

J Connolly Open Forum BBS 1/3/2023

January 3, 2023

From: Joseph Connolly, M.A.

To: El Dorado County Board of Supervisors
Copy: El Dorado County Chief Administrative Officer
El Dorado County Counsel

Subj: El Dorado County Board of Supervisors - A Full Circle of Seditious Ties

Dear Supervisors:

Prior to Commissioner Grimoldi's appointment you received unrefuted evidence of her connections to individuals and groups who advocated for, and then attempted to overthrow the United States Government by force on January 6, 2021. Those groups include the "Proud Boys," whose leaders have pled guilty or are facing trial for seditious conspiracy against the United States, amongst other crimes related to their conspiracy.

Grimoldi has been a member of the local group "Boots on the Ground Cali" ("BOTGC") for over two years, prior to and throughout her appointment as an El Dorado County commissioner. In that time, Grimoldi has had individual friendships with members of the Proud Boys, while BOTGC has maintained a full circle of seditious ties with the Proud Boys from at least November, 2020 to the present.

Grimoldi now questions the results of the Congressional "Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the U.S. Capitol." The committee's final report mentions the "Proud Boys" 224 times, including "how the Proud Boys led the attack, penetrated the Capitol, and led hundreds of others inside."

Grimoldi's ongoing advocacy for the Proud Boys seditious conspiracy is incompatible with your oath of office to support and defend the United States Constitution, under which the Congress convened on January 6, 2021. Grimoldi's continued social media postings of personal political views are a flagrant disregard of the specific warnings you issued to avoid becoming too political, at the risk of vacating her commission appointment.

Sincerely,

s/Joseph Connolly

Sedition Comes Full Circle to El Dorado County:

The El Dorado County Board of Supervisors' Approval of Ties to Seditious Conspiracy Against the United States



An Independent Citizen's Summary of Seditious Ties amongst Commissioner Linda Grimoldi and the Proud Boys

Prepared and Submitted by:
Joseph Connolly, M.A.
January 3, 2023

INTRODUCTION

The El Dorado County Board of Supervisors (“Board”) appointed Linda Grimoldi as a commissioner on March 22, 2022 despite public opposition and unrefuted evidence of her ties to extremist groups and individuals.

Grimoldi did not disclose she was a member and moderator of the group “Boots on the Ground Cali” (“BOTGC”), that she had personal ties to Proud Boys who were also BOTGC members, or that the BOTGC founder was a personal friend who had his own extremist ties to the Three Percenters militia, Proud Boys and neo-Nazis.

BOTGC’s ties to the Proud Boys in particular, from 2020 to the present, implicate Grimoldi and the Board to the Proud Boys guilt in planning and carrying out a seditious conspiracy against the United States, whose purpose was to obstruct a Congressional proceeding mandated by the U.S. Constitution and public law.

In October, 2022 Proud Boy leader Jeremy Bertino of North Carolina pled guilty to seditious conspiracy. His plea deal requires him to fully participate in all related trials.¹ Currently, five of Bertino’s fellow conspirators are on trial for seditious conspiracy and related federal crimes. (See Figure 1.)



Figure 1
Proud Boys defendants in current seditious conspiracy trial

¹ See Dept. of Justice press release at <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/former-leader-proud-boys-pleads-guilty-seditious-conspiracy-efforts-stop-transfer-power>.

I.
BACKGROUND AND KEY FIGURES

On November 21, 2020 “dozens of Proud Boys” attended a “Stop the Steal” rally at the California state Capitol. The election protest was the third consecutive weekend in which the Proud Boys engaged in public violence during those protests.²

The protestors included Aaron Bate of El Dorado County, founder of the group “Boots on the Ground Cali” (“BOTGC”). Among the Proud Boys were Eddie Block, Ricky Willden, David Dempsey, and Patrick Kiehl, the future president of the Hangtown Proud Boys, an El Dorado County chapter of the Proud Boys Intl., LLC.

Block, Willden and Dempsey continued to protest at Proud Boys rallies here and in Washington, DC. At a December 12, 2020 rally in Washington, DC, one Proud Boy wore the attire of the newly formed Hangtown Proud Boys, which features a person hanging from a noose and the words “Placerville CA.” (See Figure 2.)



Figure 2

Sacramento area Proud Boy Cosmin Merca (left) with Hangtown Proud Boy (right)
Washington, DC Proud Boy Rally - December 12, 2020

² See e.g., <https://www.capradio.org/articles/2020/11/21/third-straight-weekend-of-protests-violence-as-trump-supporters-descend-on-californias-capitol/>.

