

PBS documentary, CBS “60 Minutes” segment add to evidence of far-reaching state complicity in January 6 coup attempt

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Last week, the PBS “Frontline” program aired a 90-minute documentary (*American Insurgency*) arguing on the basis of well-known facts that the January 6 storming of the U.S. Capitol by a fascistic mob, with the encouragement and support of Donald Trump, was the culmination of a protracted effort spearheaded by the then-president to create a “broad fascist movement” in the US.

This was followed Sunday by a CBS “60 Minutes” segment bringing together documentary evidence showing that months of extensive planning, coordination and organization went into the far-right insurrection. Previously unreleased audio of communications between far-right militia leaders made during the actual siege proves their central role in planning and executing the coup attempt and provides additional damning evidence of the complicity of police, intelligence and military officials in a plot to overturn the 2020 election and maintain the loser, Trump, in power as de facto dictator.

The “60 Minutes” segment focuses on the Oath Keepers militia group, which played an instrumental role in the storming of the Capitol and has close ties to the Republican Party and state agencies, including the police and military.

In an interview clip that has been viewed over 1.4 million times on social media as of this writing, the vice president of the Arizona chapter of the Oath Keepers, Jim Arroyo, said, “Our guys are very experienced. We have active-duty law enforcement in our organization that are helping to train us. We can blend in with our law enforcement and, in fact, in a lot of cases our training is much more advanced because of our military backgrounds.”

The CBS segment also shows Arroyo discussing civil war during an Oath Keepers meeting. “It’s not a joke,” he says. “This can happen and we need to be ready for it.”

The production also spotlights the role of the group’s founder, Stewart Rhodes, a Yale-educated lawyer and former Army paratrooper. It features open-channel radio communications previously reported in court documents and on the *World Socialist Web Site* but until Sunday never heard by the public.

While not explicitly naming Rhodes, the court documents and the CBS segment strongly imply that Rhodes directed the Oath Keepers during the siege of the Capitol. Previous photos and video evidence have confirmed his presence on Capitol grounds, as Oath Keepers members moved in military-style “stack” formation up the Capitol steps and into the building.

On January 6, as the attack was under way, WNYC radio reporter Michael Loewinger, who had been monitoring far-right activity online leading up to the attack, began recording the open channel conversations on the Zello radio app. Loewinger recorded conversations held on a “Stop the Steal” channel that included indicted Ohio militia leader and Army veteran Jessica Watkins and other Oath Keepers as they were breaking into the Capitol.

In one recording, Watkins is heard saying, “We have a good group. We’ve got about 30, 40 of us. We sticking together and sticking to the plan.” Watkins follows up with a location update: “We’re moving on the Capitol now. I’ll give you a boots-on-the-ground update here in a few.”

An unidentified male voice is then heard over the same channel directing the group: “You are executing citizens’ arrest!”

In previous court documents, this same phrase was cited by federal prosecutors to justify keeping Oath Keeper leader and former Navy Commander Thomas Caldwell in pretrial detention.

As previously noted by the *World Socialist* the phrase “citizens’ arrest” is, according to federal prosecutors, the same language used by members of the far-right Wolverine Watchmen militia group in connection with their planned kidnapping and likely murder of Democratic Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer. The FBI publicly revealed the plot last October.

The connection between the plot against Whitmer and the attack on the Capitol three months later is further established in the PBS documentary, which aired on April 13. The documentary confirms the link through interviews with members of the Wolverine Watchmen and the Boogaloo Bois.

In one interview, reporter A.C. Thompson speaks with Wolverine Watchmen militia member Barry Croft, one those indicted in connection with the plot against Whitmer. PBS has confirmed that six members of the Wolverine Watchmen participated in the April 30 storming of the state Capitol in Lansing, Michigan.

The April 30 rally, organized to oppose Whitmer’s implementation of minimal anti-pandemic public health measures, was hailed by Trump and financed by significant sections of the financial oligarchy. FBI documents filed last year assert that the rally served as the first public assemblage of militia members who would later plan the kidnapping of Whitmer. As the WSWS warned at the time, the Michigan plot, downplayed by the Democratic Party and the mainstream media, had to be seen as part of a broader conspiracy, led by the Trump White House, to overturn a possible Biden victory and what remains of democratic procedures in the US. It is now clear that the Michigan plot was indeed a dry run for the attack on the Capitol on January 6.

Croft, according to the FBI, is also a leader in the III Percenters, another fascist militia group. Members of the III Percenters have been indicted for their role on January 6. Like the Oath Keepers and Proud Bois, the III Percenters militia group has extensive ties to sitting Republican members of Congress. In the PBS documentary, Croft speaks to Thompson from prison and reveals that he had been in contact with the leader of a Virginia chapter of Boogaloo Bois, Mike Dunn, prior to his arrest.

Despite being only 20, Dunn has been a fixture at far-right rallies in Virginia, participating in the January 20, 2020 “Lobby Day” demonstration in which over 10,000 descended on the Virginia Capitol armed with assault rifles. Dunn was joined by hundreds of Oathkeepers, III Percenters and Boogaloo Bois, and the event was

promoted by Trump on Twitter.

In previous interviews, Dunn has threatened violence against elected officials and acknowledged that members of his group helped attack the US Capitol. The FBI has revealed that there were plots to kidnap and kill other Democratic governors besides Whitmer, including Virginia Governor Ralph Northam.

The heads of the various intelligence, military and police agencies charged with protecting Congress and the Capitol, such as FBI Director Christopher Wray, former Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy, and former D.C. Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund, have claimed that “no intelligence” indicated an attack on Congress was likely on January 6. These claims, lacking any credibility on their face, have since been thoroughly exposed as outright lies.

Both documentaries bring together facts that have for the most part been reported and analyzed in dozens of articles and statements posted by the WSWS. They present in a coherent manner important information. But they fail to directly draw the connection between what they themselves reveal and other evidence pointing irrefutably to the complicity of top officials in the Pentagon and within the police and intelligence agencies in the conspiracy led by the Trump White House. Just in the past two weeks, government reports have documented the critical role played by top police and military officials in facilitating the attack on the Capitol.

The *World Socialist Web Site* has reported extensively on both the internal Pentagon timeline of January 6 and the D.C. Capitol Police Inspector General’s report on the events of that fateful day. The Pentagon report makes it clear that top civilian Pentagon officials, appointed by Trump, delayed giving authorization for the D.C. National Guard commander to send troops under his command to protect Congress from the fascistic mob. The second report cites facts proving that the chief of the D.C. Capitol Police had ample evidence of a looming violent attack on the U.S. Capitol. But instead of beefing up his force to guard Congress, he issued orders to prevent those under his command from resisting being overrun by the fascist mob unleashed by Trump.



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