

#1441 There is Nothing New About Right-Wing Extremist Violence

[00:00:00] **JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** Welcome to this episode of the award-winning Best of the Left podcast, in which we shall give deeper context to the current wave of right-wing extremists threatening violence against the government, our election system, masking, vaccine, cOVID measures, and anyone not agreeing with their conspiratorial worldview.

We at Best of the Left are waging a war on entropy, giving context to the contextless, creating order to stave off the chaos. To that point, this is another of our experimental remix episodes in which we sprinkle in some classic clips from our archives in addition to the kind of new material you're used to. The first two clips you hear today will be from 2010, but from there on out, it's much more contemporary.

Clips today are from On The Media, The Rachel Maddow Show, Consider This, Democracy Now, The David Pakman Show, All In with Chris Hayes, and All Things Considered.

Killing By Numbers: The history of April 19th and 20th - On The Media - Air Date 8-24-10

[00:00:55] **BOB GARFIELD - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** 15 years ago this Monday, Timothy McVeigh exploded a truck bomb outside the Alfred P Murrah federal building in downtown Oklahoma City. The blast killed 168 people, including 19 children, and was, until September 11th 2001, the deadliest terrorist attack on American soil. McVeigh had ties to the militia movement and was retaliating for the government's raid on the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, exactly two years earlier. But before the FBI identified McVeigh, and co-conspirator Terry Nichols, as the prime suspect in the bombing, many terrorism experts and news reporters speculated that there might be a Middle East connection.

The first world trade center bombing had occurred only three years before, and there was the Bosnian genocide, the ethnic cleansing of Muslims at the hands of militant Serbs and warlords. Views of the American Muslim community were

shaped by that context. Reporter Scott Gurian looks back at the rush to judgment by the media and by law enforcement

[00:02:03] **SCOTT GURIAN:** in the 36 hours following the bombing, the Council on American Islamic Relations documented hundreds of cases of what it calls anti-Muslim backlash across the country. There were reports of vandalism and death threats. Talk radio callers went off on racist rants and a pregnant Iraqi refugee in Oklahoma City suffered a miscarriage after a group of people threw rocks through her windows and shouted anti-Islamic epithets. Imad Enchassi, the president of the Islamic Society of Greater Oklahoma City, said his fear was sparked the moment he heard the blast.

[00:02:36] **IMAD ENCHASSI:** I remember very vividly that I was going to the bank to make a deposit at 9:01 where I could hear a very loud explosion. My secretary at that time, she told me this sound like some kind of a thunder or something. I said, well, having lived in Lebanon, this sounds like an explosion.

[00:02:53] **ARCHIVE FOOTAGE:** Governor, describe for us as you walk through the building, what did you see?

Well, it's Beirut. I mean, it's, uh, it's just incredible.

[00:03:02] **IMAD ENCHASSI:** Sure enough on the radio, the news was was some kind of an explosion downtown, still not familiar with what it was. And not too far after that, when it was concluded that it was some kind of a car bomb and so on and so forth, the news traveled very fast and all of a sudden on the news they were looking for two Middle Eastern Arabs with a description that fits my profiles and we realized that this is going to be a troublesome.

[00:03:30] **ARCHIVE FOOTAGE:** Three suspects, three men, two of whom are described as Middle Eastern. They're said to be driving a brown Chevrolet...

...local newspaper, and one of the local television stations by someone saying they represented an Islamic group that claiming responsibility.

One of the descriptions is the 20 to 25 year old male wearing blue jogging suit, another 35 to 38 years old wearing a blue jogging suit and brown pants. Beard, mustache,...

Oklahoma City also said a member of the Nation of Islam claimed responsibility, but that group also vehemently denied any connection with the attack.

[00:04:04] **SCOTT GURIAN:** Part of the reason so much early suspicion was cast on Middle Easterners was the government's detention of Oklahoma City resident Abraham Ahmed. Ahmed was a Palestinian American in route to visit his family in Amman Jordan on the morning of April 19th. He fit the FBI's profile and the contents of his luggage raised some suspicions. So he was taken into custody at London's Heathrow Airport, sent back to Washington and held for three days. He had no connection to the bombing, but was portrayed in the media as a guilty man.

[00:04:36] **IMAD ENCHASSI:** I was sitting at home watching it, and I believed it.

[00:04:40] **SCOTT GURIAN:** Imad Enchassi.

[00:04:41] **IMAD ENCHASSI:** I believed my very best friend that I grew up with and I went to college with could have been one of the perpetrators, and then I go back to my senses and said, no, no, there's no way he would do that. But then I'll go back and see some of the news reports, some of the experts reports, and some of the media, Channel 4, Channel 5, Channel 9, coming back saying they found bomb making material in his luggage and so on and so forth, so I believed it. There was very strong message, even to me, who is Muslim and who knew that person very, very, very well that, I have believed that he could have had done something like that. So imagine what kind of effect it would have on a regular person on the street.

[00:05:15] **SCOTT GURIAN:** Ibrahim Hooper is spokesperson for the Council on American-Islamic Relations.

[00:05:20] **IBRAHIM HOOPER:** After those first initial days, when it was thought that Middle Easterners or Muslims, whoever had done it, we saw that when it was clear that that was not the case, it was like a slap in the face for many people. And they recognized that this isn't the way you need to look at things, that you can have domestic terrorism, that people who look like "regular Americans" can be terrorist.

[00:05:46] **SCOTT GURIAN:** The FBI says the majority of terrorist incidents and attacks in the US come from within, but as Jim Naureckas with the liberal media watchdog group, Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting has observed, that runs counter to the media's prevailing narrative, or as he calls it, metaphor.

[00:06:02] **JIM NAURECKAS:** The main metaphors are the invasion metaphor and the infection metaphor. And in both cases you're thinking of

something that is coming from outside the body politic and is entering against your will, and if you could only keep that out then you'd be safe. There is a xenophobia lying beneath it, that terrorism is what you get when you are exposed to the other. And so the solution to terrorism is to have a heightened awareness and a suspicion of the other.

[00:06:36] **SCOTT GURIAN:** In part, it's suspicion of the other that motivates the militia movement, which is on the rise. That's why it's important to remember, not just September 11th, 2001, but also April 19th, 1995. For *On the Media*, I'm Scott Gurian.

[00:06:52] **BROOKE GLADSTONE - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** April 19th is a day. We will have little chance to forget because our domestic terrorists or would be terrorists insist on reminding us every few years. We decided to trace April 19th and it's equally fraught companion, April 20th, back to where it all began. So many symbols twisted into dark narratives. So much magical thinking about a date, starting with one celebrated act of violence on April 19th, 1775.

Later Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote,

"By the rude bridge that arched the flood, their flag to April's breeze unfurled, here once the embattled farmers stood, and fired the shot heard round the world."

[00:07:37] **BOB GARFIELD - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** Next notable date for some militias, April 20th, 1889 - Hitler's birthday. Others site, April 19th, 1943 as the date the Nazis invaded the Warsaw ghetto. Yet another instance of government forces marching on the innocent. That the innocent were Jews is not emphasized. Then April 20th, 1985, 300 agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms raided the Arkansas compound of the Covenant of the Sword and the Arm of the Lord, one of the original far-right militias. It served as the model and inspiration for many that followed.

[00:08:17] **BROOKE GLADSTONE - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** Newsweek quoted a newsletter published by the Militia of Montana that pounded the importance of April 19th. It was the shot heard round the world. The date in 1992, the militias claimed of an aborted ATF raid on white supremacist Randy Weaver, whose wife later was shot dead by FBI snipers at Ruby Ridge. We couldn't find any documentation of that April 19th raid.

April 19th, 1995 was the scheduled date for the execution of Richard Wayne Snell, a white supremacist who, like Weaver, newsweek noted, was regarded as

a movement martyr. Snell, convicted of killing a pawn shop operator, was executed just hours after the Oklahoma City bombing, after telling his executioners that they had, "picked a bad day."

[00:09:05] **BOB GARFIELD - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** But before Oklahoma City, there was Waco. April 19th, 1993, the end of a 51 day siege of the Branch Davidian Cult by agents of the ATF, in which more than 70 men, women, and children died in a fire.

[00:09:22] **ARCHIVE FOOTAGE:** Well, as you can see, the parts of the building have collapsed. The fire has indeed engulfed the vast majority of this compound.

The entire roof is gone.

The entire roof has gone, mike. What else can you tell us? Any sign of firefighting equipment? No. None whatsoever...

