMP: Sure, I'm willing to do that.

CHRIS WALLACE: Are you prepared specifically to do it.

DONALD TRUMP: I would say almost everything I see is from the left wing not from the right wing.

CHRIS WALLACE: But what are you saying?

DONALD TRUMP: I'm willing to do anything. I want to see peace.

CHRIS WALLACE: Well, do it, sir.

JOE BIDEN: Say it, do it say it.

DONALD TRUMP: What do you want to call them? Give me a name, give me a name, go ahead who do you want me to condemn.

CHRIS WALLACE: White supremacist and white militia.

JOE BIDEN: Proud boys. Proud boys.

DONALD TRUMP: Okay. Proud Boys - stand back and stand by. But I'll tell you what somebody's got to do something about Antifa and the left because this is not a right wing problem this is a left wing.

JOE BIDEN: His own FBI Director said unlike white supremacist, Antifa is an idea not an organization-

DONALD TRUMP: Oh you got to be kidding me.

JOE BIDEN: ... not a militia. That's what his FBI Director said.

DONALD TRUMP: Well, then you know what, he's wrong.

CHRIS WALLACE: We're done, sir. Moving onto the next... [crosstalk]

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Following the shout out several members of the group pledged their allegiance to the president.

One social media account connected to the organization even appeared to made 'Stand back. Stand by' part of a new logo.

Proud Boys organizer Joe Biggs wrote: 'President Trump told the proud boys to stand by because someone needs to deal with ANTIFA... well sir! we're ready!

'Trump basically said to go f*** them up! this makes me so happy.'

Joe Biden retweeted a post which looked to show a number of their posts in the wake of Trump's comments.

He wrote: 'This. This is Donald Trump's America.'

Republican Senator Mitt Romney said 'of course' President Donald Trump should have condemned white supremacists during the presidential debate Tuesday night.

'Of course, of course,' Romney, who's openly criticized Trump when he disagrees with the president, told reporters on Capitol Hill Wednesday morning.

'It was not a Lincoln Douglas debate, that's for sure,' he added of the clash between Trump and Democratic nominee Joe Biden that pundits dubbed a 's*** show' and 'dumpster fire.'

Other Republicans said they would give the president a chance to explain, including Republican Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina, the only black GOP senator.

'I think he misspoke in response to Chris Wllace's comment,' Scott said on Capitol Hill Wednesday. 'He was asking Chris what he wanted to say. I think he misspoke. I think he should correct it. If he doesn't correct it I guess he didn't misspeak.'

And Republican Senator Todd Young of Indiana said the president should have been clear that extremist groups from both the left and right should be condemned.

'He should have been very clear, and he should have made it very clear that there's no room for people on the far left or the far more far right. When it comes to either an antifa or these white supremacist groups should have been very clear,' Young said.

And Hogan Gidley, the spokesman for the Trump campaign, said the president condemned them three times during the debate.

'He did call them out. He has condemned them,' Gidley said on CNN. 'He said sure three times.'

Some of the president's other supporters also said he missed out on the chance to condemn such hate groups, including Brian Kilmeade, one of the co-hosts of Trump's favorite morning show 'Fox & Friends.'

'Donald Trump ruined the biggest layup in the history of debates by not condemning white supremacists,' Kilmeade said on the cable news morning show Wednesday.

'I don't know if he didn't hear it, but he's gotta clarify that right away,' he added. 'Why the president didn't just knock it out of the park, I'm not sure.'

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The Proud Boys hold a rally in Portland, Oregon on Saturday. Governor Kate Brown declared a state of emergency prior to Saturday's rally as fears of political violence between Proud Boys and Black Lives Matter protesters grew.

7/18

Anti-Defamation League CEO Jonathan Greenblatt tweeted: 'It's astonishing that, when asked a simple question, will you condemn white supremacists, @POTUS responded - 'The Proud Boys should stand back and stand by.'

'Trying to determine if this was an answer or an admission. @POTUS owes America an apology or an explanation. Now.'

Proud Boys describes itself as a fraternal organization that 'venerates the housewife' and is 'anti-political correctness.' It has been suspended from both Twitter and Facebook.

Computer science professor Megan Squire told NBC News: 'To say Proud Boys are energized by this is an understatement.'

'They were pro-Trump before this shoutout, and they are absolutely over the moon now. Their fantasy is to fight antifa in his defense, and he apparently just asked them to do just that.'

Jason Miller, a senior adviser to the president's campaign, said Trump's call to 'stand by' was 'very clear he wants them to knock it off'.



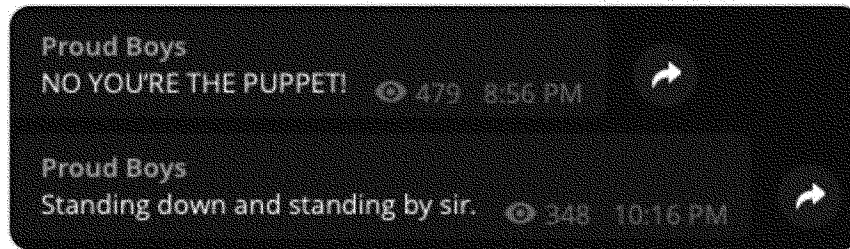
A Proud Boy wearing a Proud Boys yamaka is seen during a Proud Boys Rally at Delta Park Vanport. The Oregon governor declared an emergency in advance of the event hosted by a right-wing group with a history of violence at protests



nikki mccann ramírez
@NikkiMcR



Trump told the Proud Boys to "stand by" and it looks like they were watching



10:19 PM · Sep 29, 2020 · Twitter Web App

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Members of the far-right group posted about the shout out, telling the president: 'We're ready.' Their account on the social media app Telegram posted: 'Standing down and standing by sir'

The Trump campaign tweeted afterward: 'President Trump has repeatedly condemned white supremacists. What a ridiculous question from Chris Wallace.'

Vice Media co-founder Gavin McInnes started the Proud Boys in 2016.

McInnes and the Proud Boys have described the group as a politically incorrect men's club for 'Western chauvinists' and deny affiliations with far-right extremist groups that overtly espouse racist and anti-Semitic views.

In February last year, McInnes sued the Alabama-based Southern Poverty Law Center for labeling the Proud Boys as a hate group.

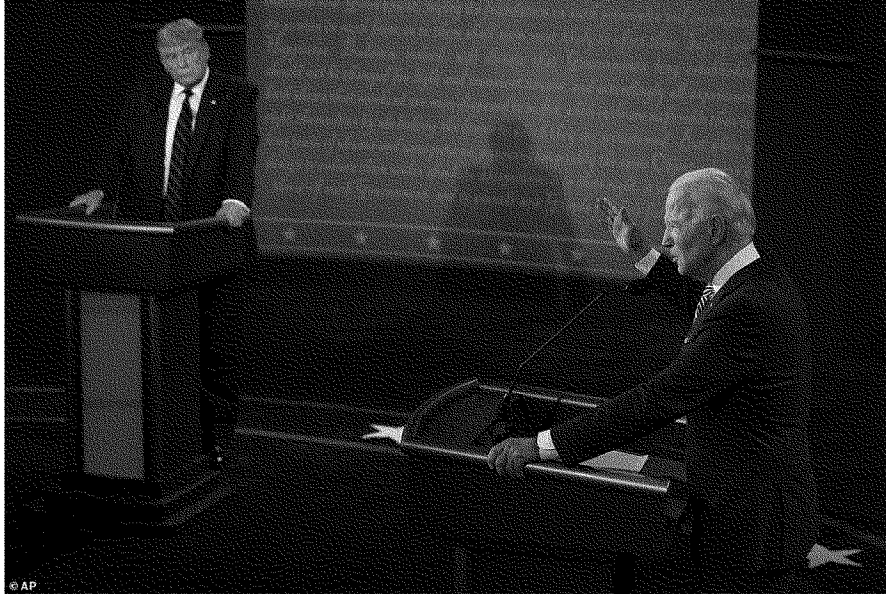
In response to the lawsuit, the law center said Proud Boys members often spread 'outright bigotry' over the internet and have posted social media pictures of themselves with prominent Holocaust deniers, white nationalists and 'known neo-Nazis.'

In New York City in October 2018, police arrested several Proud Boys members who brawled with anti-fascist protesters following a speech by McInnes at a Manhattan Republican club.

Proud Boys members also have frequently clashed with counterprotesters at rallies in California and Oregon.

About 1,000 people gathered at the Proud Boys rally in Delta Park on Saturday, while a group of 500 left-wing counter-protesters massed at nearby Peninsula Park, leading to fears of clashes.

Ahead of the right-wing rally, which organizers said was to support President Donald Trump and 'to end domestic terrorism', Oregon Governor Kate Brown declared a state of emergency and Mayor Ted Wheeler said it poses the 'greatest threat we've faced so far' amid fears of clashes with left-wing protesters.



President Donald Trump listens to Democratic presidential candidate former Vice President Joe Biden during the first presidential debate Tuesday

Debate moderator Chris Wallace asked the president if he would condemn white supremacists and militia groups.

'I would say almost everything I see is from the left wing, not from the right wing,' Trump said.

Wallace asked him to clarify what he meant.

'I'm willing to do anything, I want to see peace,' Trump said.

'Then do it, sir,' Wallace challenged.

'What do you want to call them? Give me a name, give me a name,' Trump said.

'White supremacist and right wing militias,' Wallace said.

Instead, Trump turned to attack antifa, an unorganized group opposed to extreme right-wing political groups like fascists.

'Proud boys, stand back and stand by, but I tell you what, somebody has got to do something about antifa and the left because this is not a right wing problem, this is a left-wing problem,' he said.

But antifa is not an organization - it's a political idea that many different groups support. And law enforcement has found no evidence these groups were working with the Black Lives Matter protesters in cities across the United States.

Trump has declined to call out the citizen militias that have sprung up during the protests as he declined to do Tuesday night.

'Antifa is an idea not an organization. His FBI director said,' Biden said.

'Antifa is a dangerous, radical,' Trump started saying as Wallace interrupted him to say they were moving on to another topic.

But the president got in one last zinger on antifa: 'They'll overthrow you.'

Race relations, like other debate topics, resulted in a furious back-and-forth, shouting over each other conversation between the presidential contenders.

At one point in the night, Biden called Trump a 'racist' when the two men debated race relations in the country.

Trump was defending his decision to end racial sensitivity training for federal workers when his Democratic rival hit him with the 'racist' label.

more videos

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Who are the Proud Boys? Inside the far-right group who describe themselves as 'Western chauvinist' men and are classified as extremists by the FBI - and have a chummy relationship with Donald Trump

The Proud Boys is a far-right fraternal organization that was founded on the idea that white men and western culture are under siege and champions being 'anti-political correctness' and 'venerating the housewife'.

The group has been known to promote and engage in political violence as they push their pro-gun, anti-feminist, anti-immigration and anti-welfare. The group maintains that it is not racist despite incorporating elements of the 'white genocide' conspiracy theory into its core tenets.

The Proud Boys were classified as an extremist group with ties to white nationalism by the FBI, while the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) lists them as a hate group and the Anti-Defamation League describes them as misogynistic, Islamophobic, transphobic and anti-immigration.

Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube suspended official Proud Boys social media accounts from their platforms for promoting 'hateful content' after the SPLC made its designation in 2018.

The group has a history of street violence targeting left-wing and anti-fascist activists and protest movements. In the past few months Proud Boys have repeatedly dropped in on Black Lives Matter demonstrations taking place across the country, sparking violent clashes on several occasions.

Proud Boys founder Gavin McInnes is quoted as saying in 2015: 'I want violence, I want punching in the face. I'm disappointed in Trump supporters for not punching enough.'

The organization made headlines this week after Donald Trump refused to condemn their associations with white supremacy during his first 2020 presidential debate against Joe Biden on Tuesday night.



