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### Schooling the Proud Boys: The Educational Background of Proud Boy Members at the Capitol on January 6, 2021

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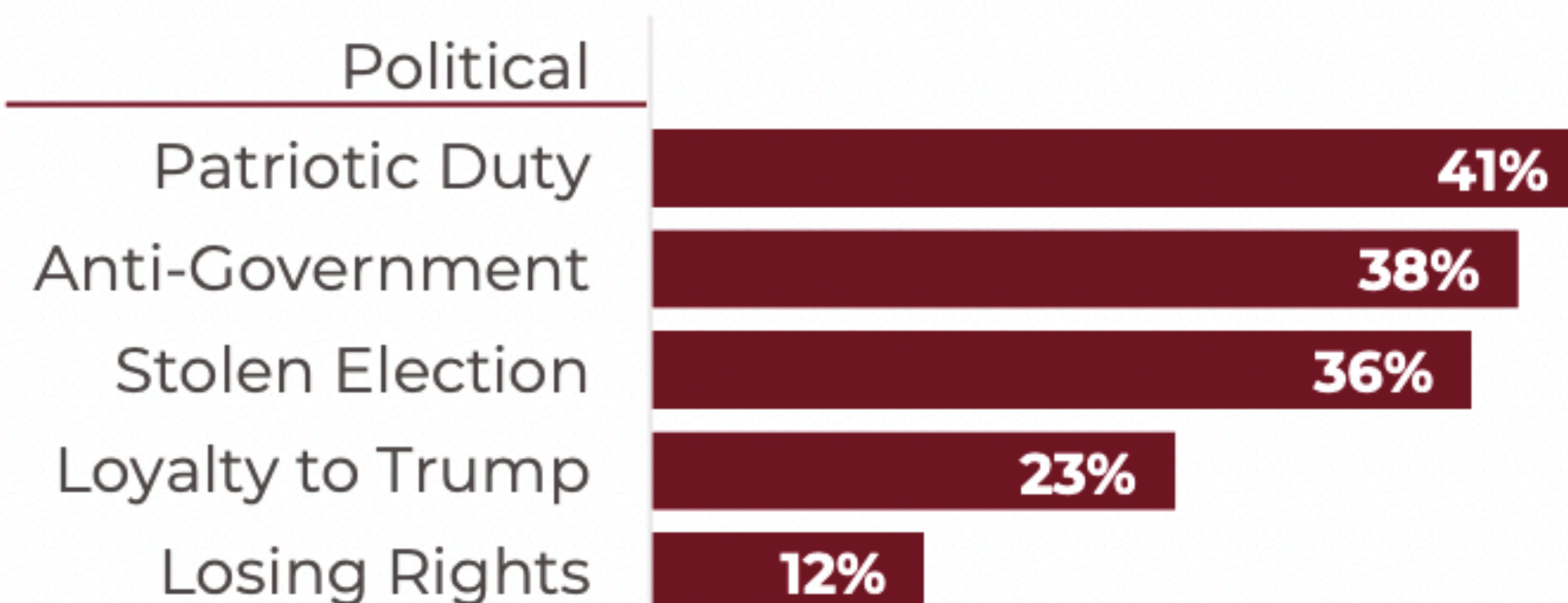
# Trumpeting the Proud Boys: Shared Rhetorical Patterns Between Trump and the Proud Boys at the Capitol

By: Alex Moon

*What rhetorical tropes do the Proud Boys and former president Donald Trump share? What is the significance of this overlap pertaining to the Capitol insurrection on January 6, 2021?*

## In general, participants' reasons for rioting:

AMONG PEOPLE WITH STATED MOTIVES



Pape, Robert A. "Patriotic Counter-Revolution": The Political Mindset that Stormed the Capitol

## Proud Boy Crimes at the Capitol: Top Charges

18 U.S.C. §1512 Obstruction of an Official Proceeding - 21

18 U.S.C. §111 Assaulting, resisting, impeding officers - 16

18 U.S.C. §371 Conspiracy - 11

To conspire either to commit any offense against the United States or to defraud the United States

18 U.S.C. §2384 Seditious Conspiracy - 6

To conspire to oppose by force the authority thereof, or to prevent, hinder, or delay the execution of any law of the United States

→ The most serious crime with which insurrectionists have been charged.