[00:09:37] **BOB GARFIELD - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** It was Waco that inspired Timothy McVeigh, and it was April 19th that he put on his fake driver's license he used to rent the truck he used in the bombing. It was Waco and Oklahoma City that inspired Columbine High School students, Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris.

[00:09:54] **ARCHIVE FOOTAGE:** They dressed in black trench coats. They hated jocks. Today they brought their guns and their grudges to school, then started shooting.

[00:10:01] **BOB GARFIELD - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** Anything in the hands of the unbalanced and disturbed can be dangerous, even a date. April 19th has been anointed a day of remembrance and it's worth remembering that there are people out there whose calendars are marked a whole lot differently than yours or mine.

Gun marches - The Rachel Maddow Show - Air Date 4-24-10

[00:10:18] **BETTY MCCOLLUM:** I don't want another Oklahoma City to ever take place again. And, just as we would not give aid and comfort to Al Qaeda, let us not allow the words of elected leaders to give comfort and comfortable excuses to extremists bent on violence. When members of Congress compare

healthcare legislation to government tyranny, socialism, or totalitarianism, in the hopes of scoring political points, it's like pouring gas on the fire of extremism.

[00:10:45] **RACHEL MADDOW - HOST, THE RACHEL MADDOW**

SHOW: That was Congresswoman Betty McCollum of Minnesota speaking on the House floor this week in support of a resolution honoring the victims of the 1995 attack on the Alfred P Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. The resolution passed. Monday, of course, is the 15th anniversary of the bombing, which killed 168 Americans.

On Friday, Bill Clinton will be the keynote speaker at a symposium marking the anniversary. It's an event designed to be a forum for discussing how the country reacted to the attack 15 years ago, and what lessons learned from the Oklahoma City bombing can be applied to today's America.

On Monday, our next guest, Secretary of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, will be in Oklahoma City itself for the official remembrance ceremony.

Also that day, again, on the anniversary of the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City, by Timothy McVeigh, an anti-government extremist with ties to the militia movement, there will be two Marches On Washington. One's being called the Second Amendment March. It's... leading up to their... In leading up to their March On Washington, this group has been holding armed rallies at state capitals, from Kentucky, to Montana, to Virginia, uh, anti-government marches and rallies at which participants are encouraged to, uh, wear and display their guns.

Now, even though those folks have been armed at all the state capitals leading up to the April 19th March, when they actually head to the grounds of the Washington Monument, on the actual anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing, they're not allowed to open carry there. So that Second Amendment March will be unarmed in D.C..

That said, right across the Potomac from that site, at Gravelly Point Park in Virginia, that March On dC, also on the occasion of the Oklahoma City bombing anniversary, uh, that March will be armed. Participants at that one are being encouraged to bring guns.

The organizers are holding it in Virginia, and bringing people right up to Gravelly Point on the Potomac because they say that's as close as they think they can legally get to DC with loaded weapons.

One of the speakers at that event is-- the one with guns, uh-- is the ex Alabama militia man who made news recently by encouraging people to go to Democratic Party offices and throw bricks through the windows.

Um, one other high profile attendee of that armed March, uh, is backing out now. He's the president of the Oathkeepers. They're a group of pro-gun law enforcement and military personnel who say they plan to disobey orders in order to, in their words, "Prevent possible future egregious violations of the Bill of Rights, and to," again, in their words, "stop a dictatorship from taking root in America.

The Oathkeepers has pulled out of the armed March on almost Washington, citing published statements by some participants in the upcoming rally that indicate that the event will have a confrontational stance.

The Michigan Kidnapping Plot And Whats Fueling Right Wing Extremism - Consider This - Air Date 10-9-20

[00:13:27] **AUDIE CORNISH - HOST, CONSIDER THIS:** In April thousands of protesters packed the streets of Lansing, Michigan, near the state Capitol building.

[00:13:33] **UNIDENTIFIED PERSON #1:** Governor, you have overstepped. We can take care of ourselves. Thank you. We want to work.

[00:13:40] **AUDIE CORNISH - HOST, CONSIDER THIS:** It was just a few weeks after Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer had signed a stay-at-home order, shutting down workplaces, stores, churches, bars, gyms, all across the state.

[00:13:51] **UNIDENTIFIED PERSON #2:** What brings me out here is our governor has just gone way too far. She's stepped way overstepped her boundaries. It's just, the American people and the people of Michigan are standing up. We're letting them know what's going on.

[00:14:04] **AUDIE CORNISH - HOST, CONSIDER THIS:** There were protests like these in states across the country. Pushback against the shutdowns that sought to stem the spread of coronavirus. But in Michigan, some protesters went beyond causing traffic jams or holding up signs.

[00:14:18] **UNIDENTIFIED GROUP:** [Chanting] Let us in.

[00:14:22] **AUDIE CORNISH - HOST, CONSIDER THIS:** Here's the thing. Michigan is an open carry state, and it's one of just a handful of states where you can walk into the State House, armed with a gun. And that's exactly what some protesters started doing.

[00:14:33] **UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER #1:** Some members of the Michigan state legislature are wearing Bulletproof vests today.

[00:14:38] **UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER #2:** After the Capitol building was overrun by protesters, some of whom were armed with semi-automatic weapons.

[00:14:45] **AUDIE CORNISH - HOST, CONSIDER THIS:** One day, a handful of these protesters made their way onto the balcony overlooking the state Senate with legislators working below. Some state lawmakers said it made them feel afraid and threatened.

[00:14:57] **GOV. GRETCHEN WHITMER:** We have legislators who are showing up to work wearing bulletproof vests. That is disenfranchising thousands of people in our state, if their legislator doesn't feel safe enough to go to work and to do what their job is.

[00:15:10] **AUDIE CORNISH - HOST, CONSIDER THIS:** Now we know some of the people who attended those demonstrations back in April and May are allegedly connected to the plot to kidnap Governor Whitmer.

[00:15:19] **LT. GOV. GARLIN GILCHRIST:** Let me be really clear, two of the men who were arrested two nights ago, these are the same men who were in the Senate gallery that I preside over, I saw these men with my own eyes, with long guns, and they were there to intimidate lawmakers and disrupt the lawmaking process.

[00:15:34] **AUDIE CORNISH - HOST, CONSIDER THIS:** This is Michigan's Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist, a Democrat, speaking to NPR.

[00:15:39] **LT. GOV. GARLIN GILCHRIST:** This was a credible threat, and I think they've been encouraged by Republicans up and down, and no one in Michigan, no one in the country, should accept this. And that is why I'm

thankful that law enforcement did their investigatory work and they took action to make sure that this was thwarted.

[00:15:55] **AUDIE CORNISH - HOST, CONSIDER THIS:** Experts say 2020 is shaping up to be an unusually big year for right-wing extremism. There's a lot of factors at play. The pandemic, the uncertain economy, the shutdowns, and Democrats argue the president's divisive rhetoric and hesitation to condemn white supremacy and militia groups. Today, I spoke with Cynthia Miller-Idriss about all of that. She's a professor at American University who tracks right-wing extremism. She says right now, there's just this perfect meeting of these factors and right-wing recruiters are taking advantage of that.

[00:16:32] **CYNTHIA MILLER-IDRISS:** You know, increasing anxiety, lack of control over one's life, isolation and lack of belonging to other people makes people a little bit vulnerable to calls to act heroically or engage with meaning and purpose in some way. Obviously the vast majority of people do not join militias who experience those conditions, but we are seeing increasing participation in conspiracy theories, increasing mobilization around militias, and across the whole spectrum.

[00:17:05] **AUDIE CORNISH - HOST, CONSIDER THIS:** There is another thing people are bringing up. Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel said that these groups are taking advantage of all the upheaval going on right now. She mentions the pandemic, but also the racial justice protests. Does this ring true to you?

[00:17:22] **CYNTHIA MILLER-IDRISS:** Absolutely. I think of it as three waves of the militia mobilization. It started with Richmond, the protests in January around the second amendment protests where you had, I think 22,000 people come out, and then the shelter-in-place orders and the protests at state capitals, and then co-opting, I should say, the peaceful protests around the Black Lives Matter and racial injustice.

[00:17:45] **AUDIE CORNISH - HOST, CONSIDER THIS:** But co-opting In what way? What are they saying?

[00:17:47] **CYNTHIA MILLER-IDRISS:** So we had militia and vigilante groups showing up who are saying, they're protecting the police or law enforcement, they're trying to protect the status quo, and then you have groups showing up who want to spark a race war or want to create further chaos or harm protesters. So you can't think of it as one unified group, but as clusters of small groups that sometimes are at odds with each other.