On January 6, 2021, the Proud Boys carried out a planned attack on the U.S. Capitol in order to obstruct Congress from certifying the 2020 Electoral College vote. Willden, Dempsey and Block participated in that conspiratorial attack that included violent assaults against officers guarding the Capitol building and grounds.

As of January 3, 2023, Willden is serving a two year prison sentence after pleading guilty to assaulting law enforcement officers.³ Dempsey was arrested, indicted on eleven counts, and remains in jail awaiting trial.⁴ (See Figures 3-4.)



Figure 3
Proud Boy Ricky Willden
U.S. Capitol - Jan. 6, 2021



Figure 4
Proud Boy David Dempsey
U.S. Capitol - Jan. 6, 2021

Block's home was raided by the FBI in January, 2021. Although he has not been arrested, Block complained in April, 2022 that he received death threats for having to testify in future trials.⁵

Block is a potential witness in the ongoing trial of Proud Boys leaders charged with seditious conspiracy and related crimes. (See Figure 1.) On December 28, 2022 the presiding judge denied defendant Ethan Norden's request to depose Block in lieu of appearing in person.⁶

³ See Dept. of Justice press release at <https://www.justice.gov/usao-dc/pr/california-man-sentenced-two-years-prison-assaulting-officers-during-jan-6-capitol-breach>.

⁴ See Dept. of Justice press release at <https://www.justice.gov/usao-dc/pr/california-men-arrested-assault-law-enforcement-during-jan-6-capitol-breach>.

⁵ See e.g., page 15 and footnote 19 of Joseph Connolly letter, "Proud Boy Ricky Willden Plea - El Dorado County Implications," dated April 25, 2022.

⁶ See order at <https://www.docdroid.net/kt4NDfT/nordeaneddieblockminuteorder-pdf>.

II.
**FINAL REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE THE
JANUARY 6TH ATTACK ON THE U.S. CAPITOL**

On June 30, 2021 the U.S. House of Representatives established a “Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol” (“Select Committee”).

The Select Committee’s purpose included “[t]o investigate and report upon the facts, circumstances, and causes relating to the January 6, 2021, domestic terrorist attack upon the United States Capitol Complex ... and relating to the interference with the peaceful transfer of power, ... as well as the influencing factors that fomented such an attack on American representative democracy **while engaged in a constitutional process.**”⁷ (emphasis added.)

A.
CRIMINAL REFERRALS

On December 19, 2022 the Select Committee unanimously voted to refer four criminal charges to the U.S. Department of Justice’s Special Counsel against former President Donald Trump, Trump’s attorney John Eastman, and others.⁸

The Committee also suggested the Department of Justice investigate the possibility of additional charges, **including seditious conspiracy.**⁹

The decision to refer criminal charges was based in part on federal court rulings related to the Select Committee’s investigation. On March 28, 2022 a court ruled that “President Trump attempted to obstruct an official proceeding [of Congress] by launching a pressure campaign to convince Vice President Pence to disrupt the Joint Session on January 6.”

⁷ See <https://january6th.house.gov/about>; see also <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-resolution/503/text>.

⁸ See December 19, 2022 committee meeting at <https://january6th.house.gov/legislation/business-meetings/12192022-business-meeting>; see also December 19, 2022 introduction to the committee’s final report at <https://www.justsecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/january-6-clearinghouse-executive-summary-december-19-2022.pdf>.

⁹ See pages 75-90 of the committee’s introduction to its final report at <https://www.justsecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/january-6-clearinghouse-executive-summary-december-19-2022.pdf>.

In other words, Trump and Eastman “more likely than not” committed “the crimes of obstruction of an official proceeding and conspiracy to defraud the United States.”¹⁰

The court concluded that “Dr. Eastman and President Trump launched a **campaign to overturn a democratic election**, an action unprecedented in American history. Their campaign was ... **a coup in search of a legal theory**. The plan spurred **violent attacks on the seat of our nation’s government**, led to the **deaths of several law enforcement officers**, and deepened public distrust in our political process. ... If Dr. Eastman and President Trump’s plan had worked, it would have permanently ended the peaceful transition of power, undermining American democracy **and the Constitution**.”¹¹ (emphasis added.)

B.

