IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA				
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,)			
Plaintiff,)) CR No. 21-28-8) Washington, D.C.			
VS.) March 26, 2021			
KELLY MEGGS,) 4:00 p.m.			
Defendant.)))			
TRANSCRIPT OF DETENTION HEARING VIA ZOOM PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE HONORABLE AMIT P. MEHTA UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE APPEARANCES:				
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Proceedings recorded by mechanical stenography; transcript produced by computer-aided transcription					

PROCEEDINGS 1 2 COURTROOM DEPUTY: Good afternoon, Your Honor. 3 THE COURT: Good afternoon. COURTROOM DEPUTY: This is Criminal Case No. 4 5 21-28-8, the United States of America versus Kelly Meggs. 6 Jeffrey Nestler for the government. 7 David Wilson for the defendant. Christine Schuck on behalf of Pretrial Services. 8 9 The defendant's appearing via videoconference for 10 this hearing. 11 THE COURT: All right. Good afternoon to 12 everyone. 1.3 Counsel, good afternoon. Mr. Meggs, good afternoon. Can you hear me okay? 14 15 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor. 16 THE COURT: Okay. 17 So we're here this afternoon on Mr. Meggs's 18 bond-review motion. I've read all the papers that the 19 parties have submitted, and so I'm happy to hear any further 20 argument or evidence that either side wishes to present. 21 So why don't we start with Mr. Nestler and the 2.2 government. 23 MR. NESTLER: Thank you, Your Honor. 24 Kelly Meggs was involved in the recruiting, the 25 vetting, the planning, the coordinating, the financing of

what the stack of Oath Keepers, who are members of this conspiracy, did on January 6th.

And so we've laid out the different facts that support those different premises and those different inferences in our pleadings, Your Honor.

And we can go directly to what the D.C. Circuit said this morning in the *Munchel* case, which was that, those who planned or coordinated the attack on the Capitol are in a very different position than Mr. Munchel was and from some of the other defendants, including some of the defendants who Your Honor has already heard bond-review motions for and has determined that the government did not meet its burden of showing future dangerousness or of a need for future detention.

Kelly Meggs is in a different situation than the individuals you've already heard and released this week, including Donovan Crowl and Laura Steele, Your Honor.

Kelly Meggs was the leader of the Florida Oath
Keepers, by his own admission. He was involved, as we laid
out in our pleading, in recruiting other members, vetting
other members, planning for everyone to get to D.C., paying
for hotel rooms for not just himself and his own family but
for others at both his hotel and at other hotels, telling
other people what to bring, giving them their supply lists
for mace, gas masks, batons, plate carriers, armor,

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literally telling them to bring the tools of war that they
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     need in order to accomplish their ends while they were in
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     D.C.
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               He was also involved in coordinating with the QRF.
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     We have cited several of the comments that he made in the
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     chats, the quick reaction force that would be "heavy," the
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     government submits, indicating that the QRF would be armed
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     and have arms ready to ferry Mr. Meggs and other members of
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     the conspiracy at a moment's notice. That was part of
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    Mr. Meggs's planning.
               For those reasons, Your Honor, Mr. Meggs is in a
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     different class than some of the other defendants who you've
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    heard bond-review motions for already. And Mr. Meggs, we do
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     submit, was not only a danger to other individuals and to
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     Congress and our entire system of government on January 6th,
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    but does pose a future danger to society at this point.
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               And there's a couple of reasons for that: One
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     is --
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               THE COURT: Let me --
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               MR. NESTLER: Go ahead, Your Honor.
               THE COURT: Let me interrupt you for a second
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    before you move to your argument with respect to specific
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     threats.
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               I think it was your supplemental memo references
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     two facts; one, that there were firearms recovered from
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Mr. Meggs's home following a search. So question one is:
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     Were those firearms legally registered to Mr. Meggs or his
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     wife?
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               MR. NESTLER: The FBI did not recover any
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     firearms, Your Honor, and the reason being is that the
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     search warrant did not authorize the FBI to --
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               THE COURT: I see. Okay.
               MR. NESTLER: -- recover firearms.
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               So the FBI was aware of the location of firearms
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     in the house. And that's why we indicate in our pleading
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     that the FBI saw at least three firearms.
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               THE COURT: Okay.
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               MR. NESTLER: And that's because the FBI was doing
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     what it was supposed to be doing under the terms of the
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     search warrant, not looking for evidence of firearm
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     ownership.
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               THE COURT: I understand.
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               MR. NESTLER: And that's why I'm not able to tell
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     the Court whether those firearms appear to be the same
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     AR-platform firearms we see Mr. Meggs shooting at the range
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     in that class in September or not. I just don't know the
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     answer to that question.
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               I can say, I believe that Mr. Meggs does have a
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     concealed-carry permit in Florida.
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               THE COURT:
                           Okay.
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And then the second question pertains to removal or destruction of physical evidence: You've said that the FBI did do a search of his residence but didn't find any of the paraphernalia that he was seen wearing on January 6th, as well as that for his wife; is that right? MR. NESTLER: That's correct, Your Honor. The FBI did find some Oath Keepers' paraphernalia and some Oath Keepers' clothing and flags, but not the actual helmet, plate carrier, Oath Keepers' T-shirt that he appears to have been wearing on the day in question. And the government submits that that would be because Mr. Meggs and/or his wife got rid of those because they were incriminating. THE COURT: Okay. And were any other -- were there any other properties or locations connected to Mr. Meggs or Ms. Meggs that were searched? MR. NESTLER: Just an RV that was parked on their property in Dunnellon, Florida, and the FBI did search that RV park on the property. THE COURT: And I take it nothing was found in the RV? MR. NESTLER: Nothing about the gear that they had been wearing that day, no. THE COURT: All right.