The Proud Boys is a far-right fraternal organization that was founded on the idea that white men and western culture are under siege and champions being 'anti-political correctness' and 'venerating the housewife'. Members of the group are seen marching across the Hawthorne Bridge during a rally in Portland, Oregon, on August 17, 2019

FOUNDING:

British-Canadian activist and Vice Media co-founder Gavin McInnes founded the Proud Boys in the months leading up to Donald Trump's election to the presidency in 2016. McInnes started the group as a joke in the far-right Taki's Magazine, adopting its name from the Aladdin song Proud Of Your Boy.

McInnes and the Proud Boys have described the group as a politically incorrect men's club for 'Western chauvinists' and deny affiliations with far-right extremist groups that overtly espouse racist and anti-Semitic views.

In February last year, McInnes sued the Alabama-based SPLC, claiming he was banned from social media platforms and saw his livelihood suffer after the organization branded the Proud Boys as a hate group.

'What they [the SPLC] do is they cast this wide net of 'everyone's a Nazi' and they start destroying lives,' McInnes said at a news conference announcing his lawsuit. 'This is a free speech nation, and this is not a free speech organization.'

However McInnes recorded a video titled '10 things I hate about the Jews,' and said Jews have a 'whiny paranoid fear of Nazis' and that Israelis don't support President Donald Trump because they're 'scared of Christians and Trump, who are their biggest allies.'

Richard Cohen, president of the Southern Poverty Law Center, responded to the suit by saying: 'Gavin McInnes has a history of making inflammatory statements about Muslims, women and the transgender community. The fact that he's upset with SPLC tells us that we're doing our job exposing hate and extremism.'

McInnes has since worked to distance the group from the alt-right, describing members as 'Western chauvinists' and denying affiliations with far-right extremist groups that overtly espouse racist and anti-Semitic views.

Enrique Tarrío is currently serving in the role of chairman for the Proud Boys.



British-Canadian activist and Vice Media co-founder Gavin McInnes (pictured) founded the Proud Boys in the months leading up to Donald Trump's election to the presidency in 2016



Enrique Tarrío is currently serving in the role of chairman for the Proud Boys. Tarrío is pictured during an Oregon rally this month

JOINING THE GROUP:

The Proud Boys only admits men into its ranks, as the name suggests. Members share a number of ideologies that include being pro-gun rights, anti-feminism and anti-immigration.

To join, members must make the following pledge: 'I am a proud western chauvinist, I refuse to apologize for creating the modern world.'

Members can be identified by an unofficial uniform of red Make America Great Again caps from the Trump campaign and black and yellow Fred Perry polo shirts. The clothing brand withdrew that specific design from sale in North America this week because it said it does not want to be associated with the Proud Boys.



Proud Boys members can be identified by an unofficial uniform of red Make America Great Again caps from the Trump campaign and black and yellow Fred Perry polo shirts (seen above during a protest in Oregon on September 26). The clothing brand withdrew that design from sale in North America this week because it said it does not want to be associated with the Proud Boys

NOTABLE INCIDENTS:

February 2, 2017: McInnes gives a speech at New York University, after which minor brawls break out between Proud Boys members and anti-facist activists, resulting in charges against 11 people.

April 15, 2017: Proud Boys attend an alt-right rally in Berkeley, California, that was organized by the Liberty Revival Alliance and attended by members of neo-Nazi group Identity Evropa and the Oath Keepers, another right-wing anti-government group. Twenty-one people were arrested after violence broke out between attendees and counter-protesters.

August 11-12, 2017: Proud Boys member Jason Kessler helped organize the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, where counter-protester Heather Heyer was mowed down and killed by white supremacist James Alex Fields Jr. McInnes later said that he'd kicked Kessler out of the Proud Boys for his involvement in the rally attended by other members.

February 2018: Longtime Trump ally Roger Stone allegedly hired the Proud Boys to serve as his security detail at the annual Republican Dorchester Conference in Salem, Oregon. After the event the Proud Boys posted a video claiming that Stone was undergoing 'low-level initiation' into the group.

October 12, 2019: A group of Proud Boys were filmed beating up anti-facists staging a protest against a speech by McInnes in New York City. Two members - Maxwell Hare, 27, and John Kinsman, 40 - were convicted and sentenced to four years in prison for their involvement in that incident.

June 2020: Proud Boys face off with Black Lives Matter protesters by the Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone in Seattle, Washington.

September 29, 2020: Donald Trump brings up the Proud Boys during his first presidential debate against Joe Biden after moderator Chris Wallace repeatedly asked him to condemn violence by white supremacists and right-wing groups. 'Proud Boys, stand back and stand by!' Trump said. 'But I'll tell you what, somebody's got to do something about Antifa and the left.' The Proud Boys reacted with joy over the shout out, even adding the phrase 'Stand Back, Stand By' to their logo. Proud Boys leader Enrique Tarrio posted on social media: 'Standing by sir.'



The group has a history of street violence targeting left-wing and anti-fascist activists and protest movements. In the past few months Proud Boys have repeatedly dropped in on Black Lives Matter demonstrations taking place across the country, sparking violent clashes on several occasions. Pictured: A Proud Boy confronts a counter-protester during a rally in Oregon this month

Reporting by Megan Sheets for DailyMail.com

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Proud Boys' West Palm leader: Trump bump 'awesome,' we're not a hate group

P palmbeachpost.com/story/news/2020/10/21/west-palm-beach-proud-boys-leader-trump-bump-awesome/5880793002/



[Christine Stapleton](#) | Palm Beach Post

Bobby Pickles — whose real name is not Bobby Pickles — is a college graduate, owner of a screen printing business and head of the West Palm Beach chapter of the [Proud Boys](#).

In the wake of the uproar over President Donald Trump's call for the Proud Boys to "stand back and stand by" during the first presidential debate Sept. 29, Pickles wants to make one thing clear: The Proud Boys are in Palm Beach County and they are not a hate group or white supremacist organization.

"I am a textbook example of someone who is not a white supremacist," said Pickles, 40, adding that he "surrounds" himself "with non-white people."

Pickles said his girlfriend is from Costa Rica. He also said he hires minorities, including an Asian man born in South Korea who is also a member of the Proud Boys, and a Black man, who is not a member of the Proud Boys.

"It's just a fraternal organization," said Pickles, who calls himself a "liberal" Proud Boy. "We like to get together, we like to drink beer and we all support Trump and that's it."

1/8

Not so, say two of the largest non-profit organizations that monitor hate groups: The Anti-Defamation League and the Southern Poverty Law Center.

The ADL describes the group on its website as "alt lite."

"A loosely connected movement of right-wing activists who reject the overtly white supremacist ideology of the alt right, but whose hateful impact is more significant than their 'lite' name suggests," according to the ADL website. "The alt lite embraces misogyny and xenophobia, and abhors 'political correctness' and the left."

The SPLC goes even further, accusing Proud Boys founder, Vice Media co-founder Gavin McInnes, of crafting the "Western chauvinism" concept as a ruse to gain mainstream acceptance. Individual Proud Boys are guilty by association, participating alongside white supremacists at events like the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Va., in August 2017 that brought together Klansmen, anti-Semites, Southern racists and militias, according to the SPLC.

"They should absolutely be taken seriously as should all extremists — as should all people who espouse hate and bigotry of any kind," said Sheri Zvi, the Florida regional director for the ADL. "They should be called out and denounced by everyone who comes in contact with them, especially the president of the United States."

More: Trump tells Proud Boys to 'stand back and stand by.' Who are the Proud Boys?

Because of the stigma, local leader says Proud Boys use aliases

Pickles blames the SPLC for the Proud Boys' bad reputation. The advocacy center has branded the Proud Boys white supremacists and labeled them a hate group for financial reasons, Pickles said.

Both groups are widely despised by the Proud Boys.

"They need hate to exist in order for them to make money," Pickles said. "They need to perpetuate this false idea there are all of these hate groups all around the country."

Because of the "stigma" against the group, Proud Boys often use aliases, Pickles said, adding that he adopted his "nom de plume" long before he became a Proud Boy after a co-worker dubbed him Bobble Pickles.

"The reason why many other Proud Boys don't give their real names is because the media have libeled us so they fear getting doxed and losing their job," said Pickles.

Pickles said he graduated with an English degree from the University of Florida after two years at a community college, and that he always wanted to be in a fraternity. The Proud Boys fills that void, he said.

"There's just something about being in a group of men and doing stuff together," said Pickles. "It's, like, very awesome."

More: [Trump opened door for Proud Boys, far right group enters election fray](#)

Being a Proud Boy has not only provided Pickles with male camaraderie and drinking buddies, it's also has been a boon to his business. It has attracted big, high-profile accounts to his company, [Fat Enzo T-Shirts](#) on North Dixie Highway in West Palm Beach.

He says his T-shirt shop makes merchandise for the campaign of Laura Loomer and for Roger Stone

While Pickles says that neither he nor the Proud Boys endorse or condone racism, xenophobia or violence, his T-shirts say otherwise. "SPEAK ENGLISH" is emblazoned on one shirt in the storefront window.

Two other shirts celebrate Kyle Rittenhouse, the 17-year-old facing murder charges in the fatal shootings of two protesters and wounding another during demonstrations in Kenosha, Wis. Those protests followed the police shooting of a Black man, Jacob Blake, by a white officer in August.

Rittenhouse has become a hero to conservatives who claim he acted in self-defense. Far-right social media posts have depicted those shot by Rittenhouse as "commies."

In Pickles' shop, a black T-shirt in the front window proclaims "KYLE RITTENHOUSE DID NOTHING WRONG!" in white letters. Another shirt displays an image of a smiling Rittenhouse holding a semi-automatic weapon across his chest with his finger on the trigger superimposed over a tree.

"THE TREE OF LIBERTY MUST BE REFRESHED FROM TIME TO TIME WITH THE BLOOD OF COMMIES," the shirt reads. The saying is a play on a quote by Thomas Jefferson: "The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants."

The quote has previously been used to justify violence and was displayed, along with a tree dripping blood, on the back of the T-shirt worn by Timothy McVeigh, the domestic terrorist who carried out the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995 that killed 168 people.

Phrases on other shirts include "SPEAK ENGLISH" and "CAUC ASIAN" below an image of the Proud Boys' emblem, a rooster or cock, and a politically incorrect depiction of an Asian man wearing a cone shaped hat and Fu Manchu mustache.

Pickles said the company produces nearly all the "merch" for the Proud Boys, the congressional campaign of self-proclaimed Islamaphobe Laura Loomer and political operative Roger Stone. Pickles proudly claims Stone was wearing one of his T-shirts when he

was arrested.

Proud Boys chapter in South Florida is called Vice City, local leader says

Although a diehard Trump fan and defender of "Western values," Pickles said he works both sides of the political aisle. As proof, one anti-Trump shirt hangs in his window featuring a drag queen flushing a toilet. "Flush the turd on November 3rd," the shirt reads.

"We provide the bullets and the bandages," Pickles said.

The Proud Boys have chapters throughout the U.S., Europe and Australia. There are also chapters in China and Japan. Florida is divided into six zones, each with different names. The regions are divided into chapters and sub-chapters, Pickles said.

More: [Proud Boys at Trump LGBTQ counter-rally in Orlando, June 18, 2019](#)

The region that covers South Florida, from West Palm Beach to Key West, is called Vice City and has about 150 members, said Pickles, who heads the West Palm Beach chapter.

The Vice City website asks prospective members to answer four questions, including political leanings and thoughts on race-based politics. It also advises: "Meeting up with the boys for a couple of brews is essential to being a Proud Boy. How often can you join us?"

All that's required to be a Proud Boy is for a man to declare that he is "a Western chauvinist who refuses to apologize for creating the modern world," according to the group's website.

There is also a vetting process, Pickles said. If you are a prospective Proud Boy in South Florida, the vetting will be done by Genghis Khan, a Korean-born employee at Pickles' T-shirt business, whose real name is not Genghis Khan.

"I'm going to put it this way," Khan said. "The Proud Boys isn't for everyone and sometimes it really is not for someone."

