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Description of document: US Secret Service (USSS or Secret Service) Protective Intelligence Briefs (QAnon, Oath Keepers, Proud Boys, Three Percenters) 2021

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U.S. Secret Service FOIA Office  
245 Murray Lane Building T-5  
Washington, D.C. 20223  
[FOIA@uss.s.dhs.gov](mailto:FOIA@uss.s.dhs.gov)

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**DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY**  
UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20223

Freedom of Information Act Program  
Communications Center  
245 Murray Lane, S.W., Building T-5, Mail Stop 8205  
Washington, D.C. 20223

Date: October 23, 2023

File Number: 20230915

Dear Requester:

This is the final response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, originally received by the United States Secret Service (Secret Service) on September 29, 2023, for information pertaining to the most recent Protective Intelligence Briefs pertaining to the following organizations:

Proud Boys  
Oath Keepers  
Three Percenters  
QAnon

After a detailed review of all potentially responsive records, 14 pages were released and no pages were withheld in their entirety. After considering the "Foreseeable Harm" standard, outlined in Title 5 U.S.C § 552(a)(8)(A)(i) and Department of Justice guidance, exemptions under FOIA Statute Title 5 U.S.C. § 552, and/or the PA Statute Title 5 U.S.C. § 552a, have been applied where deemed appropriate.

Enclosed are the documents responsive to your request, as well as a document that explains the exemptions in more detail. Withheld information is pursuant to the exemptions marked below.

***Section 552 (FOIA)***

(b) (1)	(b) (2)	(b) (3) Statute:		
(b) (4)	(b) (5)	<b>(b) (6)</b>	(b) (7) (A)	(b) (7) (B)
<b>(b) (7) (C)</b>	(b) (7) (D)	<b>(b) (7) (E)</b>	(b) (7) (F)	(b) (8)

Please be advised, in the processing of this FOIA request, no fees are being assessed.

If you deem our decision an adverse determination, you may exercise your appeal rights. Should you wish to file an administrative appeal, your appeal should be made in writing and received within ninety (90) days of the date of this letter, by writing to: Freedom of Information Appeal, Deputy Director, U.S. Secret Service, Communications Center, 245 Murray Lane, S.W., Building T-5, Washington, D.C. 20223. If you choose to file an administrative appeal, please explain the basis of your appeal and reference the case number listed above.

Additionally, you have the right to seek dispute resolution services from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) which mediates disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies as a non-exclusive alternative to litigation. Please note that contacting the Secret Service's FOIA Program and/or OGIS **is not** an alternative to filing an administrative appeal and **does not** stop the 90-day appeal clock. You may contact OGIS at: Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001. You may also reach OGIS via e-mail at [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov), telephone at 202-741-5770/toll free at (877) 684-6448, or facsimile at (202) 741-5769.

If you need any further assistance, or would like to discuss any aspect of your request, please contact our FOIA Public Liaison Kevin Tyrrell, at (202) 220-1819. Alternatively, you may send an email to [foia@uss.s.dhs.gov](mailto:foia@uss.s.dhs.gov).

FOIA File No. 20230915 is assigned to your request. Please refer to this file number in all future communication with this office.

Sincerely,



Kevin L. Tyrrell  
Freedom of Information Act Officer  
Office of Intergovernmental and Legislative Affairs

Enclosure:  
FOIA and Privacy Act Exemption List



## U.S. Secret Service

Protective Intelligence & Assessment Division  
Risk Management Branch

February 17, 2021

May 4, 2021

### Protective Intelligence Brief

## QAnon

### Background

The QAnon movement began in late 2017 on 4chan when Q, an anonymous official, posted former First Lady Hillary Clinton would be arrested because of her involvement in child sex trafficking. Q claimed to have a government Q security clearance and insider knowledge of secret government activities. Since then, QAnon has been defined as a loosely connected community of conspiracy theorists who believe the deep state exists for several reasons. Although the deep state conspiracy theory predates QAnon by decades, QAnon incorporated and enhanced it claiming that the deep state exists to enable the criminal activities of a cabal of elites and benefit their special interests.



