

Federal prosecutors say:

# Oath Keepers brought grenades, rifles, “suitcases full of ammunition” to Washington D.C. on eve of January 6

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On Friday, US federal prosecutors filed a 28-page motion that includes new allegations against Oath Keeper leader Stewart Rhodes and his fascistic associates.

The filing came as the House Select Committee charged with investigating ex-President Donald Trump’s failed coup prepared to hold its seventh and eighth televised hearings this week.

The motion includes details about the planning and preparation for the coup, including weapons and materiel the accused allegedly brought to the Washington D.C. area. Items mentioned in the motion include semi-automatic rifles, grenades and tactical gear, such as combat helmets and axes.

The motion also mentions that “suitcases filled with ammunition” were supplied to at least three separate “QRF” (Quick Reaction Force) teams that were stationed outside the capital, waiting to be deployed.

Oath Keeper chapters from Florida, North Carolina and Arizona participated in forming and equipping the heavily armed QRF teams. Shattering claims by Trump, his Republican allies and complacent elements in the pseudo-left that the attack on the Capitol was a “spontaneous First Amendment demonstration” that “got out of hand,” prosecutors allege that on January 5, the Arizona Oath Keeper group arrived at the Virginia Hotel and “wheeled in bags and large bins of weapons, ammunition, and essential supplies to last 30 days.”

In addition to Rhodes, Friday’s filing mentioned eight other Oath Keepers: Kelly Meggs, Kenneth Harrelson, Jessica Watkins, Roberto Minuta, Joseph Hackett, David Moerschel, Thomas Caldwell and Edward Vallejo. These nine have been charged with seditious conspiracy for their actions before, during and after January 6, 2021. They have all pled not guilty. Oath Keepers Joshua James and Brian Ulrich were also charged with seditious conspiracy for participating in the coup. However, both men pled guilty earlier this year.

The documents note that on the morning of January 6, Rhodes texted his minions: “We will have several well equipped QRFs outside DC. And there are many, many others, from other groups, who will be watching and waiting on the outside in case of worst case scenarios.”

Following the failed coup, according to the court documents, Rhodes spent over \$17,000 on gun parts and tactical equipment and summoned Oath Keepers to join him in Texas for a possible firefight with government agents if they attempted to arrest him.

Prosecutors also claim that several Oath Keepers continued to plot against the Biden government after January 6. In a search of the home of Watkins after the coup, prosecutors found numerous firearms, pool sticks cut down to be used as batons, and two bomb-making recipes. Watkins is a U.S. Army veteran who deployed to Afghanistan from 2001 to 2003.

The Justice Department claims that in addition to military grade weaponry, one Oath Keeper, Thomas Caldwell, kept a “death list” in his home that included the name of a “Georgia elections official” and a family member of that person. It was earlier revealed that Caldwell, a retired U.S. Navy officer who previously held a top secret security clearance while working for the FBI, kept such a list. But it was not known that a specific Georgia election official and a family member of the official were named by Caldwell.

While the Justice Department did not name the official targeted by the fascists, the filing noted that they “became the target of unfounded conspiracy theories that they were involved in voter fraud” during the 2020 election.

In the fourth January 6 Select Committee hearing held last month, former Fulton County, Georgia, election worker

Wandrea ArShaye Moss, along with her mother, Ruby Freeman, provided testimony on the racist attacks and death threats they received following the 2020 election, after Trump and his personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, launched a smear campaign against the women that spread like wildfire on right-wing media.

The prosecutors allege that when officers searched Caldwell's house last year, they discovered that in addition to maintaining a kill list, Caldwell was attempting to acquire a gun made to look like a cell phone. In messages sent after January 6 and before the January 20 inauguration of Biden, Caldwell allegedly tried to get other Oath Keepers to build him rifles.

The court documents also detail the role of a currently unindicted Oath Keeper co-conspirator, Jeremy Brown. The documents note that during a search of Brown's home on September 30, 2021, the authorities "seized two illegal guns from Brown's residence and military ordnance grenades" from inside a recreation vehicle that Brown owned. The same RV, prosecutors note, was in Washington D.C. on January 6.

The Oath Keepers are dominated by ex- and current police and military members. According to a database maintained by the Program on Extremism at George Washington University, of the 838 people charged so far in the failed coup, at least 102, or 13 percent, have military experience. The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) estimates that about 10 percent of the Oath Keepers' membership are active-duty military, and around two-thirds are retired military or police.

The Oath Keepers, along with the Proud Boys, III Percenters and other right-wing militias, played an integral role in the Republican plot to overthrow the election of Joe Biden and install Trump as president-dictator.

Throughout his campaigns and his presidency, Trump cultivated support among the militias through his effusive praise of the police, military and border gestapo. Trump also elevated the groups in public statements—most notably in his debate with Biden in September 2020, when he instructed the Proud Boys to "stand back and stand by."

Trump continues to glorify right-wing militias that heeded his call. He claims those who were arrested in the failed coup are "political prisoners," who have been "treated so badly."

At his fascistic campaign-style rally held this past Saturday in Anchorage, Alaska, Trump—who is yet to be charged, let alone arrested, for trying to overthrow the government—hustled Trump paraphernalia alongside Confederate flag hats, III Percenter T-shirts, and stickers.

At the rally, which took place a month before the August 16 Alaska Republican primary, Trump endorsed Kelly Tshibaka

for Senate and former Republican vice presidential candidate, Sarah Palin, for the House.

In a typical, long-winded fascistic rant, Trump attacked current Republican Senator Lisa Murkowski, who voted to impeach Trump following the coup, as a "bad person" and a "piece of —" who was "worse than a Democrat."

While Trump has been allowed complete freedom to build up his far-right movement, the Democratic-controlled January 6 Committee has dawdled for 18 months, only recently revealing in public hearings new information establishing Trump's direct role in organizing a violent coup.

On Friday, the committee heard eight hours of testimony from Trump's White House counsel, Pat Cipollone.

Cipollone previously failed to testify before the committee. However, a June 29 subpoena from the committee—coupled with explosive testimony from Cassidy Hutchinson, a former top aide to Trump's Chief of Staff Mark Meadows—drove Cipollone to cooperate.

In her testimony before the committee on June 28, Hutchinson said that Cipollone warned her that Trump would be charged with "every crime imaginable" if he marched on the Capitol on January 6.

Hutchinson also testified that she recalled hearing the words "Oath Keeper" and "Proud Boy" mentioned inside the White House when Giuliani came to visit Trump. Speaking to CNN on Friday, committee member and Democratic Representative from California Zoe Lofgren said that Cipollone's testimony "did not contradict" previous witness testimony.



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