The vetting process includes interviews, background checks and scouring social media, looking not only for racist comments but also religious bigotry.

"The organization, as a whole, we are not anti-Islam or anti any religion," Khan said. "Now, individual wise, I can't speak for everybody. I'm sure there are some out there who are like that but within every group you have the good and there are some that are not going to be good."

Says his group is not racist and 'I don't know why it's on us to prove it'

As proof that that the Proud Boys are not white supremacists, Pickles and Khan point to Proud Boys leader Enrique Tarrío, an Afro-Cuban Miami businessman. Pickles said he met with Tarrío in West Palm Beach when he was considering joining the group in 2017.

"First thing I said was, 'Are you guys racist in any way? Because if you guys are, I don't want to be a part of this because I keep on hearing that and I don't want to be a part of it,'" Pickles said. "Enrique was like, 'I'm Cuban.'"

"I don't know why it's on us to prove it," Pickles said. "It should be on the people trying to libel us."

As Pickles discussed the Proud Boys, Jermain Wilson, a Black man who is a member of the West Palm Beach chapter, walked into Pickles' cavernous warehouse-like storefront.

Wilson, who once worked for Pickles, said he "grew up mostly Democratic but my way of thinking has always been Republican." He said he was raised by his mother and grandmother, who "never got government assistance, never got food stamps."

"I was raised on values of working for what you get — all that is all Republican," said Wilson. "Democrats believe in abusing and using the system — getting checks from government."

Wilson doesn't hide his membership in the Proud Boys. He posts pictures on his social media accounts and wears Proud Boys swag.

"Sorry to say but the majority of white people look at me, like, 'You're a Proud Boy?'" Wilson said. "They are more shocked about it than African Americans."

Proud Boys members must also subscribe to the group's tenets: "Minimal government, maximum freedom, anti-political correctness, anti-drug war, closed borders, anti-racial guilt, anti-racism, pro-free speech, pro-gun rights, glorifying the entrepreneur, venerating the housewife, and reinstating the spirit of Western chauvinism."

Western chauvinism is a sort of a Mad Men-esque type of America where political correctness is reviled, housewives are venerated and Trump is revered.

Making the commitment to Western chauvinism is the first of four degrees in the group's hierarchy. A second-degree wannabe must recite the names of five breakfast cereals while being playfully slugged by other members.

To become a third degree Proud Boy, a member must get a Proud Boy tattoo. To achieve the fourth and highest degree, a Proud Boy must endure a hardship, such as being kicked off social media — more of a badge of honor than hardship for far right agitators like Pickles and his clients Loomer and Stone.

Pickles achieved that status when he was kicked off Facebook and Instagram earlier this year. He was given no reason for his banishment but — as a point of pride — said it coincided with Loomer and Stone getting kicked off both platforms.

Trump's call-out during presidential debate drove attention ... and backlash

While Trump's shout-out gave the Proud Boys an avalanche of free publicity and drove up interest in the group, the backlash was swift.

Color of Change, the nation's largest online racial justice organization, succeeded in its years-long efforts to convince Google to ask a Cloud Services customer to stop hosting the Proud Boys website and online store. Within a day, the Proud Boys site was back online with a new web hosting service.

Amazon, eBay, Etsy and Teespring, an e-commerce platform that allows people to create and sell custom apparel, also stopped selling Proud Boys products. Twitter and Facebook de-platformed the group in 2018, and the payment processor PayPal cut its ties with the group in 2019.

The LGBTQ community also fired back by hijacking the #ProudBoys hashtag. Star Trek star and activist George Takei launched the prank two days after the debate when he tweeted: "What if gay guys took pictures of themselves making out with each other or doing very gay things, then tagged themselves with #ProudBoys. I bet it would mess them up real bad. #ReclaimingMyShine."



Proud Boys at Trump LGBTQ counter-rally in Orlando, June 18, 2019

Members of the Proud Boys jeered LGBTQ counter-protestors several blocks from rally where Trump announced re-election bid in Orlando, June 18, 2019.

Christine Stapleton, Palm Beach Post

The movement went viral and searches for the hashtag #ProudBoys on Twitter returned countless photos of gay couples kissing.

Still, the Trump bump was "awesome," Pickles said. The topic came up as a trick question and it would have been better if the president had said the Proud Boys are not white supremacists, Pickles said.

7/8


Proud Boys, meanwhile, are showing up at more mainstream conservative events without their megaphones and weapons. Gavin McInnis made a podium appearance at Loomer's victory party after the August primary, and Tarrío was a featured speaker at AMPFest, the annual convention for young conservatives held at Trump Doral.

"People are getting woken up by this whole thing," Pickles said. "People you would never expect or suspect of being even remotely right wing are going, what is the Proud Boys?"

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@ChristineStaple

Proud Boys surround man with knife at violent DC Trump rally

 nypost.com/2020/12/13/one-person-stabbed-during-massive-proud-boys-brawl-in-dc/

By Elizabeth Elizalde

December 13, 2020

December 13, 2020 | 12:47am | [Updated December 13, 2020 | 8:20am](#)

Violence erupted in Washington, D.C., on Saturday night as Proud Boys and Antifa clashed after a day of pro-Trump demonstrations, leaving a female cop injured and at least four people stabbed — including in this dramatic, caught-on-video knife-fight.

The video shows a lone African American counter-protester, dressed all in black, as he is surrounded outside Harry's Bar at 11th and F streets NW by a group of shouting white men.

Many in the crowd are wearing "America Strong" hats and the gold, laurel wreath insignia associated with the far-right, white nationalist Proud Boys.

At first, the surrounding group just taunts the black-clad counter-protester, telling him to leave.

He indeed begins to walk off, glaring at the taunting group over his shoulder.

"Get out! Get the f— outta here!" they shout at him. "Go that way!"

But when he's shoved from behind, the lone counter-protester pulls what appears to be a gravity knife from his right coat pocket.

He flicks it open and holds it down at his side as he continues trying to walk off — and the group surrounding him bursts into screams and shouts, some among them moving still closer to him.

"He's got a knife!" they shout. Others in the crowd shout, "Get back! Get back!"

Women can be heard shrieking. One woman is seen in the video grabbing and pulling at the counter-protester's balaclava-style ski hat, which covers most of his head and face.

The counter-protester appears to be swinging his knife and running away as some in the crowd then give chase and tackle him.

"Get his ass!" someone in the crowd yells.

"Stop guys stop — please stop" police can then be heard shouting as they break up the scrum, into which the knife-wielding counter-protester has disappeared.

The clip ends with the crowd clearing the way for multiple D.C. police officers who have rushed quickly to the scene, breaking up the scrum and taking control of the now cowering counter-protester, who has curled up into a ball on the sidewalk.

A separate video of the same incident, [tweeted by @mauricioxgomez](#), shows others in the crowd surrounding and trying to help a male victim with a bleeding stab wound to his stomach.

“He got stabbed!” someone shouts. “Medic! Medic! Medic!”

“There was a lot of alcohol — it was a charged atmosphere,” videographer James Keivom told The Post of the scene outside Harry’s.

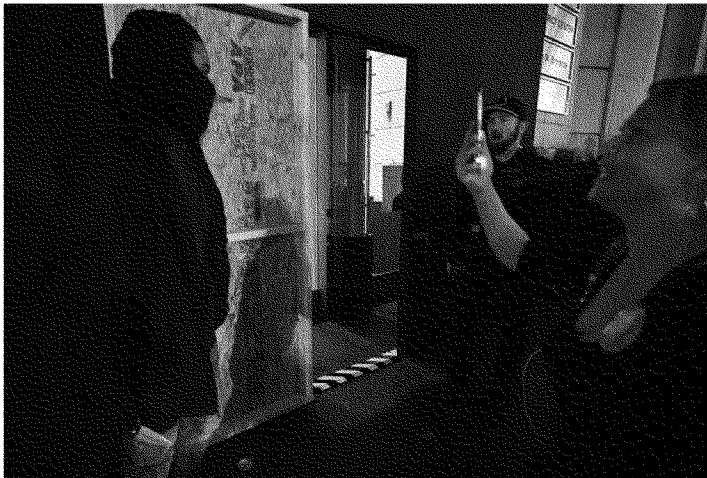
At least four stabbing victims were hospitalized, and some suffered life-threatening injuries, D.C. fire spokesman Doug Buchanan [told the Washington Post](#).

One police officer was also injured, the paper said.

[ABC 7 tweeted footage of the injured cop](#) as she limped away from the scene, supported on both sides by her fellow officers.

“The officer appeared to have tears in her eyes,” the tweet noted.

The Metropolitan Police Department told WRC-TV that 23 people were arrested.



Members of the Proud Boys confront a man with a knife in DC Saturday night.
James Keivom



Members of the Proud Boys confront a man with a knife in DC Saturday night
James Keivom



A police officer stands over a man who was attacked by members of the Proud Boys.
James Keivom



Paramedics take a man to the hospital after the stabbing.
James Keivom for New York Post

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Trump Supporters Gather As Votes Are Counted in Atlanta

gpb.org/news/2020/11/05/trump-supporters-gather-votes-are-counted-in-atlanta



Primary Content



Credit: Sarah Rose



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Nearly a hundred Trump supporters rallied outside of the State Farm Arena in downtown Atlanta, where ballot counting was in process, alleging that voter fraud was taking place in the state's presidential vote tally.



"I've been seeing and hearing a lot of things that are not being broadcast," said Kimberly Aikland of Dacula. "I think this election is in jeopardy of being tampered with."



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Listening...

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Caption

Trump supporter Gladys K. protests outside of State Farm Arena in Atlanta as votes are counted in the 2020 election.

Credit: Sarah Rose/GPB News

Gladys K. escaped Cuba when she was 24 and said she's supporting Trump because she doesn't want Americans to experience what she did under Castro communism.

"I left Cuba because there was no freedom of religion, freedom of education, freedom of commerce," she said. "If the American people think that the shenanigans with this election is just about Republicans or Democrats, they better wake up — because it's going to happen to you also."

Secondary Content

About the author

Author



Sarah Rose
REPORTER

Sarah Rose (*they/them*) is a reporter for GPB News covering public policy issues throughout the state.

Detroit Elections Center Employee On 'Stop The Count' Protest: 'It Said A Lot'05:52 Download Copy the code below to embed the WBUR audio player on your site

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Election challengers demand to enter to observe the absentee ballots counting but were denied after the room reached capacity during the 2020 general election in Detroit, Michigan on Wednesday, Nov. 4, 2020. (Salwan Georges/The Washington Post via Getty Images)

Soon after the Associated Press called the state of Michigan for Joe Biden, a chaotic scene erupted inside the Detroit convention center.

Police barred Republicans and Democratic poll challengers from entering a room where Detroit ballots were being counted. A group identified as Republicans chanted “stop the count” as they were met by police, who shielded the doors of the city’s TCF Center.

Authorities were able to quickly disperse the crowd but a photo in The New York Times captured one worker fearlessly staving off the protesters. Exterior logistics coordinator Sommer Woods says she stepped outside to explain the process to the crowd.

“For me, it was just a matter of making sure that we were being fair,” she says, “but obviously also the workers that were on the inside, for their safety as well.”

A long-time logistics coordinator, Woods says she was called in to help with an election for the first time — and the experience “forever changed” her. People talk about the importance of voting but don’t put enough emphasis on taking part in the process, she says.

“Even though it was my first time being that entrenched in the process, I will forever be a part of it going forward and never take that for granted,” she says. “So I feel very fortunate and I feel very blessed that I was able to play a small role.”

Despite that Detroit is a majority Black city, videos from the scene show the protesters were white. For Woods, the altercation “said a lot” about the state of the country.

Election workers stayed in the room all night and counted ballots while the white people outside banged on the windows and yelled at them, she says. And the protesters were “irate” as they yelled at Woods when she came out to talk to them, she says.

Even in this hostile space, Black workers continued doing their job with grace, she says.