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While QAnon's core belief is that a group of Satan-worshipping elites, who run a child sex ring, are trying to control US politics and the media, their adoption of the deep state theory has enabled any anti-government conspiracy theory to be added. For example, QAnon followers have claimed the deep state was responsible for mass shootings and election engineering. They have also theorized COVID-19 is related to the wave spectrum used by 5G technology and COVID-19 vaccines are used to implant microchips into the population to make people compliant.

### Activities

QAnon followers look for "breadcrumbs," "Q drops," or "truth bombs," delivered by Q on message boards (example at left). These cryptic posts often consist of *non sequitur conclusions* or statements that suggest deep state activity. Former President Trump became a cult hero within the QAnon movement due to his campaign language about rooting out the corruption in Washington, DC. QAnon adherents describe political attacks against former President Trump as deep state plots. In 2017 and 2018, QAnon followers claimed the Russian collusion

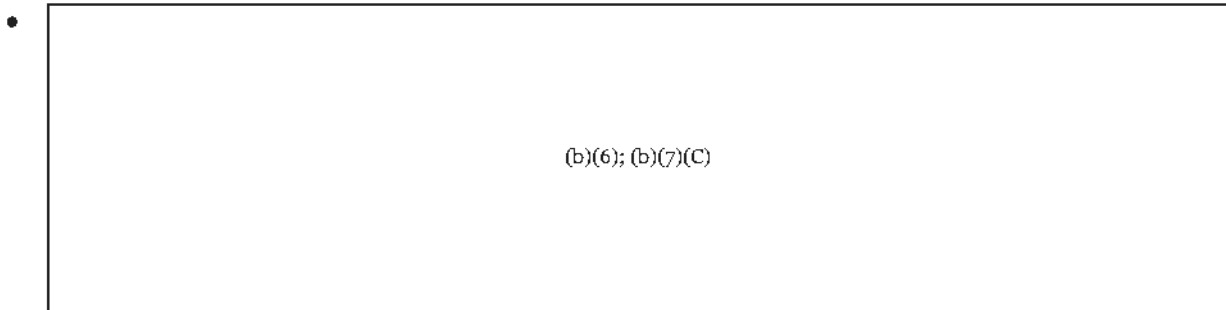
How are people inform[ed]?  
Why was Sarah A. C. attacked (hack-attempt)?  
Why was Operation Mockingbird repeated?  
Why was Jason Bourne (CIA/Dream) repeated?  
Think social media platforms.  
Who are the Wizards & Warloc[k]s?  
What council do the Wizards & Warlocks control?  
Think Snowden (inside terms dropped).  
Alice & Wonderland - understood.  
Snow White - understood.  
Iron Eagle?  
Godfather III?  
Speed?  
Everything has meaning.  
Disney is a distraction.  
Senate & Congress = puppets (not all)(power shift).  
For [GOD & COUNTRY].  
For HUMANITY.  
GERONIMO.  
Q

investigation by Special Counsel Robert Mueller was a front for former President Trump's investigation into the deep state.

The proliferation of QAnon conspiracies into mainstream politics has resulted in some individuals running for elected office in order to expose the deep state. Two individuals elected to Congress in 2020 have expressed support for QAnon.

Other notable QAnon related incidents are as follows:

- On November 2, 2020, a QAnon channel on Telegram released a post adorned with images of the Proud Boys, Patriot Action Network, the Oath Keepers, and the Three Percenters along with an announcement of a supposed meeting of "patriot groups" in Florida to discuss action for the US presidential election. There is no indication such a meetup occurred.
- On October 22, 2020, a QAnon Telegram channel shared an opinion article written by former General Michael Flynn, in which he claimed there was a "leftist" and "elitist takeover" thwarting the "will of the American people."

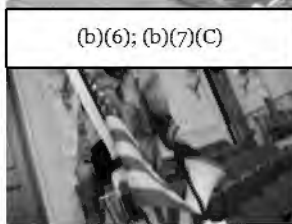


- In November 2018, a local police officer working security in Hollywood, FL, was photographed wearing a QAnon patch as Vice President Pence spoke to officers at the conclusion of a visit. Once the image was shared on Vice President Pence's twitter it was circulated online stoking controversy. The post was taken down and the officer was reprimanded and reassigned.
- In June 2018, a man blocked the Hoover Dam access road and initiated a standoff during which he held a sign in his vehicle that read, "Mr. President release the reports." After a peaceful end, the man wrote a letter to the USSS that included the QAnon slogan, "Where we go one, we go all."