[00:18:07] **AUDIE CORNISH - HOST, CONSIDER THIS:** The final factor that we've been hearing a lot about is the president himself, using racist language on Twitter and in person. He's also repeatedly been rebuked for not saying enough to condemn white supremacist actions. Does his rhetoric figure into the growth of these groups? Is there actually evidence of that so far?

[00:18:29] **CYNTHIA MILLER-IDRISS:** There's evidence generally speaking in the research that the incendiary words of elected officials leads to greater violence against vulnerable populations, and so we know that to be true in the research and what we have seen in the U.S. is that there is a perception on the part of far-right and extremist groups that they have been legitimized. So even if it's not intentional, that's the way it's received. And I think people have to understand the impact of the failure to condemn and of words like "Stand back. Stand by." even if then it's later walked back or said that wasn't the intent. They were immediately celebrated online in far-right channels as a call to action.

[00:19:10] **AUDIE CORNISH - HOST, CONSIDER THIS:** That's Cynthia Miller-Idriss. She studies extremism. Her new book is called *Hate in the Homeland: The New Global Far Right*.

One more thing, let's talk about that term - militia. It came up again and again in yesterday's press conferences with Governor Whitmer and the authorities, but in a tweet today, the governor said, "they're not militias. They're domestic terrorists, endangering and intimidating their fellow Americans. Words matter."

Kathleen Belew is an assistant professor of history at the university of Chicago who studies paramilitary and white power groups. I spoke to her today about those words.

[00:19:44] **KATHLEEN BELEW:** Let me just begin by clarifying that the militias that I'm going to be talking about are also terrorist a lot of the time, and they are illegal all of the time. All 50 states have laws prohibiting paramilitary militias of the kind that we see in stories like this one. But I think that the distinction here is about what kind of white supremacist or right-wing anti-government terrorism is at play in a given context, and what that context can tell us about what this movement is and what it is trying to accomplish.

[00:20:19] **AUDIE CORNISH - HOST, CONSIDER THIS:** Give us a little more detail about the elements that are at play, then.

[00:20:24] **KATHLEEN BELEW:** Sure. So there are two kinds of militia that people are talking about in the public discourse today. One has to do with the

idea of the well-regulated militia enumerated in the second amendment. It's really important for people to remember that, that militia does not exist as a private effort anymore. Those militias were mandated and controlled by the state and they were all incorporated into national guard units in the early 20th century. So there's not a through line from the second amendment militia to the private militias we're talking about now, even though those groups sometimes claim that there is.

Now, the militias that we're talking about, like the ones in this story about the attempted kidnapping of Governor Whitmer, are part of a social movement that has been active in our nation for several decades. And it's part of a longer history of a thing called the white power movement, which brought together Klansmen, neo-Nazis, skinheads, and others in the 1980s, and then moved into some parts of the burgeoning militia movement in the early 1990s. But another thing I'd like to help clear up for people is that not all militias are part of the white supremacist movement, and what we have in the Michigan case, according to the attorney general, are people who are both militia-affiliated and part of what law enforcement would term "white supremacist extremism."

Now those activists constitute the largest domestic terror threat to the United States, and are experiencing a momentous upsurge right now. So we have to connect this story in Michigan to other places where this violence is occurring.

[00:22:12] **AUDIE CORNISH - HOST, CONSIDER THIS:** So that's what happens for the experts, but for all the rest of us, we hear one thing coming out of microphones, and it's interesting thinking back to what you said earlier about the second amendment, because does using the term essentially lend that kind of patriotic lens to extremist groups when we throw around the word militia?

[00:22:36] **KATHLEEN BELEW:** You know, I, don't know quite where that pushback is coming from, and strikingly, I've been studying this phenomenon since 2005 and only in the last two weeks, have I ever heard this kind of a pushback against the use of the term. And it seems to be coming on the one hand from people in national guard units who don't want to be lumped into this, understandably, but also it seems to be coming from the left by way of saying that the word militia imbues some kind of neutral and order-keeping and legitimate face onto these groups. I just don't think that's the case. All militias, as I said are illegal. Many of them are also involved in anti-American, anti-democratic terrorist violence. and even when they're not, they often rub shoulders with groups that are.

So when I use that word, militia, it's not to imbue any kind of positive connotation, it's simply to describe the type of activism that we need to

confront. But let's not be confused about any of this. All of this is a deep threat to American democracy and poses fundamental danger both to our electoral process and to our citizens, and I think all of it deserves our careful attention and specific language over the months to come.

Proud Boys & Far-Right Groups Tied to Jan. 6 Attack Reporters & Others at Anti-Mask, Anti-Vax Rally - Democracy Now! - Air Date 8-23-21

[00:23:52] **AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!:** As COVID-19 cases surge in the United States, with the country, once again, averaging 1000 daily coronavirus deaths a day, we look now at how anti-mask, anti-vaccine protests are continuing nationwide, with some turning violent.

In a shocking story out of California, at least one person was stabbed, and two journalists attacked, while covering an anti-vax, anti-mask demonstration outside Los Angeles City Hall, on Saturday, August 14th. That was two Saturdays ago.

The protest was attended by members of the Proud Boys and other right-wing groups. KPCC radio reporter, Frank Stoltze was assaulted while doing an interview. He had his glasses ripped off, was repeatedly kicked. He said nothing like that had ever happened to him in his 30 years of reporting.

The Huffington post reports a Southern California mortgage broker named Tony Moon was videotaped attacking the independent journalist Tina-Desiree Berg. Moon was also seen screaming, "Unmask them all!" Moon was also in Washington on January 6 during the insurrection at the Capitol.

Well, last week I spoke to Tina-Desiree Berg, a reporter at Status Coup News in Los Angeles, and asked her to describe the protest and what happened to her as she covered it.

[00:25:09] **TINA-DESIREE BERG:** It was a wild day. I got there about 45 minutes before the violence actually started, because I had been... I had just released a story that morning, Saturday, where one of our gubernatorial candidates, Sarah Stephens, she had been involved with another press beating in front of the Wi Spa almost three weeks ago.

I had filmed that beating, and it... Coincidentally, the folks that did it had posted bodycam footage of themselves inside the vehicle as they were leaving. And they posted it on social media. So, when I saw that, I knew who had been responsible.

But, one of the persons in the vehicle was Sarah Stephens. She's running for governor right now. And we were able to identify her, not only through her license plate, but also through video surrounding the incident, where you see her on the sidewalk.

So my intention that morning was to go down, since she was one of the keynote speakers, and maybe try to talk to her about what happened at Wi Spa two weeks before, because I think that's a newsworthy conversation to have, if you're running for governor.

But we never made it that far. So, initially on the sidewalk, a group of me and other reporters were standing there. There had been some skateboarders that had been going up and down First Street and Spring Street, and they were preteens, kids, maybe the oldest was 15, it seemed to me. I didn't videotape much of them because I generally don't videotape children.

But, at one point, one of the Proud Boys, his name is Benjamin Patino —came across the street and started harassing one of the skateboarders and calling them Antifa. So, these guys, they have a broad brush with what they state to be Antifa. They see Antifa where there's no Antifa often in my experience.

So, he started harassing one of these skateboarders, and somebody that is in black bloc came to this kid's defense, and pushed Patino away. Patino ran back across the Street. But then he came back over with Adam Kiefer, who is another Proud Boy, Tony Moon, who is a Capitol insurrectionist, and a group of other folks, and I'm not sure who all of the other ones were.

And that's when you had the incident of... one of them came up to me called me a, B-I-T-C-H —I'm not sure if we can say that. And he punched me in the camera. But I kept filming.

Then Tony Moon came over, and he had been hitting another woman with his water bottle. And I tried to intervene a little bit while I was filming, because I could see she had a bloody head. She had been hit in the head. And so, then he started screaming, "Unmask them all!" He ripped my mask off and manhandled me, or shoved me a little bit.

But then I kept filming. And right after that, you'll notice in the background of the video, there is a counterprotester, who is pro-vaccine, who was... looks like he's getting beaten by fists, but it turns out that that individual had a shank of some sort in his hand and was actually trying to stab him.

So that's the second stabbing. The first stabbing had happened earlier. I didn't catch it on video, but I did see the gentleman coming by from behind, walking towards the police officers. And you can see there's blood on his shirt, and then he's collapsed in the street and they're giving him aid.