MR. NESTLER: And -- I'm sorry. 1 2 THE COURT: Go ahead. 3 MR. NESTLER: And the government did cite, and we 4 recently located this, which is why we filed the 5 supplemental memorandum, Your Honor, that this text-message 6 chain or this message chain between Mr. and Mrs. Meggs and 7 another family member, where Kelly Meggs appears to make 8 light of the fact that he lost all of his gear in a boating 9 accident, the government finds the timing there to be 10 conspicuous, just within a week of the other co-defendant's 11 arrest being publicized. 12 THE COURT: Okay. 13 I interrupted you, Mr. Nestler, if you want to 14 continue. 15 MR. NESTLER: Yes, Your Honor. 16 And so in terms of future dangerousness, we do 17 know that Kelly Meggs was leading, commanding, controlling 18 various other individuals who are part of this Oath Keepers 19 group. 20 So unlike other members of the conspiracy who may 21 have been -- who joined or were following or were given 22 instructions, Mr. Meggs appears to be the one giving 23 commands to other people. And that does mean he poses a 24 future danger to society and to others, because he appears 25 to still have the ability to tell other people what to do,

where to go, what to bring.

The training that he participated in, as we talked about this morning with regard to Connie Meggs, appears to have been some sort of paramilitary training, not a firearms safety class, and that does pose another, additional danger that Kelly Meggs, we do believe, has access to firearms at the house, but also in terms of training for how to use those firearms in the future.

And a couple of other points, Your Honor.

It appears that Kelly Meggs has a desire for some sort of violence. We saw both on the patch that he was wearing when he illegally entered the Capitol, the language, "I don't believe in anything. I'm just here for the violence."

And we also see one of the hashtags that the training center in Leesburg, a hashtag when it posted the video of Kelly Meggs and others at the training facility had language that was "#giveviolenceachance."

So these are not statements, and these are not indications that Mr. Meggs is somebody who was a non-violent character, who wouldn't hesitate to use violence if he thought it was warranted in order to achieve his aims.

THE COURT: Just to be clear, the hashtag they're referring to, that wasn't something he used. That was used by one of the instructors or facilitators, correct?