Despite its origins as a conspiracy theory with a predominantly US nexus, the movement has spawned an international following leading to localized hybridization of the conspiracy narrative. This lends credibility to the movement by reinforcing the widespread nature and reach of the deep state to QAnon believers.

- On October 22, 2020, a German-language QAnon channel posted a photo depicting political leaders, on both the left and the right, in a noose. The same channel posted altered photos of former President Trump placing a noose around the necks of former President Obama and former First Lady Clinton.

## January 6



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On January 6, 2021, QAnon supporters were among the individuals who breached the US Capitol Building during the Congressional certification of the electoral ballots for President-elect Biden. An individual dubbed, the “QAnon Shaman,” is one of many facing charges. An individual, reported to be a Qanon supporter, was fatally shot by US Capitol Police while climbing through a broken interior window.

Another QAnon supporter, was seen in a viral video wearing a distinctive Q shirt. He advised the FBI that he intentionally positioned himself toward the front of the mob so his T-shirt would be visible to the cameras so Q would “get the credit.”

## Updates Since Capitol Breach

On March 15, a QAnon follower fired a paintball gun at soldiers in the vicinity of a Reserve recruiting center in Pewaukee, WI. None of the individual’s shots hit and his paintball gun jammed soon after he started firing. Following his arrest, he claimed he would “cause mass [casualties]” if he failed to deliver his message. QAnon followers posted to social media platforms that recent mass shootings in Atlanta, GA, and Boulder, CO, were the work of false flag operators or hoaxes as part of a deep state attempt to restrict gun ownership.

Some QAnon followers advocated a revision of core beliefs suggesting that the Chinese government collaborated with Jewish factions in a bid for world domination. The alteration combines several conspiracy theories from white supremacist ideologies and movements (e.g., Zionist Occupied Government (ZOG)) into the broader deep state conspiracy theory. Other QAnon connected accounts have commented that this Chinese-Jewish conspiracy marks the formation of the New World Order, a network of political and business elites who govern the world.

The QAnon incorporation of additional conspiracy theories is not surprising given how virtually anything can be explained through the lens of the deep state conspiracy theory. The timing could reflect an evolution of the movement to remain relevant; alternatively, given the largely disconnected nature of the QAnon movement, the incorporation of other conspiracy theories could reflect the proliferation of ideas from followers who joined from other extremist movements, such as militia or white supremacist extremists.

Although not unprecedented, QAnon members have announced several in-person meetups. On social media, a QAnon-connected organizer announced a conference titled the “For God & Country Patriot Roundup” to be held in Dallas, TX, on May 28 at the Omni Dallas Hotel featuring keynotes by (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) and (b)(6); (b)(7)(C) both of whom are popular among QAnon followers. Event notoriety has caused some businesses, such as payment processing businesses, to cut ties with the organizers.

In addition to the conference, QAnon followers have also discussed organizing “Maskless March[es]” in different communities. In a Telegram channel associated with QAnon, organizers announced one such march in Fort Lauderdale, FL, on April 10. Other users, in spreading the announcement, encouraged followers to organize locally to make April 10 a nationwide event.

**Outlook**

The FBI has labeled QAnon a domestic terrorist movement because of their unpredictable beliefs and anonymous nature. For law enforcement officials seeking to prevent future violent attacks, the rise of QAnon has presented new challenges because many QAnon conspiracy theories cut across political divides and propagate quickly online. QAnon beliefs have spread to other anti-government extremist groups and movements.

A National Terrorism Advisory issued by DHS on January 27 judged domestic violent extremists may feel emboldened following the January 6 US Capitol Building breach to target elected officials and government facilities.

