

Aide to Republican Congressman Matt Gaetz cheered on fascist mob on January 6

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A congressional aide to Florida Republican Representative Matt Gaetz, a Trump acolyte, posted a video in support of the fascist mob as it was storming the Capitol during the January 6 coup attempt, according to archived media posts uncovered by the website *Gizmodo*.

“From the top of the Capitol office buildings, WE HEAR YOU LOUD AND CLEAR! #StopTheSteal,” wrote Joel Valdez on the right-wing social media network Parler.

Valdez attached a five-second video to the post showing the crowd pushing its way toward the Capitol. The video was taken at roughly 1:14 p.m., when Trump supporters, including neo-Nazis, Proud Boys, III Percenters and Oath Keepers, were attempting to overrun an undermanned Capitol Police force.

According to his LinkedIn account, Valdez has been a “press assistant” for Gaetz for just over a year. Prior to that he interned for Trump’s White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows. Valdez also claims on his profile to have worked for two months, February through March 2020, as a “war room analyst” for “Donald J. Trump for President, Inc.—Full time.”

Parler was taken offline within days of the fascist assault by Amazon, which previously hosted the website. A hacker who goes by the Twitter handle @donk_enby was able to exploit a flaw in Parler’s code to download thousands of videos and posts from Parler users, including incriminating evidence of these individuals breaking into the Capitol, which have since been uploaded onto the internet.

Gaetz has been a political attack dog for Trump since his election to the House in 2016. Indicative of the general rightward shift of the ruling class and the Republican Party toward fascism, Gaetz has peddled anti-Semitic conspiracy theories, claiming that

Holocaust survivor George Soros funds South American “migrant caravans.”

He has appeared on the fascistic Alex Jones program. For the 2018 State of Union address, he invited Holocaust denier and founder of far-right “news” website GotNews, Charles “Chuck” Johnson, to attend as his guest, personally giving him a ticket in his congressional office. Johnson has previously fundraised for the Nazi website *Daily Stormer*.

In another development, Mike Dunn, the 20-year-old commander of the Virginia-based Boogaloo group “Last Sons,” told ProPublica that he and members of his group were in D.C. on January 6 and “may” have breached the Capitol.

“It was a chance to mess with the federal government again,” Dunn said. Interviewed a few days after the assault, he said he would be willing to “die in the streets” and felt that “We’re looking at the possibility—stronger than any time since, say the 1860’s—of armed insurrection.”

Dunn said that members of his group were calling to avenge Air Force and Air National Guard veteran Ashli Babbitt, a QAnon adherent who was shot dead by an unidentified Capitol Police officer as she was attempting to break into the House Speaker’s lobby. Babbitt spent six years in the Air Guard with a unit, colloquially known as the “Capital Guardians,” tasked with defending the Washington D.C. region.

In the last 18 months, ProPublica and FRONTLINE have identified “more than 20 Boogaloo Bois or sympathizers who’ve served in the armed forces.” ProPublica notes that 13 of those identified “have been arrested on charges ranging from the possession of illegal automatic weapons to the manufacture of explosives to murder.”

Ongoing revelations regarding the January 6 coup

attempt add to the mountain of evidence that the Trump White House was the political nerve center of the plot to overturn the results of the 2020 election and with it democratic forms of rule in America. A sprawling article in the *New York Times* on Monday entitled, “77 Days: Trump’s Campaign to Subvert the Election,” details the increasingly desperate and unconstitutional measures in which Trump and substantial sections of the Republican Party engaged.

One of the more startling revelations in the article involves the blatantly unconstitutional attempt led by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton to suppress some 20 million votes in the “battleground” states of Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, all of which were won by Biden.

This took the form of a baseless lawsuit filed December 7 with the US Supreme Court on behalf of the state of Texas, claiming massive voting fraud in these states and calling on the court to overturn Biden’s victories. Doing so would have taken away Biden’s margin of victory in electoral votes and handed the election to Trump.

The suit was joined by the Republican Attorneys General Association and 126 House Republicans, including House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy.

The suit specifically called on the high court to protect the “rights” of Texas and other states by allowing state legislatures to reject the electors determined by the popular vote and instead name their own slates of electors. In this, the Republican Party was urging the Supreme Court to establish as a matter of law the totally undemocratic argument advanced by Justice Antonin Scalia in the 2000 case *Bush v. Gore*. Scalia asserted that the electorate had no constitutional right to choose the US president.

In that infamous case, the Supreme Court ruled, in a 5-4 party line decision, that Florida had to stop a vote recount that would have given the state’s electoral votes, and hence the presidency, to the Democratic candidate, Al Gore, the winner of the national popular vote.

The Texas complaint was unceremoniously tossed out by the Supreme Court, which ruled that the plaintiffs had no legal standing.

The *Times* article reveals that the legal complaint was drafted not by Paxton but by Lawrence Joseph, who had previously worked on Trump’s efforts to prevent

federal courts from ordering him to release his tax returns. This bit of information further demonstrates the pivotal role of the Trump White House in the conspiracy to overturn the election and establish a dictatorship, which included the failed coup of January 6.



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