**Trump was impeached for the second time on January 13, 2021, for incitement of insurrection (U.S. Const. Amdt. 14 §3)**

## Rhetorical Framework

**"We fight like hell. And if you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore."**  
- Trump in Ellipse speech on January 6, 2021

**"The spirit of 1776 has resurfaced and created groups like the Proudboys and we will not be extinguished. [...] We are unstoppable, unrelenting, and now... unforgiving."**  
- Nordean, president of his local chapter, on November 27, 2020

## TIMELINE OF THE PROUD BOYS

### SEPTEMBER 2016

The Proud Boys is founded by Gavin McInnes

### OCTOBER 2018

McInnes resigns from the Proud Boys, and Enrique Tarrio succeeds him as chairman.

### SEPTEMBER 30, 2020

During the first presidential debate, incumbent President Donald J. Trump refuses to denounce white supremacist/right-wing militia groups  
→ Says, "Proud Boys, stand back and stand by."



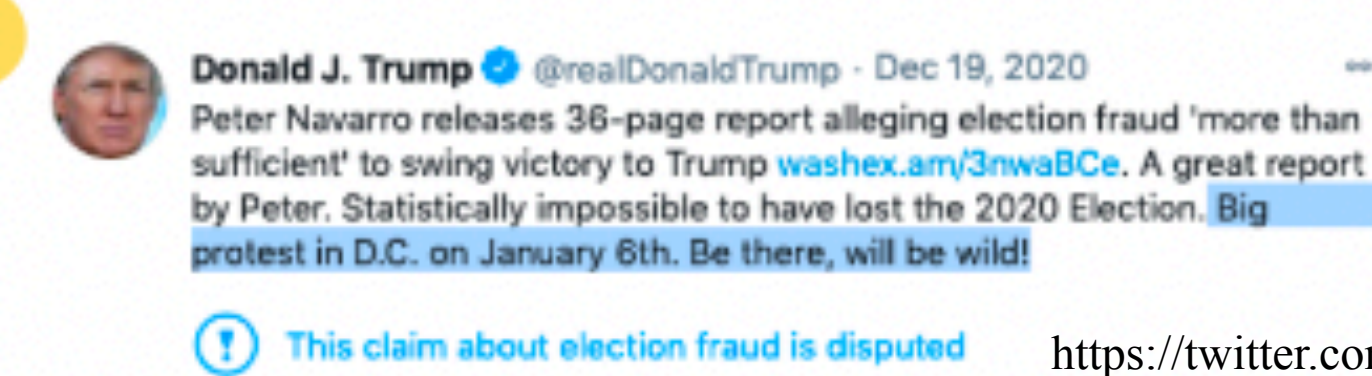
<https://www.cnn.com/2021/08/20/politics/doj-proud-boys-leader-jail-time/index.html>

### DECEMBER 12, 2020

Proud Boys attend a rally in Washington, D.C. to protest the election results. Shortly after, Enrique Tarrio and others burn "#BlackLivesMatter" flag belonging to a church

### DECEMBER 19, 2020

Trump posts a Tweet announcing his plan to hold a rally on January 6, 2021, to protest election results and writes "Be there, will be wild!"



### DECEMBER 20, 2020

Enrique Tarrio creates an encrypted message group called "Ministry of Self Defense" or MOSD with "hand selected [Proud Boy] members" to discuss plans and preparations for the rally on January 6.

### JANUARY 6, 2021

Proud Boys show up to the Capitol dressed "incognito" (not in their trademark yellow and black colors).



<https://www.justice.gov/usao-dc/capitol-breach-cases>

### JUNE 6, 2022

The Court of D.C. returns a superseding indictment charging Enrique Tarrio, Joseph Biggs, Ethan Nordean, Dominic Pezzola, and Zachary Rehl with seditious conspiracy

## Methodology and Findings

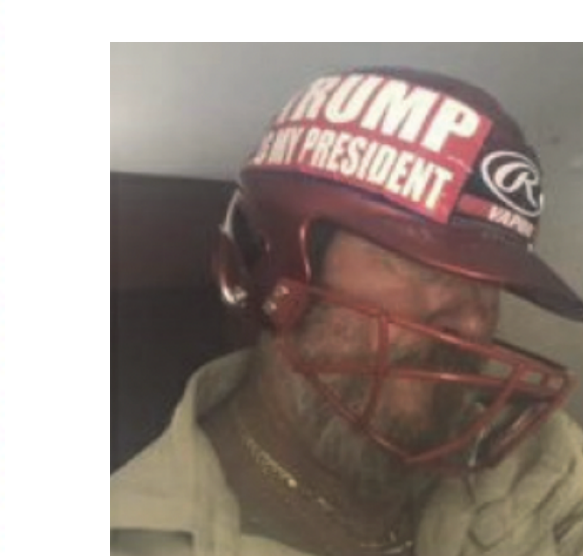
### 1) NPR Database of Charged Participants