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(b)(7)(E) Facts observed include: vandalism; targeted violence using firearms, including an incident where a QAnon supporter allegedly fired shots into a court house on January 8, 2021, in Portland, OR; and unlawful entry. QAnon adherents believe political leaders, including the USSS protectees, are either helping to dismantle the deep state or are engaged in its preservation

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(b)(7)(E)



## U.S. Secret Service

Protective Intelligence & Assessment Division  
Risk Management Branch

February 17, 2021

May 4, 2021

### Protective Intelligence Brief

## Oath Keepers



### Background

The Oath Keepers is an American right-wing militia organization formed in 2009 by a US Army veteran. The organization is known to recruit current and former law enforcement, first responders, and military personnel. Members claim they will "defend the Constitution from all enemies, foreign and domestic." The organization maintains numerous chapters in multiple states and largely positions itself as pro-law enforcement. Recently, an FBI confidential human source reported each Oath Keepers' member pays upward of \$50 for an annual membership and as much as \$1,200 for a lifetime membership.

Some Oath Keepers have disseminated conspiracy theories alleging a tyrannical US government, attempting to establish a global world order, will deny American citizens their Constitutional rights. The deprivation of these rights, according to some supporters, will result in the confiscation of firearms, use of warrantless searches, and the unjust imprisonment of American people. In reaffirmation of their oath to the Constitution, the group has codified these principles in a ten-point document titled, "Declaration of Orders We Will Not Obey."

### Activities

The Oath Keepers are of record with the USSS since 2014. Members have attended former President Trump's rallies and 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment demonstrations throughout the US. The organization has a history of soliciting volunteers prior to these events in order to provide security and protection services from "leftist extremists." They have previously worked with local groups such as Three Percenters and motorcycle clubs.



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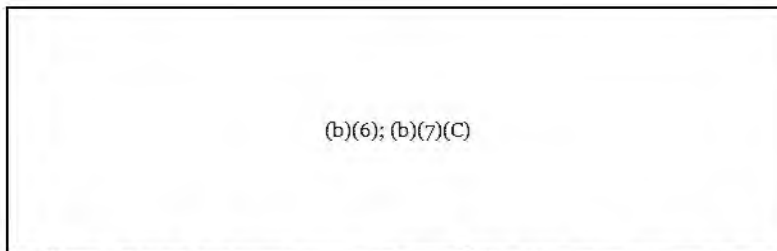


The Oath Keepers gained widespread media attention after a number of incidents in which armed members, sometimes also in paramilitary garb, patrolled an area after a high-profile incident. The organization stated these actions were taken to support police or because they believed local government was not doing enough.

- During civil unrest following a Ferguson, MO, grand jury decision not to indict an officer in the fatal shooting of a black man in 2014, Oath Keepers patrolled the streets and kept watch from rooftops.
- In 2016, the Oath Keepers offered to liaise between armed demonstrators occupying the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Princeton, OR, and the federal authorities.
- In the aftermath of the 2018 Stoneman Douglas High School mass shooting, the Oath Keepers issued a call to action for armed patrols at schools nationwide.

In 2019, the Oath Keepers released a statement that the group would not be participating in the August “End Domestic Terrorism” rally in Portland, OR, because not enough was done to exclude white supremacists.

