



Militant group is target of DOJ, FBI

After riot, authorities aim to build conspiracy case against Oath Keepers

BY DEVLIN BARRETT, SPENCER S. HSU, AARON C. DAVIS AND TOM JACKMAN

The Justice Department and FBI are gathering evidence to try to build a large conspiracy indictment against members of the Oath Keepers for their roles in the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol, according to people familiar with the matter, but the group's sometimes fractious and fantasy-laden internal workings may complicate efforts to bring such a case.

In the wake of the short-lived insurrection, the Oath Keepers is the most high-profile self-styled militia group in the country. While members use the jargon and trappings of a paramilitary organization, in daily practice the group is often more akin to a collection of local chapters with a similar, disinformation-fueled ideology about what they view as the inevitable collapse of the U.S. government as it becomes more tyrannical.

"This was not a well-trained army or a disciplined military unit; this was a loose structure," said Karl Schmae, who dealt with the Oath Keepers when he was an FBI negotiator responding to the 2016 occupation of a wildlife refuge building in eastern Oregon.

SEE OATH KEEPERS ON A9

Venue challenge: Riot defendant wants her trial moved to Texas. B2

Tape reveals details of call Trump made to Ga. official

BY AMY GARDNER

President Donald Trump encouraged Georgia's chief elections investigator in a December phone call to uncover "dishonesty" in her investigation of absentee ballot signatures in an effort to reverse his defeat against Joe Biden in the state, according to a recording of the call released this week by the Georgia secretary of state's office.

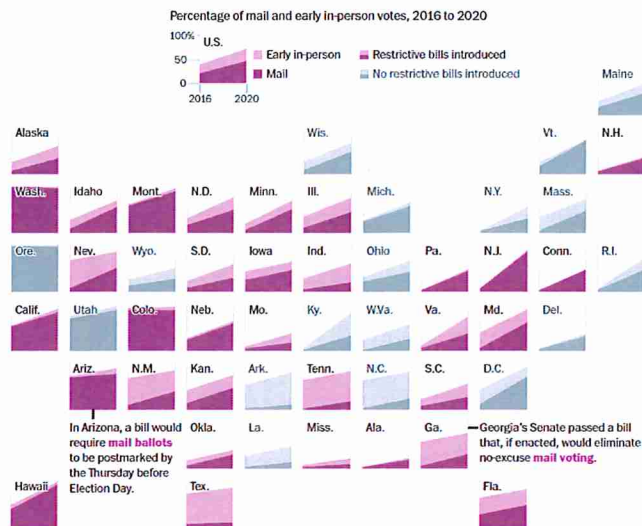
"The people of Georgia are so angry at what happened to me," Trump told Frances Watson, the chief investigator for Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, according to the recording. "They know I won, won by hundreds of thousands of votes. It wasn't close."

He added, "When the right answer comes out, you'll be praised." Later on the call, he said, "You have the most important job in the country right now."

The Washington Post reported on the substance of Trump's call on March 10.

SEE CALL ON A2

Restrictions to mail and early voting proposed in 33 states



Note: Data as of Feb. 19

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, MIT Election Lab, Brennan Center for Justice HARRY STEVENS AND KATE RABINOWITZ/THE WASHINGTON POST

GOP push imperils gains in voting rights

Proposals in legislatures across country could amount to largest contraction of ballot access since Reconstruction

BY AMY GARDNER, KATE RABINOWITZ AND HARRY STEVENS

The GOP's national push to enact hundreds of new election restrictions could strain every available method of voting for tens of millions of Americans, potentially amounting to the most sweeping contraction of ballot access in the United States since the end of Reconstruction, when Southern states curtailed the voting rights of formerly enslaved Black men, a Washington Post analysis has found.

In 43 states across the country, Republican lawmakers have proposed at least 250 laws that would limit mail, early in-person and Election Day voting with such constraints as stricter ID requirements, limited hours or narrower eligibility to vote absentee, according to data

compiled as of Feb. 19 by the nonpartisan Brennan Center for Justice. Even more proposals have been introduced since then.

Proponents say the provisions are necessary to shore up public confidence in the integrity of elections after the 2020 presidential contest, when President Donald Trump's unsubstantiated claims of election fraud convinced millions of his supporters that the results were rigged against him.

But in most cases, Republicans are proposing solutions in states where elections ran smoothly, including in many with results that Trump and his allies did not contest or allege to be tainted by fraud. The measures are likely to disproportionately affect those in cities and Black voters in particular, who overwhelmingly vote Democratic — laying bare, critics say, the GOP's true intent: gaining electoral advantage.