→ Keyword function: "Proud Boy" gave 66 results

Analyzed case summaries for indications of membership; narrowed down to 40 cases

### 2) Department of Justice Arrest Sheets

→ Read specifically for statements referring to Trump as a reason or justification for rioting



### Key Words and Symbols

"Antifa"  
MAGA/Pro-Trump Headwear  
"Stop the Steal"



<https://www.justice.gov/usao-dc/capitol-breach-cases>

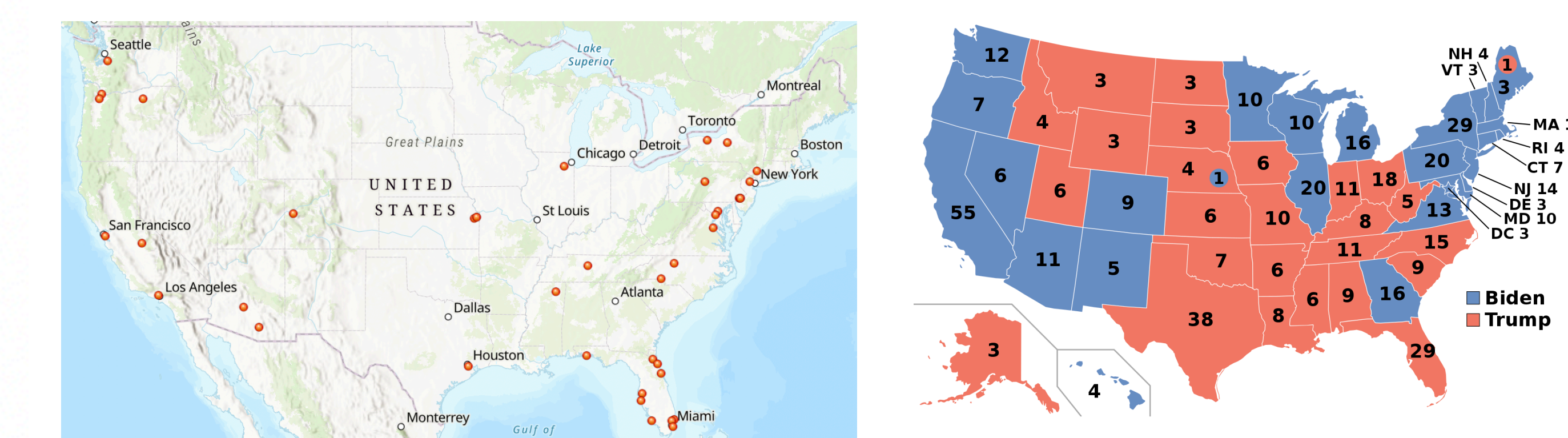
### 3) Twitter, speeches, and news articles

→ Identified significant election statements by Trump

In his speech at the Ellipse preceding the Capitol, Trump said...

**"Election" - 55 times**  
**"Fraud[ulent]"/"Defrauded" - 22 times**  
**"Corrupt"/"False"/"Fake" - 20 times**

## Locations of Charged Proud Boy Members vs. 2020 Presidential Election Results



<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:ElectoralCollege2020.svg>

27 out of 40 Proud Boys come from states in which Biden won the electoral college votes.

## Research Limitations

- Not all of the Proud Boys who were at the Capitol riot have been identified by the Department of Justice  
→ MOSD had at least 65 members
- Decentralized organizational nature made it difficult to confirm the membership status of certain Proud Boy affiliates

## Scan for Works Cited:



Joe Biggs @JoeBiggs · 15 minutes ago · 5.5k  
Proud Boys Shout at at the Presidential Debate!

Joe Biggs @JoeBiggs · 12 minutes ago · 3.5k  
Trump basically said to go fuck them up! this makes me so happy

Enrique Tarrio @NobleLead · 12 minutes ago · 3.8k  
Standing by sir.

Joe Biggs @JoeBiggs · 13 minutes ago · 6.2k  
President Trump told the proud boys to stand by because someone needs to deal with ANTIFA...well sir! we're ready!

<https://twitter.com/ByMikeBaker>