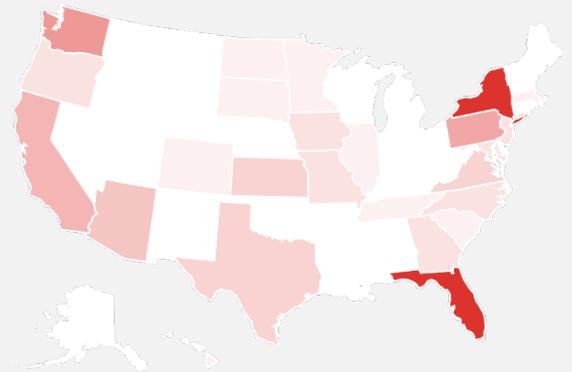




RESEARCH BRIEF

Proud Boys Crimes and Characteristics

The Proud Boys were formed by Gavin McInnes, co-founder of Vice Media, in 2016 during the U.S. presidential election. Proud Boys consider themselves “Western chauvinists” who romanticize a traditional, male-dominated version of Western culture. While the Proud Boys vehemently deny adhering to a racist ideology, the organization is deeply rooted in white nationalism and misogyny. As of December 31, 2021, 83 Proud Boys members and sympathizers have allegedly carried out ideologically motivated crimes in the United States. This number includes 54 Proud Boys defendants who participated in the Capitol breach on January 6, 2021. Proud Boys defendants have come from 25 states and the District of Columbia, including 14 from Florida, 14 from New York, 7 from Washington, and 6 from Pennsylvania. Using auxiliary data from the Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States (PIRUS) project, these infographics provide information on the characteristics of U.S. Proud Boys defendants and their crimes.



CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CRIMES

Plot Type	Number
Spontaneous Violence	16
Violent Plot	8
Weapons Possession	3
Harassment/Intimidation	1
Property Destruction	1

*Does not include crimes related to the Capitol breach on January 6, 2021.

- ▶ Proud Boys defendants plotted eight premeditated violent attacks, two of which were successful.
- ▶ Sixteen individuals were involved in spontaneous violence, all of which resulted in injuries to their victims.
- ▶ At least six people have been killed or injured in Proud Boys-related attacks since 2017. However, this is a conservative estimate since it is unclear how many individuals were injured in an attack outside the New York Metropolitan Club in Manhattan in 2018.

Criminal Charge	Number
Assault	16
Riot	10
Weapons Possession/Charge	8
Terrorizing/Harassment	3
Murder/Attempted Murder	2
Property Destruction	1
Bias-Motivated Crime	1
Filing a False Statement	1
Conspiracy to Destroy a Building	1

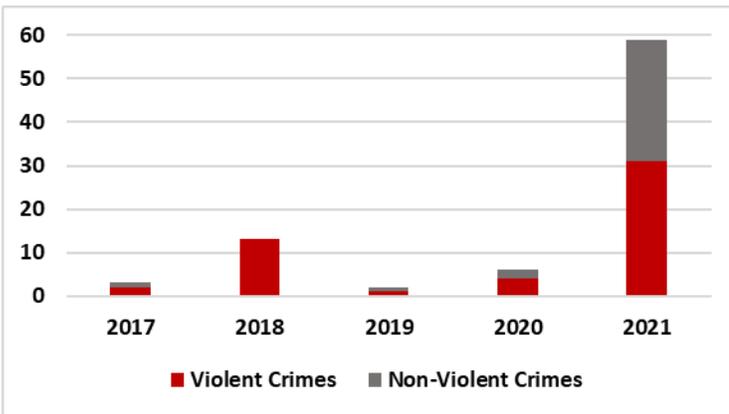
*Does not include crimes related to the Capitol breach on January 6, 2021. Charges related to the Capitol breach include Entering a Restricted Building, Disorderly Conduct, and Obstructing an Official Proceeding, among others.

