

Jury finds Trump co-conspirator Stephen Bannon guilty of contempt of Congress

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On Friday, a Washington D.C. jury found former Trump adviser Stephen K. Bannon, 68, guilty of two counts of contempt of Congress for refusing to supply documents or appear for a deposition before the January 6 House Select Committee charged with investigating the January 6 insurrection. Federal Judge Carl J. Nichols, a Trump appointee and a member of the right-wing Federalist Society, will sentence Bannon on October 21.

Bannon, a leading ideologue of the fascist right, was a ringleader in the conspiracy by former President Donald Trump to overthrow the US government that culminated in the January 6, 2021 insurrection.

For refusing to communicate with the committee in any fashion following the issuing of the subpoena last year, the 12-person jury found Bannon guilty on both counts of contempt, each of which carries a minimum 30-day jail sentence and up to a maximum yearlong sentence. Each misdemeanor charge also carries a possible fine of up to \$100,000. Prosecutors will make their sentencing recommendations to Judge Nichols on October 14, but no matter what Nichols decides, there is no question Bannon will appeal.

After being subpoenaed by the select committee last September, Bannon refused to communicate with the committee, citing alleged “executive privilege” claims made by former President Donald Trump. Trump never actually invoked executive privilege, and the committee made clear it wished to question Bannon on conversations that did not necessarily include Trump and were held after he no longer worked at the White House.

Nevertheless, Bannon continued to defy, in his words,

the “unselect committee.” Following his indictment last year, Bannon continued to publicly attack the committee, “the Biden regime,” and Trump’s political enemies on a near-daily basis on his “War Room”podcast.

Leading up to the coup, through his podcast and in-person rallies, Bannon spread Trump’s lies that the election was fraudulent and that the only way to “save the Republic” was to come to Washington D.C. on January 6 to “stop the steal.”

On a January 5 episode of the “War Room” podcast, Bannon told his audience after an 11-minute phone call with Trump that “All hell is going to break loose tomorrow,” and that “It’s all converging, and now we’re on, as they say, the point of attack.”

Following the verdict on Friday, Bannon continued to attack the Select Committee outside the courtroom. He said that his “one disappointment” was that the “gutless members of that show trial committee, the J6 Committee, didn’t have the guts to come down here and testify in open court.”

The longtime Republican operative and Trump co-conspirator added, “We may have lost the battle here today, but we’re not going to lose the war.” Bannon also reiterated his support for “Trump and the Constitution,” adding, “I will never back off that ever.”

Bannon’s lawyer, David Schoen, claimed his client had a “bullet proof appeal” and that “[y]ou will see this case reversed on appeal.”

In a statement released by Department of Justice

following the verdict, attorney for the District of Columbia Matthew Graves said, “Mr. Bannon had an obligation to appear before the House Select Committee to give testimony and provide documents. His refusal to do so was deliberate, and now a jury has found that he must pay the consequences.” Graves said the subpoena “was not an invitation that could be rejected or ignored.”

Despite being found guilty, Bannon will not go to jail immediately and will instead continue to build up and cultivate a fascist movement within the Republican Party through his podcast.

A recent analysis by CNN found that at least 10 Republican candidates who have appeared on Bannon’s podcast participated in the January 6 siege of the Capitol or in a “Stop the Steal” rally leading up to the coup. This includes Pennsylvania Republican gubernatorial candidate Doug Mastriano and Arizona Republican secretary of state candidate Mark Finchem, neither of whom have been charged for participating in the coup.

The same CNN analysis found that over 100 Republicans seeking office in 2022, all of whom have claimed that the 2020 election was corrupt and that the Biden administration is illegitimate, have appeared on Bannon’s podcast in the last year. Bannon’s top three fascist Republican guests have been former Missouri Governor Eric Greitens, Georgia Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene and the aforementioned Finchem.

Following the verdict, January 6 House Select Committee Chairman Bennie Thompson (Democrat-Mississippi) and Vice Chair Liz Cheney (Republican-Wyoming) released a joint statement hailing the conviction of Bannon as a “victory for the rule of law and an important affirmation of the Select Committee’s work.”

The statement continued: “As the prosecutor stated, Steve Bannon ‘chose allegiance to Donald Trump over compliance with the law.’ Just as there must be accountability by all those responsible for the events of January 6th, anyone who obstructs our investigation

into these matters should face consequences. No one is above the law.”

Of course, as the Department of Justice has already shown, at least two of Trump’s high-level co-conspirators *are* above the law, namely former Trump White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows and former Deputy Chief of Staff for Communications Dan Scavino. Attorney General Merrick Garland has refused to prosecute either despite receiving contempt referrals from Congress after they defied subpoenas from the House Select Committee.

The other high-level Trump co-conspirator to be indicted for contempt of Congress is former Trump trade adviser Peter Navarro. On July 15, Navarro rejected a plea deal from the Department of Justice (DoJ) that would have eliminated one of the two contempt counts against him if he pled guilty to the other one and agreed to a potential 30-day jail sentence.

The fact remains that neither Trump nor any of his high-level accomplices--including Bannon, Navarro and his coup lawyers such as Rudolph Giuliani and John Eastman--have been charged with trying to overthrow the government. Trump and his coup accomplices, far from being held accountable by the Select Committee or the DoJ, continue to cultivate a fascist movement within the Republican Party hell-bent on overturning the remnants of democratic forms of government in the United States.



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