

US government charges four Proud Boys with conspiracy in January 6 assault on Capitol

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On Friday, the US government unsealed a new indictment alleging that previously charged Proud Boy leaders Ethan Nordean, 30, and Joseph Biggs, 37, conspired with newly indicted fellow Proud Boys Zachary Rehl, 35, of Philadelphia and Charles Donohoe, 33, of Kenersville, North Carolina to obstruct congressional certification of Joe Biden's victory by overrunning the US Capitol on January 6.

The unsealing of the indictment was preceded on Thursday by the FBI's release of 10 videos of what it describes as the most violent, but still unidentified, participants in the siege of the Capitol. The videos show Trump supporters beating police with wooden clubs and police riot shields and dousing them with chemical agents as they seek to overrun the Capitol.

Also on Thursday, the FBI unsealed assault with a deadly weapon charges against 55-year-old Virginia man, Jeffery McKellop. McKellop, who was seen wearing a ballistic vest and helmet during the siege, is a former Army Special Forces soldier and a military contractor who, according to the *Washington Post*, has been "in an overseas combat zone as recently as 2018." At a Thursday court appearance, McKellop did not enter a plea and will remain in custody pending a detention hearing on Monday.

In the new indictment against Nordean, Biggs, Rehl and Donohoe, the government alleges that the four used online crowdfunding sites to raise money in order to purchase protective military and encrypted communication equipment, which was used to coordinate their attack on the Capitol. The indictment charges Nordean, Biggs, Rehl and Donohoe each with six counts, including obstruction of an official proceeding, obstruction of law enforcement, destruction of government property and conspiracy.

According to the government, Nordean, Rehl and Donohoe are all presidents of their local Proud Boys chapters, while Biggs is the lead Proud Boy organizer in Florida. All of them, except Nordean, are US military veterans.

The affidavit contains several messages allegedly sent amongst the members of the group as they were planning

their attack. The government alleges that after the arrest of Proud Boys Chairman and "prolific" FBI informant Henry "Enrique" Tarrio on January 4, Donohoe thought that the group's communications channel was compromised. He created a new channel dubbed "New MOSD," which included Proud Boys members Nordean, Biggs, Rehl, Donohoe and additional unnamed members to continue planning their attack.

"Listen to me real good!", wrote Donohoe on the new channel the evening of Tarrio's arrest. "Everything is compromised and we can be looking at Gang charges. Stop everything immediately! This comes from the top!"

An unnamed co-conspirator posted on the channel afterwards: "We had originally planned on breaking the guys into teams. Let's start divvying them up and getting baofeng (Chinese encrypted radio) channels picked up."

On January 5, a new encrypted messaging channel titled "Boots on the Ground" was created for Proud Boys members in Washington D.C. The indictment alleges that over 60 Proud Boys participated in the Boots on the Ground channel, including Nordean, Biggs, Rehl, Donohoe and the unnamed co-conspirator.

Biggs, whom members of the group commonly referred to as "Sgt. Biggs," posted a message in the same chat on January 5 that read: "We are trying to avoid getting into any sh*t tonight. Tomorrow's the day." This was followed by, "I'm here with Rufio (Nordean) and a good group." Next came a message from Biggs, saying that he was "Just trying to get our numbers. So we can plan accordingly for tonight and go over tomorrow's plan."

The government alleges that Rehl arrived in DC the evening of January 5 and communicated to the group that he had brought several radios that needed to be programmed for the attack the following day. At 9:09 p.m., the affidavit alleges, the unnamed co-conspirator broadcast a message in the New MOSD and Boots on the Ground chats that read: "Stand by for the shared baofeng channel and shared zello channel, no Colors, be decentralized and use good judgement until further orders."

The person added, “Rufio (Nordean) is in charge, cops are the primary threat, don’t get caught by them or BLM, don’t get drunk until off the street.”