MR. NESTLER: Correct. That was the hashtag used

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by the facility when it posted a video showing Mr. Meggs and
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     the rest of his group doing the training.
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               THE COURT: Right. Okay.
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               MR. NESTLER: And then after the Capitol was
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    breached and Mr. Meggs and others were evicted and were
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     outside, we quoted in our pleading, Mr. Meggs wrote in the
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     Signal chat to other members of the conspiracy -- and he's
     one of the leaders who's in the Signal chat -- "Okay.
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     gives a damn we went in there. We are now the enemy of the
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     state. We aren't quitting. We are reloaded."
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               Those are the kinds of statements that, the
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     government submits, Your Honor, makes Mr. Meggs a danger to
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     society and to the union itself.
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               THE COURT: And, Mr. Nestler, I mean, I've
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     released some of the others on home confinement. Why do you
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     think that's inappropriate for Mr. Meggs?
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               MR. NESTLER: Well, Mr. Meggs is able to
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     communicate with other individuals through secure apps.
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     We've indicated in our pleading, has access to ProtonMail.
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     He appears to have some sort of premium or paid account to
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     ProtonMail for encrypted chats.
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               Signal, of course. He was part of that Signal
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     chat.
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               Same thing with the encrypted, end-to-end
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     communications to be able to communicate with others, not
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just within Florida but with Oath Keepers leaders throughout
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     the country and other people who were involved in
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     potentially planning for what happened on January 6th,
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     throughout the country.
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               In addition, Your Honor, access to firearms is
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     certainly a concern of the government's. Mr. Meggs occupies
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     a position, apparently, of some amount of prominence within
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     the Oath Keepers, at least the way the other Oath Keepers in
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     this organization, this conspiracy looked up to him and
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     looked to him for quidance for what to do in this situation.
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     And for those reasons, we don't believe that the community
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     would be safe if Mr. Meggs were released, even on home
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     confinement.
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               THE COURT: Okay.
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               All right. Thank you, Mr. Nestler.
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               Mr. Wilson.
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               MR. WILSON: Yes, Judge.
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               I think that the facts that are being developed in
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     the evidence are entirely inconsistent with the government's
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     representations.
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               I notice with respect to the -- particularly, the
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     telegram communications that have been referenced by the
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     government, Mr. Nestler talks about two messages that were
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     sent by Mr. Meggs. One that says, "Who gives a damn who
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     went in there. If it's Obama himself, it doesn't matter.
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What matters is where we are now and decisions that have to be made. We are now the enemy of the state."

This is in response to a message sent by another individual that refers to the fact that "Individuals entered the Capitol and a young woman was murdered and that's a fact." And "If any so-called Antifa did go in, it doesn't change that fact."

So the messages that are attributed to Mr. Meggs, the communications attributed to Mr. Meggs, seem to point to a preparation for some sort of a perceived confrontation with Antifa. There is not one communication that the government can point to where Mr. Meggs plans, discusses, or mentions any pre-planning to enter the Capitol.

Going through the communications, the planning, the communications, the messages are all in anticipation of simply attending this rally and providing security for certain high-profile individuals. There is no communication.

And, in fact, there is another message that was sent by an individual who is alleged to be the leader of the Oath Keepers that refers to the spontaneousness of those individuals who entered the Capitol. The government doesn't mention that.

THE COURT: Sorry. Can I interrupt you,

25 Mr. Wilson?

MR. WILSON: I apologize, Judge. 1 2 THE COURT: No, that's okay. This is some of the 3 challenges with Zoom conference calling here. 4 I guess my question to you is: Why does any of 5 that matter? And here's why I ask. Because if 6 ultimately -- I mean, it is true that the weight of the 7 evidence is a relevant factor, but ultimately the question here is one of dangerousness and safety to the community. 8 And so if the evidence is pointing in the direction of 9 10 somebody who's prepared to engage in violent acts involving 11 Antifa, why does it matter that there's an absence of 12 pre-planning to actually enter the Capitol building? 13 MR. WILSON: Well, Judge, I think that's entirely 14 relevant, because the allegation, the charges are that there 15 was a conspiracy to -- against the government. 16 With respect to future dangerousness, there's a 17 couple of factors that I think the Court needs to take in 18 consideration: 19 There is no evidence that Mr. Meggs possessed 20 or -- any weapon or other item of a similar nature at the 21 time he was in Washington, D.C. In fact, there's 22 communications where he refers to "don't bring any firearms." 23 24 Now, the government points to this reference to a I think that if there's a reference to a QRF and 25 ORF.

backup, it is in reference not to the Capitol itself, it's to a potential for a confrontation with Antifa, and I think that's something the Court needs to consider.

And with respect to any propensity for violence, there is nothing in Mr. Meggs's past that points to a violent disposition. He has no prior criminal record.

With respect to the firearms, yes, there were firearms located in his residence, those have been removed from his residence, so he does not have access to any firearms.