So as far as I know, there's definitely two stabbings. There might be more that I didn't quite catch, but it was a very violent scene.

And, it's interesting to me, because some of these characters, including Tony Moon-- he was also, incidentally, at that same Wi Spa event where this other press member was hit on the back of the head with a lead pipe-- Tony Moon was there that day, also with a water bottle, and he struck a counterprotester with that.

So, I think it's interesting, amy, that this is a group that has been traveling around Southern California. They've also been up in Sacramento, they have also been up in Portland, and they instigate violence wherever they go. And, again, these are... they're right-wingers. They are definitely part of the group that supported Trump, but I don't think this is solely about Trump anymore, or necessarily anti-vaccine.

I think that they are just latching on from one movement to the next. And they're kind of coalesced around this idea of freedom. And you'll notice that they all have these Gators on, that are covering their faces. They're not trying to prevent the spread of COVID. They're trying to stop themselves from being identified.

[00:29:20] **AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!:** Tell us more about the direct attack on you, and how you know who Tony Moon is, and that he was at the insurrection, January 6, at the Capitol.

[00:29:36] **TINA-DESIREE BERG:** Yeah. So I know who Tony Moon is because he had been at that Wi Spa event two weeks earlier. After I saw him hit the woman with the water bottle, I got online and started to research who he was.

And I saw that he had been at the Capitol January 6th, because he had posted video of himself on his social media showing that he had been, and there was

also a clip in the Parler archive that's on ProPublica where you see him in that video. So he was definitely there.

And I think it also bears mentioning that he identifies himself as "Roof Korean." And that is a very racist trope that goes back to the beating of Rodney King. So, he's definitely identifying himself as a group that's already radical right, racist, doing violence.

So, yeah, he was there at, Wi spa. We looked into who he was. And then when I saw him coming up to me, I said, "Oh, there's Tony Moon, that's the Roof Korean guy that was at Wi Spa a couple weeks ago.

But, I will say this: he seemed much more violent and radicalized Saturday morning. I think, also, maybe there's a double meaning to "Unmask them." Because we were all wearing masks for protection, so I had my surgical mask on. I think his idea is that, not only are we unmasking you because we're anti-vaxxers, and we're anti-maskers, and we see this as an infringement to freedom, but also they're very vested in this idea of doxxing and exposing anybody that is against, you know, their beliefs.

Now, randomly of course, I use my real name, so there's not much to dox there, but, I do think that's why he was screaming "Unmask them all!" It wasn't solely because of the mask to prevent COVID transmission.

[00:31:12] **AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!:** I want to throw to a clip of he attack on you that you yourself filmed.

[00:31:19] **PROUD BOY:** Hey, bitch!

[00:31:20] **TINA-DESIREE BERG:** Hey! Yo! Stop it!

[00:31:26] **TONY MOON:** Unmask them! Unmask them!

[00:31:27] **TINA-DESIREE BERG:** [bleep] you!

[00:31:28] **TONY MOON:** Unmask them! Unmask them!

[00:31:30] **TINA-DESIREE BERG:** Yeah. So, the first guy that came up and punched me, was not Tony Moon. It was another gentleman. He came right up to the camera. He called me the B-word, and hit me, backed away back where the guys were. So, he absolutely targeted me for some reason. I'm not sure why that is.

And then, you know, maybe 20, 30 seconds later, Tony Moon was right there. So, when he came up to me, you could tell his intention was to pull down-- and he did pull it down-- my mask, and I had put up my goggles at that point as well, because somebody had been using bear mace.

And, in fact, I believe it was the anti-vaxxer that was stabbed that had used bear mace, because I do have video of him earlier using bear mace and spraying people.

This is a tactic that the Proud Boys have deployed for many months now. So, we've seen it at various different protests, where they pull out bear mace, and they mace people.

So, he did successfully pull my mask down. He was, like I said, hitting that other woman. You'll see, she has a bloody head —And just, kind of, escalated from there and started screaming, "Unmask them all."

And I also think it's interesting that if you look at the video, you see that they all have orange armbands on, and that their water bottles are all orange. So obviously orange is a significant color for them. I don't know if they're coordinating with it, but you will see they have orange armbands. And it, sort of, is reminiscent of January 6 at the Capitol, because that day, the Proud Boys had been marking themselves with orange gaffer tape or orange beanies on their heads.

And they had, at that point, Enrique Tarrio had told everybody to show up dressed, not as they normally would in their Proud Boy attire, but into, you know, sort of Antifa in disguise. And they had been marking themselves, ergo, with the orange color, whether it was the tape, the gaffer tape or the beanies.

I don't know that there's a crossover here with the group that was with Tony Moon. But I do think it's interesting that they all had orange armbands on.

MAGA Republican Threatens Bloodshed If Elections Stay Rigged - The David Pakman Show - Air Date 9-1-21

[00:33:19] **DAVID PAKMAN - HOST, THE DAVID PAKMAN SHOW:** If the FBI hasn't already, it really should open an investigation into radical Trumpist MAGA Republican member of Congress, Madison Cawthorn, who is

now coyly threatening bloodshed if the elections remain, as he calls it, "rigged." This is absolutely horrifying stuff from any citizen of the United States, but this is an elected member of Congress.

Congressman Madison Cawthorn, Republican from North Carolina, on Sunday-- this is just a couple of days ago-- falsely suggested that elections in the United States are rigged, and said there will be "bloodshed," if the country's electoral system continues on its current path.

Uh, given the context of January 6th, that should be seen and treated as a threat.

Cawthorn, a freshman lawmaker and pro-Trump star of the right, made the remarks during an event at the Macon County Republican Party headquarters in Franklin, North Carolina, on Sunday night.

The video has been taken offline as of Tuesday morning from the event's Facebook page. But we have it. We have the video, and here is Madison Cawthorn threatening bloodshed. Should be expelled from Congress and investigated by the FBI. He might end up getting reelected in November of '22. Take a listen:

[00:34:40] **REP. MADISON CAWTHORN:** Everything that we're sitting here talking about, we're all so passionate, right now. The things that we are wanting to fight for, it doesn't matter, if our votes don't count. Because, you know, if our election systems continue to be rigged, and continue to be stolen, then it's going to lead to one place, and it's bloodshed.

[00:34:56] **DAVID PAKMAN - HOST, THE DAVID PAKMAN SHOW:** So, remember, it's a false premise. The election wasn't stolen; Joe Biden won by quite a few, uh... quite a few electoral votes, as many as Trump won by in 2016, and by far more in the popular vote. But he is basing, on that false premise, the idea that there will be bloodshed.

[00:35:14] **REP. MADISON CAWTHORN:** And, I will tell you, as much as I am willing to defend our liberty at all costs, there's nothing that I dread doing more than having to pick up arms against a fellow American.

[00:35:25] **DAVID PAKMAN - HOST, THE DAVID PAKMAN SHOW:**
What?

[00:35:25] **REP. MADISON CAWTHORN:** And the way that we even have recourse against that, is if we all have passionately demand that we have election security in all 50 states.

[00:35:32] **DAVID PAKMAN - HOST, THE DAVID PAKMAN SHOW:** So that clip was ultimately taken down, uh, because it obviously doesn't look good. The FBI should be investigating Madison Cawthorn.

Understand the totality of Cawthorn: he has said that he is sometimes armed on the floor of the House of Representatives, since metal detectors have been put in, I don't know what the latest is on that; he attempted to bring a gun onto a plane, tried to carry it on with him, said, "Oops, that was a mistake."

And now is saying there is going to be bloodshed if our elections continue to be stolen, which of course they are not. The FBI should investigate. This is Trumpian terror. And I don't know how anybody can feel even remotely optimistic about the future of this country when we have elected officials, sworn to uphold the constitution, who are talking about taking up arms against other Americans.

It's, sort of, a, "The calls are coming from inside the house" moment here.

This is language that, historically, you would expect from two places: one, from actual fascist dictatorships; or second, in situations where the government has actually lost its legitimacy and its ability to have an election.

This is not the second one, right? As far as elections go, our government does many bad things, but as far as elections go, we still have elections that are basically fair elections.

Meaning: I wonder if this is a guy who has delusions of the first one, a fascist dictatorship. It is not just that these clowns-- and I'm talking about Madison Cawthorn, and Marjorie Taylor Green, and Lauren Boebert, and Louie Gohmert, and Matt Gaetz, and the whole list of them-- it's not just that they're unqualified for the job of being elected officials; their rhetoric is completely anti-American and borderline traitorous.