SEE VOTING ON A4

Biden wants all adults eligible for vaccine by May 1

VIRUS FIGHT IS FAR FROM OVER, HE SAYS

Plans to add inoculation centers, ease sign-ups

BY SEAN SULLIVAN

President Biden on Thursday directed states to ensure that all adults are eligible for a coronavirus vaccine by May 1, and he declared a goal of allowing small celebrations on July 4, setting up significant landmarks in the effort to return to normalcy after the devastating pandemic.

Speaking from the East Room of the White House in his first prime-time address, Biden sought to hit hopeful notes as he ticked through a series of new actions he intends to take to combat the virus in the spring and summer. His new initiatives include creating a "find a vaccination" website and allowing dentists, veterinarians and other health professionals to administer doses.

Biden's speech, clocking in at 24 minutes, served as an inflection point on the 51st day of his presidency. The president had

spent his first few weeks carefully managing expectations for recovery and frequently blaming the Trump administration for many of its early challenges, critics say he renewed indirectly on Thursday night. But Biden took greater ownership of the pandemic battle — and exposed himself to a potential backlash if he does not deliver.

"If we do our part, if we do this together, by July Fourth, there's a good chance you, your family and friends can gather in your backyard and have a barbecue and celebrate Independence Day," Biden said. "After this long, hard year, that will make this Independence Day something truly special, where we not only mark our independence as a nation, we begin to mark our independence from this virus."

A few moments later, Biden added a caveat: "A lot can happen. Conditions can change. The scientists have made clear that things

SEE BIDEN ON A6

Democrats face tougher tests of unity after win

Disagreement on how to move on infrastructure, immigration initiatives

BY SEUNG MIN KIM

Fresh off a major legislative victory on the coronavirus relief package, President Biden is facing a new round of battles on the next pieces of his agenda — exposing divisions within the Democratic Party not only on policy merits but also on how they get it accomplished.

On infrastructure — so high in its potential for bipartisanship that it has become a Washington cliché — Senate Democrats are already confronting an internal dispute over whether to use a party-line procedural tool

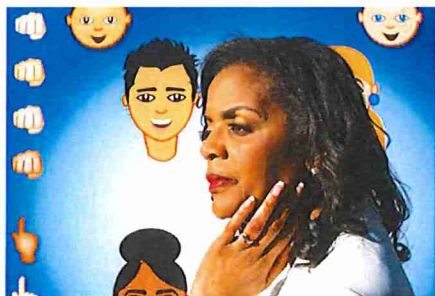
that would allow them to pass a bill with no GOP support. Biden's comprehensive immigration overhaul — a "Day One" priority for the president — is also struggling to gain traction even in the House, as Democratic leaders begin an uphill battle to count votes in favor of a sweeping bill.

And that's before Democrats begin grappling with the hurdle that is the Senate filibuster.

The complicated dynamics among Democrats on Capitol Hill show that getting the type of unity the party attained on the virus relief measure will probably be more difficult for Biden and congressional leaders on immigration, infrastructure and other issues.

Corralling near-unanimous support will be key considering few Democratic lawmakers are

SEE AGENDA ON A8



Katrina Parrott, founder of iDiversicons, with her app's emoji representing multiple skin tones. She launched the app in 2013.

Apple's diversity goals belie deeds

Pioneer of multiethnic emoji found herself cut out of the action

BY REED ALBERGOTTI

For Katrina Parrott, being invited to present her idea to Apple at its campus in Cupertino, Calif., felt like a dream. Less than a year earlier, she had been laid off from her job with NASA in Texas. Now she was discussing partnering with the iPhone maker on an idea she had pioneered: emoji with different skin-tone options.

It was 2013, and the tiny digital drawings — smiley faces and thumbs-up icons sent over

text message — depicted people in only one skin tone. Parrott, who is Black, said her oldest daughter came home from college one day and lamented that she couldn't express herself through emoji with skin tones that matched her own.

"What I learned in business is if you come up with an idea that nobody else has and you're the first on the scene, it gives you a real good opportunity to be successful," Parrott said in an interview.

Parrott embraced the idea

and in six months built and launched iDiversicons, an iPhone app that allowed users to copy and paste emoji with five distinct skin tones into their messages. At the time, creators of iPhone apps were becoming millionaires overnight, and Parrott saw an opportunity to build momentum. She began pumping her savings into the app's growth.

