

Fascist Three Percenter militia member found guilty on all five counts in first federal January 6 trial

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A Washington D.C. federal jury issued a guilty verdict Tuesday in the first trial of a participant in the attack on the US Capitol on January 6, 2021. The jury found Guy Reffitt, a member of the fascistic militia group Texas Three Percenters, guilty on all five charges against him: seeking to obstruct the congressional certification of the 2020 presidential election, transporting guns into Washington D.C., carrying a pistol on Capitol grounds, interfering with Capitol Police protecting Congress, and obstructing justice by threatening to execute his son and daughter if they turned him into the authorities.

The Three Percenters, along with the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers, were among the far-right paramilitary groups summoned by then-President Donald Trump to the Capitol on January 6 in an attempt to block the congressional certification of Joe Biden's victory in the Electoral College, following the 2020 presidential vote.

Reffitt refused to take a plea deal, as all previous Capitol assailants have done, instead seeking a jury trial. After less than four hours of deliberation on Tuesday, the jury found him guilty on all five counts. Reffitt is scheduled to be sentenced on June 8. The maximum sentence for the most serious charges, obstruction of Congress and obstruction of justice, is 20 years in prison.

Demonstrating that Trump's coup plotting was well known to US intelligence agencies prior to the attack on the Capitol, Jackson Reffitt, Guy's 19-year-old son and a key witness for the prosecution, testified that he contacted the FBI on Christmas eve 2020 to report his father's plans to storm the Capitol. Jackson Reffitt continued to remain in contact with the FBI, recording audio conversations and forwarding incriminating texts sent by his father to the domestic intelligence agency.

The young man explained during the trial that he used to be close with his father, but prior to the 2016 election, his dad became a supporter of Trump and "snowballed into a far-right extremist." Jackson testified that he felt compelled to contact the FBI after his father adopted Trump's "big lie" that the 2020 presidential election was fraudulent and that political violence was necessary to overturn Trump's electoral defeat.

"The entire house of legislation has committed unthinkable acts on our people," Guy Reffitt texted his son following the election. "We have had enough."

"Seeing these messages and reading them, my paranoia really blew over, so I decided to alleviate some of the anxiety on my shoulders and submit a tip to the FBI," Jackson testified.

During the trial, prosecutors played a video of the older Reffitt repeatedly expressing his desire to storm the Capitol and commit

violence against Trump's political enemies.

"Ripping them out by their hair. Every f**cking one of them. Dragging them out kicking and f**king screaming. I just want to see Pelosi's head hitting every f**king stair on the way out, and Mitch McConnell too," Reffitt said while in Washington D.C. on January 6.

Prosecutors painted Reffitt as a leader and instigator in the attack, telling the jury, "A mob needs a leader, and Reffitt lit the match that started the fire."

Supporting their claims, prosecutors played multiple clips that Reffitt himself filmed during the attack and in the following days. "I'm prepared to take the Capitol," Reffitt told pro-Trump supporters the morning of January 6. In another clip, filmed by Reffitt after the attack, he admits he encouraged the crowd to storm the building, "I just kept going, 'Go forward! Go forward!'" recalled Reffitt.

Following the failed coup, Jackson Reffitt testified that the family saw their father in a brief news clip on television goading pro-Trump elements into the Capitol. After the clip aired, Guy warned Jackson and his younger sister that if they turned their father in to the police, they would be traitors, and "traitors get shot."

Another key witness for the prosecution was Rocky Hardie, a former member of the Texas Three Percenters, who was given immunity by prosecutors after turning state's witness. Hardie testified that he and Reffitt met prior to the election and that they traveled to Washington D.C. together to participate in the storming of the Capitol.

Refuting claims by Republican apologists for Trump that January 6 was nonviolent and not an "armed insurrection," Hardie testified that both he and Reffitt brought automatic rifles with them to Washington D.C. and carried concealed handguns on their persons during the attack on the Capitol.

Confirming the analysis presented on the *World Socialist Web Site* that the right-wing extremists who stormed the Capitol sought out Trump's enemies for kidnapping and possible execution, Hardie said he and Reffitt brought two-way radios and flex cuffs "in case we need to detain anybody."

Proud Boys indicted on conspiracy charges

In another significant court development demonstrating that the January 6 attack was not a spontaneous riot but a pre-planned assault,

on Tuesday, a D.C. federal grand jury indicted Proud Boy leader Henry “Enrique” Tarrío, 38, and four other members of the group on conspiracy charges for their actions prior to and during January 6.

