

Reuters launders FBI claims that “scant” evidence exists of coordinated January 6 plot to overthrow the government

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This past Friday, August 20, Reuters published an “exclusive” report citing four anonymous current and former law enforcement officials “either directly involved or briefed regularly” on FBI investigations into January 6, who claimed that “scant” evidence has been uncovered that there was an organized plot to overthrow the election of president Joe Biden by Trump accomplices and fascist militia groups.

This bogus claim is contradicted by the ongoing prosecutions of fascist militia members who are closely tied to the Republican Party and particularly to Trump’s closest supporters, like ultra-right operative Roger Stone. The central purpose of this obvious lie is to downplay the significance of the attack, and cover up for the role of state agencies, including the FBI itself, in facilitating it.

The most important quote cited by Reuters is attributed to “a former senior law enforcement official with knowledge of the investigation.” The unnamed law enforcement official refers to leading Trump co-conspirators, long-time crony Roger Stone and the fascist Alex Jones of InfoWars.

Speaking of the over 579 people charged in connection with the January 6 attack the former federal official notes that, “Ninety to ninety-five percent of these are one-off cases. Then you have five percent, maybe, of these militia groups that were more closely organized. But there was no grand scheme with Roger Stone and Alex Jones and all of these people to storm the Capitol and take hostages.”

The “organized” fascist militia groups played the leading role in the attack on the Capitol and both groups, specifically the Oath Keepers and Proud Boys, have close and ongoing ties with the Republican Party and Stone and Jones in particular. The naming of these two men by the official is noteworthy given their central role in whipping up Trump’s paramilitaries and supporters in support of

Trump’s “stolen election” lies, which he continues to propagate to this day.

Stone is a long-time Republican political operative going back to Nixon administration. He avoided prison after being pardoned by Trump last July for lying to congressional committees and to Special Counsel Robert Mueller. Stone is a frequent guest on InfoWars. During a September 10, 2020, appearance on the program, he stated that the only way Trump could lose would be if the election was “corrupted” and therefore Trump should invoke the Insurrection Act and seize mail-in ballots, likely to be heavily Democratic, in battleground states.

Stone has previously admitted in court documents that he maintains close relations with the Proud Boys militia group, allowing high-ranking members access to his home, phone and e-mail accounts, and using them as bodyguards in public appearances.

At a rally December 12, 2020 in Washington D.C., Stone, flanked by Proud Boys chairman and admitted FBI informant Enrique Tarrio and “sergeant of arms” of the Seattle Proud Boys chapter Ethan Nordean, tells the assembled that the election “isn’t over until we say it is!”

Nordean, a bodybuilder and street brawler, is one of at least 38 Proud Boys who have been charged in connection to January 6. In addition to facing charges of obstructing an official proceeding, aiding and abetting, violent entry, disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds, destruction of government property, obstructing of law enforcement, Nordean is one of at least six Proud Boys to have been charged with conspiring to obstruct the certification of Joe Biden’s Electoral College victory. At least 40 Oath Keeper, Proud Boy and Three Percenter militia members have been charged with conspiracy, i.e., an organized plan, to overthrow the election.

According to encrypted communications seized by the

government and recounted in prosecutors' briefs, Nordean was given "war powers" leadership over the 200-plus Proud Boys who spearheaded the attack on the Capitol on January 6. A March court filing notes that Nordean and other Proud Boy leaders had specifically planned to whip up "normies," or "normiecons" (normal conservatives) on January 6 in order "to incite and inspire them to "burn that city to ash today" and "smash some pigs to dust."

As for Jones, who previously hosted Nordean as well Oath Keepers founder and leader Stewart Rhodes on his InfoWars program to spread fascistic lies about the election, the *Wall Street Journal* reported in January that Jones pledged \$50,000 of his own money in exchange for a speaking slot at the January 6 "Stop the Steal" rally in Washington D.C., where Trump sent the crowd marching down Pennsylvania Avenue to storm the Capitol. Jones ended up speaking at a "Stop the Steal" rally the day before, while video taken the day of the attempted coup shows Jones leading Trump supporters with a bullhorn to march on the Capitol.

Videos taken on January 6 show Jones marching with InfoWars producer and co-host Owen Shroyer. The same day the Reuters article appeared, Shroyer was charged by federal prosecutors with illegally going into a restricted area on the Capitol grounds and disorderly conduct.

Significantly, the Reuters report indicates the ongoing complicity of the Democrats in covering up Trump's coup: "Senior lawmakers have been briefed in detail on the results of the FBI's investigation so far and find them credible, a Democratic congressional source said."

This is only the latest example, following the truncated impeachment, the joint bipartisan Senate cover-up report and the last month's House Select Committee hearing, to demonstrate that the foremost concern of Democratic "investigations" is not to expose the deep support Trump's coup had within the capitalist state and among congressional Republicans. They serve to defend the institutions of the state and preserve "unity" with their "Republican colleagues." Both are essential to the defense of bourgeois class rule.

The so-called "credible" Reuters report has been hailed by leading Trump co-conspirators and fascists, including Alex Jones, who said Friday, claiming there was no coup attempt, "We'd have had guns if that was our plan." On the social media site Gab, Stone wrote, "based on today's news reports I would say that the FBI investigating January 6 determined that 'Roger Stone STILL did nothing wrong!'"

Former OverStock.com CEO and millionaire propagator of Trump's stolen election lies, Patrick Byrne, likewise hailed the Reuters article, which in his words showed, "There was no organization behind January 6, no Republicans." He characterized the article as "...a very politically strong report."

"Somebody in the FBI yesterday, did something heroic, they came out with this report. And I want us all to applaud them," added Byrne.

Byrne has been the main sponsor of the sham "forensic audit" in Arizona. Byrne created a non-profit dubbed The America Project, which has provided over \$3.25 million to facilitate the "audit" in Maricopa County, Arizona and has produced a book and movie called *The Deep Rig* which purports to show evidence of election fraud.

Joining this noxious crew was libertarian journalist Glenn Greenwald, who likewise cited the Reuters report as proof that nothing of significance happened on January 6.

"The only thing more deranged than claiming Russia had taken over control of the US through blackmail is calling January 6 an 'Insurrection,'" he tweeted, adding that January 6 was simply a "3-hour riot that got put down."

Greenwald's approach to the FBI is somewhat selective. In this case, he accepts FBI propaganda, laundered through Reuters, as good coin, because it reinforces his complacent view that there was no significant threat to democracy on January 6.

Last month he denounced the *World Socialist Web Site's* exposure of his defense of the fascist militia members arrested for conspiring to murder Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer, falsely claiming that the WSWS article defended the FBI.

What is consistent here is that Greenwald downplays the threat of fascist violence, either, in the case of Michigan, claiming it was FBI entrapment, or, in the case of January 6, citing the FBI whitewash as proof that there was no real danger.



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