And not only do they have no business being lawmakers, these are folks that should be under investigation for their allusions to violence that they continually make. So, that's Madison Cawthorn and we're going to continue to follow it.

As GOP stays at war against elections, elections officials suffer threats, harassment - Rachel Maddow Show - Air Date 9-8-21

[00:37:46] **RACHEL MADDOW - HOST, RACHEL MADDOW SHOW:**

The Washington field office of the FBI today released new footage showing the person who they believe placed pipe bombs, real bombs, operational explosive devices, at the headquarters of the Democratic party and the headquarters of the Republican party in Washington, DC the night before the January 6th attack on the U S Capitol. Again, this is new footage. The FBI says this was shot quite near the DNC headquarters, where the first bomb was placed. It has been eight months since these bombs were placed. There's still been no arrest in this case. The FBI and the ATF are offering a hundred thousand dollars reward for any information leading to the arrest of the suspected bomber.

That said, at this point in our nation's politics, you do have to be specific. You do have to, as they say, "disambiguate" when you talk about mad bombers on Capitol Hill, because this suspected bomber from January 6th, for whom there is a hundred thousand dollar reward, this suspected bomber is not to be confused with the other bomber from three weeks ago, the guy who pulled up onto the sidewalk in front of the Library of Congress, also on Capitol Hill, claiming to have a bomb in his black truck, claiming in fact that he had packed his truck with enough explosives that he could blow up several square blocks of that part of Washington, DC.

So again, don't be confused. The January 6th pipe bomb suspect, not the same as the August 19th Capitol Hill would-be black truck bomber, who said he was demanding to see president Biden and he was there to start the uprising, so all the Democrats would have to resign and go to jail and then president Trump would be president again and then Trump would pardon him for his bombing plus all the other pro-Trump revolutionaries, who he was activating to come attack DC in order to reinstate Trump in office.

Yeah, two different bombers we're talking about there. Don't get confused.

But again, even further disambiguation is necessary because neither of those two attempted Capitol hill bombers over the past few months should be confused with this other one, man named Lonnie Kaufman. See him in the black square there, circled by the FBI. Lonnie Kaufman did come to Washington on January 6th, as part of the pro-Trump mob that attacked the U S Capitol that day. His red GMC pickup was found that day parked near the U S Capitol,

actually in an area that had been closed off in part because of the pipe bombs found at the local party headquarters of the Republican and Democratic parties.

His GMC pickup was found packed with a loaded rifle, a loaded shotgun, two 9 millimeter pistols, both loaded, also a 22-caliber pistol, also loaded, also a crossbow, also several machetes, also a stun gun, a bunch of smoke bombs and, notably, 11 Molotov cocktails, firebombs all assembled and ready to go, stacked in his pickup.

Prosecutors say those Molotov cocktails, those fire bombs he had stacked in his truck, were ready to go and filled with what amounts to basically homemade napalm.

Lonnie Kaufman was arrested that day. One of the few people from the mob who actually was arrested that day, he was actually the first person indicted for the January 6th attack on the Capitol.

Still, though, do try to keep your politically motivated would be Capitol Hill mad bombers straight at this point. There's enough of them around and about that it can be confusing over these last few months since the election.

Next weekend, not this upcoming weekend, but next Saturday, the 18th of September, a former Trump campaign official is organizing another Trump supporter rally on Capitol Hill to try to glorify and celebrate and demand the freedom of the people who attacked the Capitol on January 6th. This is a rally specifically to lionize the Trump supporters who attacked the Capitol, saying those people have only been arrested because they're being politically persecuted for their beliefs as Trump's supporters, not because they actually did anything wrong when they attacked the Capitol.

Today House speaker Nancy Pelosi was asked about preparations for that. She said, bluntly, "These people are coming back to praise the people who are out to kill members of Congress on January 6th." Speaker Pelosi has also asked the top Democrat and top Republican in the Senate, Chuck Schumer and Mitch McConnell, as well as the top Republican in the House, Kevin McCarthy, to come to a full leadership security briefing with her on Monday about preparations for next weekend's rally and efforts to protect the Capitol that day.

Capitol police and DC police have now both said they will each activate their entire force that day. All officers will have to be on duty to protect the Capitol that day, protect the Capitol once again from Trump supporters. The Associated Press was first to report tonight that the protective fencing that went up in the

immediate wake of the Trump mob attack on January 6th, that fortress-like fencing that went up in January and stayed up until July. That fencing is going to go back up again next week in anticipation that Trump supporters may try yet again to wage another physical attack against the US Capitol that day.

Spencer Ackerman on How the U.S. War on Terror Fueled and Excused Right-Wing Extremism at Home - Democracy Now! - Air Date 9-6-21

[00:43:08] **AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!:** Spencer, you begin your book with the prologue, with Timothy McVeigh visiting the far-right paramilitary compound in Elohim City, Oklahoma before what you call, the prologue's chapter heading, "the worst terrorist attack in American history." Talk about the connection you see between the rise of right-wing extremism in the United States and the so-called war on terror.

[00:43:38] **SPENCER ACKERMAN:** I thought it was extremely important to see the war on terror in its fullness, in its totality, and only then can we understand its implications. And I think the only way to really do that is to look at who were the exceptions to the war on terror. Who the war on terror didn't target, despite fundamentally similar actions. And there we can understand, not just what the war on terror is, but its relationship to American history, which shapes it so deeply.

And so I also wanted to start with a journalistic cliché, where the reporter zoologically takes a reader through this unfamiliar and scary world of violence committed by fanatical people who are training with heavy weapons and talk about committing mass atrocity for a sick and supposedly divinely inspired religion, but I wanted those people to be white. I wanted the reader to see how similar these actions were, how similar some of the motivations were, how similar some of the justifications were, but we never treated them like that.

The whole purpose of the phrase "war on terror" was a kind of social compromise amongst respectable elites in order to not say the thing that they were in fact building, which was an expansive war only against some people's kinds of terror, only against non-white people's kinds of terror, only against foreigners kinds of terror, and not against the kind of terrorism that is the oldest, most resilient, most violent, and most historically rooted in American history.

One that seeks to draw its own heritage out of the general American national heritage.

People who call themselves not dissenters, not rebels, but Patriots, people who are restoring something about America, that they believe a corrupt elite that is now responsive to nonwhite power at the expense of the extant racial caste, that has been deeply woven inside, not just the American political structure, but the American economy that drives American politics. How that ultimately never gets treated.

This is exactly what Timothy McVeigh was about. This is what Timothy McVeigh had as his motivations for murdering 168 Americans in Oklahoma City, including 19 children, and we looked away from it. We looked away, from how deep the rootedness of white supremacist violence was in this country. We listened to what I believe are principled civil libertarian objections against an expensive category of criminalized association, treating people who might have believed as McVeigh did, odious as I believe that is, but ultimately not committing acts of violence.

Treating them as essentially indistinct from McVeigh was absolutely intolerable, as it always should have been, to the American political elites, but that intolerability did not extend to Muslims. And there, it was easy after 9/11, to construct an apparatus fueled by things like the Patriot Act that expanded enormous categories of criminal association, known as material support for terrorism, authorized widespread surveillance that certainly would not be focused simply even on American Muslims, as disgusting as it was that it was focused on them primarily.

But ultimately, all of these things that both parties, that the leaders of the security services and intellectuals created, maintained, and justified so readily against the threat of a foreign menace seen as civilizational, seen as an acceptable substitute for a geopolitical enemy, that had served as a rallying purpose throughout the 20th century, the war on terror is a zombie anti-communism in a lot of its political caste and association. And never would any of this be visited upon white people. From the start, the war on terror showed you exactly who it was going to leave out from its carceral, from its surveillance, and from its violent gaze.

[00:48:39] **AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!:** So I want to go to Donald Trump, this week, considering a 2024 challenge to President Biden, said in a statement Biden surrendered to the Taliban. Meanwhile, Republicans on the House Armed Services Committee demanded a plan from Biden to stop Afghanistan from becoming a "safe haven for terror groups after

the Taliban takeover." This is Republican Congressman Michael McCaul on CNN.

[00:49:04] **REP. MICHAEL McCAUL:** We are going to go back, Jake, to a pre-9/11 state, a breeding ground for terrorism. And, you know, I hate to say this, I hope we don't have to go back there, but it will be a threat to the Homeland in a matter of time.