“Those people that sat at those tables, that had to listen to people beating on the walls to try to throw them off, through it all, they still maintained to count every single vote,” she says. “That said a lot for me — especially being a Black woman from Detroit — that we showed up. We represented. We did what needed to be done.”

This situation shows that the country has more work to do around racial healing and building respect, she says. In Detroit, Woods says people sometimes take for granted that the racial dynamics in the city vastly differ from Michigan at large.

“There's Detroit,” she says, “and then there is Michigan.”

To start the healing process, Woods says people need to take an honest, introspective look at themselves and the U.S. As people continue to find ways to dismantle systemic racism, communities also need to be rebuilt, she says.

The election workers who kept counting through the protest can aid in this healing by telling their stories, she says.

“I want them to share those moments, because the more that we're able to share to make this a more human experience, then I think that we can be able to do some work in order to heal,” she says. “That's just to start.”

Cristina Kim and Ciku Theuri produced this story and edited it for broadcast with Tinku Ray. Allison Hagan adapted it for the web.

Stop the Steal Protest at Central Vote Site

 urbanmilwaukee.com/2020/11/05/stop-the-steal-protest-at-central-vote-site/

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Trump supporters in Milwaukee think the election is rigged and votes were stolen... Mr. President stop spewing your non-sense before someone gets hurt!
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— Rep. David F. Bowen (@DavidFBowen) [November 6, 2020](#)

Categories: [Politics](#)

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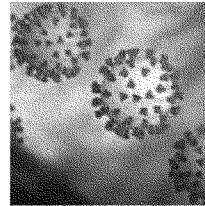
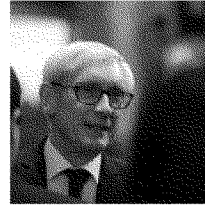
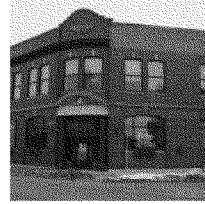
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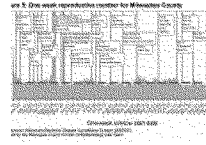
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Trump, Biden backers launch protests at vote center in North Las Vegas

lasvegassun.com/news/2020/nov/05/trump-biden-backers-converge-vote-center-nlv/

November 5, 2020



Steve Marcus

Mike and Wetonia Houlihan listen to speakers during a protest at the Clark County Election Center in North Las Vegas Wednesday, Nov. 4, 2020.

By Ricardo Torres-Cortez (contact)

Thursday, Nov. 5, 2020 | 2 a.m.

Competing protests gathered in front of a Clark County Election Department center, with one side proclaiming its candidate the winner and the other wanting the vote count to proceed.

Several dozen flag-waving President Donald Trump supporters huddled peacefully Wednesday night in front of the North Las Vegas warehouse, where workers continue to tally votes that will help determine if their candidate will remain in the White House for another term.

1/3

As one of the handful of states that hasn't yet turned red or blue on U.S. Electoral College maps, Nevada's six votes could hand Joe Biden the highest office in the land.

Ballots continue to be counted here as the former vice president's razor-thin lead in Nevada stood at fewer than 8,000 votes Wednesday.

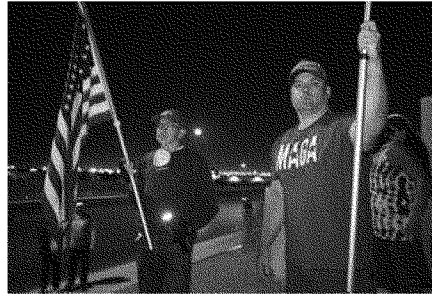
The Make America Great Again crowd was part of a multistate movement named #stopthesteal in which organizers and followers suggest that Trump has won reelection, alleging unproven conspiracies about widespread voter fraud by Democrats, polling station workers and the "fake news" media.

'Stop the Steal' Protest at Election Center

[Launch slideshow »](#)

Early Wednesday morning, hours after the polls closed across the country, Trump called for vote counting to stop in several states, proclaiming himself the winner and alleging that if he loses, it would be because of fraud.

He's offered no evidence for the alleged intrigue. But as Biden's path to 270 electoral votes became clearer Wednesday, Trump supporters have also converged on vote-counting centers in Michigan and Arizona. Republicans have filed suit in various states over the election.



The pro-Trump group grew from about a dozen to 50 with sympathizers in MAGA gear waving Trump campaign flags. North Las Vegas Police had blocked the parking lot, and the supporters gathered on a public sidewalk overlooking the warehouse.

"President Trump has won," said Rebecca Gandara, who stood with her friend Lisa Maims, whom she befriended last presidential election season. "He won Nevada. President Trump four more years."

Gandara said she didn't believe votes were being counted. "I would bet my life there's no people in there," she said about the warehouse.

Maims said she heard from a friend who told her about "illegals" brought in to vote on Tuesday and some evidence that they were sending to Rudy Giuliani, Trump's personal attorney. Voter fraud in the U.S. is very rare, according to the Brennan Center for Justice.

Gandara railed against Gov. Steve Sisolak and the COVID-19 restrictions, but also spoke about being eager to vote when she awoke at 5:30 a.m. to vote red across the board on Tuesday. “I’m American and I love President Trump,” she said. Democrats, she added, are “the party of rioters, looters and hate. We don’t hate, we love everybody.”

They went on peacefully to listen to event organizers Courtney Holland and conservative activist Michael Coudrey, who gave examples of what he called voter fraud and spoke about taking the country back.

They said Wednesday’s event was to “plant a seed” and to prepare for more such demonstrations.

After hearing about the pro-Trump protest, a liberal group organized its own demonstration, with participants chanting, “count every vote!”

Both sides kept a substantial distance between each other and didn’t direct their attention at each other.

Valeria Villaseñor, 20, voted in her first presidential election this year.

“I feel like every vote matters,” she said, adding that she’d voted for Biden. “No one should be mad just because the other is losing.”


Meanwhile, from New York City to Seattle, thousands of demonstrators turned out to demand that every vote be tallied.

In Portland, Oregon, which has been a scene of regular protests for months, Gov. Kate Brown called out the National Guard as demonstrators engaged in what authorities said was widespread violence downtown, including smashing windows. Protesters in Portland were demonstrating about a range of issues, including police brutality and the counting of the vote.

In New York, hundreds of people paraded past boarded-up luxury stores on Manhattan’s Fifth Avenue, and in Chicago, demonstrators marched through downtown and along a street across the river from Trump Tower.

Similar protests — sometimes about the election, sometimes about racial inequality — took place in at least a half-dozen cities, including Los Angeles, Houston, Pittsburgh, Minneapolis and San Diego.

Trump Supporters' Own Explanations For Assaulting The Capitol Are Undercutting His Impeachment Defense

 [buzzfeednews.com/article/zoetillman/trump-impeachment-capitol-rioters-fight-like-hell](https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/zoetillman/trump-impeachment-capitol-rioters-fight-like-hell)



Brendan Smialowski / Getty Images

Former president Donald Trump gives a speech to supporters before the insurrection at the US Capitol on Jan. 6, in which he tells them to "fight like hell."

WASHINGTON — Former president Donald Trump formally responded Tuesday to the charges filed by House Democrats in his second impeachment, denying that he incited a mob to violently descend on the Capitol building to stop Congress from certifying President Joe Biden's win.

But court records in the 175-plus criminal cases filed so far in connection with the Jan. 6 insurrection reveal that's exactly what at least some of Trump's supporters thought he was directing them to do.

"[T]oday President Trump told Us to 'fight like hell,'" Troy Smocks, a Texas man charged with making threats, posted on Jan. 6 on [Parler](#), quoting Trump's speech to supporters before the insurrection, according to the government's court filings. Smocks appeared to admit to participating in the attack on the Capitol in his posts, although he isn't charged with that; he urged his followers to get weapons and prepare to "hunt" Democrats, tech executives, and others he considered "enemies of Our constitution," writing, "We now have the green light."

1/4

“[Trump] said that Our cause was a matter of national security, and that these people behind the massive fraud must be arrested and brought to justice. And that task, falls on the shoulders of We The People.... the American Patriots,” Smocks wrote, court documents say. A judge ordered him to be held in jail pending trial, citing his posts on Parler.

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Trump’s lawyers are contesting the constitutionality of impeaching a former president, as well as disputing whether he really meant it when he had repeatedly told his supporters to “fight.”

“It is denied that the phrase ‘if you don’t fight like hell you’re not going to have a country anymore’ had anything to do with the action at the Capitol as it was clearly about the need to fight for election security in general, as evidenced by the recording of the speech,” Trump’s lawyers wrote in his [official response papers](#).

But court filings in many cases showed that the former president’s supporters [came to Washington spoiling for a fight](#) and that they broadly took calls from Trump and his allies to “stop the steal” — a reference to baseless claims of widespread voter fraud — to be an appeal for violence. Social media posts, FBI interview summaries, and publicly available interviews that prosecutors included in charging papers also lay out the extent to which Trump’s supporters were waiting to take orders from him and understood his words as a direction to act.

Robert Bauer, charged with unlawfully entering a restricted area (the US Capitol) and violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds, spoke with two FBI agents on Jan. 8. He “reiterated that he marched to the U.S. Capitol because President Trump said to do so,” according to his charging papers. The FBI affidavit includes a screenshot of a selfie found on Bauer’s phone that shows him and his cousin (and codefendant) Edward Hemenway II, both wearing “Trump 2020” hats, smiling and posing with their middle fingers up inside the Capitol building.

“According to BAUER, after President Trump told the crowd, ‘We are going down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol,’ the crowd began moving towards the Capitol,” an FBI agent wrote in the affidavit.

Robert Sanford, a Pennsylvania man charged with throwing a fire extinguisher at police officers at the Capitol, similarly told the FBI when he was interviewed on Jan. 12 that he was part of a group that “had gone to the White House and listened to President Donald J. Trump’s speech and then had followed the President’s instructions and gone to the Capitol.”

“IF TRUMP TELLS US TO STORM THE FUKIN CAPITAL IMA DO THAT THEN!”

In charging papers for Kenneth Grayson of Pennsylvania, the FBI quoted a private message that he allegedly sent to an unidentified person on Dec. 23 about his plans to go to DC on Jan. 6 and take direction from Trump. Grayson, who allegedly livestreamed video on Facebook of himself going into the Capitol and who prosecutors believe is a follower of the QAnon mass delusion, is charged with being a restricted area, disorderly and disruptive conduct, and obstructing an official proceeding.

“I’m there for the greatest celebration of all time after Pence leads the Senate flip!! OR IM THERE IF TRUMP TELLS US TO STORM THE FUKIN CAPITAL IMA DO THAT THEN! We don’t want any trouble but they are not going to steal this election that I guarantee bro!!” Grayson allegedly wrote.

Samuel Fisher, a New York man charged with illegally going into the Capitol and disorderly conduct, wrote in a lengthy post on his personal website dated Jan. 6, apparently before the attack, “Trump just needs to fire the bat signal... deputize patriots... and then the pain comes.”

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It’s too early in most cases for people charged with participating in the insurrection to have had a chance to offer a defense — but in a few court fights over whether defendants should be kept in jail or allowed to go home pending trial, their lawyers have highlighted the connection between Trump’s words and the violence at the Capitol. In opposing pretrial detention for Emanuel Jackson, who is charged with assaulting police officers as well as illegally going into the Capitol, his lawyer wrote that “the nature and circumstances of this offense must be viewed through the lens of an event inspired by the President of the United States.” A judge ordered Jackson kept in custody.

A judge is scheduled to hear arguments on Feb. 3 on whether to order pretrial detention for Dominic Pezzola, a New York man and member of the Proud Boys identified in videos breaking a window at the Capitol and who the government alleged had instructions at his home to make guns and bombs. In a recent interview, Pezzola’s lawyer told Reuters that the “logical thinking” to Trump’s supporters was that the president had “invited” them to Washington.

