

In January 6 attack on Capitol

# **FBI informant and former Proud Boy chairman Henry “Enrique” Tarrio charged with seditious conspiracy**

**Jacob Crosse**

**6 June 2022**

On Monday the US Department of Justice released a superseding indictment charging fascist Proud Boys chairman and “prolific” FBI informant, Henry “Enrique” Tarrio, and four other members of the paramilitary group with seditious conspiracy for plotting to use violence to stop the certification of the Electoral College vote on January 6, 2021, and overturn the election of Joe Biden. Over 30 members of the far-right militia have been charged for their actions on January 6.

In addition to Tarrio, who has since stepped down as chairman of the group, Proud Boy leaders Ethan Nordean, Joseph Biggs, Zachary Rehl and Dominic Pezzola were also charged with seditious conspiracy. Biggs, Rehl and Pezzola are US military veterans. All five have been incarcerated since at least March of this year after being previously indicted on conspiracy charges.

Notably Biggs, like Tarrio, had a working relationship with the police and the FBI prior to the fascist attack on Congress. While Tarrio was an informant from at least 2012-2014, Biggs’ lawyer last year claimed his client had been providing intelligence to the FBI on alleged “antifa networks” since at least July 2020. The lawyer further asserted that Biggs, a correspondent on Alex Jones’ “InfoWars” program, first began communicating with FBI agents and local Florida police in 2018.

While Tarrio was not in Washington D.C. on January 6, he did meet with co-founder of the Oath Keepers Stewart Rhodes the day before the coup, in an underground D.C. parking garage. While the full extent of this meeting between Tarrio and Rhodes has yet to be revealed, previous court hearings have established that Tarrio discussed with Oath Keepers lead counsel Kellye SoRelle how to erase incriminating information from his phone, which the government was in possession of at the time. Tarrio also asked SoRelle if she knew how he could access his social media accounts so he could continue to

coordinate with his Proud Boy soldiers.

Tarrio and the four other Proud Boys join Rhodes and 10 other members of the Oath Keepers in being charged with seditious conspiracy for their role in the coup. As of this writing, three of the 11 Oath Keepers charged with seditious conspiracy have already pled guilty and turned state’s witness. These are by far the most serious charges leveled against participants in the attack on the Capitol and underscore the pre-planned and far-reaching character of the attack.

The reason Tarrio was not in D.C. to coordinate the attack in person was because he had, fortuitously, been arrested by D.C. Metropolitan Police on January 4, 2021 for burning a Black Lives Matter banner during a pro-Trump rally in Washington D.C. on December 12, 2020.

A day before Tarrio burned the banner, on December 11, Tarrio and Nordean, in a separate rally, shared the stage with long-time Trump political fixer and honorary member of the Proud Boys, Roger Stone. Stone has yet to be charged for his role in coordinating the attack on the Capitol.

FBI Director Christopher Wray has repeatedly claimed that the January 6 attack was an unforeseen event. The fact that several leaders of the fascist paramilitary groups, who were working in coordination with Trump and his Republican co-conspirators to block the certification of the election, had multi-year relationships with the police and intelligence agencies exposes that lie.

In reality the police, military, intelligence agencies, leading members of the Democratic and Republican Party, as well as well-connected media figures knew that an attack on Congress, orchestrated by the Republican Party, was imminent prior to January 6. Yet they did nothing to stop it or warn the

population of the impending threat of dictatorship.

In their indictment against the Proud Boys, the government alleged that Tarrio, Nordean, Biggs, Rehl, Pezzola and another Proud Boy, Charles Donohoe, who pled guilty in April to conspiracy and assault charges, began planning to stop the certification of Biden after Trump's electoral defeat in the November 3, 2020 election.

The government alleges the paramilitaries carried out the conspiracy by, among other things:

- Engaging in meetings and discussions prior to and on the morning of January 6 in furtherance of the attack;
- Encouraging participation in the January 6 “Stop the Steal” rally in Washington D.C. online and in private chats;
- Using the internet to crowdfund for travel expenses and paramilitary equipment used in the attack on the Capitol, including body armor and encrypted radios;
- Foregoing traditional black and yellow Proud Boy “colors” and instead dressing “incognito” in order to more easily infiltrate, direct, mobilize and lead members of the pro-Trump crowd onto the Capitol grounds and into the building itself, in an effort to delay the certification;
- Dismantling police barricades, windows, government property and assaulting police.

Demonstrating the close coordination between Trump and his Brownshirts, the indictment notes that on December 19, 2020, Biggs sent a private message to Tarrio stating that the Proud Boys needed to “get radical and get real men.” This was the same day Trump tweeted out to his followers that there was a “Big protest in D.C. On January 6th ... Be there, will be wild!”

The next day on December 20, Tarrio created a special leadership encrypted message group called the Ministry of Self Defense (MOSD). Members of the MOSD chat included Nordean, Biggs, Rehl, Donohoe and other unnamed individuals. Tarrio explained that the purpose of the group was a “national rally planning committee,” which only included “hand selected members.”

A person identified in the indictment as “Person-3” wrote in the chat that same day, “I am assuming most of the protest will be at the capital [sic] building given what's going on inside,” a reference to the Electoral College certification on January 6. Tarrio responded with a proposal for a “video chat” to take place the next day between members of the group to discuss the January 6 attack.

Throughout December, the Proud Boys leaders continued to crowdfund for the attack on Congress through social media while devising and revising their plan, no doubt in coordination with the White House, to delay certification.

Four days prior to the failed coup, on January 2, 2021, Stone

and Tarrio held a protest outside of Florida Senator Marco Rubio's home, demanding he join other Republican senators, such as Missouri's Josh Hawley and Texas's Ted Cruz, in voting to reject the certification of the election.

In March of this year, the *New York Times* revealed the existence of a document in Tarrio's possession, called “1776 Returns” which outlined a strategy for the Proud Boys to recruit at least 50 members to occupy seven federal buildings in Washington D.C. on January 6. The *Times* did not reveal who gave Tarrio the document, which prosecutors claimed he had in his possession since at least December 30, 2020.

The Proud Boys and Oath Keepers, besides enjoying close personal connections with the police and domestic intelligence agencies, are also deeply intertwined with the Republican Party, which is transforming into an openly fascist party with a paramilitary wing.

Last month the Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights, (IREHR) released a report called “Breaching the Mainstream,” which found that more than 1 in 5 state legislators, 872 Republicans, and three Democrats, were affiliated with one of 789 “far-right” groups, with each politician claiming membership in “an average of 2.4 groups.” These groups included anti-abortion, Christian fascist, and COVID-19 denialist organizations, various militias, such as the III Percenters and the aforementioned Oath Keepers and “Stop the Steal” adherents.

Demonstrating that the attack in Washington D.C. was just one aspect of the far-reaching plot by Trump and his Republican allies, not a spontaneous “First Amendment rally” that got rowdy, the IREHR documented “forty-five insurrectionist rallies” that took place on January 6 in “thirty-two states.”

The pseudo-left argued prior to the November 2020 election that a vote for the Democratic Party and the election of Biden would put a brake on the development of fascism in the United States. But more than 16 months since the failed coup, Trump and his high-level Republican allies remain free and continue to build a far-right movement hell-bent on subverting what remains of American democracy. This exposes the bankruptcy of the reformist perspective and the necessity of the working class to organize independently of the two big business parties in opposition to the capitalist system, the source of fascism.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](http://wsws.org/contact)**