In addition to charging admitted FBI informant Tarrío, the grand jury issued conspiracy charges against Proud Boys leaders Ethan Nordean, 31; Joseph Biggs, 38 (also an admitted FBI informant); Charles Donohue, 34; and Zachary Rehl, 36, all of whom were previously charged for actions on January 6. Former U.S. Marine and New York Proud Boy Dominic Pezzola, 44, who was videotaped using a police riot shield to smash a window and climb into the Capitol on January 6, was also named as a participant in the conspiracy.

Fellow New York Proud Boy Matthew Greene was the first member of the group to plead guilty to conspiring with other fascists to stop Congress from certifying the Electoral College vote. Greene has been cooperating with authorities since his December 2021 plea.

In a September 2020 presidential debate with Biden, Trump infamously refused to denounce the fascist paramilitary group, instead instructing them to “Stand back and stand by.”

The indictment lays out how Tarrío and other Proud Boys leaders coordinated their efforts in the months following Trump’s electoral defeat to overthrow the election of Biden. Even though Tarrío was not in D.C. during the attack, the government alleges he continued to “direct and encourage the Proud Boys prior to and during the events of January 6, 2021, and that he claimed credit for what had happened on social media and in an encrypted chat room during and after the attack.”

Tarrío was indicted on one count each of conspiracy to obstruct an official proceeding and obstruction of an official proceeding. He was also charged with two counts each of assaulting, resisting or impeding certain officers and destruction of government property.

On November 6, 2020, Tarrío, then the chairman of the Proud Boys, posted a public online message that read: “The media constantly accuses us of wanting to start a civil war. Careful what the f*ck you ask for we don’t want to start one... but we will sure as f*ck finish one.”

Ten days later Tarrío publicly posted, “If Biden steals this election, [the Proud Boys] will be political prisoners. We won’t go quietly... I promise.”

The indictment alleges that Proud Boy leaders Nordean, Biggs and Rehls posted similar statements in November 2020 calling for civil war and taking down the Biden government.

The indictment notes the extensive Proud Boys participation in the December 12, 2020 “Million MAGA” rally in Washington D.C., which also served as a nexus for the “Stop the Steal” movement, bringing together the various fascist elements and Republican operatives and lawmakers who were working together in furtherance of Trump’s coup.

The indictment notes that on December 30, 2020, an unnamed person sent Tarrío a document that laid out a strategy for occupying a few “crucial buildings” in D.C. on January 6, including the House and Senate office buildings near the Capitol. The nine-page document was titled “1776 Returns” and called for having as many people as possible participate in the occupation of the Capitol.

The indictment details the creation of a select Proud Boys chapter dubbed the Ministry of Self Defense, or “MOSD,” by Tarrío in December, 2020. Tarrío is alleged to have said the MOSD would be a “national rally planning” chapter that would only include “hand-selected members,” such as Tarrío, Nordean, Biggs, Rehl and

Donohue. Throughout December, prosecutors allege, members of MOSD planned for the attack, using the encrypted chat to coordinate efforts to raise funds for electronic communication devices such as BaoFeng radios, travel expenses and other equipment used in the attack.

Prosecutors claim the MOSD chat log details Tarrío’s instructions to Proud Boys to show up to the Capitol on January 6 “incognito” and in “all-black.” The government claims to also have in its possession evidence showing the accused “engaging in meetings and encrypted communication in Washington D.C. in the days leading up to January 6, and on the morning of January 6, to plan for the... attack.” This is not surprising, given multiple reports that the FBI, Capitol Police and D.C. Metropolitan Police were listening to Proud Boys communications prior to the attack.

The indictment notes that on January 4, 2021, Tarrío was arrested by D.C. police for burning a “Black Lives Matter” banner during the previous December 12 fascist rally. As part of his bond conditions, he was ordered to leave Washington D.C. immediately. However, the indictment notes that Tarrío did not comply with this order, instead meeting with Oath Keepers founder Elmer Stewart Rhodes, himself charged in January with seditious conspiracy, for approximately “30 minutes” in an underground parking garage in Washington D.C.

The indictment reads: “During this encounter, a participant referenced the Capitol.”

A recent report from the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) titled “The Year in Hate & Extremism 2021” notes that despite the fact that at least 40 members of the Proud Boys have been charged in relation to their role in the January 6 coup, the number of active Proud Boy chapters in the US has risen from 43 in 2020 to 72 in 2021.

VICE reporter Tess Owens has claimed that Proud Boys members have attended at least 114 public events in 2021. They have been emboldened by the support they have received from the ruling class, including from Republican politicians and police departments around the country.

The SPLC notes that the Proud Boys, mobilized in opposition to any public health measures aimed at stemming the spread of COVID-19 and in furtherance of the Republicans’ far-right “America First” agenda, have been “largely targeting local government and community institutions such as public schools.”



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