With respect to encrypted communication or a Proton email account or ProtonMail email account, that simply can be remedied by a restriction on having access to any electronic devices or communications or abilities to communicate.

I also want to point out that during his interview with the, I assume it's the FBI, the individual interviewing him isn't really identified, I don't think, but he's indicated that he is no longer affiliated with the Oath Keepers and left based upon dissatisfaction with some of the things that they had done that he didn't approve of. So he no longer has the ability to command or control any individuals.

And I would also point out when the government indicates that people were looking to him for direction, on

January 6th, between, I believe, 6:27 a.m. and, I think, 1 2 approximately 6:37 or 6:30 p.m., there are no messages from 3 him, he engages in no communication electronically. 4 Although other individuals are communicating, he is not. 5 So he is not directing anybody to do anything. In fact, the 6 last message that he sends at 6:37 a.m. -- or 6:27, sends, 7 "Don't come downtown to the Capitol area. The crowd's too 8 big." 9 So I do think that, you know, to the extent that 10 there's communications indicating some planning on the part 11 of Mr. Meggs, the evidence shows that it's a plan to attend 12 a rally, not a plan or conspiracy to invade the Capitol. 13 There's no allegation that he engaged in any 14 violent acts while he was in the Capitol. There's no 15 allegation that he himself destroyed any property or 16 anything of that nature. I understand the government's 17 position is that, well, we don't have that evidence yet, but 18 that doesn't mean it exists. 19 I do think that there are conditions that the 20 Court can impose on Mr. Meggs that would be sufficient to 21 alleviate or ameliorate any concern the Court might have. 22 He's not a risk of flight, he does not possess a passport. 23 And certainly, there's nothing to indicate that he would 24 commit any further acts of violence or any other acts 25 against the United States going forward if released.

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Similar to the Munchel case, you know, the activities that they were involved in ended with the close of January 6. The issue with the government, the election is over, there is no further question. So I don't think that there would be any reason that the government could allege that Mr. Meggs would have any sort of issue with the government going forward that would cause him to engage in any illegal acts. You know, to the extent that the government says that he instructed people on bringing tools of war, I fail to see how protective gear is -- can be construed as tools of war. It's rhetorical. THE COURT: No. It's not just -- maybe -- "tools of war" may be, I agree with you, that's probably a bit of an embellishment and an overstatement, but he certainly talks about mace, gas masks, batons. You know, so it's not just gear or clothing. MR. WILSON: None of which I'm aware were in the possession of Mr. Meggs while he was inside the Capitol or at the rally. THE COURT: Okay. Anything else, Mr. Wilson? MR. WILSON: No, Judge. I think it's all laid out in the pleadings. And I do think that this case is very much in line with the Munchel case, his actions that day. And I recognize that

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he's alleged to have been a leader in this organization; I'm not aware that membership in a particular organization itself is illegal. I just don't think that the evidence supports the contention that he instructed anybody or planned with anyone to enter the Capitol that day. THE COURT: Okay. All right. Mr. Nestler, it's the government's burden here, so I'll give you the last word before we go on, if you wish. MR. NESTLER: Thank you, Your Honor. Mr. Wilson is correct that Mr. Meggs does not appear to have been very active in the Signal chat during the day of the 6th, and there's a very logical explanation for that: Mr. Meggs was the team leader on the ground in charge, so there's no need to be communicating with others through the Signal chat when he's there and he can talk to them live. And so it's correct that we don't have a Signal chat with Mr. Meggs saying, now everybody go storm the Capitol. But Mr. Meggs was there live with the other dozen or so people who were, in a lot of ways, reporting to him as the team leader, as others referred to him as the team

And the communications that he made before and after the 6th are much more probative of both his role and his intention.

leader, so that's a very logical explanation for that fact.

And then on one more point, Your Honor, which is,
Mr. Wilson did indicate that Mr. Meggs told the FBI, upon
his arrest, that he had disassociated from the Oath Keepers.
That is correct.

The government does not have any information right now to corroborate Mr. Meggs's statements, and that we will indicate, and I think we indicated in our pleadings, there are a couple of other points where Mr. Meggs was not truthful with the FBI when he was interviewed upon his arrest.