Reuters also noted that during a Jan. 21 court hearing, a lawyer for Riley Williams of Pennsylvania told the judge that her client “took the president’s bait and went inside the Capitol.” Williams is charged with illegally going into the Capitol as well as stealing or helping to steal a laptop from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s office; Williams, through her lawyer, has denied any involvement in the theft.

The House voted to impeach Trump for a historic second time on Jan. 13 for inciting the insurrection at the Capitol. A trial in the Senate is expected to begin next week. The Senate voted last week against a Republican attempt to reject the impeachment effort as unconstitutional, which means a trial will take place, but enough Republican members supported the measure that it's unlikely Democrats can win the two-thirds majority needed to convict Trump of high crimes and misdemeanors.

2/5/2021

'He invited us': Accused Capitol rioters blame Trump in novel legal defense | Reuters



U.S. LEGAL NEWS

FEBRUARY 2, 2021 / 6:12 AM / UPDATED 3 DAYS AGO

'He invited us': Accused Capitol rioters blame Trump in novel legal defense

By Jan Wolfe



(Reuters) - Emanuel Jackson, a 20-year-old Washington area man, was caught on video using a metal bat to strike the protective shields wielded by police officers as they tried to fend off rioters storming the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-capitol-defense/he-invited-us-accused-capitol-rioters-blame-trump-in-novel-legal-defense-idUSKBN2A219E> 1/9

2/5/2021

'He invited us': Accused Capitol rioters blame Trump in novel legal defense | Reuters

U.S. President Donald Trump speaks during a rally to contest the certification of the 2020 U.S. presidential election results by the U.S. Congress, in Washington, U.S. January 6, 2021. REUTERS/Jim Bourg

Jackson, awaiting trial in federal court on assault charges, is now adopting a novel legal defense: seeking to pin the blame on Donald Trump, citing the former president's remarks at a "Stop the Steal" rally shortly before the Capitol siege.

Trump told the crowd to "fight like hell," said "we will not take it anymore" and repeated his false claims that the election was stolen from him through widespread voting fraud. Trump exhorted his followers to go to the Capitol. The ensuing rampage interrupted the congressional certification of President Joe Biden's election victory, sent lawmakers into hiding and left five people dead including a police officer.

Jackson's lawyer, Brandi Harden, wrote in a Jan. 22 court filing that "the nature and circumstances of this offense must be viewed through the lens of an event inspired by the President of the United States."

The Capitol siege, Harden added, "appears to have been spontaneous and sparked by the statements made during the 'Stop the Steal' rally." Harden argued that Jackson should be released while awaiting trial. A judge on Jan. 22 denied the request.

At least six of the 170 people charged in connection with the Capitol siege have tried to shift at least some of the blame onto Trump as they defend themselves in court or in the court of public opinion.

Other defendants to take this route include Jacob Chansley, who donned a horned headdress and face paint during the attack, and Dominic Pezzola, a member of the Proud Boys right-wing extremist group who is accused of shattering a window in the Capitol with a stolen police shield so rioters could enter.

"The boss of the country said, 'People of the country, come on down, let people know what you think,'" Pezzola's defense lawyer, Michael Scibetta, told Reuters. "The logical thinking was, 'He invited us down.'"

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Lawyers have not yet sought dismissal of charges or acquittal during a trial based on the idea that Trump incited their clients, instead making the claim as part of efforts to spare them from pretrial detention.

No defendant will be able to avoid criminal culpability by saying they were incited by Trump, said Jay Town, who served as the top federal prosecutor in Birmingham, Alabama, during the Trump administration.

"If anything, it is an admission to criminal conduct," said Town, now the general counsel of cybersecurity firm Gray Analytics. "While this ineffective tactic may help with headlines, it will not help the fate of any defendant."

Trump took to a stage near the White House and exhorted supporters to "fight" - using the word more than 20 times. Trump told the crowd that "everyone here will soon be marching over to the Capitol." About 50 minutes into the speech, many of them did.

Trump adviser Jason Miller did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the legal strategy of blaming the former president. Trump has called his speech "totally appropriate."

IMPEACHMENT TRIAL

The Democratic-led House of Representatives voted to impeach Trump on a charge of "incitement of insurrection" stemming from his Jan. 6 speech. He faces an impeachment trial next week in the Senate.

Enough of his fellow Republicans in the Senate have signaled opposition to impeachment to indicate that the chamber almost certainly will fall short of the two-thirds majority needed to convict him. Democrats hope to use the trial to disqualify him from future public office.

Lori Ulrich, a defense lawyer in Pennsylvania, said that her client Riley June Williams was motivated by Trump's remarks. Williams, 22, is accused of stealing a laptop from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office during the siege.

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Slideshow (4 images)

It is “regrettable that Ms. Williams took the president’s bait and went inside the Capitol,” Ulrich told a judge at a Jan. 21 court hearing as she argued against Williams being detained while her case proceeds. The judge released Williams to home confinement.

Some legal experts said the “blame Trump” defense could complicate matters for defendants if they eventually plead guilty in hopes of getting a lesser sentence. Town noted that federal judges require defendants who plead guilty to accept full responsibility for their conduct.

Scibetta acknowledged the limits of the effectiveness of blaming Trump.

“It would be reckless to put all your eggs in that basket,” Scibetta said.

But Scibetta said Trump’s speech helps explain how people got swept away in the riot.

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'He invited us': Accused Capitol rioters blame Trump in novel legal defense | Reuters

“These were people acting in a way they have never acted before,” Scibetta said, “and it begs the question, ‘Who lit the fuse?’”

Reporting by Jan Wolfe; Additional reporting by Sarah N. Lynch; Editing by Will Dunham and Noeleen Walder

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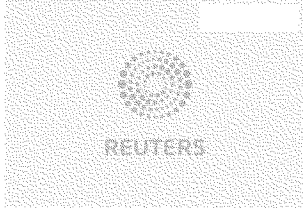
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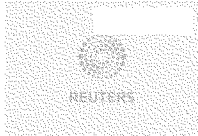
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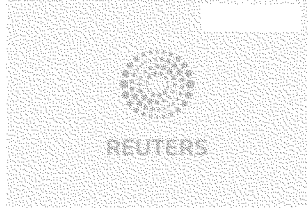
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What the Founders Would Have Done with Trump

An originalist case for trying, convicting and disqualifying a president after he or she leaves office.

by Frank O. Bowman, III (<https://washingtonmonthly.com/people/frank-o-bowman-iii/>)

January 18, 2021

LAW AND JUSTICE (<https://washingtonmonthly.com/law-and-justice/>)

Donald Trump has now been impeached by the House of Representatives for the second time but will not stand trial before the Senate until after he has left office. Senate backers of the president seem to be coalescing around the argument that at that point their body will no longer have jurisdiction over the by-then ex-president.

The majority of impeachment scholars maintain that the impending trial is perfectly proper. An insistent minority urge the opposite. The arguments so far focus primarily on the text of the constitution and on three prior impeachments: Senator William Blount who, in 1797-98, was impeached while in office and tried afterward; Secretary of War William Belknap, who in 1876 was both impeached and tried after leaving office; and Judge West Humphreys, who in 1862 was impeached, tried, convicted, and disqualified a year after he abandoned his office to join the Confederacy. Although these impeachments provide persuasive precedent for post-term Senate impeachment jurisdiction, obsessing over them can mislead us because none involved a president. Even though Article II, §4, renders all “civil officers” (a phrase we now read to include judges and executive branch appointees) impeachable, the president was the nearly exclusive focus of all the impeachment debates at the Constitutional Convention.

The delegates supported the ouster of a president for personal corruption, egregious incompetence, and betrayal of the nation to foreign powers. But a singular concern of the Framers, not merely when debating impeachment but throughout the process of designing the constitutional system, was the danger of a demagogue rising to the highest office and overthrowing republican government.

When composing our Constitution, the Framers drew on their educations and studied every historical model they could find. When crafting the impeachment clauses of the Constitution, they focused particularly on the constitutional history of Great Britain and the history of the limited number of prior republics, especially those of ancient Greece and Rome.

The unwritten British constitution was the Framers' patrimony. In the wrenching process of resisting and then freeing themselves from British rule, they had studied and debated its every nuance. Likewise, the ancient history of Rome and Greece was the core of the "classical education" almost all the Framers possessed to one degree or another, and the educated members of the founding generation drew on their knowledge of it for inspiration and example. Their public and private papers are full of classical allusions. They commonly wrote under pseudonyms of Roman political personalities — Cato, Caesar, Brutus, Agrippa, Cincinnatus, and most famously, Publius, the pen name used by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay as authors of *The Federalist Papers*.

The impeachment mechanism written into the American Constitution owes its structure to a set of very specific lessons the Framers drew from British and classical history.

Impeachment was well known to the Framers as an invention of the British Parliament, crafted as a legislative tool for resisting royal oppression. Impeachment could not remove the monarch, but it could hobble a ruler's aspirations by removing the ministers who were active agents of royal absolutism. For Parliament, the men most to be feared, who thus became the targets of the great political impeachments, were the hereditary aristocrats and landed gentry who were favorites of the Crown. But such figures could not be entirely defanged merely by removing them from office — even out of office, they retained title, land, wealth, and royal favor and might rise again to threaten constitutional order and, in the violent politics of the times, the very lives of the parliamentarians.

Therefore, the consequences of conviction following a British impeachment included the full range of penalties we would consider criminal — imprisonment, forfeiture of property and title, even death. These stern remedies were not merely retribution for wrongdoing, or even deterrent warnings to future officeholders, but prophylactic measures to ensure that the convicted officer could never again threaten constitutional governance.

The American Framers rejected monarchy, and they chose not to create an American aristocracy. Thus, the dangers against which the American rules of impeachment were directed were different. The Framers did not have to worry that an impeached and expelled officer would retain a hereditary title or landed fiefdom from which he could plot a violent resurgence. Nor did they have to worry that such a person would climb back into power by the grace of a hereditary monarch.

Moreover, they did not want the national legislature to act as a court, imposing personal punishments on either private citizens or erring officeholders. But they were every bit as conscious as the British that merely removing an officeholder from power would not necessarily neuter the threat such a person

could pose to the Republic. The particular threat that haunted the founding generation was the demagogue.

The founders cautioned against demagogues constantly. The word appears 187 times in the National Archives' database of the founders' writings. Eighteenth-century American writers often used "demagogue" simply as an epithet to suggest that a political opponent was a person of little civic virtue who used the baser arts of flattery and inflammatory rhetoric to secure popular favor. In 1778, in the midst of the Revolution, George Washington wrote to Edward Rutledge complaining that, "that Spirit of Cabal, & destructive Ambition, which has elevated the Factious Demagogue, in every Republic of Antiquity, is making great Head in the Centre of these States."

But the idea at the bottom of the insult was the Framers' conclusion, based on the study of history ancient and modern, that republics were peculiarly vulnerable to demagogues – men who craved power for its own sake, and who gained and kept it by dishonest appeals to popular passions.

The Framers had ancient historical examples constantly in mind, particularly Cataline, who sought to overturn the Roman Republic by ingratiating himself with the Roman mob and raising an army to make him a dictator. His name was a synonym for anti-republican villainy in the minds of the Revolutionary generation, just as the famous Romans who thwarted him, Cicero and Cato, were the universally admired symbols of steadfast republican virtue.

Alexander Hamilton summed up the Founders' view in Federalist No. 1:

History will teach us, that ... of those men who have overturned the liberties of republics the greatest number have begun their career [sic], by paying an obsequious court to the people, commencing Demagogues and ending Tyrants.

The worry about demagogues influenced every aspect of the constitutional debate. For example, in proposing large, populous districts for members of the House of Representatives, Madison argued they would be less likely to elect demagogues.

The Framers' fear of a demagogue was doubly acute because the new American chief executive would be chosen, not by hereditary succession, but the people. The much-maligned electoral college was devised, not only as a means of giving states a special mediating role in picking the president, but also with the idea that the state legislatures tasked with devising processes for picking electors, and the electors themselves, would be sensible statesmen immune to the popular intrigues of a demagogue.