THE PROUD BOYS ROLE IN THE PRESIDENTIAL “COUP” ATTEMPT

The Select Committee’s final report documents “how the Proud Boys led the attack, penetrated the [U.S.] Capitol, and led hundreds of others inside.”¹²

Planning for the January 6, 2021 attack included a “Stop the Steal” campaign that was incorporated in Alabama on November 10, 2020. Organizers “held rallies around the country to protest fictional claims of voter fraud. These events provided an opportunity for radicals and extremists to coalesce [including t]he Proud Boys, Oath Keepers, and Three Percenters.”¹³

In particular, the Proud Boys coalesced their previously disparate organization into an organized plan “to stop the peaceful transfer of power.” On November 5, 2020—two days before a group of Proud Boys first appeared at a Sacramento “Stop the Steal” rally—Proud Boys leader Joseph Biggs posted on social media, “It’s time for fucking war if they steal this shit.”¹⁴

¹⁰ See pages 32-42 of ruling at https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.cacd.841840/gov.uscourts.cacd.841840.260.0_4.pdf.

¹¹ *Id.*, page 44.

¹² See e.g., page 56 of final report at https://january6th.house.gov/sites/democrats.january6th.house.gov/files/Report_FinalReport_Jan6SelectCommittee.pdf.

¹³ *Id.*, see pages 502-507.

¹⁴ *Id.*, see Chapter 6.2, “The Proud Boys: “[Y]ou Want to Storm the Capitol”” at https://january6th.house.gov/sites/democrats.january6th.house.gov/files/Report_FinalReport_Jan6SelectCommittee.pdf.

The end result of the “Stop the Steal” campaign was the January 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol, led by the Proud Boys. Compare, for example, the first lawful *rally* in Sacramento on November 7, 2020, and the final unlawful *attack* in Washington D.C. on January 6, 2021. (See Figures 5-6.)



Figure 5
“Stop the Steal” Rally - California State Capitol - November 7, 2020



Figure 6
“Stop the Steal” Attack - U.S. Capitol - January 6, 2021

The Select Committee’s findings are clear about the Proud Boys primary role in the January 6, 2021 attack of the U.S. Capitol. “[T]he Proud Boys “directed, mobilized and led members of the crowd onto the Capitol grounds and into the Capitol, leading to dismantling of metal barricades, destruction of property, breaching of the Capitol building, and assaults on law enforcement.””¹⁵ (See e.g., Figure 7.)



Figure 7

Proud Boy Dominic Pezzola – First Breach of U.S. Capitol Building – Jan. 6, 2021

“Shortly before the joint session of Congress was set to begin at 1:00 p.m., the Proud Boys instigated an assault on outmanned law enforcement at the Peace Circle, a key location. They quickly overran security barriers and made their way onto the U.S. Capitol’s restricted grounds. Throughout the next several hours, members of the Proud Boys led the attack at key breach points, preventing law enforcement from gaining crowd control and inciting others to press forward.”¹⁶

One especially violent part of the attack was an hours-long assault on officers guarding a critical tunnel entrance into the U.S. Capitol. Figure 8, below, shows Proud Boys David Dempsey and Alan Fischer at the forefront of that attack. Both are holding stolen police shields as they and other Proud Boys unsuccessfully sought to breach that access point.

¹⁵ *Id.*, Chapter 8, “Analysis of the Attack.”

¹⁶ *Ibid.*



Figure 8
Proud Boys David Dempsey (top), [Jeremy Fischer](#) (bottom)
U.S. Capitol Attack - January 6, 2021

In October 2022, Proud Boys leader Jeremy Bertino entered a [guilty plea to seditious conspiracy](#). His statement of offense admitted that “the Proud Boys traveled to Washington, DC on January 6, 2021, “to stop the certification of the Electoral College Vote.” They “were willing to do whatever it would take, including using force against police and others, to achieve that objective.””¹⁷

C.

COMMISSIONER GRIMOLDI’S MOCKERY OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE

On December 19, 2022 commissioner Grimoldi mocked the select committee and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi on her social media account. (See Figure 9.)

Grimoldi wrote, “Are the jan 6 hearings just one sided. I never heard from anyone on the right or about doors being opened by security or face lift queen refusing more security. Just asking.”

Three responses were all marked with a “thumbs up” icon by Grimoldi, which signifies assent or approval. Sharon Rose wrote, “Most definitely and they couldn’t come up with a crime so they are sending it to the Department of Justice to come up with a crime.” Grimoldi responded, “so out of control.”