He did tell the FBI he did not know other people's names in the organization; he only knew a couple of monikers. That is false, Your Honor, because Mr. Meggs was a person who was receiving these vetting forms from other individuals. And we have some of the phone records showing that Mr. Meggs was calling these individuals and referring to them by name after the 6th and on the 7th and later, clearly indicating that Mr. Meggs knew exactly who they were and who their real identities were.

Mr. Meggs indicated that he didn't do any vetting; we know that to be not correct. We see even Laura Steele was providing her information to Mr. Meggs to be vetted.

And he told the FBI he didn't do any training, any firearms or any kind of paramilitary training. We know from the videos we filed yesterday on those photographs, that's also

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not true. So everything that Mr. Meggs told the FBI upon
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    his arrest we do take with some grain of salt, Your Honor.
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               THE COURT: All right, everyone.
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               Let's hang on, folks. Let me just -- I want to go
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     off camera for a few minutes here and collect my thoughts
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     and I'll be back with you in a few minutes, okay?
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               Thanks, everybody.
               (Recess from 4:28 p.m. to 4:31 p.m.)
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               THE COURT: All right. Do we have everybody back?
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               All right.
               So let me just begin with the basis for detention
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     here and the grounds that justify this proceeding and the
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     consideration of pretrial detention here.
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               So under 3142(f)(1), if an offense is listed under
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     28 U.S.C. 2332b(q)(5)(B) and that listed offense carries a
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     penalty of ten years or greater, that makes a person
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     eligible for detention.
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               In this case, the charge of destruction of
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     government property, although aiding and abetting of
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     destruction of government property is a qualifying charge
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     or, in this case, involves that kind of conduct, because
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     that's the word used in the statute, "involve," because this
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     case involves that kind of conduct, Mr. Meggs is subject to
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     a detention hearing, and, therefore, eligible for detention.
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               That same charge for which the Grand Jury has
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found probable cause gives rise to a rebuttable presumption of detention, and that there are no combination of conditions that would ensure the safety of the community and of dangerousness. Mr. Meggs — that is a rebuttable presumption, and Mr. Meggs has brought forward evidence to rebut it; specifically, at least, at a minimum, the absence of any criminal history.

So consequently, the question remains whether the government has established by clear and convincing evidence that Mr. Meggs presents such a danger to the community or to any person, but no combination of conditions would ensure the safety of the community.

In making that assessment, I'm required to consider four factors: The nature and circumstances of the offense, the weight and the evidence against the person, the history and characteristics of the person, and the nature and seriousness of the danger to any person or the community that will be posed by the person's release.

Let me start with the history and characteristics of the person. Mr. Meggs has no prior criminal convictions, has a senior position with an automobile dealership,

I believe, in Florida, a long-term resident of that community, has two adult children, is married. And so there's nothing about his history or circumstances, such as prior criminal convictions or the like, that would weigh in

favor of pretrial detention here.

But against those characteristics and history,

I've got to weigh the nature and circumstances of the

offense and the weight of the evidence against him, the

danger that he poses.

The nature and circumstances of the offense, the nature of the offenses which relate to the charges themselves, are set forth in the indictment.

Mr. Meggs and others are accused of entering the Capitol building during the count of the Electoral College with the intent of obstructing that proceeding. He is both accused of conspiring to do so and doing so individually. He's accused of aiding and abetting in the destruction of property and for that purpose.

Those charges are obviously quite -- are serious;

I think our Court of Appeals has acknowledged that in the recent decision. You know, this is not run-of-the-mill charge; on the other hand, it's not as -- the dissent in the recent Court of Appeals decision points out, it's not a Class A felony, for example; but, nevertheless -- or at least the lead charge is not a felony; but, nevertheless, they are serious offenses.

And the circumstances of the offenses charged are such that they do give rise to a concern, an inference of dangerousness.

Mr. Meggs, at least on January the 6th, did join with others to enter the Capitol building. As the government has described more than once, they sort of formed a stack of individuals, or at least a line-up of individuals, and moved toward the front of the large group of people who were attempting to infiltrate the Capitol by knocking down that front door or knocking down a door or going through a door and going through officers who were trying to hold the door and hold the line.

Mr. Meggs, and those he was with, were not at the front of that line, nor were they all the back at the back, as the Munchels were in that case that the Circuit decided today, he was somewhere in the middle, probably arguably closer to the front, along with folks who were all pressing forward to enter the Capitol building.

