

Federal indictments allege coordinated planning by Proud Boys in January 6 coup attempt

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Federal indictments released this past week allege that members of the far-right Proud Boys led and coordinated the assault on the Capitol during the January 6 coup attempt. As of this writing, eight Proud Boys have been charged for their role in the attack, several of whom face serious charges, including obstructing an official proceeding of Congress.

Urged on by Donald Trump, hundreds of his fascistic followers, spearheaded by far-right militia groups such as the Proud Boys, the III Percenters and the Oath Keepers, broke into the Capitol in an attempt to prevent Congress from officially certifying the results of the 2020 presidential election. The clear intent was to take elected officials hostage, and perhaps execute some, in a bid to overturn the election and enable Trump to hold on to power.

Among the Proud Boys facing major charges is the so-called “sergeant of arms” of the Seattle Proud Boys chapter, Ethan Nordean, otherwise known as “Rufio Panman.” In addition to obstructing an official proceeding, Nordean is charged with aiding and abetting, violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds. He faces up to 20 years in prison if convicted.

Demonstrating the advanced planning that went into the assault, federal agents cited a December 27 Parler post in which Nordean solicited donations to purchase equipment ahead of the planned siege of the Capitol.

“Anyone looking to help us with safety/protective gear, or communications equipment, it would be much appreciated, things have gotten more dangerous for us this past year, anything helps,” Nordean wrote, while linking to a fundraiser called “Protective gear and communications by Rufio Panman.”

Federal authorities allege that leading up to January 6, Nordean posted videos promoting the event and exhorting his followers to “bring back that original spirit of 1776 of what really established the character of what America is,” in response to what he called, echoing Trump, “blatant, rampant voter fraud.”

Prosecutors allege that in the same video, Nordean said: “Democracy is dead? Well, then no peace for you. No democracy, no peace.” In a separate video taken by another Proud Boy member in DC on January 6, Nordean can be seen with a bullhorn directing dozens of Proud Boys to advance toward the Capitol.

Several photos and videos taken on January 6 show Proud Boy leaders, including the previously charged Joe Biggs, with radio equipment and ear pieces. After being charged last month with obstructing an official proceeding of Congress, illegal entry and disorderly conduct on restricted Capitol grounds, Biggs was released to his home in Florida. In an interview with an FBI agent, Biggs denied “having any knowledge of any pre-planning of storming the Capitol.” He added that “the doors of the Capitol were wide open.”

Last year, Biggs was photographed with South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham at the Trump hotel in Washington D.C.

The Proud Boys was formed in 2016 in the US and boasts chapters in Canada and Europe. During the nationally televised presidential debate with Joe Biden in September, Trump refused to commit to a peaceful transition of power should he have lost, and would not disavow the Proud Boys. Instead he issued a military-style command for the group to “stand back and stand by.”

On Wednesday, the same day that several US

indictments were brought forward, the Canadian government officially designated the Proud Boys as a “terrorist entity,” the first government to do so. In announcing the designation, Canadian Public Safety Minister Bill Blair noted that the group played a “pivotal role in the insurrection in the US Capitol.”

Other Proud Boys charged this week include Nicholas DeCarlo of Burleson, Texas and Nicholas R. Ochs of Honolulu, Hawaii. An indictment alleges that the pair conspired to plan, raise money and travel to D.C. to disrupt Congress and deface the Capitol.

Ochs is the founding member of the Proud Boys Hawaii Chapter. In 2020, he ran as a Republican for the Hawaii state legislature. DeCarlo and Ochs are both members of a live-streaming group called Murder the Media (MT Media).

The pair bragged about their criminal exploits in a live-streamed Facebook interview posted after the January 6 assault. They displayed photos they took of themselves after having defaced a door in the Capitol with the phrase “murder the media.”

In a since-removed Facebook video taken on January 5 from a hotel in Alexandria, Virginia, where DeCarlo and Ochs were staying, DeCarlo declared, “We got a lot of good sh*t planned for tomorrow. There are so many f*cking people here.”

In an interview given to another MT Media host after the Capitol had been retaken by the police, DeCarlo candidly admitted, “Me and Nick Ochs went there specifically to stop the steal. It happened.”

Like Nordean, Ochs and DeCarlo sought donations to fund their trip. The two raised money on the fundraising site GiveSendGo, the self-proclaimed “#1 Free Christian Crowdfunding Site.” In his fundraising appeal, Ochs wrote that he and DiCarlo were “going to DC because the president asked and said it was gonna be ‘wild’ and that people should wear body cameras.”

Republican operative Ali Alexander, who helped organize #StopTheSteal rallies around the country and in Washington DC, working with Arizona Republican Representatives Andy Biggs and Paul Gosar, also maintains a GiveSendGo account that he used to fundraise for the event.

The connections between fascist groups and the Trump administration run deep. Trump political crony Roger Stone, who was videotaped the morning of January 6 outside a hotel in D.C. flanked by Oath

Keeper militia members, was an early proponent of the Ochs’ election campaign.

“I know that he’ll fight to protect the taxpayers and to run a clean, efficient government,” Stone said of Ochs. “He’s a man you can count on.”

An Associated Press report from earlier this week found that almost 30 of the 181 federal cases pending against those involved in the siege were tied to far-right or fascist groups. These include: Seven defendants linked to QAnon, four Oath Keepers, four III Percenters, eight Proud Boys and two leaders of “Super Happy Fun America,” which is affiliated with the neo-Nazi NSC-131 group.



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