[00:49:18] **AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!:** So, you have the Republicans now talking about a foreign terrorist threat. The Republicans who have been denying the insurrection of January 6, calling it no worse than a group of tourists coming to Washington DC and not wanting to investigate that, even though under Bush, under Trump, the intelligence agencies have said the number one domestic terror threat is right-wing white supremacists.

[00:49:51] **SPENCER ACKERMAN:** We see who the war on terror then as now, is a mechanism for having terrorism excused, not terrorism dealt with. When that terrorism is white, when it is politically powerful, when, for reasons that they themselves probably ought better to explain, politicians sympathize with it, seek to draw strength from it, that's a real serious red flag for American democracy. We don't have to treat it as if it is a new red flag for American democracy, this is always how American democracy has been eroded. This is always alongside the ways in which capital has been extremely willing to ally with white supremacy. This is what the creation of Jim Crow was. This is how the maintenance of segregation in the north of the country, which we don't often talk about as much in its different permutations. I'm a New Yorker—this city is segregated even still. You see that definitely with the way the school system is constructed.

Ultimately we are seeing throughout this past week the ease with which the Republican Party, supposedly now in the Trump era feeling antipathy to the war on terror, readily snapped to war on terror politics when it comes to the demonization of refugees. The idea that America has a responsibility to take in the refugees that it itself creates out of this psychotic racist fear of white replacement. That demographics are ultimately driving the erosion of, in its respectable settings, white political power, not just on the fringes, but at the centers of American governance.

And that is a politics of the war on terror that has been here from the start. Trump makes it vastly less subtle, to the extent that it was subtle, than it was before, and his hold on the party is not an accident. His hold here has everything to do with the way that he was able to recognize the ways in which the war on terror is an excellent sorting mechanism for figuring out who is a real American

and who is a conditional American. And then as we saw him using the tools of the war on terror, on the streets of cities like Portland, and Washington, DC, and New York, and in the skies over as many as 15 cities last summer, he's willing to use it on Americans that he calls terrorists.

How The FBI Got Inside The Hutaree Militia - All Things Considered - Air Date 4-24-10

[00:52:33] **ROBERT SEIGEL - HOST, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED:** The FBI recently arrested nine members of a Christian militia in Michigan, ending a nearly year-long investigation. The two key characters in the case are 45-year-old David Stone, the group's alleged leader, and his son Joshua, who was said to be second in command. The two are now being held on weapons and sedition charges. Prosecutors say the group had hoped to spark a violent standoff with the government and in the process go with other militias into battle. But what makes this story different is how those militias reacted. Instead of helping the group, they played a crucial role in bringing it down.

NPR's Dina Temple-Raston reports from Michigan.

[00:53:14] **ANDREW ARENA:** I'm standing in front of the two trailers where David Stone and his family lived, about an hour south of Detroit. The yard outside the Stone's home is littered with discarded bikes, old tires, and a rusting washing machine.

And it's here that the Stone family started a Christian militia they called the Hutaree. It was inside these two trailers that prosecutors say the group hatched a plot to gun down a single policeman. And then in a second wave, attack the officers who would show up at his funeral.

[00:53:39] **ANGELA CASE:** You just never know when there's people out there that are crazy.

[00:53:42] **DINA TEMPLE-RASTON:** That's Angela Case. She's a meat cutter at a local supermarket in Adrian, Michigan, and she lives not far from the Stone family trailers. She heard gunfire out that way. But as far as she knew, there were just a lot of farmers over there.

[00:53:55] **ANGELA CASE:** I think everybody thinks that like, oh, well they're all, they're all like toting guns around and stuff. And it was like, no, we're mostly farmers and stuff.

[00:54:05] **DINA TEMPLE-RASTON:** Lenawee County in southeastern Michigan is farm country, all barns and flat fields that seem to go on for miles. It's also militia country, informal groups of heavily armed men who do everything from compass reading to sharpshooting out in the woods. There are dozens of militia groups in Michigan. That makes it second only to Texas.

So armed men in camouflage aren't so out of the ordinary. Even so, David Stone and his son Joshua stood out.

[00:54:35] **ANDREW ARENA:** I think going back a couple of years ago, we kind of got wind of this group and that there could be issues with them.

[00:54:42] **DINA TEMPLE-RASTON:** That's Andrew Arena. He's the FBI special agent in charge in Detroit.

[00:54:46] **ANDREW ARENA:** Like any extremist group, I don't think in reality they believe that they're going to personally overthrow the U S government. I think that the plan is to basically be the match or the spark to ignite the revolution.

[00:54:59] **DINA TEMPLE-RASTON:** About a year ago, residents in Adrian contacted the FBI. They were concerned because David Stone seemed paranoid. Even local militia members were alarmed. Law enforcement officials told NPR a member of one militia decided to infiltrate Stone's group just to keep an eye on him. That militia member became a cooperating witness for the FBI.

Now, what we're about to hear is an FBI surveillance tape obtained by NPR. In it, David Stone is speaking about what he sees as a vast conspiracy, local cops joining forces with foreign soldiers to take over the United States.

[00:55:37] **DAVID STONE:** Do I think all the cops out here would, they would fight right alongside some Chinese trooper? Heck yeah. It's all about power. It's about the authority. They see us as the little people.

[00:55:50] **DINA TEMPLE-RASTON:** "The little people," he said. Stone's lawyer confirmed that it was his client on tape.

Now last fall, the FBI says it got word that the Hutarees is were building bombs. That's when the bureau decided to infiltrate the group with its own undercover agent. There was a side benefit to that: the FBI's Andrew Arena said the undercover officer offered to make the bombs. That meant the FBI would be in charge of the explosives.

[00:56:16] **ANDREW ARENA:** We were very fortunate to able to insert an individual who was able to kind of take that role. It certainly let me sleep a little better at night.

[00:56:25] **DINA TEMPLE-RASTON:** The undercover agent was the same person who made the recording we heard earlier of David Stone. The tape was made in February while the group was driving to Kentucky to attend a militia rally. Stone had prepared what he hoped would be a rousing speech. He read it to the others in the car and the FBI got it on tape.

[00:56:44] **DAVID STONE:** Okay. Now we need to quit playing this game with these elitist terrorists and actually get serious. Cause this war will come, whether we are ready or not. A war of this magnitude will not be easy. But like the rattlesnake on the Gadsden flag, we have rattled and warned, new world order. Now it's time to strike and take our nation back.

[00:57:01] **WILLIAM SWORE:** The things were in that statement...

[00:57:03] **DINA TEMPLE-RASTON:** William Swore is David Stone's defense attorney.

[00:57:06] **WILLIAM SWORE:** ...were no more radical, no more offensive or dangerous than anything any of the right wing wackos on television and radio said the week before these folks were arrested.

[00:57:22] **DINA TEMPLE-RASTON:** But the FBI's Arena says the Hutaree crossed a line when they plotted to kill police.

[00:57:27] **ANDREW ARENA:** In this country, you can say just about anything you want, but when you start taking action towards that government and you know how you define it, I think every case is a little different, in this case, we're defining it as they started to plan how they were going to ignite the war.

[00:57:42] **DINA TEMPLE-RASTON:** Now there's one more twist to the story.

Four years ago, a man named Matt Servino thought about joining the Hutaree, and he talked to David Stone about it at length. Servino said Stone made him a little nervous.

[00:57:54] **MATT SERVINO:** You know, you can tell that he was really upset about anything that the government was doing. Not to the point of saying, you know, let's go do this particular act or something. He would just say something along the lines of something really needs to be done. These protests, these talking to people is just not cutting it anymore. Something serious needs to happen.

[00:58:12] **DINA TEMPLE-RASTON:** So Matt Servino decided to start his own militia instead.

[00:58:16] **MATT SERVINO:** Our local unit here in Lenawee my brother and I reorganized it in summer 2006.

[00:58:23] **DINA TEMPLE-RASTON:** So Servino heads one militia in Adrian, and Stone was in charge of another. Then the weekend before Easter, federal authorities arrested David Stone and a handful of Hutaree members. Stone's son, Joshua, was not among them. Joshua Stone turned to Matt Servino for help. He assumed Servino would be sympathetic.

[00:58:43] **MATT SERVINO:** He asks for assistance, weapon, gears, whatnot. He asked us to back him up to get onto his property. He knew a back way onto his property. He was pretty confident himself that he could get to some weapons and supplies that were stashed on the property.

[00:59:00] **DINA TEMPLE-RASTON:** As a general matter, the perception has been that militias are lying in wait for opportunities like this, occasions when the small bands of private warriors can engage the government and go out in a blaze of glory.