Previous charging documents have stated that Nordean was nominated by the group to have “war powers” and take leadership of the Proud Boys activities on January 6.

At 9:17 p.m. on January 5, Biggs posted in the New MOSD chat, “We just had a meeting [with] a lot of guys. Info should be coming out,” followed by “Just spoke with [Tarrío].” Three minutes later, Biggs posted, “We have a plan. I’m with rufio,” to which Donohue inquired, “What’s the plan so I can pass it to the MOSD guys?”

Biggs responded, “I gave [Tarrío] a plan. The one I told the guys and he said he had one.”

The following morning, January 6, Donohoe posted in the New MOSD chat, “are we gonna do a commanders (sic) briefing before the 10 am?” At 10 a.m., Nordean, Biggs, Rehl and Donohoe, along with about 100 other Proud Boys, all wearing orange knit caps, met at the Washington Monument to finalize their plans.

At 12:53 p.m., seven minutes before Congress was set to begin the Electoral College certification process, and as Trump was still speaking at the Ellipse in front of the White House, Nordean, Biggs, Rehl and Donohoe, all charged towards the Capitol and began overrunning metal barricades and pushing back against the police. The affidavit alleges the group exchanged messages throughout the assault, and alleges that Nordean, Biggs and Rehl entered the capitol.

The government alleges that following the mob’s withdrawal from the Capitol, the group celebrated in public and private messages to one another, with Rehl posting on social media that he was “proud as f*ck” about “what we accomplished yesterday, but we need to start planning and we are starting planning, for a Biden presidency?”

Donohoe and Rehl were both arrested on Wednesday and have yet to enter a plea. Rehl, whose parents and grandfather were all Philadelphia police officers, according to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, was a non-commissioned officer in the Marine Corps from October 2008 to May 2012.

The fascist Proud Boys, whom former President Trump infamously told to “stand back and stand by” during last September’s presidential debate with Biden, enjoy close relations with Republican politicians and law enforcement agencies across the country.

During a June event last year, the Philadelphia Proud Boys posted photos of themselves wearing their colors while inside a police station, as they were delivering snacks to the cops.

The next month, members of the Proud Boys were welcomed at a “members-only” “Back the Blue” party at the Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police Lodge #5

headquarters. At that event, then-Vice President Mike Pence gave an in-person speech.

After outrage grew within the community over Proud Boys being welcomed by the cops, FOP Lodge #5 President John McNesby tried to claim that he was unaware of the Proud Boys’ presence, and that had the police been aware, they “would have immediately escorted them off our property.”

Quoted at the time by WPVI, Rehl retorted, “We always go to conservative rallies, Trump rallies and we see an event going on for the police and we wanted to go there and show our support for them.”

Testifying to the deep ties between the fascist group and the police, the *Daily Beast* in a recent article reported that a review of Donohoe’s social media accounts revealed that his profile picture on the encrypted messaging app Telegram featured him wearing the distinctive black and yellow Proud Boys polo while shaking hands with current DC Metropolitan Police officer Collin Coles. Coles, like Donohoe, is a former Marine and the two are friends.

The *Roanoke Times* reported that Donohoe served in the Marine Corps and appeared on an online show called “Leatherneck Reconnect” in February 2019. In the interview, Donohoe claims that he has a “top secret” clearance and that the Marine Corps is in his blood. Later on, he says: “I love America and I’m always about America no matter what the (expletive) America is about. Even if a bunch of traitors take over. Because then I can kill the traitors.”

The *Daily Beast* reported that the photo of Donohoe and Coles was taken during a July 2019 Proud Boys rally in DC. In a different post, Donohoe tagged Coles and the pair proceeded to talk about the 2019 rally. “You’ll see me, I’m with the proud boys,” Donohoe told Coles. “Don’t publicly announce this please antifa is trying to ruin our weekend,” he added.

“Of course not!” the DC cop wrote back. “I’ll keep an eye out.”



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