

Proud Boy leaders sentenced to double-digit prison terms

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Last week, four high-level members of the fascist Proud Boys militia group, all of whom were convicted of multiple felonies in furtherance of ex-President Donald Trump's failed coup, were sentenced to double-digit prison terms by US District Judge Timothy J. Kelly. While including a terrorism enhancement in all of the Proud Boys' sentences, Kelly, a Trump appointee, ordered less severe prison terms than those recommended by prosecutors.

On August 31, Kelly sentenced Joseph Biggs, an Army veteran with two deployments to Iraq, who then became an FBI informant and *InfoWars* correspondent, to 17 years in prison, one less year than the 18 years handed down against Oath Keepers founder Stewart Rhodes this past May. In seeking a 33-year sentence for Biggs, federal prosecutors wrote that he, perhaps more than any other defendant, "promoted the use of force against the government," and "constantly invoked the language of 'war.'"

Seeking to justify his relatively lenient sentencing decision, Kelly said that Biggs' actions, while warranting a terrorist enhancement, did not result in mass death and therefore did not warrant the "stratospheric" sentence demanded by the government.

That same day, Kelly sentenced Zachary Rehl, a former US Marine and grandson of a Philadelphia police officer, to 15 years in prison, half of the 30 years sought by prosecutors. Both Biggs and Rehl were photographed at the head of the far-right mob that stormed the US Capitol at multiple points during the January 6, 2021 siege. Both men were convicted earlier this year of seditious conspiracy and conspiracy to obstruct an official proceeding.

The following day, Kelly sentenced bodybuilder, street fighter and Seattle-area Proud Boy chapter president Ethan Nordean, 32, of Auburn, Washington to 18 years in prison, 9 less than the 27 years sought by prosecutors. Nordean and Biggs assumed command of the Proud Boys following the arrest of former chairman Henry "Enrique" Tarrio on January 4, 2021.

Nordean, who implored his Proud Boy comrades to "fash the f*ck out" prior to the attack, led a group of about 200 Proud Boys to the Capitol on January 6. Convicted of seditious conspiracy earlier this year, he admitted prior to his sentencing that he had led "a group of men back to the Capitol," adding, "There is no excuse for my actions, ignoring police commands, going past barricades, entering the Capitol."

Like Biggs, Nordean appeared on January 6 organizer Alex Jones' *InfoWars* program multiple times throughout the Trump presidency to promote the Proud Boys.

Also on Friday, Kelly sentenced former US Marine Dominic Pezzola of Rochester, New York to 10 years in prison, half of the 20 years sought by prosecutors, who described Pezzola as an "enthusiastic foot soldier" in "Donald Trump's army."

On January 6, Pezzola used a stolen police riot shield to break a window at the Capitol and crawl through it. Once inside the building, he helped open the doors, allowing the mob to flood in and stop the congressional certification of the election. While he was not convicted of seditious conspiracy, Pezzola was convicted of multiple serious felonies, including conspiring against members of Congress, assaulting police and destroying government property.

Prior to his sentencing, Pezzola tearfully requested leniency from Judge Kelly, saying, "Your honor, I stand before you as a changed and humbled man. But, nonetheless as a man who has always taken responsibility for his actions... I have never denied what I did on J6."

After Kelly handed down his sentence and left the room, a beaming Pezzola raised his arms as he was led out of the courtroom by US Marshals and shouted, "Trump won!"

On Tuesday, "prolific" FBI informant and former Proud Boys chairman Tarrio is scheduled to be sentenced. While prosecutors are seeking a 33-year sentence, given the generally lax sentences judges have handed down to Trump's foot soldiers, there is little chance Tarrio will be sentenced to more

than 20 years in prison, especially since he was not actually in Washington D.C. during the attack.

While the sentences handed down by Judge Kelly are more than warranted, the prosecution of leaders of the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers militia groups has not prevented smaller Proud Boys clubs and other militia groups from mobilizing on behalf of former President Trump, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and fascistic Republican causes.

This is mainly due to the fecklessness of the Biden administration and the Democrats, and their deliberate cover-up of coup plotters in the military, the police, the intelligence agencies and the Republican Party leadership. This, in turn, is driven by their desire for bipartisan support to prosecute the war against Russia in Ukraine and to suppress the mounting upsurge of the working class.

While Trump is belatedly facing charges in relation to the January 6 coup, none of the indictments link Trump to the fascist militia groups that stormed the Capitol on his behalf. And while some of Trump's top co-conspirators, such as Rudy Giuliani and Mark Meadows, have been indicted, hundreds more remain uncharged nearly three years after the coup. This includes conspirators at the Pentagon such as former acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller and General Charles Flynn, both of whom played critical roles in blocking the deployment of National Guard troops to break the siege at the Capitol.

Meanwhile, groups of Nazis, encouraged by politicians in both big business parties, held rallies in Florida over the weekend. On Saturday morning, roughly 15 Nazis, for at least the third time this year, held a rally outside Disney World. They wore black shirts featuring a Sonnenrad and waved swastika and DeSantis flags, while also holding signs in support of Democratic presidential challenger Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

Referring to DeSantis, the Nazis said they were "Ron's Holocaust task force" and "his biggest supporters." On-the-ground footage shows the Nazis cutting up a rainbow Pride flag and yelling vile insults against immigrants, Jewish people and "all the mud races."

While he has backed off from his attacks against the Disney corporation in recent months, last year DeSantis endeared himself to Nazis freely operating in Florida by frequently attacking the corporation. In multiple speeches at far-right conferences and on Fox News, DeSantis accused the corporation of pushing a "woke agenda," which, according to him, included "sexualizing children" and promoting LGBTQ rights.

According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the neo-

Nazis outside of Disney were from three separate groups, including Order of the Black Sun, 14 First, and the Aryan Freedom Network. In a statement, the Orange County Sheriff's Office said the Nazis rallied for about two hours and left without any arrests being made.

Later that afternoon, in and around Orlando, two different neo-Nazi groups, the Goyim Defense League, led by Jon Minadeo II, and Blood Tribe, led by former US Marine Christopher Pohlhaus, came together for a rally dubbed "The March of the Redshirts."

Images circulated by the groups prior to the rally featured a photo of the AR-15 used by neo-Nazi Jerrald Gallion during his massacre at the Dollar General in Jacksonville, Florida the week prior.

At Saturday's rally, roughly 50 Nazis, dressed in red and black and waving swastika flags chanted "Jews get the rope" and "Heil Hitler" on an overpass above Interstate 4. At one point, unsuccessful Republican congressional candidate and pro-Trump operative Laura Loomer, who is Jewish, appeared at the rally. Once the Nazis saw Loomer they immediately began yelling, "tranny Jew," "f*ggot" and "Laura Jewmer."

Asked by a journalist on the scene whom he would vote for in the 2024 election, Pohlhaus said his vote was useless, but that, "I think Biden is better than Trump because he sends rockets to Ukraine."

"Hail Ukraine. Hail Azov," Polhaus added. Behind him, another heavily tattooed Nazi, identified as Kent "Bone Face" McLellan, chanted "Slava Ukraini."

McLellan was previously arrested by the FBI in 2012 on domestic terrorism charges. After pleading guilty to taking part in paramilitary training in preparation for the coming "race war," McLellan was sentenced to four years probation without prison time. McLellan has repeatedly claimed that he has traveled to Ukraine and fought alongside the Azov Battalion.



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