That isn't what happened here. Instead of helping Joshua Stone, Servino told him his group was staying out of it. And Servino went a step further: he brought his militia together and...

[00:59:23] **MATT SERVINO:** When we talked about it, we decided as a group to go to the state police department local here and talk to them and tell them what little bit information we had.

[00:59:33] **DINA TEMPLE-RASTON:** A day later, the FBI arrested Joshua Stone in a neighboring county without incident. Servino says what the Hutarees are accused of doing is precisely the kind of thing that gives militias a bad name. And he says militias have changed.

[00:59:47] **MATT SERVINO:** I mean it's, I don't want it. The terminology, the old school militia versus the new age militia, it kind of is.

I mean, there's just the way you look at things and the way you approach them is a lot different than it used to be.

[00:59:59] **DINA TEMPLE-RASTON:** The FBI's Andrew Arena agrees. Most militias aren't like the Hutaree.

[01:00:05] **ANDREW ARENA:** I think their reaction to this latest incident with the Hutaree I think that kind of shows what their mindset is right now. I think they were appalled, to say the least, at the planning and the activities that these people were trying to do.

[01:00:19] **DINA TEMPLE-RASTON:** That's what makes the story so unusual. Militia groups and authorities work together to break the case.

The Truth Behind The Alleged Michigan Kidnapping Case - All In with Chris Hayes - Air Date 7-22-21

[01:00:25] **CHRIS HAYES - HOST, ALL IN:** Three months before the January 6th insurrection, there was another group that had been talking about storming a state capitol and instigating a civil war. According to the FBI, they were also hatching a plot to kidnap Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer. The FBI said the men's spied on her vacation home, wanted to blow up a bridge to distract authorities, indicated they had wanted to take the Governor hostage before the November election, and, according to the criminal complaint, take her to a secure location in Wisconsin for a "trial."

The six men were charged with conspiracy to commit kidnapping, which can carry a life sentence. Governor Whitmer at the time tied the plot to Donald Trump and his criticism of her and her state over COVID protocol.

You'll remember in April of last year, while Michigan was in lockdown because of the virus, trump tweeted "Liberate Michigan." Two weeks later, protesters opposed to the lockdown entered the Michigan Senate gallery and tried to force their way into the House chambers. Some of those folks were armed. In fact, now when you look at those scenes, they look pretty familiar, pretty predictive of what happened on January 6th.

Now, a big investigative report on Buzzfeed news has revealed a bunch of new details, particularly about the role that FBI informants played in the plot and breaking it up.

Jessica Garrison is a reporter for Buzzfeed news and the co-author of that investigation. And she joins me now.

Jessica, first of all, it's a great, great piece of reporting. Um, the, the big revelation in your piece is that, uh, a number of people involved in this plot, uh, involved in this group, involved in organizing, it were themselves, FBI informants. Tell us more about that.

[01:01:59] **JESSICA GARRISON:** So, I mean, I think it's... it's true that, um, you know, we always knew, even from the moment the case was announced that there was at least one informant, in fact, at least two. Um, and that they had, sort of, been in the plot.

The great revelation, um, you know, of our reporting, and also what's come out in the court documents and in other media, um, including the Detroit Free Press, which has done a great job on this, is that there were as many as 12, um, informants, and that those informants played a much larger, you know, more active role.

Um, one of the informants actually rose to become the second in command of the Wolverine Watchmen. Um, and he was an Iraq War vet, and he had training, he actually trained the Watchman.

Um, another informant invited people, um, to a bunch of meetings, one in Ohio, one in Delaware. So the informants were, you know, not just, sort of, passively sitting there wearing wires, they were actively involved with the group.

[01:02:54] **CHRIS HAYES - HOST, ALL IN:** Now, um, one of the informers, you talk about the... the sort of origin story of him being an informant is pretty fascinating, because he, sort of, starts out an Iraq War vet, wants to, kind of, stay in fighting shape while he's working at a post office, kind of, joins this group,

has aligned politi- you know, politics, libertarian, doesn't like COVID or lockdown.

But then gets, like, real freaked out by what he sees and basically goes to law enforcement and says, like, "I don't like this."

[01:03:20] **JESSICA GARRISON:** Yeah. I mean, and.. And he's, you know, he's actually testified in court. Um, and yeah, that's exactly right. He, sort of, wants to train with milit--- you know, militia groups, um, and he wants to keep himself in kind of fighting shape, and he goes to Facebook, um, and starts looking.

And Facebook suggests to him this group called the Watchmen And he goes to it, and he fills out a little survey, and he's then invited to fill out another little survey. And before he knows it, he's on an encrypted chat, um, on an app called "Wire" where people are talking about killing police officers.

And this guy is, like, "Wait a minute. Like, I want to run around in the woods shooting guns. I don't want to kill police officers."

So, he goes to a friend who is a local police officer and shows him his phone, and the friend connects them with the FBI. And he goes to the FBI. And he's basically, like, you know, "I just think you should know this," and he kind of figures, "We're done here. The FBI has got it."

But the FBI says, "Well, we'd like you to rejoin the group, but this time with us kind of sitting on your shoulder, watching and advising." Um, which he does. And before too long, you know, because he is a trained soldier, um, everyone is, like, "Oh, you're great. You can really help us."

And so he becomes the second-in-command, and then brings this group in Michigan and kind of, you know, plays, you know... is there when they connect with, um, groups around the country, um, including a man from Michigan who later is identified as the, kind of, ringleader of the plot to kidnap the governor.

[01:04:55] **CHRIS HAYES - HOST, ALL IN:** So, the... the, sort of, the... the... the... both the subtexts and some of the text here, of course, is that, um, people who are in this plot, allegedly, have... have claimed, essentially, they were entrapped. That... that this, sort of... FBI agents crawling all over them, um, pushing them to do things they wouldn't have otherwise done. This was, kind of, like, idle chatter, that it was the informant, the one pushing it forward.

And, of course, there's some precedent for this in... in a lot of, um, war on terror cases, uh, ones I've covered. There's infamously a guy who, uh, had someone ask him to sell them a surface-to-air missile, and then someone offered to sell him a surface-to-air missile. And both of those people were FBI informants. And then he ended up, uh, you know, being prosecuted by Chris Christie, actually, when he was a U. S. Attorney.

So, what I learned from your story was, it didn't seem that egregious at all, but it does seem like it's a complicated question of what... what side is on what, of the line between good policing and entrapment.

[01:05:47] **JESSICA GARRISON:** I think that's a really good question. And, you know, I think that certainly some of the stuff that happened in the war on terror, you know, can make you go, "Wait a minute..." Right?

Um, you know, I. I think this one is... is really interesting because it's very nuanced. You know, the idea of being angry at Gretchen Whitmer, um, and the idea of, you know, going to the capitol with guns, those were ideas that... the FBI did not plant those ideas in the... in the minds of these people. Um, you know, they... they were actively engaged in, and actively talking about a lot of stuff that, you know, as I think most people would consider, like, quite horrifying and shocking.

Um, and I, you know, I think, as a general rule, often, if the evidence against, you in this case, it's, like, 400,000 text messages, hundreds of hours of wire taps, you know... I'm not sure there are many other defenses available besides entrapment, because there's a lot of evidence.

Um, you know, that said, I think that, you know, for someone who doesn't, you know, follow these cases, in these kinds of cases, closely, you know, the role of the FBI in helping to, you know, really work with these people, befriend these people, text these people at all hours of the day at night, be with them all the time, is... is quite huge.

Summary

[01:07:03] **JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** We've just heard clips today, starting with On The Media, back in 2010, digging into the history of the right wing militia movement;

The Rachel Maddow Show, also in 2010, reported on the anti-government armed rallies on the anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing;

Consider This, just last year in 2020, discussed the plot to kidnap the governor of Michigan, and the status of militias in the U. S.;

Democracy Now last month spoke with a journalist who covers anti-mask and anti-vaccine marches that often become violent;

The David Pakman Show this month discussed the extremist Republicans who allude to bloodshed being the inevitable remedy to their election conspiracy theories;

Rachel Maddow, just three days ago, ran down the list of would-be bombers on Capitol Hill, just since January 6th, and the planned rally in support of the insurrectionist coming up next weekend;

And Democracy Now spoke with Spencer Ackerman about the deep context of white supremacy and the so-called "war on terror" for today's right-wing extremists.

