

# Trump 'detached from reality' over election, Jan. 6 witness says

BY LISA MASCARO AND MARY CLARE JALONICK  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump's closest campaign advisers, top government officials and even his family were dismantling his false claims of 2020 voting fraud on election night, but the defeated president was becoming "detached from reality," clinging to outlandish theories to stay in power, several said.

Trump's former campaign manager Bill Stepien testified Monday, June 13 before the House Jan. 6 committee that Trump was "growing increasingly unhappy" at the election results as the night wore on.

Son-in-law Jared Kushner tried to steer Trump away from attorney Rudy Giuliani and his far-flung theories of voter fraud that advisers believed were not true.

Former Justice Department official Richard Donoghue recalls breaking down one claim after another — from a truckload of ballots in Pennsylvania to a missing suitcase of ballots in Georgia — and telling Trump "much of the info you're getting is false."

"He was becoming detached from reality," said former Attorney General William Barr, who resigned. "I didn't want to be a part of it."

The witnesses appeared before the House committee investigating the Jan. 6 Capitol attack as the panel focused on the "big lie," Trump's false claims of voter fraud that fueled the defeated Republican president's efforts to overturn the 2020 election and provoked a mob of his supporters to lay siege to the U.S. Capitol.

Most of those appearing did so in previously recorded testimony from closed door interviews over the course of the panel's yearlong investigation. The committee has interviewed some 1,000 witnesses and compiled 140,000 documents, and some members say they have uncovered enough evidence for the Justice Department to consider an unprecedented criminal indictment against the former president.

Chairman Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., opened Monday's hearing saying Trump "betrayed the trust of the American people" and "tried to remain in office when people had voted him out."

Stepien was to be a key wit-



Rep. Liz Cheney (R-WY) during a House Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th hearing in the Cannon House Office Building on Thursday, June 9, 2022, in Washington, D.C.

ness Monday, but abruptly backed out of appearing live because his wife went into labor. The ex-campaign manager is still close to Trump, and had been subpoenaed for to appear.

But the panel marched ahead after a morning scramble, showing previously recorded testimony from the ex-campaign manager and others close to the president as Trump latched on to repeated false claims about the election although those closest told him the theories of stolen ballots or rigged voting machines were not true.

Stepien described how the festive mood at the White House on election night turned as Fox News announced Trump had lost the state of Arizona to Joe Biden, and aides worked to counsel Trump on what to do next.

But he turned a deaf ear to them, choosing to listen instead to Giuliani, who was described as inebriated by several witnesses. Giuliani issued a general denial on Monday, rejecting "all falsehoods" he said were being said about him.

"My belief, my recommendation was to say that votes were still being counted, it's too early to tell, too early to call the race," Stepien said in the recorded testimony.

But Trump "thought I was wrong. He told me so."

Kushner testified that he told Trump the approach Giuliani was taking was not one he would take. But the president pushed back and said he had confidence in the attorney.

And Barr, who had previously testified in last week's blockbuster hearing that he told Trump the allegations being raised were bull—,

revealed in gripping detail how was "as mad as I'd ever seen him" when the attorney general explained that the Justice Department would not take sides in the election.

Monday's hearing also featured other live witnesses, including Chris Stirewalt, a former Fox News Channel political editor who declared on Election Night that Arizona was being won by Biden.

Thompson, D-Miss., and vice chair Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., were leading the hearing after last week's blockbuster session drew nearly 20 million Americans to see its prime-time findings.

For the past year, the committee has been investigating the most violent attack on the Capitol since the War of 1812 to ensure such an assault never happens again. Lawmakers hope to show that Trump's effort to overturn Joe Biden's election victory posed a grave threat to democracy.

A second group of witnesses testifying Monday was to be made up of election officials, investigators and experts who were likely to discuss Trump's responses to the election, including dozens of failed court challenges, and how his actions diverged from U.S. norms.

