



PRESS RELEASE

Jury Convicts Four Leaders of the Proud Boys of Seditious Conspiracy Related to U.S. Capitol Breach

Thursday, May 4, 2023

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of
Columbia

All Defendants Convicted of Multiple Felonies

WASHINGTON – A jury in the District of Columbia, today, returned guilty verdicts on multiple felonies against five members of the Proud Boys, finding four of the defendants guilty of seditious conspiracy for their actions before and during the breach of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

According to the evidence at trial, in the months leading up to January 6, the defendants plotted to oppose by force the lawful transfer of presidential power, and to prevent the Members of Congress, and the federal law enforcement officers who protect them, from discharging their duties. Henry “Enrique” Tarrio, 39, of Miami, Florida, the former national chairman of the Proud Boys; Ethan Nordean, 32, of Auburn, Washington; Joseph Biggs, 39, of Ormond Beach, Florida; Zachary Rehl, 37, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania were found guilty of seditious conspiracy, and conspiracy to obstruct an official proceeding. The four defendants and co-defendant Dominic Pezzola, 45, of Rochester, New York were also found guilty of obstruction of an official proceeding, conspiracy to prevent Members of Congress and federal law enforcement officers from discharging their duties, civil disorder, and destruction of

government property. Pezzola was also found guilty of assaulting, resisting, or impeding certain officers and robbery involving government property.

The verdicts were announced by U.S. Attorney Matthew M. Graves and FBI Assistant Director in Charge David Sundberg.

“Hundreds have already been held accountable for their conduct on January 6, 2021, and this verdict holds some of the most prominent members of the Proud Boys accountable for their role in trying to prevent the certification of the 2020 Presidential election,” said U.S. Attorney Graves. “The government’s evidence at trial demonstrated the crucial role that these men and their followers played in breaking through the multiple security lines that protected the Capitol on January 6, 2021. Their crimes, and the crimes of other members of the mob that descended on the Capitol, struck at the very heart of our democracy. We are incredibly appreciative of the jury which carefully considered all of the evidence, after attentively listening to evidence and arguments for nearly four months.”

“Today’s verdicts, which found four leaders of the Proud Boys guilty of seditious conspiracy, and all defendants guilty of serious felony charges, represent the hard work and dedication of seven FBI field offices over the past two years,” said Assistant Director in Charge Sundberg. “These verdicts serve as another reminder that the FBI and our law enforcement partners will work tirelessly to ensure justice is served. The FBI upholds the rights of all citizens who peacefully engage in First Amendment protected activities, but we and our partners will continue to hold accountable those who engaged in violence and criminal activity on January 6, 2021, at the U.S. Capitol.”

According to the evidence, the Proud Boys describe themselves as members of a “pro-Western fraternal organization for men who refuse to apologize for creating the modern world, aka Western Chauvinists.” Through at least January 6, 2021, Tarrio was the national chairman of the organization. In September 2020, former President Donald J. Trump told the Proud Boys during a nationally televised debate to “stand back and stand by.” Thereafter, membership in the group increased dramatically. Proud Boys played a significant and often violent role in Washington, D.C. rallies in November and December 2020. During a rally in Washington, D.C. on December 12, 2020, Tarrio set a stolen Black Lives Matter banner on fire. During that same rally, cooperating defendant Jeremy Bertino, who has also pleaded guilty to Seditious Conspiracy, was stabbed.

In the aftermath, Tarrio created a special chapter of the Proud Boys known as the “Ministry of Self Defense.” Beginning after December 19, 2020, Tarrio and his co-defendants, all of whom were leaders or members of the Ministry of Self Defense, conspired to prevent, hinder and delay the certification of the Electoral College vote, and to oppose by force the authority of the government of the United States. On Jan. 6, 2021, the defendants directed, mobilized, and led a group of Proud Boys and other members of the crowd onto the Capitol grounds, leading to

dismantling of metal barricades, destruction of property, breaching of the Capitol building, and assaults on law enforcement. During and after the attack, Tarrio and his co-defendants claimed credit for what had happened on social media and in an encrypted chat room.

A sixth defendant, Charles Donohoe, 34, of Kernersville, North Carolina, pleaded guilty on April 8, 2022, to conspiracy to obstruct an official proceeding and assaulting, resisting, or impeding officers.

This case is being prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia, the Department of Justice National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section, and the Department of Justice Criminal Division's Organized Crime and Gang Section.

The case is being investigated by the FBI's Washington Field Office. The charges in the investigation are the result of significant cooperation between agents and staff across numerous FBI Field Offices, and law enforcement agencies.

In the 27 months since Jan. 6, 2021, more than 1,000 individuals have been arrested in nearly all 50 states for crimes related to the breach of the U.S. Capitol, including more than 320 individuals charged with assaulting or impeding law enforcement. The investigation remains ongoing. Anyone with tips can call 1-800-CALL-FBI (800-225-5324) or visit tips.fbi.gov.

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VIOLENT CRIME

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