

As FBI begins enforcing subpoenas on Trump co-conspirators

January 6 hearing reveals multiple Republican congressmen sought pardons for participating in Trump's coup

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24 June 2022

On Thursday, the January 6 House Select Committee investigating ex-President Donald Trump's coup held its fifth public hearing. The testimony was devoted to detailing Trump's illegal efforts to enlist the Department of Justice in overthrowing the 2020 presidential election.

The hearing presented overwhelming evidence showing that Trump and his Republican co-conspirators exerted enormous pressure on top officials at the DoJ to give credence to his lies following the resignation of Attorney General William Barr in mid-December 2020. This pressure campaign was not just limited to Trump and his coup lawyers, but included Republican congressmen as well. Several of these congressmen, the committee revealed on Thursday, sought a presidential pardon for what they clearly believed were criminal actions.

The witnesses at the hearing detailed repeated efforts by Trump to pressure the DoJ into announcing bogus investigations into baseless claims of election fraud. In the course of the hearing, witnesses debunked several of Trump's false claims. This included lies about rampant voter fraud in Antrim County, Michigan; false assertions that thousands of dead people voted in the 2020 election; and even allegations that Italian spy satellites had, somehow, surreptitiously altered vote totals in favor of Biden.

While it was not the focus of the hearing, it was revealed that Trump's pressure campaign extended into the U.S. Department of Defense. While the military was noticeably absent for 199 minutes on January 6 as Trump's paramilitaries sacked the Capitol, the committee revealed that acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller was more than willing to investigate the Italian satellites conspiracy theory.

The committee said that Miller, who was installed by Trump after his election defeat to Biden, called a military attache in Italy to speak to the Italian government about their alleged (and non-existent) role in the 2020 election.

Prior to the start of Thursday's hearing, it was revealed that the FBI, beginning on Wednesday, had started serving grand jury subpoenas to Republican Party officials involved in the fraudulent elector scheme—the subject of Tuesday's hearing. One of the Republicans served with a subpoena was former DoJ environmental lawyer Jeffrey Clarke, a little known Trump loyalist and subject of much of Thursday's hearing.

Other Republicans confirmed to have been subpoenaed by the FBI in the last 48 hours include:

- All six Nevada Republicans who signed onto a bogus elector slate and sent it to the National Archives in December 2020. This includes the chair of the Nevada Republican Party, Michael McDonald.
- Three Michigan Republicans, including two false electors, Amy Facchinello and Michele Lundgren, as well as Trump campaign aide Shawn Flynn.
- David Shafer, the chairman of the Georgia Republican Party and also a Trump elector.

As with previous hearings, Thursday's event featured testimony from Republicans who resisted certain aspects of Trump's coup, in line with the committee's attempt to draw a line between the "good" Republicans and the "crazies" who went along with all of Trump's plans. However, given the nationwide raids by FBI officials against Republicans prior to hearing, this is becoming an increasingly difficult sell for the committee.

The three in-person witnesses at Thursday's hearing were former Acting Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen; his

deputy, Richard Donoghue; and Steven Engel, former assistant attorney general for the Office of Legal Counsel.

Committee members emphasized throughout the hearing that without these three conservative lawyers it was entirely possible that Trump's efforts to overturn the Constitution might have succeeded. None of the committee members sought to explain how it was possible that all that stood between the continuation of American democracy and a fascist dictatorship were a "few good [Republican] men."

In his testimony, Rosen said that between December 23, 2020 and January 3, 2021, Trump called or met with him "virtually every day" to express his dissatisfaction that the DoJ was not doing enough to advance Trump's "stolen election" lies.

Rosen testified that Trump wanted him to appoint a "special counsel," now known to be QAnon adherent Sidney Powell, to investigate election fraud. Rosen said Trump constantly pressured him to meet with his personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, which he refused to do.

In their testimony, Rosen and Donoghue explained how Trump's pressure campaign against them continued to intensify as the January 6 certification date drew near. Donoghue recalled that during a December 27, 2020 meeting with Trump and Rosen, Trump said that he was not asking the pair to change the outcome of election. Instead, Donoghue recalled Trump saying, "just say it was corrupt and leave the rest up to me and the Republican congressmen."

Donoghue said Trump told them the DoJ had an obligation "to tell people that this was an illegal corrupt election." Despite the DoJ officials constantly investigating Trump's bogus claims, only to find they had no merit, Trump continued to persist that the DoJ was not doing its job.

The hearing revealed for the first time details about a January 3, 2021 meeting at the White House in which virtually the entire leadership of the DoJ threatened to resign if Trump installed Jeffrey Clark as acting attorney general. In his testimony, Donoghue estimated that if Clark had been installed as acting attorney general, "hundreds" of DoJ lawyers across the country would have resigned within 72 hours. He explained that he told Trump the DoJ would be a "graveyard."

Trump had sought to install Clark because he, unlike Rosen or Donoghue, was willing to send a memo to state legislatures on DoJ letterhead declaring that the DoJ had "identified significant concerns that may have impacted the outcome of the election in multiple states." The letter

instructed state legislatures that they had a "plenary" authority to appoint new, pro-Trump electors.

The letter, the committee revealed, was authored not by Clark, who has no election law experience, but by a recent addition to the DoJ, Ken Klukowski. Vice Chair of the committee, Liz Cheney (Republican-Wyoming), revealed that Klukowski arrived at the department after Barr's resignation and just 36 days before the inauguration. Cheney said that Klukowski worked with Trump lawyer John Eastman in drafting the letter.

Clark, the committee confirmed, was introduced to Trump through Pennsylvania Rep. Scott Perry. Perry is one of several Republicans who not only has refused to testify before the committee but also sought a presidential pardon from Trump for his actions related to the coup.

Cassidy Hutchinson, a former adviser to White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows, testified to the committee that in addition to Perry, Florida Rep. Matt Gaetz, Texas Rep. Louie Gohmert and Rep. Andy Biggs of Arizona all sought pardons for their actions. The committee also revealed an email sent by Alabama Rep. Mo Brooks after January 6, in which he sought a pardon for all 147 Republican members of Congress who objected to certifying the election after the attack on the Capitol, and for every Republican who signed onto the December 2020 Texas amicus brief.

Hutchinson also said that she had heard that Ohio Rep. Jim Jordan "talked about" pardons but did not directly ask for one. She also said that while she did not directly appeal to her, she knew that fascist Georgia Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene had also sought a pardon during discussions with the White House Counsel's office.

The committee has presented insurmountable evidence that Trump and his Republican co-conspirators are guilty of attempting to install a dictatorship.

However, by detailing the efforts by Trump and his allies to overthrow the government, the committee has at the same time revealed the bankruptcy of Biden and Democratic Party, who did nothing to stop the coup as it was happening.



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