Among them those witnesses is the former U.S. attorney in Atlanta, BJay Pak, who abruptly resigned after Trump pressured Georgia state officials to overturn his presidential defeat. Trump wanted to fire Pak as disloyal, but Pak stepped down after Trump's call urging Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to "find" enough votes to overturn Biden's win in the state became public.

## NORTHWEST

# Mass arrest outside Idaho pride event

## 31 Patriot Front members planned to riot, police say

BY MARTHA BELLISLE  
Associated Press

Authorities arrested 31 members of the white supremacist group Patriot Front near an Idaho pride event Saturday, June 10 after they were found packed into the back of a U-Haul truck with riot gear.

The men were standing inside the truck wearing khakis, navy blue shirts and beige hats with white balaclavas covering their faces when Coeur d'Alene police stopped the U-Haul and began arresting them on the side of the road. "They came to riot downtown," Coeur d'Alene Police Chief Lee White said at a news conference.

All 31 were charged with conspiracy to riot, a misdemeanor, White said. The men were going through the booking process Saturday afternoon and are scheduled to be arraigned on Monday, he said.

Based on evidence collected and documents, authorities found that the group was planning to riot in several areas of downtown, not just the

park, White said.

Police found riot gear, one smoke grenade, shin guards and shields inside the van, White said. They wore arm patches and logos on their hats that identified them as members of Patriot Front, he said.

Police learned about the U-Haul from a tipster, who reported that "it looked like a little army was loading up into the vehicle" in the parking lot of a hotel, White said. Officials spotted the truck soon after and pulled it over, he said.

Videos of the arrest posted on social media show the men kneeling on the grass with their hands zip-tied behind their backs.

"Reclaim America" was written on the back of one shirt.

Police led the men, one by one, to the front of patrol cars, took off their masks and then brought them to a police van.

Those arrested came from at least 11 states, including Washington, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Colorado, South Dakota, Illinois, Wyoming, Virginia, and

Arkansas, White said. Only one was from Idaho, he said.

The truck was stopped near where the North Idaho Pride Alliance was holding the Coeur d'Alene Pride in the Park event. Police had stepped up their presence in the area during the event.

"It appears these people did not come here to engage in peaceful events."

*"It appears these people did not come here to engage in peaceful events."*

— Kootenai County Sheriff Bob Norris

Kootenai County Sheriff Bob Norris told a Coeur d'Alene Press reporter.

Patriot Front is described by the Southern Poverty Law Center as "a white nationalist hate group" that formed after the deadly "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017.

"Patriot Front focuses on theatrical rhetoric and activism that can be easily distributed as propaganda for its chapters across the country," the Southern Poverty Law Center said of the group. The group's manifesto calls for the formation of a white ethnostate in the United States, the Southern Poverty Law Center said.

## OREGON

# Probe underway into fire at anti-abortion center

GRESHAM (AP) — Federal law enforcement is investigating a fire that broke out on Friday morning, June 10 at an anti-abortion center in a suburb east of Portland.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives said on Twitter that they considered the fire at a First Image Pregnancy Resource Center in Gresham to be "suspicious in nature." KOIN-TV reported that the fire began at around 3 a.m. on Friday morning and that the investigation would involve multiple agencies.

"Gresham Police, Gresham Fire, ATE, and the FBI are all

involved in the investigation at this time," Gresham Fire Battalion Chief Jason McGowan told the station. "Because it's suspicious, in each structure fire we collect evidence, that evidence is then sent off to be processed, and once that process is over, we should have more information."

Pregnancy resource centers like the one in Gresham are clinics that typically provide free services and counsel clients against having abortions. Many are religiously affiliated and most are not licensed medical facilities.

The fire comes amid increasing tension and nation-

wide polarization over abortion that has arisen since a U.S. Supreme Court draft decision that could overturn Roe v. Wade leaked in May. Fire broke out at another anti-abortion center in upstate New York earlier this week and police are investigating a May arson fire at a women's health clinic that plans to open and provide abortions in Casper, Wyoming.