While he did not directly destroy property or injure property, you know, the government has argued and the Grand Jury has found, that he aided and abetted by being part of a larger group that did destroy property in order to effectuate entry into the Capitol building.

And the probable cause has been found in terms of the strength of that. That'll ultimately be something a jury may need to decide, but I think, and I've said before not just in this case, in others, but I think the weight of the evidence with respect to that particular charge is

arguably weaker than it is with respect to some of the other charges, including conspiring to enter the Capitol building to obstruct the proceedings.

And I think the inference to be drawn when a group of people collect together to enter a Capitol as part of a larger mob who have an avowed belief that what is happening is illegitimate, it's certainly more than a reasonable inference to draw that their interest in engaging in that kind of conduct in entering the Capitol building was in order to interrupt and disrupt the congressional proceedings.

And so those are the nature and circumstances of the offense. As I said, the weight of the evidence, I think, varies based upon the charge. I think the government has stronger evidence with respect to the first two charges, perhaps less so with respect to the destruction-of-property offense.

You know, the question here, it seems to me, to be really that the fourth prong or the fourth -- that is, the nature and seriousness or the danger to any person or the community that would be posed by the person's release.

You know, on Mr. Meggs's side of the ledger, he is not, as his counsel rightly points out and the government admits, did not -- is not accused of engaging any assaultive behavior on that day. He's not himself accused of

possessing a weapon that day. He's not accused of himself directly destroying property that day. All of those factors weigh, it seems to me, against a finding of dangerousness.

On the other hand, there is substantial evidence here that Mr. Meggs is someone who was prepared to do violence and ready to engage in violence prior to January the 6th.

And let me be clear about something here, at least in terms of my analysis. The fact that there are no direct communications about a plan to have an incursion at the Capitol prior to January 6th to me is not dispositive of the issue of dangerousness. What is dispositive of the issue of dangerousness are the various facts and circumstances surrounding January the 6th and what that means about the risks the person poses if they are released.

So the fact that Mr. Meggs's communications may have been not about entering the Capitol building, but, rather, engaging with Antifa, it seems to me is a relevant factor but certainly is not dispositive in his favor, because the ultimate question is dangerousness and whether his release would pose a danger to the community and whether there are a combination of conditions that would ensure the safety of the community.

And when I look at what the government has presented, Mr. Meggs raises a whole host of concerns that

I will tell you the others have not, with the exception of, perhaps, Ms. Watkins. Not only did he actually enter that building on January the 6th and then collect with others to do so -- so on January the 6th itself, he actually -- whether there was any pre-planning on the 5th or earlier is, in a sense, beside the point.

What is the point is that on January the 6th, at least ten people collected together, which arguably constitutes a conspiracy in and of itself on January 6th to enter the Capitol building. And they did so as part of a larger mob of individuals, a crowd of people who pushed up against a door and against a group of officers to find their way into the Capitol building to disrupt what was happening with Congress.

But more importantly, in my view, Mr. Meggs has presented himself as somebody, through his words and his deeds and his conduct as somebody who presents a danger, because he is somebody who's a leader, somebody who was communicating not just within the Oath Keepers but with other organizations and prepared to come to Washington, D.C. to do violence.

And it may not have been violence to enter the Capitol, but it was violence to engage with people in the street, whether it be Antifa or some other group, and to essentially create and be prepared for and engage in havoc

in the streets of Washington, D.C. That presents a danger, in my view, to the community.

And these are his words. On November 9th, days after the election, "This fight" -- he posts on Facebook:
"This fight is face to face, not far away. If you're ready to join the fight, DM me. Remember, there are people doing shit," is his word.

A month later, he says that he is "organizing an alliance between the Oath Keepers, the Florida Three Percenters, and the Proud Boys. We've decided to work together and shut this shit down," okay? Whether he's talking about the election count or shutting down violent protests or violence involving Antifa; nevertheless, we have somebody who's already prepared to organize and engage with other groups to engage in violent acts on the streets of the District of Columbia.

December 22nd of 2020, a Facebook exchange in which he's contemplating with somebody else what might be described as a military, a pincer-type movement, to confront people in the streets. "I figure we could splinter off the main group of Proud Boys and come up behind them. Fucking crush them for good. We can hang for a while. They'll see one group. Then we fall back on the pack and peel off. We catch them in the middle. Game over."