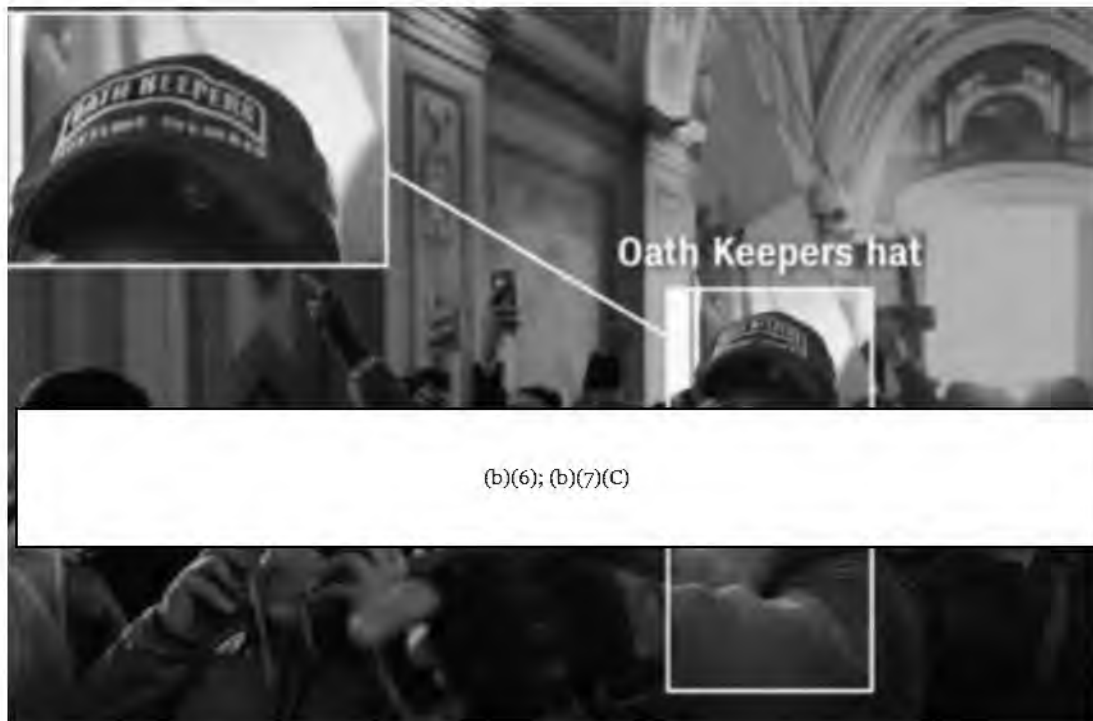
On several occasions in 2019 and 2020, Oath Keepers contacted the USSS to announce their intent to attend President Trump rallies in Sunrise, FL, Fayetteville, NC, and Jacksonville, FL, for the purpose of providing protection to the president’s supporters. They also indicated they would carry concealed weapons where permitted by law.



## January 6

Leading up to the US Capitol Building breach, the Oath Keepers promoted the January 6, 2021, “Stop the Steal” rally as a last-ditch effort to reverse the election in favor of President Trump. On January 4, the Oath Keepers website called for support and stated, “We have worked side-by-side with many other patriot groups and veterans. If you are a team leader of a group that will be in DC please email us.” Many Oath Keepers participated in the January 6 US Capitol Building breach and some were arrested, including three-chapter leaders who were indicted on conspiracy charges. The indictment claimed the

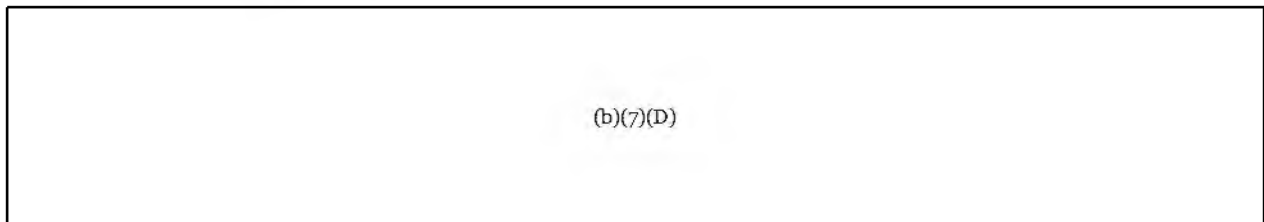
breach had been planned weeks in advance and recruiting via social media had begun as early as November 2020. Local Oath Keepers leaders targeted January 6, the date of the Electoral College certification, as a critical time to show support for President Trump. The leader of the Ohio State Regulars, an Oath Keeper group, allegedly texted a recruit, "Biden may still yet be our President. If he is, our way of life as we know it is over. Our Republic would be over. Then it is our duty as Americans to fight, kill and die for our rights."

