Fascist militia members indicted in plot to blow up Sacramento, California Democratic Party headquarters

Jacob Crosse
19 July 2021

On July 7, a federal grand jury indicted two California men, Ian Benjamin Rogers, 45, of Napa and Jarrod Copeland, 37, of Vallejo, on multiple charges relating to a plot to blow up the Democratic Party headquarters in Sacramento.

Both men are ardent supporters of Donald Trump. Copeland's membership in the III Percenters fascist militia group has been confirmed. Rogers has a III Percenters decal on his personal vehicle.

The two men are facing charges of conspiracy to destroy a building, possession of destructive devices, possession of multiple illegal weapons and obstruction of justice. Rogers has been in state custody since January 15, while Copeland was arrested last week.

A previous indictment against Rogers, which included five counts of possessing a destructive device with intent to injure, eight counts of illegally possessing an assault weapon and one count of silencer possession, revealed that when police executed search warrants on his business and residence they found between 45 and 50 firearms and other weapons. These included numerous assault rifles, three machine guns, five fully assembled pipe bombs and approximately 15,000 rounds of ammunition.

In addition to firearms, the government claims to have seized from Rogers materials to make additional pipe bombs, including black powder, pipes and end caps. The indictment also alleges that police found literature such as "The Anarchist Cookbook," the "US Army Improvised Munitions Handbook" and "Homemade C-4: A Recipe for Survival."

Rogers was also in possession of a Nazi flag. Roger's lawyer claims the flag belonged to Rogers' grandfather.

The new indictment, which includes charges against Copeland, alleges that the two men began planning their attack on November 25, 2020. However, a former employee of Rogers' auto repair shop, identified in court documents as "Mr. X," warned the FBI nearly two months prior, on September 22, that Rogers was in possession of high-powered and possibly illegal weaponry.

When the FBI refused to investigate, "Mr. X" informed the Napa County Sheriff's Office of the weapons Rogers had in his possession, but they also refused to immediately act.

It appears that the police and FBI began seriously investigating the two men only after Trump's failed coup of January 6, 2021. According to the affidavit, which quotes text messages allegedly sent between the pair, the plan was to blow up the headquarters building on the day of Joe Biden's inauguration, January 20.

Before settling on the California Democratic Party headquarters as the target, the fascists discussed other possibilities, including billionaire Holocaust survivor George Soros, a frequent target of anti-Semitic threats and smears.

"We need to hit the enemy in the mouth," Rogers allegedly texted Copeland on November 25. "Yes, so we punch [George] [S]oros," replied Copeland. "I think right now we attack [D]emocrats," responded Rogers, who suggested the pair use Molotov cocktails and gasoline.

The government alleges that over the ensuing 6–8 weeks the pair planned their attack, shifting their target from the governor's mansion to the Democratic Party headquarters building located in the state capital. "I think I'll do a drive by and unload a couple drums into that commie building," Rogers mused in later messages.

Animated by Trump's lie that the election had been stolen, the pair wondered what "Trump is going to do" after the election. Rogers wrote, "He [Trump] needs our help."

As Trump and his co-conspirators in the Republican Party continued their efforts to overturn the election of Biden in the courts, Rogers, in a December 1 message, could not contain his pleasure at the thought of mass terrorist violence, asking Copeland, "Do you think something is wrong with me how I'm excited to attack the Democrats?"

In a January 4 exchange, Rogers asked Copeland if more people could be brought in on the plot, to which Copeland responded, "Proud boys and 3%," and, "I emailed proud boys."

The affidavit notes that a search of Copeland's personal computer found that he had visited a URL associated with the Proud Boys and submitted a form to join the group on December 28, 2020. On January 13, two days before Rogers was arrested, Copeland told Rogers, "I got a few guys that are with us but they moved out of California."

On January 11, according to the affidavit, the pair confirmed their plan to attack the headquarters, with Rogers lamenting, "Sad it's come to this but I'm not going down without a fight. These commies need to be told what's up."

"I agree," replied Copeland. "Plan attack."

Four days after this exchange, Rogers was arrested. The indictment alleges that on the following day Copeland deleted all

© World Socialist Web Site

of his messages with Rogers after contacting the leader of the III Percenters militia group to which he belongs, who suggested that he purge his phone of the incriminating messages.

Copeland joined the military in December 2013. However, by May 2014 he had been arrested for desertion.

In October of 2016 he was arrested for desertion once again, and in November he was separated from the military under an "other than honorable" discharge to avoid prosecution.