However, the Framers expressly rejected the idea that periodic elections alone, even elections by the imagined body of discerning electors, would be sufficient proof against a president either corrupt or with aspirations to tyranny. Accordingly, they adopted impeachment, but with two major innovations from British practice.

The first was making the president, America's head of state and chief executive, subject to impeachment at all. If a demagogue rose to the presidency, he could, upon displaying dangerous behavior redolent of autocratic ambitions, be removed. But Article I, Section 3, does not limit the consequences of conviction to removal. It goes on to permit "disqualification to hold and enjoy any Office of honor, Trust or Profit under the United States."

This provision serves a critical function. Unlike British impeachments of old, impeachment under the federal constitution is not punitive. It is purely political. It seeks to protect the constitutional order in part by removing bad actors from federal service now, *but also*, where appropriate, *by preventing them from rising to power again*. Because the United States has neither a hereditary monarch nor a hereditary landed aristocracy, the officer removed need not be imprisoned or killed to prevent a return to national power. Permanent disqualification suffices. If personal punishments are deserved, those are reserved to the ordinary criminal courts.

How is all this relevant to the apparently technical question of whether a president may be tried after he leaves office?

The key to the Founders' fear of the demagogue was not merely that he might secure high office, but that the means by which he would attain it – appeal to the mob – would allow him to corrupt or overthrow the Republic in order to transform himself into a dictator. The source of the demagogue's power does not expire if he is expelled from office; so long as he retains the loyalty of the mob, he may return to power.

As concerned as the Framers were about the dangers of the demagogue, they imagined that they were protecting their new Republic in a variety of ways – including a presidential electoral system managed by state political elites and large House districts – that would defeat the wiles of such a person in an age when communication was limited to voice, letters, and newspapers of limited local circulation. Imagine their terror if told of today's technology that allows the demagogue to appeal directly to millions through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

Donald Trump is the living embodiment of the Framers' fears, amplified many-fold by the reach of modern media technology. If there were any doubt that his departure from the White House will not alone end his threat to the national government, consider that, even now, after the failure of the January 6 as-

sault on the Capitol and the chastisement of a second impeachment, Washington, D.C., has become a vast armed camp fortified, not against foreign invaders, but against Trump supporters *still* seeking to overturn the results of a free and fair election.

Trump was the man against whom the founding generation armed the constitution with the disqualification clause. They would surely think anyone quite mad for suggesting that a president who actively sought the overthrow of democracy could not be disqualified from trying again because the failed plot reached its crescendo too close to the expiration of his term.

The Senate trial of Donald Trump for inciting insurrection is entirely consistent with the founders' original intent.

Frank O. Bowman, III (<https://washingtonmonthly.com/people/frank-o-bowman-iii/>)

(<https://twitter.com/fobowman3>)

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1/19/2021

13 men charged in alleged plot to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer



Oct. 8, 2020, 12:15 PM EDT / Updated Oct. 9, 2020, 12:17 AM EDT

By Tom Winter, Michael Kosnar and David K. Li

More than a dozen men were arrested on federal and state charges in connection with an alleged foiled plot to kidnap Michigan's Democratic governor, Gretchen Whitmer, authorities said Thursday.

Six were apprehended and charged with federal crimes, while another seven were picked up on state charges, officials in Michigan said.

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All are members of two militia groups "who were preparing to kidnap and possibly kill me," Whitmer said in an address from Lansing late Thursday afternoon following the arrests.

"When I put my hand on the Bible and took the oath of office 22 months ago, I knew this job would be hard," Whitmer continued. "But I'll be honest, I never could have imagined anything like this."

She thanked federal and state law enforcement for bringing criminal charges that "hopefully will lead to convictions, bringing these sick and depraved men to justice."

The arrests grew out of an FBI-led inquiry that began in March and focused on militia groups' discussing the "violent overthrow" of certain government and law enforcement officials.

Each of the federally charged men faces up to life in prison if convicted on all charges, authorities said.

Those six suspects facing federal charges in the alleged kidnapping plot used encrypted messaging to communicate about the plot, conducted coordinated surveillance on the governor's vacation home and detonated an improvised explosive device wrapped with shrapnel, officials said.

Based on court documents, the FBI was well aware of the activities of the six men charged and there does not seem to have been an imminent threat posed to Whitmer.

The documents identify the defendants as Adam Fox, Barry Croft, Ty Garbin, Kaleb Franks, Daniel Harris and Brandon Caserta.

At a meeting in July, allegedly attended and recorded by one of the informants, the men "discussed attacking a Michigan State Police facility, and in a separate conversation after the meeting, Garbin suggested shooting up the governor's vacation home," authorities said.

Then at a July 27 meeting, Fox and an informant discussed a possible kidnapping of Whitmer, with the defendant allegedly saying: "Snatch and grab, man. Grab the f---ing governor. Just grab the b---. Because at that point, we do that, dude – it's over."

"Fox said that after kidnapping the governor, the group would remove her to a secure location in Wisconsin for 'trial,'" according to the criminal complaint.

More than a dozen men charged in alleged plot to kidnap Michigan Gov. Whitmer ...

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The alleged conspirators used code words and encrypted platforms to shield their discussions from authorities, according to U.S. Attorney Andrew Birge for the Western District of Michigan.

They used terms such as "cake" or "cupcakes" for bombs, a "chemistry set" for components of an improvised explosive device and "baker" for an explosives manufacturer, according to the complaint.

"Fox and Croft in particular ... discussed detonating explosive devices to divert police from the area of the (governor's vacation) home," Birge said.

The federal investigation involved at least one member of a Michigan militia group who was involved in a Second Amendment rally at the Michigan Statehouse in June.

That member allegedly told the FBI that the group was considering killing police officers and agreed to become an informant.

But the involvement of that militia in the plot to kidnap the governor appears to be minimal as the group that was charged Thursday allegedly discussed keeping the broader militia out of their actual plan.

In a YouTube video from May, Caserta claimed in a 30-minute diatribe that "the enemy is government." He shot the video in front of an anarchist's flag and a map of Michigan.

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Caserta did not post on YouTube again until three weeks ago. In that video, Caserta does not speak, and simply loads and poses with a long gun off camera while wearing a shirt that says "F-- The Government."

The seven suspects facing state charges were identified as Paul Bellar, 21, Shawn Fix, 38, Eric Molitor, 36, Michael Null, 38, William Null, 38, Pete Musico, 42, and Joseph Morrison, 26.

They've all been charged with "providing material support for terrorist acts" and "carrying or possessing a firearm during the commission of a felony," according to state prosecutors.

The seven are linked to the Wolverine Watchmen militia, sought to "instigate a civil war" and had "engaged in planning and training for an operation to attack the Capitol building of Michigan and to kidnap government officials, including the governor of Michigan," Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel said.

A senior federal law enforcement official said authorities believe the "Wolverine Watchmen" ideology differs from a conventional militia group. The official says this group believes in the "boogaloo" movement, a term that refers to an impending civil war.

The boogaloo movement is also described as an anti-government movement that advocates for a violent uprising targeting liberal political opponents and law enforcement.

There have been a number of arrests involving people linked to the boogaloo or self-described as being in the movement, including in the killing of a federal security officer and a California sheriff's deputy in May and June.

For months, Whitmer has drawn the ire of militia groups and others opposed to her restrictions aimed at curbing the spread of the coronavirus.

Armed protesters took to the streets of Lansing, the state capital, during the early days of Whitmer's coronavirus lockdown orders. And President Donald Trump famously tweeted "LIBERATE MICHIGAN!" in April.

"The Governor of Michigan should give a little, and put out the fire," Trump tweeted May 1. "These are very good people, but they are angry. They want their lives back again, safely! See them, talk to them, make a deal."

U.S. Attorney Matthew Schneider, who heads federal prosecutions in the Eastern District of Michigan, acknowledged the fraught political climate in which these arrests were made.

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"All of us in Michigan can disagree about politics," he said. "But those disagreements should never, ever amount to violence."

Whitmer on Thursday said Trump was "complicit" through his rhetoric. She specifically linked the alleged actions of the suspects in her case to Trump's refusal, at a debate last week, to forcibly denounce white supremacist groups.

"Just last week the president of the United States stood before the American people and refused to condemn white supremacists and hate groups like these two Michigan militia groups," she said.

"'Stand back and stand by,' he told them ... hate groups heard the president's words not as a rebuke but as a rallying cry, as a call to action."

Trump on Thursday night attacked Whitmer, tweeting that the governor "has done a terrible job" and "locked down" her state, referring to coronavirus restrictions. "My Justice Department and Federal Law Enforcement" announced the foiling of a dangerous plot, he tweeted.

"Rather than say thank you, she calls me a White Supremacist," Trump wrote.

"I do not tolerate ANY extreme violence. Defending ALL Americans, even those who oppose and attack me, is what I will always do as your President!" he added in another tweet.

"Mr. President, I thought you weren't interested in a virtual debate?" Whitmer responded on Twitter, refering to Trump's stated refusal to participate in the next presidential debate after the Commission on Presidential Debates announced it would take place virtually "in order to protect the health and safety of all involved."

Trump is being treated for Covid-19.

Whitmer also encouraged Trump to watch her earlier speech, saying the president clearly had not done so. "If you're as tired of this divisive rhetoric as I am, there's something we can do about it," Whitmer said in another tweet, with a link related to voting.

Trump's rival, Joe Biden, criticized Trump's past remarks on Whitmer, saying the "words of a president matter."

"I just think it's got to stop. The president's got to realize the words he utter matter," the Democratic nominee said. "Why can't the president just say stop? Stop. Stop. Stop. And we will pursue you if you don't, so stop."

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"There is a throughline from President Trump's dog whistles and tolerance of hate, vengeance, and lawlessness to plots such as this one. He is giving oxygen to the bigotry and hate we see on the march in our country," Biden said in a statement. "We have to stop it."

Whitmer was elected as the state's 49th governor in 2018, defeating Republican Bill Schuette by nearly 10 percentage points.

The governor on Thursday continued to defend her actions during the pandemic.

Michigan residents are now testing positive at about a 3-percent rate, one of the lowest in the nation, according to a rolling count kept by Johns Hopkins University.

"It's not over yet, but here's what I know: We're Michiganders. We have grit. We have heart and we are tough as hell," Whitmer said.

An attorney for Harris said in an email that he would speak to Harris on Friday and had no comment "except to say that he, like all Americans, are presumed innocent until adjudicated otherwise." Emailed requests for comment for attorneys listed as representing the other five people federally charged were not immediately returned Thursday evening. 📰



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Trump plans big farewell ceremony as Pence does all the work

 theworldnews.net/au-news/trump-plans-big-farewell-ceremony-as-pence-does-all-the-work

By Eli Stokols

January 16, 2021 — 12:53pm

Washington: Frustrated by the loss of his Twitter account and forced to accept that he soon must leave office, President Donald Trump has effectively stopped doing his job, delegating daily responsibilities to Vice-President Mike Pence while hunkering down with a shrinking group of acquiescent aides and contemplating additional presidential pardons.

Trump had considered leaving the White House before his final day in office, even as early as this weekend, but he has opted to depart on the morning of President-elect Joe Biden's Inauguration Day, according to two people familiar with discussions who cautioned that, with Trump, plans are always subject to change.

President Donald Trump has asked for an elaborate send-off on the morning of Inauguration Day. Credit: Bloomberg



The President has requested a major send-off on the morning of inauguration. It would begin with a throng of cheering, flag-waving staffers and supporters to see him off on the White House's South Lawn, according to a person familiar with the planning, and continue to a more formal ceremony at Joint Base Andrews,

featuring a red carpet, military band, colour guard and 21-gun salute. He'll make his final Air Force One flight to Florida, to take up residence at Mar-a-Lago, his West Palm Beach, Florida, estate.