Last week, the Department of Homeland Security published a memo warning of increasing threats of civil unrest and violence surrounding the looming Supreme Court decision.

# Morrow County declares emergency over water contamination

BOARDMAN (AP) — Officials in Oregon's Morrow County along the Columbia River have declared a local state of emergency after private well testing showed high levels of nitrate contamination.

During a Thursday, June 9 special meeting, Morrow County commissioners voted 3-0 in favor of the measure, which will allow the county to take immediate action to protect drinking water, Oregon Public Broadcasting reported. It's believed to be the first time an Oregon county has declared a state of emergency over water quality issues.

The county is distributing bottled water and setting up water distribution trailers in the small city of Boardman.

Groundwater is the primary drinking source for residents in the county but it's been plagued by high levels of nitrates. The state designated Morrow and adjacent Umatilla counties as groundwater management areas more than 30 years ago.



Morrow County Commissioner Jim Doherty collects a water sample from the faucet of Boardman homeowner Tiffany Baldock on May 9, 2022, so a lab can determine if nitrates have contaminated the water.

A committee was formed to address the issue and identify activities that contribute to the contamination.

But state data shows the nitrate problem has only gotten worse.

"It's been an ongoing issue," Morrow County Commissioner Chair Jim Doherty said.

"It's not something that just hit us in the last week, and we've been approaching it from lots of different angles."

Drinking high levels of nitrate can lead to respiratory infections, thyroid dysfunction and stomach or bladder cancer. It can also cause "blue baby syndrome," which decreases

the blood's capacity to carry oxygen.

Earlier this year, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality fined the Port of Morrow \$1.3 million for overapplying 165 tons of nitrogen-rich wastewater onto agricultural fields over a four-year period and failing to monitor the nitrate contamination.

The Port of Morrow released a statement this week saying it's considering millions of dollars in upgrades to reduce pollution and is eager to play a role in finding workable solutions.

Doherty said he hopes the declaration will help them obtain money for more home testing. Doherty has been going door-to-door with the local health department to test tap water for residents outside Boardman's city limits.

So far, he said they've tested about 70 wells that were "high

enough to cause some pretty severe health issues."

A team from the nonprofit organization Oregon Rural Action is assisting the county and has tested tap water in about 60 homes in Boardman and Irigton. The team found almost all were above the federal safe drinking water limit and dozens were five times that limit, according to Kristin Anderson Ostrom, the group's executive director.

Zaira Sanchez, ORA's director of organizing, said it was hard to deliver test results.

"The common response from the community was immediate shock and concern," she said.

Sanchez said some families boil their water, but that could worsen the problem. She added some families are already spending up to \$100 a month purchasing bottled water.

ORA board member and

former DEQ administrator Mitch Wolgamott, who has been working with Anderson Ostrom and Sanchez, said this is the first-time elected officials have stepped up and highlighted this issue. But he said the response doesn't go far enough.

"That's addressing the symptoms, that doesn't really address the cause of the problem," he said. "We're going to have to figure out how to either be putting less nitrogen on the ground or we're spreading it out a lot more."

The Oregon Office of Emergency Management is coordinating with Morrow County to meet emergency needs of residents. OEM officials said the emergency declaration does not grant immediate access to state funds or other resources but does allow the county to implement its own emergency procedures.

## Let's see Eye-to-Eye on your vision care

- A great selection of frames to choose to get the look you want.
- We carry both regular and prescription sunglasses.
- In house repairs and special packages starting at \$99
- Our patients' satisfaction comes first!
- Quality, trusted, comprehensive eye care.
- Great selection of frames for every budget.

# EAGLE OPTICAL

3705 Midway Drive • Baker City

541.523.2020



**Wayne Dalton**

**GARAGE DOORS**

Custom wood, Stained finish, 16 Lite Arched windows

With Thermospan™ doors, you have your choice of styles, colors and customizing options.

**NE-HI ENTERPRISES** CCB#155399

2122 10th • Baker City • 541-523-6008