

Who are the Oath Keepers? By John Green

Hearing the Department of Justice describe them, one would think that the Oath Keepers are the scariest bunch of anti-American knuckleheads to come down the pike since the Ku Klux Klan. Given that a bunch of them were just arrested for plotting an insurrection -- that the [FBI assured us wasn't an insurrection](#) -- this is a good time to get to know who they actually are.

Media coverage of the group is sprinkled with terms like “right-wing extremists,” “anti-government extremists,” and “far right militia.” Like any story, the reporting about the Oath Keepers can be spun to support a narrative or to give an unbiased assessment. The MSM has chosen to go with the narrative. One has to look beyond the scare quotes, and assess what the organization has actually done to get a true sense of its nature.

The Oath Keepers was founded in 2009 by Stewart Rhodes. It is a national, but loosely knit organization, created to resist violations of civil liberties by the government. In 2009, that sounded like conspiracy nut thinking. But since the organization's founding, we've been treated to Crossfire Hurricane, two impeachment show trials, COVID shutdowns, election 2020, and our own government targeting parents as domestic terrorists. What sounded crazy in 2009 sounds prescient in 2022.

Stewart Rhodes is an army veteran (a paratrooper) and a Yale Law School graduate. He understands what our Founders intended for America, and has served to defend it. He believes that the Democrats see illegal immigration as a way to get more votes -- pay no attention to those canceled border wall contracts. He also believes the Democrats would like to confiscate everyone's guns -- because that's exactly what they've said. He considers BLM to be a communist front organization -- which isn't a big leap given that its leaders are [trained Marxists](#). Such crazy thinking can't be tolerated -- if you're a Democrat or a deep state operative. In short, Rhodes is only an extremist if the ideas of freedom, limited government, and self-determination are now extreme.

The organization's name is a reference to the oath that all soldiers and law enforcement officers swear -- to defend the Constitution from all enemies, foreign and domestic. Although anyone can join, a large percentage of the membership is comprised of people who have taken that oath in either law enforcement or the military. Is that what the propaganda ministry calls “extremist”? Consider this: If all of our government officials complied with the oath they have sworn (looking at you Merrick Garland), would America be better or worse?

The Oath Keepers has local chapters across the country which operate with great autonomy. The national organization will sometimes support local chapter initiatives. However, sometimes the national organization also steps in to tell a local chapter to “[knock it off](#)” if they stray off course. In other words, the organization grants its chapters great latitude to serve their communities but polices them to ensure they don’t become radicalized.

What has the Oath Keepers done to earn the “far right militia” label? In 2014, members of the Oath Keepers participated in a standoff with federal authorities at the Bundy ranch in Nevada. Cliven Bundy was in a conflict with the government over grazing rights for his cattle. He was eventually arrested and held in jail for nearly two years. In 2018, a federal judge declared a mistrial with prejudice -- meaning Bundy could never be retried. The judge reached that decision because of what she called “flagrant prosecutorial misconduct.” The case was never decided on its merits, but in Bundy’s prosecution, the government displayed the very tyranny which members of the Oath Keepers have sworn to resist -- and which their critics claim doesn’t exist.



In 2015, the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson MO triggered widespread rioting. The Oath Keepers provided protection to store owners from vandals and looters after the police refused to do so. They were doing exactly what Asian shopowners did in 1992 after the Rodney King incident. Extensive news reporting claims that their presence alarmed the rioters. There’s no word on how the property owners felt about their presence. Apparently, in 21st century America, the notion that people have a right to protect private property has become “extreme.”

In 2016, the Oath Keepers proved just how subversive they were -- they endorsed Donald Trump for President. In his campaign, Trump pledged to fight against the corrupt elite, so it was a birds of a feather thing. But siding with the hated Trump against the corrupt elite, made Rhodes an enemy -- at least of the corrupt elite.

After the election in 2020, Rhodes questioned the legitimacy of the election. His embrace of the “big lie” moved him and his organization firmly into the “threat to

America” category, as judged by the Democrat party. He’s in good company. Over half of all Americans believe the election was affected by fraud.

Rhodes has also accused Joe Biden of being in the pocket of the Chinese government. Where could he have gotten that idea? Could it be because Joe shared an office with a Chinese businessman? Could it be that his son, Hunter, has had lucrative business dealings with the Chinese -- and Hunter’s laptop has evidence that the “big guy” was getting 10 percent of the take? Could the fact that Hunter launched a new "[money for influence](#)" business after President Asterisk was inaugurated have given Rhodes that idea?

When one looks beyond the scare quotes, there has been nothing out of the mainstream about the opinions or actions of the Oath Keepers. Unfortunately, to our leftist dictator wannabes, “mainstream” has come to mean “extreme.”

As for the indictment of Stewart Rhodes and his fellow travelers: the DoJ claims that they intended to conduct [an armed paramilitary operation](#) on January 6, 2021, to interfere with official congressional business. There are a couple of hurdles the government will need to overcome in prosecuting that case:

- None of the Oath Keepers were armed on January 6
- No paramilitary operation was conducted on January 6

The Feds are going to need to answer a couple of tricky questions for the jury. How do they know what the Oath Keepers intended to do? If they intended to conduct an armed insurrection, why didn’t they? Given the [FBI’s lost credibility](#), and the DoJ evolution to being a political enforcer, whatever evidence they have [will not be presumed accurate](#), but will be subjected to extensive vetting.

As the financial guys say: Past performance is the best predictor of future behavior. So, what have the Oath Keepers done in the past? They’ve defended the property rights of private citizens, protested an election that half of America thinks was stolen and accused Biden of being a Chinese puppet. Stewart Rhodes must have learned a thing or two about the Constitution at Yale Law. All of his organization’s past activities have been entirely consistent with the Constitution -- freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, property rights, and government by the people. Unfortunately, we live in an America in which one of the two political parties believes those positions are extreme. The issue isn’t the Oath Keepers. The issue is our current political environment.

I don’t find the past performance of the Oath Keepers to be particularly alarming. However, I find the past performance of our government to be extremely alarming. There have clearly been subversive activities going on in

America, but the Oath Keepers aren't the only suspects. We don't know what the Oath Keepers actually did, or didn't do, on January 6. Given the recent behavior of the FBI, the DoJ, and the propaganda ministry, I'll withhold judgment until the evidence has been thoroughly vetted. I'm not taking the government's word for anything.

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