While Trump is still unwilling to formally concede to Biden directly, or to participate in the traditional show of the peaceful transfer of power by attending his successor's swearing-in, Pence called Vice President-elect Kamala Harris and "congratulated her and offered assistance ahead of inauguration," according to a person familiar with the call.

Pence, his relationship with Trump all but severed now because he refused to abet the President's efforts to overturn the election result, confirmed earlier in the week that he plans to attend Biden's inauguration. Trump, in one of his final tweets last week, made it clear he would not be going.

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Previously, Trump had floated the idea of leaving town early to avoid having to host Biden at the White House before the inauguration ceremonies at the Capitol, as has long been traditional - to provide the time-honoured photo of the outgoing and incoming presidents that gives visual definition to America's peaceful transfer of power. Though he now might stay until Inauguration Day, Trump still has no plans to meet with the President-elect.

Finally forced to acknowledge the "new administration" - if not his defeat - Trump has withdrawn almost completely from the duties of the job he fought so hard to keep. Aides and friends who have spoken with him this week say he's been sobered somewhat by warnings from his lawyers about his potential legal liability for inciting last week's deadly riot.

Since the moment the pro-Trump mob smashed through the Capitol doors and into the House and Senate chambers to stop Congress' count of the electoral votes, Pence has effectively taken over the responsibilities of the Presidency. With Trump mesmerised by live television coverage of his supporters fighting for him, it fell to Pence - who'd been presiding over the count, and had to be rushed into hiding - to authorise the deployment of the National Guard in the District of Columbia to quell the mob.

The President is confident the Senate will again fail to convict him, according to one person who speaks with him regularly, and last Wednesday focused his ire on the 10 House Republicans who voted in favour of impeachment, peppering aides with questions about who some of the lawmakers were and what he could do to exact revenge.

Trump has instructed aides to knock down reports of his frustration with Rudolph Giuliani, one of the few lawyers still willing to defend him. That afternoon, while Trump took farewell photos with staffers, Pence visited the headquarters of the Federal Emergency Management Agency for a briefing about security preparations for the inauguration ceremony.

After the meeting, Pence told reporters that the government would "ensure that we have a safe inauguration, that President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris are sworn in ... in a manner consistent with our history and traditions".

Vice President Mike Pence elbow bumps with a member of the National Guard as he speaks to troops outside the Capitol on Thursday evening. Credit: AP



On his way home, Pence stopped to greet some of the 20,000 National Guards posted outside the Capitol, thanking them for their service.

By Friday (Saturday AEDT), Trump still had not addressed the nation about reports from the FBI and other law

enforcement agencies that domestic terrorists, emboldened by the breach of the Capitol that left at least five dead, threatened not only the inauguration but all 50 state capitals.

My Pillow Chief Executive Mike Lindell, one of Trump's staunchest defenders in arguing that fraud cost the President reelection, was spotted around an otherwise quiet White House. As Lindell left the West Wing, a photographer captured an image showing that the notes he was holding referred to "martial law" and the "Insurrection Act".

Pence is also scheduled to deliver an address Saturday, local time, on the administration's "foreign policy accomplishments" at California's Naval Air Station Lemoore, and then to the 10th Mountain Division, in Fort Drum, New York.

Typically, outgoing Presidents take part in an official farewell ceremony with members of the armed forces. Trump, however, isn't bothering. The White House emailed a brief statement to reporters from Trump that could mark a final, 67-word valedictory.

"United States military troops in Afghanistan are at a 19-year low. Likewise, Iraq and Syria are also at the lowest point in many years," the President said. "I will always be committed to stopping the endless wars. It has been a great honour to rebuild our military and support our brave men and women in uniform. \$2.5 trillion invested, including in beautiful new equipment - all made in the USA."

Loading

Spending his final days almost entirely out of view, Trump is said to be readying a number of pardons and weighing whether to give one to himself. A self-pardon would be an act of untested and dubious constitutionality.

Those who have been in contact with the President are loath to predict whether he will go through with the brazen move. His calculations now must be weighed against the unsettled matter of his impeachment trial in the Senate; a conviction could bar him from ever seeking office again.

Los Angeles Times

Trump Biden 2020

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Extremists intensify calls for violence ahead of Inauguration Day

 [cnn.com/2021/01/08/us/online-extremism-inauguration-capitol-invs/index.html](https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/08/us/online-extremism-inauguration-capitol-invs/index.html)

January 9, 2021



(CNN)"Trump or war. Today. That simple."

"If you don't know how to shoot: You need to learn. NOW."

"we will storm the government buildings, kill cops, kill security guards, kill federal employees and agents, and demand a recount."

In the weeks, days and hours ahead of Wednesday's siege on the Capitol by President Donald Trump's zealous supporters, the warning signs were clear: online posts from hate groups and right-wing provocateurs agitating for civil war, the deaths of top lawmakers and attacks on law enforcement.

And now, as the dust settles and the country struggles to make sense of the violence that left five dead -- including an officer with the US Capitol Police -- experts warn that the calls for violence have only intensified ahead of Inauguration Day, when President-elect Joe Biden will be sworn in as commander in chief.

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"We are seeing ... chatter from these white supremacists, from these far-right extremists -- they feel emboldened in this moment," said Jonathan Greenblatt, the CEO of the Anti-Defamation League, which tracks and counters hate. "We fully expect that this violence could actually get worse before it gets better."

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Supporters of President Donald Trump break into the US Capitol on January 6, 2021 in Washington, DC.

Wednesday's chaos -- which erupted during a protest to dissuade Congress from certifying the results of Biden's unambiguous win -- showed a loss of control and sudden breaking of the bond that for four years had held Trump, his supporters and the Republican leadership together in lockstep.

After rioters charged through a barricade, assaulted police officers, shattered windows and stormed into the hallowed building that was torched by the invading British military in 1814, Trump made a tepid plea for them to go home -- although he repeated the falsehood that the election had been stolen. Republican leaders that night -- including Vice President Mike Pence and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell -- condemned the rioters in the strongest terms.

But it all appeared to have little effect on the radicalized right.

"Trump WILL be sworn in for a second term on January 20th!!," said a commenter on thedonald.win, a pro-Trump online forum, on Thursday, the day after the siege. "We must not let the communists win. Even if we have to burn DC to the ground. Tomorrow we take back DC and take back our country!!"

Security concerns ahead of Biden's inauguration

John Scott-Railton, a senior researcher at the Citizen Lab -- a group at the University of Toronto that monitors cybersecurity -- said he is "terribly concerned" about the inauguration. "While the broader public was aghast at what happened (Wednesday) at the Capitol, in certain corners of the sort of right wing conversation, what happened ... is viewed as a success," he told CNN.

In the days and weeks before the attack on the Capitol, signs that the protest could spiral into violence were in abundance.

Pro-Trump supporters storm the US Capitol following a rally with President Donald Trump on January 6.

Advance Democracy, Inc., a nonpartisan governance watchdog, highlighted red flags on social media. In the six days leading up to the event, for instance, there were 1,480 posts from QAnon-related accounts that referenced the event and contained terms of violence. On Parler, the report said, multiple posts referenced war, including statements like "the war begins today."

Ali Alexander, a political activist who has organized pro-Trump rallies, including one of the demonstrations that converged on the Capitol lawn Wednesday, accused the left of "trying to push us to war." In late December, Alexander told followers on Periscope that he and three GOP congressman -- Reps. Paul Gosar and Andy Biggs of Arizona and Rep. Mo Brooks of Alabama -- were planning something big.

Insurrection fueled by conspiracy groups, extremists and fringe movements

"It was to build momentum and pressure and then on the day change hearts and minds of Congress peoples who weren't yet decided or who saw everyone outside and said, 'I can't be

on the other side of that mob," Ali said, though he did not call for violence.

CNN reached out to the offices of all three congressmen, but only Biggs responded, with a statement from a spokesperson denying that he worked in any way with Alexander or any protestors.

"Congressman Biggs is not aware of hearing of or meeting Mr. Alexander at any point -- let alone working with him to organize some part of a planned protest," the spokesperson said. "He did not have any contact with protestors or rioters, nor did he ever encourage or foster the rally or protests. He was focused on his research and arguments to work within the confines of the law and established precedent to restore integrity to our elections, and to ensure that all Americans -- regardless of party affiliation -- can again have complete trust in our elections systems."

Watchdogs issued warnings ahead of Capitol siege

Several organizations that monitor extremism online issued warnings beforehand.

On January 4, the ADL published a lengthy [blog post](#) detailing threats of violence pertaining to the upcoming rally.

"In response to a user who wondered what happens if Congress ignores 'evidence' that President Trump won the election, a user wrote, 'Storm the capitol,'" the ADL's blog post says.

We offer several ways to reach our journalists securely.

The post went on to say while it wasn't aware of any credible threats violence planned for January 6, "if the past is any indication, the combination of an extremist presence at the rallies and the heated nature of the rhetoric suggests that violence is a possibility."

Also on January 4, a [risk analysis](#) by the security firm [G4S](#) stated that "current rhetoric suggests that there will be attendees who have violent intent, including armed militia groups" between January 6 and Inauguration Day.

The analysis cited numerous posts in recent weeks advocating violence on the right-wing site [thedonald.win](#), including one from late December that said, "We will have to achieve an actual tactical victory like storming and occupying Congress, to have the intended effect." Another said, "Patriots who STILL, AT THIS POINT IN TIME, are too cowardly to condone violence, are part of the problem."

Security experts said they were puzzled by the flat-footed response of law enforcement.

"The surprising part of it is why it was so much less aggressively policed," said Jonathan Wood, director of global risk analysis for London-based Control Risks. "Many security analysts were surprised by the lack of security, and by the lack of a robust security response."



Law enforcement caught by surprise

Federal and local law enforcement officials insist they had no idea the siege would happen. "There was no intelligence that suggested there would be a breach of the US Capitol," said DC Police Chief Robert Contee at a press conference Thursday. Steven A. Sund, who is resigning as chief of the US Capitol Police amid criticism over the apparent lack of preparedness to deal with the violent mob, said in a statement that the department had a robust plan to address "anticipated First Amendment activities."

Trump supporters clash with police as they storm the US Capitol on January 6, 2021. "But make no mistake -- these mass riots were not First Amendment activities; they were criminal riotous behavior," he said Thursday. As for security on Inauguration Day, the Secret Service issued a statement saying its plans for the event have been long in the making. "The inauguration of the President of the United States is a foundational element of our democracy," the agency said in a statement. "The safety and security of all those participating in the 59th Presidential Inauguration is of the utmost importance."

Law enforcement missed key signs ahead of riot on US Capitol

Robert Dodge, president of corporate risk services at G4S -- which issued the January 4 warning -- said in the months leading up to January 6, he saw "a lot of concerning and hostile rhetoric, which in our world we call a threat indicator." He added that the US Capitol building seemed to lack the proper fortification. "Did people approaching the Capitol see a proper level of physical barriers, of psychological barriers such as signs saying do not cross this line or you will be arrested?" he said. "You saw the glass windows being broken in. Why weren't some of those reinforced? It looks like there were some serious physical security challenges that got left to the Capitol police to mitigate."

Americans swept up in disinformation

Trump supporters try to break through a police barrier on January 6 at the Capitol. It isn't just the fringe elements who have gotten swept up in the current fervor. Mingling with the crowd of militia groups, white nationalists and high-profile conspiracy theorists on the Capitol lawn on Wednesday were other citizens who made the trip to challenge the certification. One was Texas resident and former mayoral candidate Jenny Cudd, whose campaign slogan was "Jenny for Mayor." After railing against what she described as voter fraud and a stolen election, she called for the death of those who have committed treason. "All we need is one public hanging, and then people will start acting right -- kind of like it would be useful if we still had the firing squad for the death penalty," Cudd said. "We shall see if there will be a public hanging in our future because it is still considered a valid form of death for treason." Cudd posted a video the night before the protests, where she talked about how the next day was going to be a "ruckus."

