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Proud Boys lose their trademark ownership to a Black church they vandalized, court rules



By [Aimee Picchi](#)

Edited By [Anne Marie Lee](#)

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Proud Boys leader Enrique Tarrio released from prison after Trump pardon



[Proud Boys leader Enrique Tarrio released from prison after Trump pardon 02:10](#)

The ownership of the Proud Boys' trademark is now in the hands of a Black church that the group vandalized in 2020.

The Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C., was granted ownership of the group's trademark in a Feb. 3 ruling from Judge Tanya M. Jones Bosier of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. The decision also gives the Metropolitan AME Church a lien on the trademark and the power to block the Proud Boys from using the trademark or selling licensed goods, like T-shirts or hats, without the church's approval.

Reached for comment, former Proud Boys leader Enrique Tarrio pointed to a statement he [posted](#) on X. In it, he said the judge should be impeached and the church's nonprofit status revoked. The court's decision had been [reported](#) earlier by the New York Times.

Tarrio, who had been serving a [22-year sentence](#) for [seditious conspiracy](#) tied to his role in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol building, [was pardoned](#) by President Trump after his Jan. 20 inauguration.

The ruling on the Proud Boys' copyright stems from an incident on Dec. 12, 2020, when members of the all-male right-wing group attended a "stop the steal" event in Washington, D.C., and also attacked the Metropolitan AME Church by climbing over a fence to get onto church property, where they destroyed a "Black Lives Matters" sign, according to court documents. A court ordered the Proud Boys to pay the church \$2.8 million, money that the group has failed to pay, the documents note.

As a result, the court gave the Metropolitan AME Church ownership of the trademark, providing them with the right to deny use of the group's name and yellow-and-black laurel wreath symbol.

"This is our time to stand up, to be very clear to the Proud Boys and their ilk that we came here fighting, that we have never ever capitulated to the violent whims of white supremacist groups," Rev. William H. Lamar IV, pastor of the Metropolitan AME Church, told CBS MoneyWatch. "If they thought we would be afraid, they were wrong. There are many people with us and who stand with us."

The Metropolitan AME Church, which was founded in 1838 and has hosted speakers including Frederick Douglass and Eleanor Roosevelt, can now collect funds from sales of Proud Boys merchandise as well as its membership dues, people familiar with the case said. The church can also block the Proud Boys from using the trademark, they said.

The notoriety of the Proud Boys' name likely helped the group in recruitment, which means blocking use of its trademark could both hurt the group's ability to sell merchandise and recruit new members, they added.

"From our point of view, it's fitting that the money the Proud Boys raised in sales and dues will go to fund the good work of the Metropolitan AME," Kaitlin Banner, who represented the church in the case and serves as deputy legal director at the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs, told CBS.

In his statement posted on X, Tarrio indicated he didn't intend to honor the court's ruling. "I hold in contempt any motions, judgments and orders issued against me," he wrote.

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