Shortly thereafter, he joined a III Percenter militia affiliate, where, according to the government, he worked his way up the ranks. He told Rogers in January 2021 that he had been offered an officer position within the militia, as either "[c]ommunication or security." Copeland added, "my communication consists of fists and bullets soooo."

In addition to Proud Boys and Oath Keepers, members of III Percenter militia groups, popular among law enforcement officials, have featured prominently in recent court documents pertaining to the attack on the Capitol. In an indictment released last month, six Southern California men—Alan Hostetter, 56, of San Clemente; Russell Taylor, 40, of Ladera Ranch; Erik Scott Warner, 45, of Meniffe; Felipe Antonio "Tony" Martinez, 47, and Derek Kinnison, 39, both of Lake Elsinore; and Ronald Mele, 51, of Temecula—were charged with conspiracy for their actions on January 6.

Hostetter is a former police chief in Orange County, while Kinnison identified himself, Martinez, Warner and Mele as part of the "so cal 3%" in a January 1 Telegram thread.

According to data complied by the *Washington Post* and CBS News, of the over 535 arrests so far in connection to the attempted coup, at least 37 have claimed membership in the Proud Boys, while another 20 Oath Keepers have been charged and at least six III Percenters.

At least 56 of those arrested are current or former military members, while at least 20 of those arrested were current or former police officers at the time of their arrest. An ongoing tally in *The Appeal* has identified 48 cops as having publicly participated in the attack.

Among those with direct police connections arrested in recent days in connection with the storming of the US Capitol are former police and current Proud Boys from Florida Kevin "Tito" Tuck, 51, and Nathaniel Tuck, 29.

The Tucks were arrested and released on bond last Thursday. Both have been charged with obstructing a joint session of Congress, trespassing and disorderly conduct. After a warrant was issued for the elder Tuck on July 7, he resigned from the Windemere Police Department. Nathaniel Tuck is a former officer with the Apopka Police Department, working full-time at the department from March 19, 2018, through August 22, 2020. Nathaniel worked as a reserve officer at the department until September 18, 2020.

The Tucks were added to an earlier indictment of previously charged Florida Proud Boy Arthur Jackman, who is married to an Orange County, Florida, sheriff's deputy, Sarah Jackman. Nathaniel Tuck is also married to a fellow cop, Gabriela, of the Longwood Police Department.

Both wives have been investigated by the departments for which they work and cleared of any wrongdoing. In an April 14 internal review, Deputy Sarah Jackman claims that her husband Arthur joined the Proud Boys after they started dating, but before they were married. An incredulous Sarah Jackman rhetorically asked during her internal investigation, "Do I leave him because of this group he joined?"

In the same interview, Sarah Jackman refuted characterizations of the far-right militia group as a "terrorist organization," claiming that it is not "a hate group, nor a right-wing extremist group." Instead, she described the Proud Boys as "pro-American, pro-family, and very patriotic," and claimed that members of the group attended Bible studies together.

While hundreds of low-level thugs have been arrested in connection with Trump's attempted coup, the drive by sections of the ruling class to continue in Trump's fascistic path has continued, emboldened by Biden and the Democratic Party's feckless response to the ongoing threat.

Over the weekend, a former Trump campaign employee, Matt Braynard, organized sparsely attended rallies in 10 cities to demand the release of "political prisoners" tied to the January 6 attack. The biggest rally took place outside the Washington, D.C., correctional facility, drawing almost 100 people.

The character of the rallies was exemplified in Trenton, New Jersey, where fewer than 10 Proud Boys gathered outside the Clarkson S. Fisher Federal Courthouse with signs demanding, "Free Our Boys Now!"

Two other notable incidents in California took place in the past week.

• On July 11, Democratic lawmaker Katie Porter had an outdoor town hall-style event cut short after avowed white supremacist and far-right Republican candidate for the 45th Congressional District, Nick Taurus, 29, along with his father and a few Trump supporters, jeered and shoved attendees, provoking a fight. Police arrested a Porter supporter after Taurus, who showed up at the event wearing a blue "Make America Great Again" hat, claimed that the man had shoved his father.

• Dozens of people were injured on Saturday, including a reporter with the Guardian, after fascists and Los Angeles Police officers assaulted anti-fascist and pro-trans rights demonstrators. This was the second confrontation in the past month between fascists and their opponents in front of the Wi Spa in Chinatown. The spa has been the target of QAnon-inspired attacks due to its trans-inclusive policy. One video that has gone viral shows LAPD cops firing a round of bean bags point blank into a woman's stomach, while ignoring violent Proud Boys and Trump supporters wielding baseball bats.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

© World Socialist Web Site