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Mary Jo Riley wrote, "It's extremely one-sided! And mostly if not all, a lot of hearsay!!!" Again, Grimoldi responded with a "thumbs up" icon.

Dustin Weiland wrote, "Everyone on that panel, bought and paid for by someone. ... This was a sham! ... Mark my words. The fix is in on that deal, somewhere and somehow." Grimoldi responded, "soros and obama," and added a "thumbs up" icon.

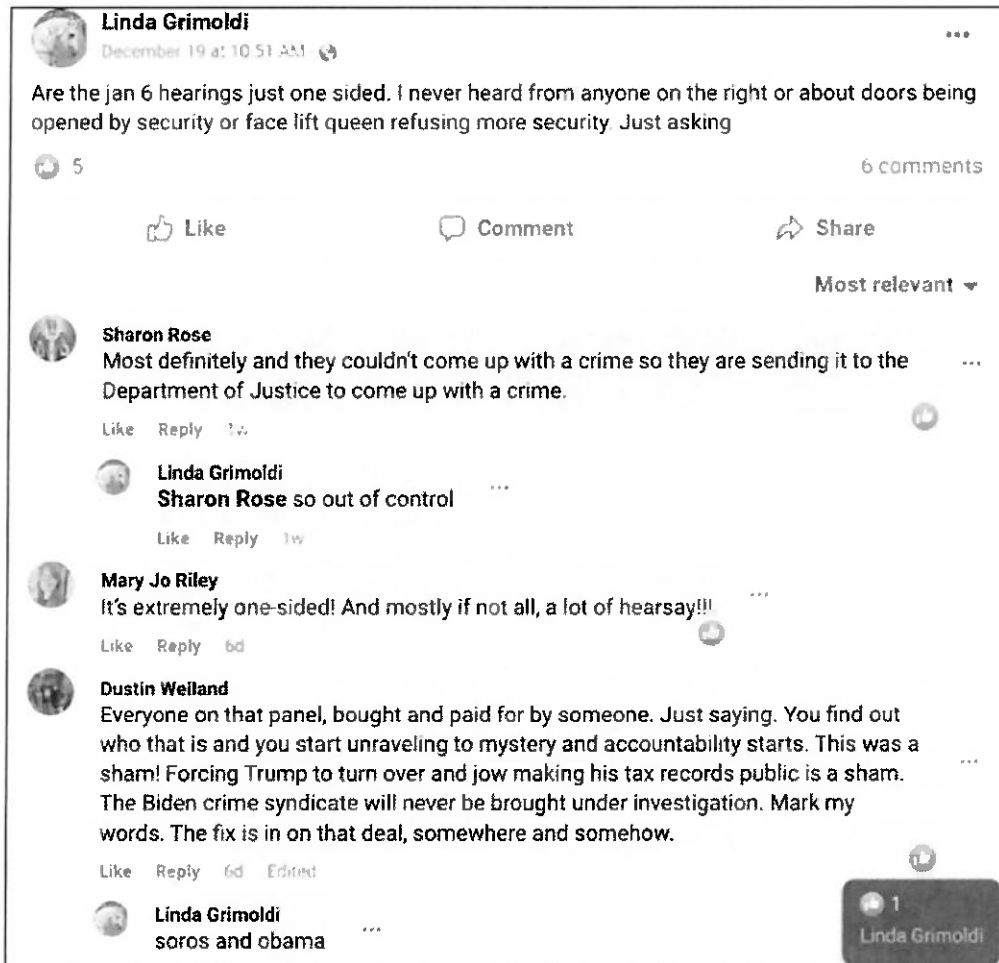


Figure 9
Grimoldi Facebook post - December 19, 2022

III.
“STOP THE STEAL” RALLY AND PROUD BOYS VIOLENCE
SACRAMENTO, CA - NOVEMBER 21, 2020

On November 21, 2020 Bate joined multiple Proud Boys at the third consecutive “Stop the Steal” rally in Sacramento. Among the Proud Boys at the rally were David Dempsey, Ricky Willden and Eddie Block.¹⁸ (See e.g., Figures 10–12.)



Figure 10
BOTGC founder Aaron Bate (left), Proud Boy Eddie Block (right)
“Stop the Steal” fist bump – Sacramento, CA – November 21, 2020



Figure 11
Block’s Proud Boys stickers



Figure 12
Block’s Proud Boys ball cap

¹⁸ Block filmed the event in a 2 hour, 35 minute video titled “Sacramento Stop the Steal Rally Proudboys Antifa BLM.” Block’s video is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdlzUI3pdzM&t=6273s&ab_channel=EddieBlockFilms.