That's not the only instance of such language.

On December 25th of 2020, not just language with playing, he 1 talks about what equipment should be brought to the 2 3 District of Columbia. He talks about D.C. has no guns. And 4 so I guess to his credit, he'll recognize that you shouldn't 5 bring a gun to the District. But it wasn't necessarily to 6 avoid violence, it was to avoid getting arrested. So 7 instead, bring mace, gas -- these are my words. But he 8 says, "So mace and gas masks, some batons. And if you've 9 got armor, that's good. During the day, it's kind of 10 boring; but when it starts getting dark, game on." So, 11 again, here we have Mr. Meggs, a leader of this group of 12 people, ready to engage and prepare for violence in the 13 evening. 14 He later on says in that same string: 15 "Orchestrated a plan with the Proud Boys. I've been 16 communicating with the leader. We're going to march with 17 them for a while. Then fall back to the back of the crowd 18 and turn off. Then we will have the Proud Boys get in front 19 of them. The cops will get between Antifa and Proud Boys. 20 We will come in behind Antifa and beat the hell out of 21 them." I think those words speak for themselves in terms of 22 what Mr. Meggs was prepared to do and willing to do when he 23 came to Washington, D.C. 24 Another exchange on December the 30th, 2020, says, 25 he will not be carrying, but there's a reason for that,

because we have a "Heavy QRF," referring to a quick reaction 1 2 force, "ten minutes out, though." This is referring to 3 having a group of people or a person outside the 4 District of Columbia with weapons at the ready to come in, 5 if necessary, if things get heavy; in other words, if 6 there's a confrontation with other groups. 7 Again, Signal chat on January the 2nd, 2021, 8 showing that he planned to get with, "the North Carolina 9 team today and find out the QRF location, " again, referring 10 to the quick reaction force and where they're going to be. 11 And then, perhaps most troubling of all, and this 12 is, frankly, in all of the evidence that I've seen and 13 presented with, the most express statement about somebody 14 coming to Washington for something other than just a 15 political rally. After learning that the Vice President 16 would count the Electoral College votes, he writes, "that 17 checks all the boxes. I think this is why we were called 18 here. Anything less would be a terrible mistake. 19 natives are restless. Tell your friend this isn't a rally." 20 And then he tells that same person: "Be very cautious." 21 You know, all of those communications that happened before 22 the 6th are indicative of somebody who is prepared for and 23 planning for violence in the streets of Washington, D.C. There's ample evidence that Mr. Meggs is a leader 24 25 and planner in this group. He says, in a communication

dated December 25th, that he is the state lead of Florida. 1 2 There are communications with other chains -- excuse me, 3 communication chains with others showing communications with 4 other groups that he's admitting to, organizing large 5 numbers of people to come to Washington, and providing 6 direction on what type of implements to bring into the 7 District and how to avoid getting arrested in the District. 8 He has an alias that he uses on these planning 9 calls: Gator 1. 10 Mr. Young, who is a co-defendant in this case, 11 acknowledges in one of his text messages, in one of his 12 communications, that Mr. Meggs was a team leader at the 13 Capitol, those are his words. 14 And we also have evidence that Mr. Meggs is 15 underwriting the cost of hotel rooms not just for himself 16 but for others. 17 His behavior in the aftermath of the 6th certainly 18 suggests that he was not humbled by what he saw happen, and, 19 in fact, was inspired by it. 20 There is the comment, and although it's the only 21 one, you know: "Okay. Who gives a damn who went in there. 22 We are now the enemy of the state. We aren't quitting. 23 We're reloading." 24 And as the government has represented today that 25 even after the 6th, he is still calling people and

communicating with people who are other leaders of other organizations even after the 6th. And so we have somebody who is preparing for violence before the 6th. On the day of the 6th, he incurs the Capitol building with a group of others, and after the 6th is looking forward to further planning and preparation with others.

So I do think, you know, the question under Salerno, which the Circuit makes clear I need to consider in Munchel, is what is the identifiable or articulable threat that individual poses to the community, and I think Mr. Meggs poses two threats here that are articulable and identifiable.

One is: Further violence in the streets of various cities throughout the country in which there are possibilities of political rallies, possibilities of antagonistic behavior between opposing political forces.