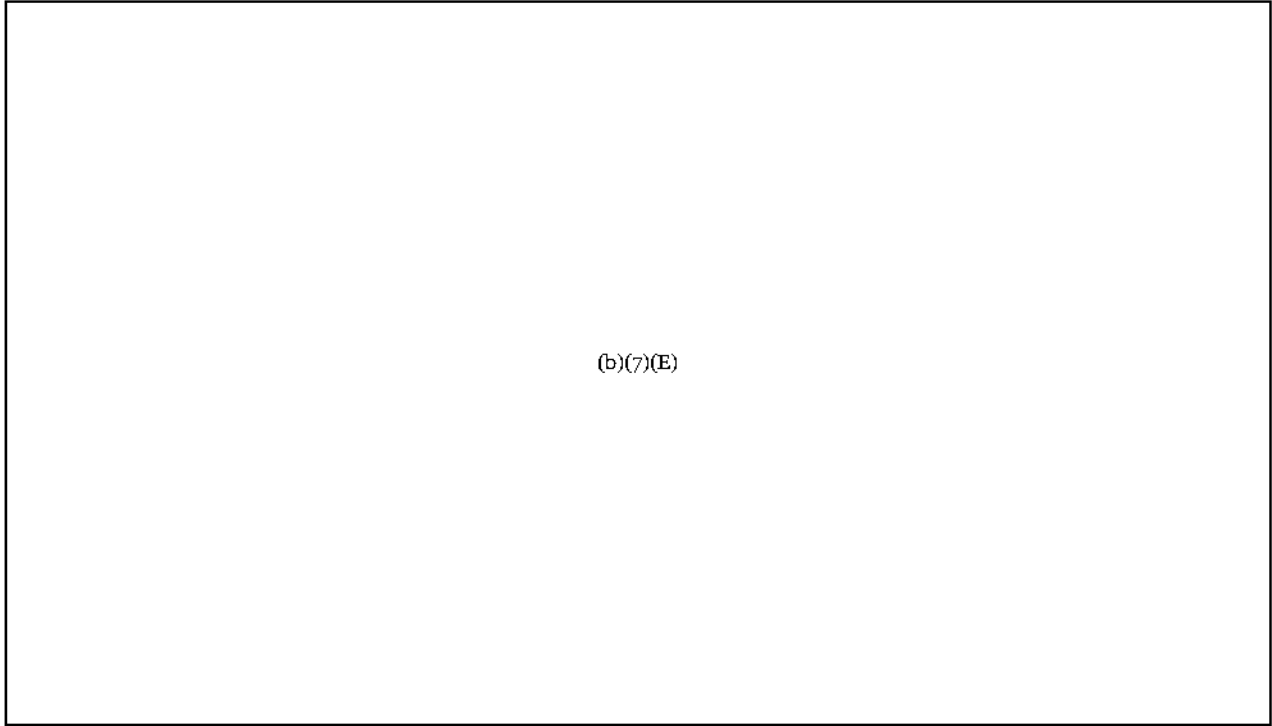


An FBI indictment revealed Oath Keepers members operated as a group in order to breach the US Capitol Building and kept in touch using a walkie-talkie app called Zello. Once inside, Oath Keepers are said to have received information on the location of Members of Congress from Facebook messages that read, "All members are in the tunnels... seal them in" and "Go through back house chamber doors facing N left down hallway down steps." The indictment claimed Oath Keepers moved in an organized fashion as they moved through the US Capitol Building. Captured text of Oath Keepers communication detailed their belief they were executing a citizen's arrest on the assembly and believed to have probable cause for acts of treason and election fraud.

In addition to conspiracy charges against the US, the indictment listed charges of obstructing an official proceeding, destroying government property, and entering restricted grounds.

#### Updates Since Capitol Breach





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## U.S. Secret Service

Protective Intelligence & Assessment Division  
Risk Management Branch

February 17, 2021

May 4, 2021

### *Protective Intelligence Brief*

## Proud Boys

### Background

The Proud Boys is a right-wing group founded in 2016 that has chapters throughout North America and Europe. Its first leader, co-founder of *Vice* magazine Gavin McInnes, described the group as a "pro-Western fraternal organization" formed in response to the "war on masculinity" with an "anti-political correctness and anti-racial guilt" agenda. Members take a pledge which states, "I am a Western Chauvinist and I Refuse to Apologize for Creating the Modern World. The West is the Best." Two years later, McInnes disavowed the Proud Boys accusing it of being taken over by white supremacists in the aftermath of the group's participation in the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, VA, in mid-2017; however, he maintained some level of contact with the organization



The Proud Boys, and its current leader Enrique Tarrio, claim they do not discriminate based on race, sexual orientation, or sexual preference; however, some supporters have made anti-Muslim, misogynistic, transphobic, and white supremacist comments online and while participating in protests alongside white supremacist groups. Proud Boys are led by a leadership council, referred to as the Elder Chapter, but much of the public personality of the group is shaped by its leader. Open source research and law enforcement sources suggest the organizational structure to be hierarchical, with the Elder Chapter setting policy, membership requirements, and overall direction; however, local chapters appear to retain autonomy for activities at the local level with individuals participating in national "all calls" at their discretion.

