

Prosecutors announce new charges against Proud Boys in connection with January 6 assault on US Capitol

Jacob Crosse
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On February 11, US prosecutors unsealed charges against five Proud Boys in connection with the January 6 assault on the Capitol. Those named were: William Chrestman, Christopher Kuehne, Louis Enrique Colon of Kansas City, and siblings Felicia and Cory Konold of Tucson, Arizona.

All five were charged with conspiring to obstruct, influence or impede an official proceeding before Congress, while Chrestman was also charged with threatening and assaulting a federal law enforcement officer. In the charging documents, the FBI alleges that the group, which typically wears black and yellow polos, instead wore all black clothing, body armor and helmets, and used fluorescent orange tape to identify themselves while coordinating the assault.

The FBI charges that the group “appeared to gesture and communicate to one another” as they breached the police lines outside the Capitol. As in previous charging documents the federal government has filed against the fascistic Proud Boys, prosecutors allege that the Trump-aligned militia led the charge on the Capitol, using flag poles, police riot shields, bear mace and ax handles to beat back police and breach the building.

The 28-page affidavit establishes that Chrestman and Felicia Konold were coordinating and marching with fellow Proud Boy organizers Joseph Biggs and Ethan Nordean outside the Capitol. Biggs and Nordean were both previously charged with conspiracy. Photos in the affidavit also show Proud Boys Nicholas Ochs and Nicholas DeCarlo filming the criminal exploits of their comrades.

Over the weekend, the *New York Times*, based on a visual investigation of social media and press photos, reported that Trump political crony and Republican

Party operative Roger Stone, who previously endorsed Ochs in a political campaign, was with six Oath Keeper militia members on the morning of January 6. The six Oath Keepers went on to breach the Capitol.

Previously released video footage linked Stone to Proud Boy leaders Nordean and Enrique Tarrío. Another Proud Boys member, Dominic “Spaz” Pezzola, a former Marine, is facing multiple charges, including conspiracy, for breaking into the Capitol.

In documents filed February 15 in Pezzola’s case, prosecutors requested that the court issue a protective order in order to “expedite the flow of discovery material between the parties and adequately protect personal identity information entitled to be kept confidential.”

In the wake of the Senate impeachment trial debacle and continuing revelations of ties between the far-right groups that led the insurrection and Trump’s closest allies, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced that she would push for the creation of a 9/11 Commission-like bipartisan body to investigate the attempted coup.

Such a body, if established, would carry out a coverup of the vast scale of the political conspiracy headed by Trump that was aimed at overturning the results of the 2020 election and installing Trump as a presidential dictator, just as the 9/11 Commission left unanswered the role of the FBI, CIA and other state bodies in facilitating the terror attacks on New York City and Washington D.C.

The Democrats hope as well that the call for such a commission will provide a measure of political cover for their abject refusal to conduct the impeachment and Senate trial of Trump in a manner that would expose the criminal role of the bulk of the Republican Party

and its leadership in the coup plot, as well as forces within the military, the police and the intelligence agencies that left the Capitol unprotected and blocked any timely dispatch of National Guard troops. As a result, the mob came within seconds of taking hostages and executing lawmakers in order to block the certification of Joe Biden as president and allow Trump to declare a state of emergency.

The entire political establishment has been discredited by the Senate acquittal of Trump, while the former president and his fascistic allies in and out of the Republican Party have been emboldened. The Democrats, in particular, have been discredited by their refusal even to call witnesses in the Senate trial, thereby covering up the complicity of their “Republican colleagues.”

On Sunday, Chris Coons, Democratic senator from Biden’s home state of Delaware, backed the call for an “independent” commission on ABC News’ “This Week” program. South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham, one of 43 Republicans who voted to acquit Trump, endorsed the idea on the “Fox News Sunday” program.

On Tuesday, the chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, Mississippi Representative Bennie Thompson, joined by the NAACP, filed a federal lawsuit accusing Trump, his attorney Rudy Guiliani, the Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers of illegally conspiring to intimidate and block Congress’s certification of the 2020 election.

Thompson’s lawsuit alleges that Trump and Giuliani’s lying claims of a stolen election, which culminated in the assault on the Capitol, violated the Ku Klux Klan Act. The 1871 law was enacted during Reconstruction to prevent the KKK from using violence to intimidate and prevent duly elected representatives from taking office.

In a press release announcing the suit, the NAACP wrote: “The insurrection was the result of a carefully orchestrated plan by Trump, Giuliani and extremist groups like the Oath Keepers and Proud Boys, all of whom shared a common goal of employing intimidation, harassment and threats to stop the certification of the Electoral College.

“They succeeded in their plan. After witnessing Capitol police barricading the doors of the House chamber with furniture, Congressman Thompson and

fellow lawmakers donned gas masks and were rushed into the Longworth House Office Building where they sheltered with more than 200 other representatives, staffers and family members.”



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