That's what everyone heard, but members also heard bonus clips on the role of the FBI infiltrating militias, first from All Things Considered, back in 2010, explaining how an anti-government militia in Michigan was brought down by FBI informants.

[01:08:23] **DINA TEMPLE-RASTON:** David Stone seemed paranoid. Even local militia members were alarmed. Law enforcement officials told NPR a member of one militia decided to infiltrate Stone's group just to keep an eye on him. That militia member became a cooperating witness for the FBI. Now, what we're about to hear is an FBI surveillance tape obtained by NPR. In it, David Stone is speaking about what he sees as a vast conspiracy; local cops, joining forces with foreign soldiers to take over the United States.

[01:08:56] **DAVID STONE:** Do I think all the cops out here... would... They would fight right alongside some Chinese trooper. Heck, yeah. It's all about power; it's about the authority. They see us as the little people.

[01:09:09] **DINA TEMPLE-RASTON:** The little people, he said. Stone's lawyer confirmed that it was his client on tape.

[01:09:14] **JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** And All In with Chris Hayes, from this summer, spoke with reporter about the role of FBI informants in the militia that had plotted to kidnap the Michigan governor.

[01:09:24] **CHRIS HAYES - HOST, ALL IN:** One of the informers you talk about the... the sort of origin story of him being an informant is pretty fascinating. Because he, sort of, starts out an Iraq War vet, wants to, kind of, stay in fighting shape while he's working at a post office. Kind of, joins this group has aligned politi-- you know, politics, libertarian, doesn't like COVID, or lockdown. But then gets, like, real freaked out by what he sees, and basically goes to law enforcement, and says, like, "I don't like this."

[01:09:48] **JESSICA GARRISON:** Yeah. I mean, and... and he's... you know, he's actually testified in court. Um, and yeah, that's exactly right. He, sort of, wants to train with milit-- you know, militia groups, um, and he wants to keep himself in, kind of, fighting shape, and he goes to Facebook, um, and starts looking. And Facebook suggests to him this group called the Watchmen.

And he goes to it, and he fills out a little survey, and he's then invited to fill out another little survey. And before he knows it, he's on an encrypted chat, um, on an app called Wire, where people are talking about killing police officers. And this guy is like, "Wait a minute. Like, I want to run around in the woods shooting guns. I don't want to kill police officers."

[01:10:28] **JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** To hear that and all of our bonus content delivered seamlessly into your podcast feed, sign up to support the show at bestoftheleft.com/support, or request a financial hardship membership, because we don't make a lack of funds a barrier to hearing more information. Every request is granted, no questions asked.

And now, we'll hear from you.

[01:10:49] **VOICEDMAILER: JONATHAN FROM NY:** Hi Jay! This is Jonathan from New York City. I've been enjoying the shows as always.

I wanted to continue the discussion about term limits that Bud started and you responded to. Both of you made nuanced comments. Bud said it wasn't a bad idea but also gave several reasons why they might be. I thought I'd give my thoughts based on experience since they were instituted in New York City at the local level in 1993. Jay, you mentioned power dynamics and I think that is right. In one dimension it is power between executive and legislature. I think it's good our mayors are limited to two terms, -- except for Bloomberg who served 3 because rules don't apply to billionaires. But our 2-term limits have had a bad effect on the city council in various ways. After this election, more than 70% of our city council will be brand new, with most of the rest having served just one term. That will weaken the city council which is too weak anyway. There also

are bad effects because councilmembers are always thinking about their next job. We get 17-candidate primaries for citywide positions when they open up and other councilmembers go work for lobbying firms.

Comparing it to the state where we don't have term limits, I think it would be very good to limit the governor to 2 terms, but not the state legislators. There certainly are hacks who get entrenched in positions but there are also dedicated legislators with long careers who develop expertise on issues.

Bringing it back to the nation, I think it's very good the president has term limits. I'm actually a big supporter of 18-year term limits for the Supreme Court. But term limits for Congress is one of those ideas that superficially sounds good but would be bad in practice.

Stay Awesome!

[01:12:15] **VOICEMAILER: NICK FROM CALIFORNIA:** Hey, Jay!, this is Nick from California. I'm calling in because I was inspired by the conversation about term limits. Although I don't really have any specific feelings towards how term limits would affect things. I honestly don't know. I often see a related meme on the Internet about congressional pay. That is, people advocating that people in Congress should make the median US wage and not have health benefits and not get pensions afterwards. And while this early, I want to see that happen to right-wing ideologues who don't want to raise the minimum wage, don't want to have universal healthcare, destroy the planet, et cetera, et cetera.

While that seems appealing to me, I personally believe that that would increase corruption massively, because predominantly the only people who would go into that job would be then those individuals who are only using it as a stepping stone to then a super-well-paying job. I know that's the case now, and I would love to limit that. But I think that would be exclusively the case or nearly exclusively the case if you made it so that the congresspeople were essentially impoverished, like the majority of Americans.

Instead of just impoverishing them, I think that the way to get us to advocate for us is to make it so that it's illegal for them to take on certain positions, maybe even all private positions -- although I don't know how that could be legal -- but especially positions that involve lobbying or anything else that's political afterwards. So I want them to be paid well for their congressional work. What I want to stop is their ability to get really high-paying jobs afterwards. Again, I don't know how that's possible. I'm just saying, I think that would be a better

way of stopping the corruption in our system than just paying them less, which I think would increase the corruption.

But I'm interested to hear what other people think on that. Thanks, man. Stay awesome.

[01:14:47] **JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** Thanks to all those who called into the voicemail line or wrote in their messages to be played as VoicedMails. If you'd like to leave a comment or a question of your own to be played on the show, you can record a message at 202-999-3991, or write me a message to Jay@BestoftheLeft.com.

So as you can tell, those two messages went nicely together. And so my response to them can be unified. It just comes back to theory of change, right? And your theory of change can't be "Hey, I think it would make me feel good. Hey, what's your theory of change? It would make me feel good." Okay, well, you've made your legislators weaker in its ability to stave off corporate control and actually incentivized more corruption.

Now, how do you feel? Probably frustrated. Okay. Well, perfect. Let's take some time to think our plans through a little bit more next time, shall we?

You know, many will remember a couple of episodes back I spoke at a little bit of length about theories of change and some who bristle at the idea of needing to have a plan before acting.

I think my analogy was about trying to escape a burning building. And you just can't say that because of the state of emergency we're in that we don't have time to figure out which door is the exit, because we just need to run and get out of here. Cutting congressional pay, implementing term limits, these are two great examples of not taking the time to figure out where a door goes before running through it. And as I suggested previously, term limits is a policy that is very often brought up by very well-meaning rank-and-file conservatives who are genuinely looking for ways to reduce corruption in government.

And this isn't an accident. The corporate interest who helped develop a lot of the talking points that become conservative dogma would love to have all levels of legislators weakened by inexperience and more vulnerable to corruption, which is what term limits helped create. But the policy primarily sounds like a "feel good, screw the bastards, you work for us, don't get too comfortable buddy" kind of policy. So it's nearly perfect. It's populist anger turned seamlessly into

corporate interest. "Oh, but we don't have time to find the emergency exit. Just run and get out of here."

By the way, the update on that is that the member whose comments I was responding to who doesn't believe in having a theory of change canceled her membership. Which leads to a whole other conversation about the fickle support of independent media consumers that may have to wait for another day.

As always, keep the comments coming in at 202-999-3991 or by emailing me to Jay@BestoftheLeft.com.

That is going to be it for today. Thanks to everyone for listening. Thanks to Deon Clark and Erin Clayton for their research work for the show and participation in our bonus episodes. Thanks to the Monosyllabic Transcriptionist Trio, Ben, Ken, and Scott, for their volunteer work helping put our transcripts together. Thanks to Amanda Hoffman for all of her work on our social media outlets, activism segments, graphic designing, web mastering, bonus show co-hosting. And thanks to those who support the show, particularly those who are not just fair weather supporters, by becoming a member or purchasing gift memberships at BestoftheLeft.com/support or from right inside the Apple Podcast app. Membership is how you get instant access to our bonus episodes in addition to there being extra content and no ads in all of our regular episodes. For details on the show itself, including links to all of the sources and music used in this and every episode, all that information can always be found in the show notes on our website and likely right on the device you're using to listen.

So coming to you from far outside the conventional wisdom of Washington, DC, my name is Jay!, and this has been the *Best of the Left* podcast coming to you twice weekly, thanks entirely to the members and donors to the show from BestoftheLeft.com.