

Uncovered emails reveal US Secret Service coordinated with Oath Keepers founder prior to January 6 insurrection

Jacob Crosse
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On Friday, the last of the 19 defendants in the Georgia election interference case turned themselves in for arrest at the Fulton County Jail in Atlanta. Eighteen of the 19 defendants, which include ex-President Donald Trump, his White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows, attorneys Rudy Giuliani, John Eastman, Sidney Powell, Jenna Ellis and Kenneth Chesebro and former Justice Department official Jeffrey Clark, have all posted bonds ranging from \$100,000 to \$200,000.

The only defendant charged in the sprawling RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations) case who has not posted bond is Harrison Floyd, the leader of Black Voices for Trump. Floyd, who did not negotiate a bond prior to his arrest, remains in detention at the jail as of this writing.

In response to a motion for a “speedy trial” filed by former Trump lawyer Kenneth Chesebro, one of the architects of the fraudulent elector scheme, Georgia state Judge Scott McAfee set an October 23, 2023 trial date for the Trump co-conspirator. Last week, CNN broadcast photos and videos showing Chesebro marching outside the Capitol on January 6 with Alex Jones. Jones, along with Roger Stone and Ali Alexander, served as liaisons between the Trump White House and right-wing militias, such as the Oath Keepers, the Proud Boys and the III Percenters.

In the lead-up to the coup and for over 12 years prior, Jones, who has not been charged for his actions on January 6, regularly hosted convicted Oath Keepers founder Stewart Rhodes on his fascist program *InfoWars*. Rhodes is one of six Oath Keepers who have been found guilty of seditious conspiracy for their actions in furtherance of the coup. He was sentenced to 18 years in prison.

Both the federal Justice Department and the Georgia state prosecutions of Trump and a section of his accomplices for conspiring to overthrow the 2020 election and illegally retain power are entirely warranted. One critical question is why the Biden administration and the Democratic Party authorities in

Fulton County waited more than two-and-a-half years to indict would-be dictator Trump and his cronies.

In Georgia, Trump and his lawyers illegally filed false documents, intimidated election workers, broke into voting machines and threatened elected officials, most of which was carried out in broad daylight both before and after the November 2020 election.

Moreover, the indictment in Georgia and the earlier indictment filed by Special Counsel Jack Smith are deliberately constructed to cover up the links between the violence at the Capitol on January 6 and the widespread and active support Trump’s coup had within the police and military, not to mention the US Supreme Court (Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas) and among Republican elected officials.

None of the numerous high-level Pentagon, police and intelligence officials who were complicit in the attempted overthrow of the Constitution and imposition of a Trump dictatorship, including by delaying for more than three hours the deployment of D.C. National Guard troops to the Capitol, have been indicted, and their roles are never mentioned in the wall-to-wall media commentary on the cases against Trump.

Recently uncovered internal US Secret Service emails published by Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW) shed more light on the close ties between the militia elements that stormed the Capitol and the agency charged with protecting the president. On August 23, CREW published emails that show that as early as September 15, 2020, Secret Service agents were talking on the phone with Stewart Rhodes.

In an email dated September 15, 2020, which was sent by one agent to others in the agency, the email’s author wrote that he had had a phone call with Rhodes “today,” and that Rhodes was planning “to have security details in Fayetteville for POTUS supporters.” The message continued: “He had specific questions and wanted to liaison with our personnel. His cell phone is [redacted].”

Reflecting the cordial relationship between the Secret Service and the militia group, the agent began the email by noting that

he was “the unofficial liaison to the Oath Keepers (inching towards official).”

As early as 2015, the Anti-Defamation League characterized the Oath Keepers as “anti-government extremists,” whose members were “involved in criminal incidents.”

Beginning with the 2014 police murder of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, Oath Keepers have repeatedly intimidated anti-police violence protesters by showing up to protests in body armor and wielding semi-automatic rifles.

Yet, in the September 15, 2020 email, the Secret Service agent gave no indication he was aware of, or cared about, the Oath Keepers’ violent tendencies. Instead he wrote that the Oath Keepers “are primarily retired law enforcement/former military members who are very pro-LEO [Law Enforcement Officer] and Pro Trump. Their stated purpose is to provide protection and medical attention to Trump supporters if they come under attack by leftist groups.”

Subsequent emails demonstrate the lengths the agency went to whitewash the far-right politics of the militia group. A separate email written by another Secret Service agent the following day, September 16, wrote of having just spoken on the phone with Rhodes and that “[Rhodes’] desire is to assist those attending the [Fayetteville pro-Trump] event [to] make it to and from their cars safely.”

The agent wrote that Rhodes and the Oath Keepers were “NOT there to demonstrate or push a political agenda.” He then requested that the recipient of the email “conduct social media analysis on the groups and provide any information regarding their plans to attend the event.”

In response, another agent wrote that “General searches revealed news articles that touched on the background of the founder Stewart Rhodes and the group.” The agent wrote that “Rhodes has denounced White Nationalist ideals while sharing his dislike for ANTIFA.” He later added that the “group claims it is a local community response team for natural or civil disorders.”

The uncovering of these emails by CREW is the latest proof that the near-success of Trump’s coup cannot be attributed to the few hundred fascists and smaller number of organized far-right militia forces who stormed the Capitol, but the fact that these elements were supported and given free rein to operate by high-level security elements within the US government, including the Secret Service.

In the course of the trials of Oath Keeper insurrectionists last year, one defendant, John Zimmerman, turned state’s evidence and testified that Rhodes frequently communicated with Secret Service agents using his cell phone, beginning in September 2020.

Zero Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Service, Carol Leonnig of the *Washington Post* described Secret Service agents on January 6 wearing red caps and cheering on the attack on the Capitol. Following the coup, Leonnig wrote that “one Secret Service officer called the armed protesters ‘patriots’ seeking to undo an illegitimate election.”

Leonnig described then-US Secret Service Assistant Director Tony Ornato as being “extremely close” to Trump and one of his “yes-men.” Trump made the highly unusual move of appointing Ornato, while still holding his Secret Service post, to be his deputy White House chief of staff for operations.

The decision of President Joe Biden, the Democratic Party and the now-defunct House Select Committee to obscure the critical role of the security agencies and the Pentagon in Trump’s coup is part of a deliberate policy. It is the result of a combination of political cowardice and complicity.

Both before, during and after the attempted coup, the Democrats sought to downplay the danger to the democratic rights of the American people precisely because it is rooted in the mortal crisis of American and world capitalism. The ruling class has no answer to the crisis other than imperialist war and ever more brutal attacks on the social conditions and rights of the working class.

Under conditions of an escalating war against nuclear-armed Russia and open preparations for war against China, another nuclear power, and a growing movement of the working class against social inequality and falling living standards, the Democrats work deliberately to politically disarm the masses.

That is why from the outset Biden and the Democrats have advanced the “one-man coup” narrative. This fiction, made official in the final report issued by the Democratic-controlled House Select Committee, attributes the attempted coup entirely to Trump and a few enablers.

This false narrative, the WSWS wrote last year, “underscores the committee’s political goal of marginalizing Trump while exonerating key institutions of the capitalist state that were implicated in the conspiracy and continue to plot against the democratic rights of the population. This effort at cover-up and deception is driven principally by the foreign policy and war aims of the Biden administration and the Democratic Party, which, in Biden’s words, desire a ‘strong Republican Party’ to pursue a bipartisan policy of confrontation and war against Russia and China.”



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