DEFENDANT CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristic	Proud Boys Defendants*
Average Age	35.7
Female	3.6%
Married	49.1%
Parents	41.2%
Military/Law Enforcement Experience	31.3%
Unemployed	17.9%
Low Educational Attainment	37.5%
Mental Health Concerns	13.3%
Substance Use Concerns	13.3%
Criminal History	35.7%

*Includes both non-Capitol and Capitol defendants

Proud Boy Defendants from 2017-2021



*Non-violent crimes: Property Damage/Burglary/Trespassing; Violent Crimes: Use of Force/Criminal Threats. Fifty-four of the 59 2021 cases are related to the Capitol breach on January 6, 2021.

- ▶ Eighty-three Proud Boys members or sympathizers have allegedly carried out crimes in the United States. At least 54 Proud Boys have been charged for participating in the January 6, 2021, Capitol breach.
- ▶ Proud Boys defendants were on average 35 years old at the time of their crimes/arrests. The oldest individual was 63 at the time of their arrest and the youngest was 21.
- ▶ Three women affiliated with the Proud Boys allegedly committed crimes in relation to the Capitol breach.
- ▶ At least 20 of the defendants were married at the time of their arrests. Seven others were previously married.
- ▶ Twenty-one of the individuals are confirmed to be the parents or legal guardians of children.
- ▶ Twenty-six of the individuals have U.S. military and/or law enforcement backgrounds. One individual was active in the Army Reserves at the time of their arrest.
- ▶ Ten defendants were unemployed at the time of their arrests and three individuals were students.
- ▶ At least 15 defendants had a high school degree or lower at the time of their arrests.
- ▶ Eleven of the defendants had documented mental health concerns, as noted in court records, at the time of their arrests.
- ▶ Eleven of the individuals had substance use concerns at the time of their arrests.
- ▶ At least 25 of the individuals had a criminal record at the time of their arrests, including eight who had previously committed violent crimes.

COMPARING PROUD BOYS DEFENDANTS

Characteristics of Capitol Breach Proud Boys Defendants vs. Other Proud Boys Defendants*

Risk Characteristic	Capitol Defendants	Other Defendants
Married	52.8%	42.1%
Children	48.6%	25%
% Female	5.6%	0%
Military background	35.2%	13.8%
Law enforcement background	7.4%	0%
Unemployed	18.9%	15.8%
Substance abuse	11.1%	17.2%
Mental health concerns	14.8%	10.3%
Criminal record	26.7%	52%

*These numbers reflect valid percentages (i.e., missing values have been excluded)

- ▶ Excluding the defendants who were arrested for committing crimes in relation to the Capitol breach on January 6, 2021, 29 members or sympathizers of the Proud Boys have been arrested in the U.S. for committing criminal acts. These arrests have resulted in charges ranging from destruction of property to weapons possession to assault and murder.
- ▶ While only four (13.8%) non-Capitol breach defendants had past military experience, 19 (35.2%) individuals who committed crimes in relation to the Capitol breach on January 6, 2021, had previously served in the U.S. armed forces. Four others had law enforcement backgrounds (7.4%). One individual had both a military and law enforcement background.

ADDITIONAL MOVEMENT AFFILIATIONS OF PROUD BOYS DEFENDANTS

Movement Affiliation	Total Proud Boys Defendants	Defendants Involved in Successful Plot*
QAnon	4	4
Patriot Prayer	3	3
Golden State Skinheads	1	1
Battalion 49	1	1
Georgia Security Force III%	1	1
Traditionalist Worker Party	1	1
Patriot Front	1	1
211 Bootboys	1	1
Three Percent United Patriots	1	0

*The Capitol breach is considered a successful plot

- ▶ While the majority of Proud Boys defendants did not have additional movement affiliations (69), 14 individuals had known ties to other extremist movements. Thirteen of these individuals carried out successful attacks (violent and non-violent) in the United States.

ABOUT THE DATA

The data used in this brief were compiled from public sources, including news reports and court documents. In order to be included in the dataset, each individual must have radicalized in the United States; espoused ideological motives; have ties to the Proud Boys; and must have carried out an ideologically-motivated crimes resulting in his/her arrest. These data are comprehensive as of December 31, 2021.

To learn more about the project, please visit: https://twitter.com/RaD_UMD

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