Block and Dempsey later marched with the Proud Boys to confront the public at Caesar Chavez Plaza, approximately four blocks north of the state Capitol rally site. Multiple Proud Boys, including Block, assaulted the public and Block bragged about getting his “4th degree” of Proud Boys membership in the melee. (See e.g., Figures 13, 14.)



Figure 13
Proud Boys Jeffrey Perrine (left), David Dempsey (right)¹⁹



Figure 14
Proud Boy David Dempsey (left) during Proud Boys assault

¹⁹ Perrine has collaborated with Bate in past extremist events, including a 2018 rally with individuals linked to neo-Nazi groups. See e.g., pages 25-29 of Joseph Connolly letter, “Proud Boy Ricky Willden Plea - El Dorado County Implications,” dated April 25, 2022.

IV.
PROUD BOY EDDIE BLOCK’S PARTICIPATION IN THE U.S. CAPITOL ATTACK
JANUARY 6, 2021

Proud Boy Eddie Block’s participation in “Stop the Seal” rallies and the January 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol has previously been documented to the Board of Supervisors.²⁰

The following images are additional documentation of Block’s unlawful presence on the restricted grounds of the U.S. Capitol. Notably, Block was in a position to film former New Mexico county commissioner Couy Griffin, as Griffin passed within an arm’s reach of Block while using a ramp to scale a low wall on the Capitol’s lower west terrace.²¹ (See Figures 15 - 21.)



Figure 15
Proud Boy Eddie Block - Lower West Terrace, U.S. Capitol - January 6, 2021
NOTE: Plywood ramp above Block, used to scale a low wall

²⁰ See e.g., pages 15-23, 37, 40-43, 53-65, 80-82 of Joseph Connolly letter, “Proud Boy Ricky Willden Plea - El Dorado County Implications,” dated April 25, 2022.

²¹ Griffin was removed from office for life on September 6, 2022, under authority of Section 3 of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and New Mexico statutes. See e.g., Joseph Connolly letter, “Constitutional Disqualification from Holding Office,” dated September 20, 2022.



Figure 16
Proud Boy Eddie Block - Lower West Terrace, U.S. Capitol - January 6, 2021



Figure 17
Coy Griffin - Lower West Terrace, U.S. Capitol - January 6, 2021



Figure 18
Couy Griffin (left), Proud Boy David Dempsey (right)
Outer edge of temporary inaugural platform - U.S. Capitol - January 6, 2021



Figure 19
Proud Boy Eddie Block (lower) filming Couy Griffin and others (above)
Lower West Terrace - U.S. Capitol - January 6, 2021



Figure 20

Proud Boy Eddie Block - Lower West Terrace - U.S. Capitol - January 6, 2021
NOTE: Visible "PROUD BOYS" patch²²



Figure 21

Proud Boy Eddie Block at end of insurrection
Lower West Terrace - U.S. Capitol - January 6, 2021

²² Block's "PROUD BOY" patch was distinctive because the Proud Boys leadership did not allow any identifying signs amongst themselves on January 6, 2021, including their typical black and yellow clothing and emblems.

V.
COMMISSIONER GRIMOLDI'S APPOINTMENT WITH EXTREMIST TIES
MARCH 22, 2022

Commissioner Grimoldi's application to fill a vacancy on the El Dorado County Commission on Aging was submitted on February 18, 2022. Grimoldi did not disclose she was a member and moderator of BOTGC for approximately two years, nor disclose she had personal ties to Proud Boys, or that those Proud Boys were also BOTGC members.

Grimoldi was appointed on March 22, 2022, despite public opposition and unrefuted documentation of her extremist ties. She has not acknowledged any extremist ties, nor has the Board asked her to.

VI.
BOTGC AND PROUD BOYS CONFRONTATION
EL DORADO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING ROOM - MAY 10, 2022

On May 10, 2022 BOTGC founder Aaron Bate, Hangtown Proud Boys chapter president Patrick Kiehl—a BOTGC member—and three other Proud Boys confronted me in the Board of Supervisor's meeting room, resulting in the dispatch of two El Dorado County sheriff's deputies.

The confrontation occurred in full view of the Board, the County's Chief Administrative Officer, County Counsel, and members of the public. Nevertheless, no Supervisor or other County official apologized or condemned the public confrontation by Bate, Kiehl and their Proud Boy companions.²³ (See Figure 22.)