Proud Boys members wear a black "Fred Perry" polo shirt with gold piping. Proud Boys have been increasingly adding paramilitary gear to augment their Fred Perry shirts, such as plate carriers, load bearing equipment and helmets. The change in equipment appears to be developing on an individual level in response to clashes with left-wing opponents at demonstrations that turned violent in mid-Summer 2020.



## Activities

Proud Boys have organized several public events bringing them into contact and conflict with groups on the left. Individuals seem to participate at their discretion regardless of leadership's stance. An example occurred in the lead-up to the 2017 Unite the Right rally when then-leader McInnes denounced the event and discouraged Proud Boys from attending in "colors," yet several members participated in the infamous torch light march across the University of Virginia's campus.

The Proud Boys have also organized rallies to draw other right-wing support. As an example, they held rallies to "End Domestic Terrorism (EDT)," in Portland, OR, in both 2019 and 2020 that drew media coverage. The 2019 event resulted in violent confrontation with left-wing extremists including Antifa adherents that ended with 13 arrests. The second EDT rally was held in September 2020 following more than 100 uninterrupted nights of riots by left-wing groups in Portland, OR, who were protesting police brutality. Although clashes with Antifa supporters were expected, the rally concluded without any significant incidents reported. The Proud Boys clashed again during demonstrations in August 2020 when a Proud Boys member allegedly fired several paint balls at rival protesters. He was arrested and charged with 12 counts involving assault and unlawful use of a weapon among other charges.



The Proud Boys have collaborated with other right-wing movements, although these partnerships may not necessarily reflect a change in the group's ideology. In one such collaboration, the Proud Boys announced support for the "March Against Human Trafficking and Pedophilia" rally which was largely based on the [QAnon conspiracy theory](#).

Proud Boys are of record with the USSS for seven demonstrations since 2017 in support of former President Trump. No civil disobedience or arrests were recorded.

The Proud Boys have been involved in many activities surrounding the 2020 election, such as their participation in the mid-November 2020 "Million MAGA March." Many of their social media posts about the election contained vague threats of violence.

Prior to the January 6 US Capitol Building breach, Proud Boys leader, Tarrío, was arrested by the Metropolitan (DC) Police Department on charges stemming from his burning a Black Lives Matter flag.

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(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)

After the Capitol breach, Tarrío released a statement encouraging followers to join the "Stop the Steal" rally and to avoid wearing their trademark Fred Perry shirts to avoid detection. Media reports claimed the Proud Boys had a large presence at the rally. Several Proud Boys were identified inside the US Capitol Building, one of whom smoked a cigar he later referred to as a "victory smoke."

### Updates Since Capitol Breach

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An alleged organizer for the Proud Boys reported that Tarrío ordered all activity to stop.

Despite the stand-down order and past denunciations of the white identity/nationalist movement, several presumed Proud Boys members announced support for the "White Lives Matter" rallies, which were scheduled to be held in several cities Nationwide on April 11. Several posts by presumed Proud Boys expressed a desire to attend "in plain clothes or not." It was not clear from the posts if they reflected the opinions of the individuals who made them only or the sentiment of the Proud Boys more broadly. The willingness for some members to be associated with what were primarily white nationalist rallies may reflect Tarrío's loss of influence with local chapters.

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**U.S. Secret Service**  
Protective Intelligence & Assessment Division  
Risk Management Branch

February 17, 2021  
May 4, 2021

*Protective Intelligence Brief*

## Three Percenterers



### Background

The Three Percenterers (aka III%ers) is a decentralized American right-wing movement created in 2008 based on the belief that only three percent of American colonists were willing to take up arms against the British during the American Revolution. Followers draw parallels between the colonial grievances leading to the American Revolution and modern-day perceptions of government overreach and interference with personal freedoms. Supporters tout the ability of a small force capable of overthrowing an unjust government. Some groups have formed based on the Three Percenter ideology, like the III% Security Force or the Sons of Liberty, and many individuals associated with the movement have joined with already established groups, like the Oath Keepers, a right-wing militia organization. Like other patriot groups, some Three Percenterers propagate conspiracy theories, such as the establishment of a global world order which seeks to systemically deprive Americans of their Constitutional rights.