"I don't know what y'all think about a revolution, but I'm all for it," she said. "Nobody actually wants war, nobody wants bloodshed, but the government works for us and unfortunately it appears that they have forgotten that, quite a lot, so if a revolution is what it takes then so be it."



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Right-wing news network OANN posted a photo of Cudd on Twitter Wednesday afternoon showing her inside the Capitol, wearing a Trump flag around her as a cape. And that evening, she posted a video from her hotel, where she drank a beer and choked back tears as she took her followers through what had happened that day.

"When Pence betrayed us is when we decided to storm the Capitol," she said.

On Friday, Cudd told a local TV news outlet that she did nothing illegal.

"I pretty well walked up the steps and then there was an open door to the Capitol," she said.

"I personally did not tear down anything, destroy anything."

In response to a CNN request for comment Friday, Cudd texted a link to a video of herself repeating a version of the statement she made to the local outlet, saying, "cancel culture is in full force," and that she has "received several death threats, along with thousands of one-star reviews" for her business.

Joel Finkelstein, director of the Network Contagion Research Institute at Rutgers University, said conspiracies on the web have mushroomed from smaller, obscure sites like 8kun frequented by adherents of QAnon to more mainstream sites like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The result, he said, is that many of the people drawn to the protests Wednesday

were not extremists but rather ordinary Americans who did not understand that they had been lied to.

"These are our neighbors -- these are these are our neighbors and friends," he said. "They are people we all know. They were doing it on Facebook. They were doing it on Twitter. The threats to our democracy aren't coming just from 8chan. And they're not coming just from QAnon."

Some of the more disturbingly violent chatter on social media reflects what appears to be a growing hostility toward Republican leaders on the part of Trump supporters.

"I'm fairly certain seeing Pelosis and Mitch the Bitch swinging bodies from a rope will get more attention from sheeple who normally don't follow or care about politics," said a commenter Wednesday on thedonald.win.

And as law enforcement has begun to take a heavier hand with right-wing extremist groups -- Proud Boys leader Henry "Enrique" Tarrío was arrested by DC police ahead of the January 6 protest -- experts are noticing a growing antipathy for police in these circles, which have tended to consider themselves allies of men and women in uniform.

"That creates a pretty dangerous situation," said Southern Poverty Law Center senior research analyst Cassie Miller. "Because not only might there be violent encounters with leftists but it kind of increases the potential that there's going to be a violent confrontation with cops as well."

CNN's Yahya Abou-Ghazala, Nelli Black, Blake Ellis, Drew Griffin, Melanie Hicken and Benjamin Naughton contributed to this report.

Opinion: The far-right Trump insurgency just scored a huge propaganda coup

[washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/01/08/capitol-mob-far-right-trump-propaganda/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/01/08/capitol-mob-far-right-trump-propaganda/)

Opinion by Greg Sargent Columnist

January 8, 2021



As we seek to absorb the meaning of a violent insurrectionist mob storming the seat of government on President Trump's behalf, a kind of split screen is emerging.

On one screen, Trump is shriveling into a buffoonish, pathetic figure. His violent and destructive fantasies remain unchecked and dangerous, but news accounts are depicting an increasingly isolated figure whose advisers are deserting him, even as he rages ineffectually over his inability to reverse his election loss.

On the other screen, a different picture is emerging: For the loose network of groups and lone actors that carried out Trump's calls for violent disruption of the lawful conclusion of the election, it's becoming clear that the siege was a huge and momentous success, a propaganda coup that will energize them for a long time to come.

"Make no mistake: Wednesday was a watershed moment for the far-right extremist movement in this country," Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO of the Anti-Defamation League, told me.

“By all measurable effects, this was for far-right extremists one of the most successful attacks that they’ve ever launched,” Jared Holt, who tracks far-right groups for the Atlantic Council, added. “This will be lionized and propagandized on likely for the next decade.”

Trump came as close as he ever will to conceding defeat in a [video](#) released Thursday night. This came [after aides alarmed by his erratic behavior pressured him](#) to project calm as imagery of the chaos and destruction at the Capitol sank in across the country and around the world.

Trump also released the video [after growing convinced](#) that he could face legal trouble for inciting mob violence. So Trump appears somewhat chastened, if not by the violence and destruction he has wrought, then at least by his newfound legal vulnerability.

But we shouldn’t view this as a wind-down or a defeat for this loose movement of groups. That misconstrues both his relationship to this movement, such as it is, as well as its understanding of the real meaning of this moment.

The siege of the Capitol

It’s not easy to say who exactly stormed the Capitol. The ADL, tracking far-right live streams and scouring as many pictures and videos as possible, tells me the groups include extremist and alt-right organizations such as the [Proud Boys](#), the [Oath Keepers](#), the [Groyper Army](#) and the [Three Percenters](#), as well as various militia organizations.

Holt, who employs similar techniques and [tracked online planning of the siege for months](#), concurs, telling me that many of the participants were “militia movement groups” and “white supremacist and white nationalist groups” and known individual “conspiracy extremists.”

The connecting thread is the “Stop the Steal” movement, which brought all these groups together in various state capitals in the months-long struggle over the election results, Holt says.

The driving ideology here is more complicated than just, “Democrats stole the election.” As Holt notes, it’s bigger: The idea is that the “election was somehow compromised by nefarious forces,” including everyone from state officials in both parties to the courts and the media, all devoted to denying Trump a win.

Trump spoke directly to these impulses when he [told Fox News last fall](#) that Joe Biden was being controlled by “people in dark shadows.” And, as Holt told me, the notion of a compromised election has been “echoed at the highest levels of Republican power.”

But both Holt and the ADL agree that for these groups, what happened on Wednesday was a major, resounding victory.

A propaganda coup

As Holt notes, the Internet chat rooms and message boards and other platforms he tracks have been absolutely lighting up with such chatter. Their understanding of this moment is that they successfully placed the U.S. government under siege.

“These communities are discussing the attack as some sort of validation that it actually is possible for them to exert their power like this and achieve results,” Holt tells me. “They’re talking about this as the first stab in a greater revolution.”

Think of it like this: The attack on the Capitol captured the news cycle and riveted the country’s attention for a full day, projecting imagery of a country seeming to teeter on the edge of civil collapse.

They succeeded in disrupting the lawful conclusion of the presidential election, even if temporarily. This imagery (and remember that far-right groups have gone international) was broadcast all around the world.

Meanwhile, it’s now emerging that there were major security breakdowns. The FBI and Homeland Security didn’t do a threat assessment, calls to bring in the Maryland National Guard were rebuffed amid chaotic cross-signaling, and the Capitol Police allowed the rioters to capture the seat of government.

This, too, will likely be held up as a propaganda victory, another sign that the ruling elites and their decrepit security forces are collapsing under the weight of their own corruption.

“A lot of these extremist groups have explicitly discussed what the attack on the Capitol represents for their ability to overwhelm law enforcement,” Holt told me, adding that the security failures are seen as “validation of a broader narrative about the government buckling” that will awaken others to its “corruption.”

In a terrific segment, Rachel Maddow looked at Wednesday’s events and concluded that the loosely knit movement that showed up on Trump’s behalf will see all this as a “big success.”

“His supporters pulled off a violent, armed insurrection attacking the U.S. Capitol,” Maddow noted. “And then they all just walked away to tell their war stories about it.”

Or, as Greenblatt put it to me, these groups “are certainly not going anywhere.”

It’s hard to say what will happen to this movement once Trump exits the scene. But it’s hard to be optimistic.

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What I Saw at the White House on Trump's Last Day

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January 20, 2021



Anna Moneymaker / New York Times / Redux

At dawn this morning, workers loaded couches and tables into a moving truck parked outside the West Wing. Men wearing white coveralls and carrying roller brushes and paint cans walked across the north driveway. Inside the White House, pictures of the 45th president had been removed from the walls. Only the hooks remained, ready for a new set of portraits of the 46th.

A lone Donald Trump press deputy, Judd Deere, sat in his small office, writing a note on a piece of stationery to whoever would be taking over his desk in a few hours. Deere was attempting to describe what it's like to work in the building. When I looked in at noon, after the Trump presidency had officially ended, he was gone, his desk cleared. Even the magazine racks hanging on the wall had been emptied.

Trump also left a letter for his successor, perhaps the only traditional gesture he'd made in what has been an utterly graceless departure. Breaking one final norm, Trump refused to grant the simple courtesy of attending the inauguration ceremony and greeting the Bidens at the White House to show them their new home, as the Obamas had greeted him four years earlier. It's not that Trump is merely a sore loser; Trump was even a sore winner, weaving conspiracy theories about how he was robbed of the popular vote in 2016.

1/3

Read: Among the guardsmen

Trump left the White House with his wife, Melania, at about 8:20 a.m., refusing to take questions from the press. He walked to Marine One with an ominous send-off: "I just want to say goodbye, but hopefully it's not a long-term goodbye. We'll see each other again." Later, in a brief departure ceremony at Joint Base Andrews before flying to Florida, he gave a familiar and repetitive summation of what he views as his accomplishments in office. He of course neglected to mention the incident that will come to overshadow everything else that happened over the past four years: a lethal insurrection carried out by his supporters after a rally in which he'd again falsely claimed that the election was stolen. Trump may have no interest in revisiting the riot at the Capitol on January 6 that delayed the congressional certification of Joe Biden's victory and took five lives, but history won't forget it.

"This is the only president in American history who incited an insurrection against Congress that could have resulted in assassinations and hostage-taking and, conceivably, the cancellation of a free presidential election and the fracturing of a democracy," Michael Beschloss, the presidential historian, told me. "That's a fact, and it won't change in 50 years. It's very hard to think of a scenario under which someone might imagine some wonderful thing that Donald Trump did that will outshine that. He did, literally, the worst thing that an American president could ever do."

By early afternoon, the new Biden aides had arrived in the White House, fresh from the inaugural ceremony. There were predictable hiccups: The incoming deputy press secretary, Karine Jean-Pierre, came through the press room with a thick binder under her arm and discovered that the door to the West Wing staff section was locked. Jean-Pierre, it turns out, inherited the office that Deere had just vacated. I later asked her if she had gotten his note. She said she hadn't read it yet, but appreciated that he wrote it.

Adam Serwer: An incompetent authoritarian is still a catastrophe

Shortly after noon today, the main @POTUS, @WhiteHouse, and @VP Twitter accounts had changed hands. Twitter even created an account for Vice President Kamala Harris's husband, Douglas Emhoff, called @SecondGentleman. Unlike Trump, Biden is not a Twitter obsessive. A Biden transition adviser told me that the new president would not use social media as an "abusive, psychotic mechanism to display insecurity and grievances."

There was no mistaking the new administration for the old. Biden's press secretary, Jen Psaki, sat behind the desk in her office wearing a mask. Others walked through the offices wearing masks as well. During my visits to the White House last year, I observed staff members walking through hallways and talking to one another without masks. The explanation they'd give was that they were routinely tested for COVID-19. Still, the coronavirus sickened a slew of White House officials from Trump on down.

The Biden White House will limit the number of journalists allowed on the grounds at any one time to reduce the risk of infection during the pandemic. Reporters are required to get tested for the virus before coming into the building. By comparison, visitors to the Trump White House might have looked around and concluded that the pandemic didn't exist.

After Trump boarded Marine One for his departure from the White House, tree branches bent and swayed as the blades whipped the air. The helicopter rose slowly from the South Lawn and arced behind the Washington Monument. Had Trump looked out his passenger window, he might have seen the thousands of National Guard troops and razor-topped fences aimed at repelling his supporters should they attempt another insurrection. He might have glimpsed the lights placed near the Lincoln Memorial honoring those who have died from COVID-19, even as he made his empty assurances that the nation had "rounded the turn."

A small group of reporters and TV camera people gathered outside the White House on the north driveway watched quietly. A voice behind me eventually piped up: "Good riddance."