When I objected to the Board chair, Supervisor Lori Parlin, she responded in part that she "wasn't responsible for my safety." When I objected to the County's Chief Administrative Officer, I was criticized by him for "being critical."

As of January 3, 2023 the Board of Supervisors has not addressed the issue or the connections to commissioner Grimoldi.

²³ See pages 5–18 of Joseph Connolly letter, "Ongoing Harassment in Board of Supervisors Chambers," dated May 17, 2022; see also pages 9–10 of Joseph Connolly letter, "Additional Commissioner Grimoldi Ordinance Code Violations," dated August 16, 2022.



Figure 22

BOTGC founder Aaron Bate (left), Proud Boy Patrick Kiehl (right) & other Proud Boys
El Dorado County Government Center - May 10, 2022

**VII.
PROUD BOY EDDIE BLOCK JOINS BOTGC
ON OR ABOUT SEPTEMBER 9, 2022**

On or about September 9, 2022 Proud Boy Eddie Block joined BOTGC, as announced and welcomed by BOTGC's founder Aaron Bate.²⁴ (See Figure 23.)



Figure 23

BOTGC Welcome to Proud Boy Eddie Block - OOA September 9, 2022

²⁴ See page 10 of Joseph Connolly letter, "El Dorado County Aid and Comfort to Constitutional Enemies," dated September 27, 2022.

VIII.
BOTGC'S SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EXPANSION
OCTOBER, 2022

On October 31, 2022 Grimoldi replied with a “Love” to a Facebook post by BOTGC founder Aaron Bate, who announced the “exciting news” that BOTGC was expanding to Southern California. That news included one of the organizer’s ties to “most of the Patriots, P[roud] B[oy]s, etc. in So Cal.”²⁵

On November 23, 2022 Grimoldi personally promoted BOTGC’s outreach to extremists who have been convicted of seditious conspiracy and other federal crimes related to the January 6, 2021 U.S. Capitol attack.

Grimoldi promoted the outreach as “get[ting] involved in a non political community organization,” omitting any mention of her BOTGC membership or of that group’s extremist ties. (See e.g., Figures 24-25.)



Figure 24
BOTGC expansion to Southern California
“Patriots” and “PB’s etc.”



Figure 25
Grimoldi’s promotion of BOTGC’s
Southern California expansion

²⁵ See pages 10–11 of Joseph Connolly letter “Seditious Conspiracy Outcomes and Implications,” dated December 6, 2022.

IX. CONCLUSION

Despite unrefuted evidence of commissioner Grimoldi's extremist ties to the Proud Boys, whose members have pled guilty to seditious conspiracy against the United States and other related crimes, the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors has now come full circle in maintaining connections to that conspiracy and its outcomes.

The Proud Boys' purposeful use of force and the violence they instigated caused millions of dollars in damage to the U.S. Capitol and led to the deaths of police officers who valiantly performed their duty to protect members of Congress.

Multiple Proud Boys have been convicted of federal crimes related to the January 6, 2021 U.S. Capitol attack, including **seditious conspiracy**, while many more await trial.

A Congressional select committee investigated the events of January 6, 2021, released an 845 page report of its findings, and made four criminal referrals to the U.S. Department of Justice's Special Counsel for former President Donald Trump, his attorney John Eastman and others; namely,

- Obstruction of an Official Proceeding (18 U.S.C., § 1512(c))
- Conspiracy to Defraud the United States (18 U.S.C., § 371)
- Conspiracy to Make a False Statement (18 U.S.C., § 371, 1001)
- Incite, Assist, or Aid and Comfort and Insurrection 18 U.S.C., § 2383)

The select committee's findings have already been supportively noted in a December 28, 2022 federal court ruling denying a defendant's intent to rely on a public authority defense at his trial; i.e., "to argue that his actions on January 6 were taken in reasonable reliance on statements made by then-President Trump at his rally on January 6, 2021."²⁶

Seditious conspiracy against the United States, its related crimes, and those connections to the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors are a reality that the Board and its counselors should no longer ignore. The Board's tacit endorsement, through continued silence to the seditious ties of its commissioners, is an affront to the rule of law and each Board member's legal duty to support and defend the U.S. Constitution.

²⁶ See committee reference on page 19, fn. 7 of ruling at <https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.dcd.228770/Gov.uscourts.dcd.228770.63.0.pdf>.