

THE DISAPPEARING WILLARD HOTEL AND THE ACCUSED SEDITIONISTS' OTHER INTERLOCUTORS

Just as sedition bears down on Roger Stone, the government has put a curtain over what they know about his role in it. The government has moved on from Stone, it seems, to other interesting Oath Keeper interlocutors.

Way back in May, I noted how judicious DOJ was being with statements from Stewart Rhodes – referred to officially as Person One back in his halcyon pre-sedition charge days – in the charging documents for Oath Keepers. Within a few days that month, DOJ added to its insurrection narrative a December 14, 2020 Rhodes post calling for Trump to invoke the Insurrection Act via James Breheny's charging documents. The iteration of the Oath Keeper conspiracy released at the same time (the fourth) introduced Rhodes' November 9 GoToMeeting discussion of the Insurrection Act that continues to appear in the indictments.

For eight months, in other words, DOJ has been engaged in a slow-reveal of its case against Rhodes.

Now, in the sedition indictment bearing Rhodes' name, we get a whole lot more of what Rhodes was saying:

- Calls for civil war as soon as it became clear Biden should win
- Rhodes' adoption of a Serbian (!!!) model for his civil war
- An oblique comment – dated

to “around this time” of the Inauguration – about Rhodes messaging others to organize local militias to oppose Biden’s Administration

Most of the new comments aren’t as scintillating as the catalog describing the personal arsenal Rhodes was purchasing, though, and a few of the new Rhodes comments included were public before.

There are three comments about Rhodes’ communications, though, that I find intriguing because they seem to hint at other interlocutors with the accused seditionists that we may not know about yet.

The first doesn’t even involve Rhodes directly. Rather, it relays Roberto Minuta describing to *someone* else that 1) Minuta had spoken directly with Rhodes the night of December 18 and 2) Minuta was sharing with someone apparently outside the Oath Keepers how Rhodes felt.

28. Also on December 19, 2020, MINUTA messaged another individual, “Oath Keepers president is pretty disheartened. He feels like it’s go time, the time for peaceful protest is over in his eyes. I was talking to him last night.”

This wasn’t in the prior indictment and I don’t recall it appearing in any other filings in the case (Minuta was not detained, so there’s less about him in the public record). Unless this was originally on the Facebook account Minuta allegedly deleted, there doesn’t seem to be any reason DOJ wouldn’t have obtained this message when they exploited Minuta’s phone. If they’ve had it for months, then the simplest explanation for its inclusion is that this indictment is all about Rhodes, and the comment captures Rhodes’ commitment to violence. In addition, this comment exhibits a closeness between Minuta and

Rhodes (which we've seen in earlier charging documents) that may be useful from an evidentiary standpoint.

But I suspect it serves an additional purpose. Minuta wrote it not long after the December MAGA March in DC. While there, he had been hanging out with Proud Boys, including Dominic Pezzola (who like Minuta is from upstate New York). It comes after Mike Flynn's call for insurrection. After Trump tweeted out a promise for Wild Protests on December 19, a ton of aspiring insurrectionists, both organized and not, started making plans to come to DC. In short, this was a key time in the lead-up to the operation, and Minuta was surprisingly well-connected (for a tattoo artist!!!) within the movement. So I suspect his interlocutor here is of some interest (and it's even possible the government obtained the text from that interlocutor, not Minuta).

An exchange that Kelly Meggs had with Rhodes on Christmas 2020 is similar.

34. On December 25, 2020, MEGGS messaged the OKFL Hangout Chat, in reference to the Joint Session, "We need to make those senators very uncomfortable with all of us being a few hundred feet away." RHODES then wrote, "I think Congress will screw him [President Trump] over. The only chance we/he has is if we scare the shit out of them and convince them it will be torches and pitchforks time is they don't do the right thing. But I don't think they will listen."

As we recently saw in Proud Boy Matthew Greene's statement of offense, using proximity to pressure members of Congress (and Pence), became well formulated enough that even a low-level Proud Boy would understand it by the day of the insurrection. Here, both Meggs (who is the Florida-based Oath Keeper who boasted of forging an alliance with the Proud Boys) and Rhodes

enunciate this goal, but do so twelve days before the actual attack. As with the Minuta comment, my guess is that the his exchange reflects communication with (at a minimum) the Proud Boys about this shared goal of – in Rhodes’ formulation – terrorizing Congress. It certainly makes it clear that the intent of mobbing the Capitol was formulated well in advance of the event.