According to Parrott, though, her early success turned to heartbreak when Apple and

SEE EMOJI ON A22

App creator sues Apple over dashed emoji hopes

EMOJI FROM AI

other technology companies incorporated skin tone options into their operating systems, making her app obsolete and leaving her \$200,000 in the hole.

Parrott is now suing Apple for copyright infringement in a case that highlights the lopsided power dynamic on mobile app stores, where app creators are easily copied and pushed aside by technology giants. Todd Patterson, an intellectual property lawyer in Texas who is representing Parrott, said the case is about simple values. "The woman who was trying to improve inclusion gets excluded," he said.

Apple spokeswoman Jacqueline Roy declined to comment, other than to point to the company's court filings, in which Apple says Parrott has no claim to the copyright of skin tone emoji. In court, Apple's lawyers have argued that "copyright does not protect the idea of applying five different skin tones to emoji because ideas are not copyrightable." Apple said in the court filing that it developed diverse skin tone emoji independently and did not copy her work.

Parrott, whose copyright-infringement lawsuit filed last year against Apple is pending in federal court in Texas, is not the first person to create an iPhone app only to see Apple make it obsolete. Mobile app developers competing in the estimated \$72 billion-a-year market for iPhone apps often run headlong into the might of the iPhone maker, which sets the rules of the Apple App Store on its own terms. In September, iPhone developers formed a coalition aimed at forcing Apple to loosen restrictions they say give Apple an unfair advantage over competitors and harm innovation.

But Parrott's story, told through interviews as well as emails and documents viewed by The Washington Post, bumps up against Apple's effort to market itself as an agent of change for systemic racial inequity in corporate America. Apple announced a \$100 million racial justice and equity initiative in January that aims in part to help Black entrepreneurs with start-up boot camps and other opportunities. As part of the initiative, which costs one one-thousandth of what Apple earned in revenue last quarter, the company says it is funding schools such as one in Detroit's urban center that offers free iPhone coding classes.

The effort is aimed at stopping the "gross injustices and institutional barriers" preventing communities of color from pursuing the "American Dream," Lisa Jackson, Apple's vice president of environment, policy and social initiatives, said in a news release announcing the initiative.

It's surprising that Parrott's role in the widespread adoption of skin tones for emoji isn't more widely known, said Jennifer B. Lee, a vice chairman of the emoji subcommittee of Unicode Consortium, the body that approves and standardizes emoji so they can be sent among users with any device or operating system, and in any language. "If she had been a White male from Stanford or MIT in her mid-20s, it's more likely her company would have been acquired by Apple," said Lee, who featured Parrott in her documentary "The Emoji Story."

Apple remains overwhelmingly White and Asian. According to a form posted on its website, it had one Black executive out of 123 top executives in 2018. And of the 10,000 first- and mid-level managers at the company, fewer than 300 were Black. It hasn't released data on the diversity of its employee base for more than two years.

Sydney Harry, a fellow at the Annenberg Innovation Lab at the



Katrina Parrott is suing Apple for copyright infringement in a case that highlights the lopsided power dynamic on mobile app stores, where app creators are easily copied and pushed aside by technology giants. "The woman who was trying to improve inclusion gets excluded," her attorney said. Parrott says she was left \$200,000 in the hole.

University of Southern California who has studied bias in tech and media and is a former Apple Store employee, said Apple's treatment of Parrott shows the company's blind spots when it comes to Black tech talent.

"They always say, 'Oh, we have a pipeline problem,'" she said of Apple and other large technology companies. But Harry thinks Apple overlooks people like Parrott, with passion and an ability to perform, who are sitting right in the company's offices. Parrott "has all these credentials, but most importantly, she had a good idea and was someone who was willing to put in the work," Harry said.

Intellectual property lawyer Gerald DePardo, a partner at McCormick, Paulding and Huber, said Parrott's lawsuit falls into the category of a tough case to win in part because Apple's emoji and Parrott's do not appear to be identical. The fact that she came up with the idea first is not enough.

Apple has a long history of incorporating features first found on the App Store or elsewhere and turning them into features built into its operating system. Companies such as Spotify have accused Apple of creating competing services and using its power over its iOS mobile software system to gain a competitive advantage. Companies such as Blix, the maker of email software, have taken Apple to court over similar allegations.

Emoji were created in the late 1990s in Japan and were added to iPhones in 2008, the year after the iPhone was introduced. But it wasn't until 2015, with the release of iOS 8.3, that Apple added the option to change the skin tones of the all-White characters, prompted by changes Parrott pushed through at Unicode. Google, which operates the Android system for smartphones, introduced Unicode skin-tone standards in 2016. Unicode's members include all of the major tech companies, including Apple, Google and Microsoft, which help steer decision-making there.