### Activities

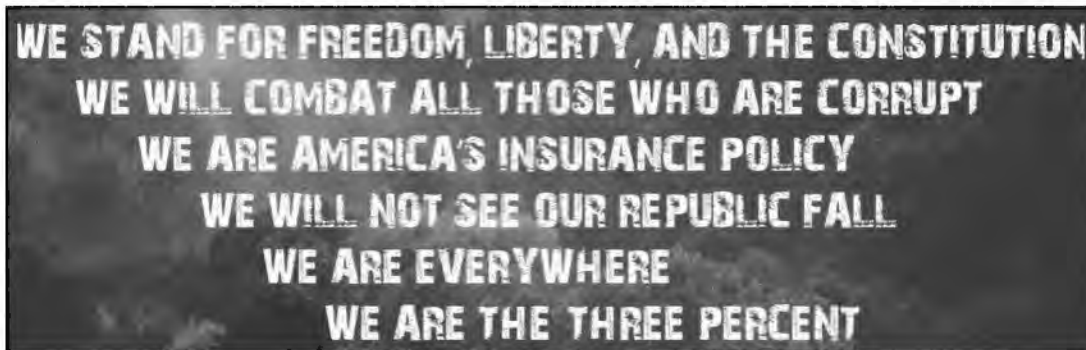
The Three Percenterers are of record with the USSS for two peaceful demonstrations since 2014. A few individuals of record with the USSS have cited the Three Percenter ideology or group membership as a justification to their opposition of the government, legislation, or specific protectees.

Over the years, some individuals claiming affiliation with the Three Percenterers have conducted or planned attacks garnering widespread media attention, to include the firebombing of mosques and the attempted bombing of a bank. For example, in 2020 members of the Michigan-based Wolverine Watchmen were arrested for plotting to kidnap the governor of Michigan. The group targeted her vacation home and planned to use explosives at



a bridge in order to slow police response once they attacked. One of their members was alleged to be a leader within the Three Percenter movement and had their symbol tattooed on his hand.

During the 2020 election cycle, domestic violent extremists (DVE), including militias, advocated for violence against their political opponents. They also called on others to arm themselves against what they perceive to be an increasingly illegitimate government. Three Percenter militia groups and individuals who bore their insignias attended protests which saw the ideological left and right in opposition to one another on polarizing issues such as police brutality and COVID-19 lockdowns. Typically, Three Percenters offered to act as a civilian protection service and peacekeeper by peacefully protesting, often while armed. During these events, Three Percenters branded themselves as oppositional to the violence associated with their ideological opponents, such as Antifa. While members have engaged in verbal altercations during protest activity in recent years, violent altercations are rare.



### January 6

Individuals aligned with the Three Percenter movement took part in the January 6, 2021 US Capitol Building breach in Washington, DC, which resulted in five deaths, including a USCP officer, and dozens of injuries. Former Vice President Pence, who was presiding over the presidential election electoral count, was evacuated after rioters overwhelmed law enforcement. Conspiracy charges have not been brought against Three Percenter followers, but the possibility of their coordinated involvement exists.

### Updates Since Capitol Breach

In late February 2021, members of a Three Percenters group were reportedly attempting to organize followers nationwide in a plan to take over the US Capitol in Washington, DC through the use of a diversionary tactic, such as an explosion, sometime between March 4 and March 6. Plotting may have been inspired by a conspiracy theory popular amongst QAnon adherents which posited March 4, as the original date of the presidential inauguration, would see former President Trump reclaim the presidency. No significant activity occurred on the aforementioned dates despite initial intelligence. In the aftermath of the Capitol Breach, the National Council for the Three Percenters announced their dissolution condemning those who took part in the breach. Despite the name, the National Council did not exert any operational control over the various chapters or individuals affiliated with the Three Percenter movement, instead appearing to self-designate as the spokes-organization for the various groups within the movement.

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