There’s one more example. For some reason, DOJ provides the exact time (without time zone) that Rhodes wrote, “There is no standard political or legal way out of this” on December 31, 2020.

40. RHODES and his co-conspirators used the Leadership Intel Chat and other Signal group chats to plan for January 6, 2021. On December 31, 2020, at approximately 10:08 p.m., RHODES wrote to the Leadership Intel Chat, “There is no standard political or legal way out of this.”

For the purposes of the indictment, this shows *mens rea* that the Yale Law grad leading this insurrection recognized what they were going to do next was not legal. But it also seems to reflect a response (thus the timing) to something – one I haven’t been able to guess yet. The comment comes *before* Texas Congressman Louie Gohmert’s lawsuit against Mike Pence, the last of a long series of ridiculous “legal” efforts, failed spectacularly. But it comes at around the same time that even Sean Hannity was beginning to give up.

For example, on December 31, 2020, you texted Mr. Meadows the following:

“We can’t lose the entire WH counsels office. I do NOT see January 6 happening the way he is being told. After the 6 th. [sic] He should announce will lead the nationwide effort to reform voting integrity. Go to FL and watch Joe mess up daily. Stay engaged. When he speaks

people will listen.”

I’m not saying that Rhodes was in contact with Hannity: But something seems to have happened just before 10:08 PM (in whatever time zone) that elicited this response which is not dissimilar from where Hannity’s brain was at the time. And if it was non-public (as Hannity’s panic was), then it suggests Rhodes may have been responding to a well-connected interlocutor.

So it’s not so much that the sedition indictment quotes Rhodes as saying really interesting things. Rather, it seems to suggest he and others were saying things to some interesting interlocutors.

Even as the government is hinting at other interesting interlocutors of the accused seditionists, as I noted above, DOJ has entirely hidden the prior back-and-forth between the Oath Keepers and the Willard Hotel. This back-and-forth involving people who were guarding Roger Stone at the Willard that morning first started to show in the Third Superseding Indictment. Once Jonathan Walden – the guy now charged by himself – got added, the indictments included this exchange:

At 9:36 a.m., WALDEN texted JAMES, “Willard hotel?” At 9:51 a.m., WALDEN placed a phone call to JAMES, which is recorded as missed. At 9:52 a.m., WALDEN texted JAMES, “I’m here, awaiting instruction.” At 10:37 a.m., JAMES placed a phone call to WALDEN, which lasted 2 seconds.

Then last month, Kenneth Harrelson released Mike Simmons’ [Person Ten] 302s (purportedly in a desperate bid to adopt his lies, but possibly also to let others know what FBI had been investigation in May).

10:06am: Phone call with James, which Person 10 advised was a voice mail message. Person 10 advised that every time [REDACTED] moved, James called Person 10

1049am - 11:41am: Phone calls with [REDACTED] and James. Person 10, advised that most of these phone calls didn't go through, which is why there are so many of them, but recalled that James informed him that [REDACTED] was angry because he was not getting VIP treatment. [NFI]

They revealed that Joshua James, who was in charge of the security detail at the Willard, called in several times to Simmons and seems to have cited Stone's gripe about being treated poorly to Simmons.

This is what I was referring to in this post about the effect of disappearing Mark Grods, the one overt cooperator who was at the Willard that morning, from all last week's indictments. Several decisions made in the structure of these most recent indictments – spinning Walden off by himself, disappearing Grods, focusing on the activities of two stacks in the sedition indictment (and thereby starting the narrative at a later point in time), remaining coy about the present status of Simmons, and eliminating James and Minuta in the Cowl indictment – had the effect of eliminating the coordination with the Willard from the sedition indictment altogether.

Poof! Where's Roger?

Trust me. I don't think DOJ has decided that the Oath Keepers' presence at the Willard was unimportant. On the contrary. I think they've just decided to move onto making other people sweat about their communications with now-charged seditionists appearing in the indictment, while hiding how much more they've learned about the Willard in recent weeks.