That risk has not abated. That risk has not abated, and I think Mr. Meggs has not, given how expressive he has been about how he views the particular groups or people he thinks are part of Antifa -- can I ask whoever is on there to please mute your line -- that he has a mindset of somebody who's prepared to fight and do so violently in the streets.

The second identifiable and articulable harm is that I think he poses a threat to Democratic institutions and processes. You know, he's demonstrated that by entering

the Capitol building, I think, to interrupt what Congress 1 2 was doing. It's true that that event has passed, but, 3 nevertheless, I think, given all of the facts and 4 circumstances, there are other capitols out there and there 5 are other events, and, frankly, even just public 6 demonstrations where I think Mr. Meggs poses a threat to the 7 community. And it's not simply what he's done, but it's also 8 what he's capable of doing. And this is why I don't think 9 10 any conditions of release are warranted, even though I've 11 considered home detention, I've considered a stay-away from 12 D.C., I've considered all of the other conditions I've 13 placed on others who I thought were -- who posed a lesser 14 risk. 15 You know, the first is, Mr. Meggs, there's 16 evidence here that he destroyed evidence or secreted 17 evidence. The fact that none of his clothing has been found 18 that he was wearing on that day and that there is this 19 text-message chain between he and his wife that suggests 20 that maybe he got rid of it, lessens the reliability that 21 Mr. Meggs may have of complying with any conditions of 22 release. 23 Secondly, Mr. Meggs has clearly demonstrated that 24 he knows how to communicate with others, through both 25 encrypted and non-encrypted modes of communication.

even if I were to order him not to do that, we are in no position to be able to monitor everything he does or does not do. And given the depth of his planning and preparation and his leadership, I do not have the level of comfort that we can monitor his communications.

Third, Mr. Meggs seems to be somebody of some means. He has, as I said, underwritten people's trips to Washington, people's hotel rooms, he's able to participate in the training class, although it's not a king's ransom, nevertheless, it demonstrates an ability to finance such activities.

And then, you know, finally, I accept the government's representations that Mr. Meggs was less than forthcoming during his FBI interview.

And so while there are strict combination of conditions that could be placed on somebody if released, for those reasons, I simply do not believe Mr. Meggs is someone that can be -- whose danger would be substantially or significantly or sufficiently, I should say, mitigated by placing those conditions upon him.

You know, the bottom line is that I've had the benefit of comparing the evidence against Mr. Meggs, the benefit to the evidence that has been brought before me with respect to at least six or seven other people. The evidence against Mr. Meggs is more substantial than it is against any

other defendant, with the exception of, perhaps, Ms. Watkins.

And I think the danger -- the inference of dangerousness is consistent with that evidence. And I think Mr. Meggs, unlike the others -- and I think given all the evidence that's before me, all of the factors that I've considered and, frankly, I've carefully considered what the Circuit had to say in Munchel -- and I will point out that the Circuit did say that it viewed people differently who aided, conspired with, planned or coordinated actions on January the 6th, they are in a different category than those who cheered on the violence or entered the Capitol after others cleared the way. I think there's ample evidence here of conspiring and planning and coordinating dangerous activities, including contemplating nighttime confrontations with the likes of Antifa and others and planning for those purposes.

And so I think Mr. Meggs is in a very different position than the defendants were in *Munchel*. I think he's in a very different position than most of the other defendants in this case. And so for that reason, I do find that there are no combination of conditions that would ensure the safety of the community if Mr. Meggs was released, and, therefore, I will deny the defendant's request for Pretrial Release.

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               Okay. With that, is there anything else anybody
     else wants to raise, because we are scheduled to be
 2
 3
     together, I think, in about ten days?
 4
               MR. NESTLER: Not on behalf of the United States.
 5
     Thank you, Your Honor.
 6
               MR. WILSON: Not on behalf of Mr. Meggs, Judge.
 7
               THE COURT: Thank you, all, very much. We will
 8
     see you soon.
 9
               Thanks, everyone.
10
               (Proceedings concluded at 4:53 p.m.)
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, William P. Zaremba, RMR, CRR, certify that the foregoing is a correct transcript from the record of proceedings in the above-titled matter.

Please note: This hearing occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic and is therefore subject to the technological limitations of court reporting remotely.

Date: March 27, 2021 /S/ William P. Zaremba William P. Zaremba, RMR, CRR

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