That lag time in the advent of diverse emoji didn't go unnoticed. "There is this playful element to emoji, which is why people are so engaged by them, but there is the reality of scale and global impact," said Florie Hutchinson, a media strategist. She submitted women's clothing emoji to Unicode in

2017 and 2019 to offer alternatives to sexualized stereotypes, such as high-heeled shoes. The use of emoji has become "a language in and of itself, and language needs to be inclusive," she said. In December, the Smithsonian Institution announced that it added two diverse emoji to its collection, one of a woman wearing a hijab and another of an interracial couple.

In 2013, the iPhone was six years old and emoji were exploding in popularity as a communication tool. When her daughter said it would be nice to be able to express herself with emoji that looked like her, Parrott said she asked, "What's an emoji?"

Parrott, who works in aerospace logistics, decided there should be an app for that. She hired a coder and set out to create her app, using five skin tones that she thought allowed for enough diversity to represent any ethnic background.

Six months later, in October, iDiversicons was available for download in the App Store. A few more than 300 emoji were in the first app, all registered with the U.S. Copyright Office. Parrott also applied for three patents for the idea.

The number of downloads was modest, but Parrott thought it was a good start and that with more promotion, it could turn into a business. At 99 cents a pop, minus Apple's 30 percent cut, Parrott's take topped out at about \$1,000 a month, she says.

But the app had been written up in several online publications, and Parrott thought greater success was right around the corner.

What she didn't account for was that the App Store doesn't operate like most marketplaces. Apple restricts the kinds of things applications can do on the App Store, reserving many functions for software it develops in house.

At the time, Apple's default keyboard, which included 846 emoji, could not be modified or replaced. Apple did not allow apps such as iDiversicons to create alternative keyboards with different emoji, so iPhone users who wanted other emoji could download apps and cut and paste the icons into text messages like an image — a clunky process.

Parrott said she asked Apple's developer support representatives about making the app easier to use and was told she wasn't allowed to implement some features, such as better integration with Apple's keyboard.

The software developer Parrott hired to create the app suggested approaching Unicode. Parrott submitted a proposal in 2013, requesting that Unicode create a standard for non-White skin tones and incorporate more diverse emoji options. Unicode invited her to present her ideas, according to Parrott and emails from the organization.

About the same time, companies such as Apple were facing more pressure to include diverse emoji. An Apple executive responded to the concerns, saying the company was working with Unicode to adopt new standards.

In May 2014, Parrott was in a conference room in the corporate offices of Adobe, which was hosting Unicode's quarterly meeting, in San Jose. Parrott, the only Black person in the room, submitted 536 diverse emoji for consideration, including hand gestures with different skin tones and people representing different ethnic groups, to prominent figures such as President Barack Obama and former South African president Nelson Mandela.

Anna Rice, a spokeswoman for Unicode, said the organization is not able to comment on "matters that are subject to pending litigation."

Parrott said the idea was well-

received and that representatives from companies such as Microsoft and Google praised the idea after the presentation.

But the most important connection Parrott made that day was Peter Edberg, a senior software engineer at Apple. Edberg, who was not previously aware of the iDiversicons app, Parrott said, was seated next to her at the meeting and told her he was excited about the idea, she said. Edberg said Apple knew that its emoji lacked diversity and that he had been interested in creating more diverse options, Parrott recalled, and he wanted Parrott to come to Apple's headquarters in Cupertino before she flew back to Texas.

The next day, Parrott posed for a photo in front of the "I Infinite Loop" sign at Apple's headquarters, smiling proudly. Edberg took the picture.

She met in a conference room with Edberg and Celia Vigil, a senior director at Apple. She gave Vigil a printout of her proposal and shared a flash drive with her emoji designs on it. Parrott came away from the meeting thinking there was a good possibility that she might sign a licensing deal with royalties or a contract in which she would provide the emoji.

Contacted by email, phone and text messages, Edberg and Vigil did not respond to requests for comment. According to his LinkedIn profile, Edberg is still with Apple. Vigil has retired, according to her LinkedIn page. Apple declined to make Edberg available.

Vigil sent a follow-up email to Parrott the next day. "I pointed my colleagues at your application," she wrote. "I can also show them the images you shared with Peter."

In August 2014, Parrott attended a Unicode meeting where members decided to adopt five additional skin tones, as Parrott had suggested. But the Unicode board wanted to base the skin-tone choices on something that sounded more official, Parrott said. Someone in the room started Googling and came up with the Fitzpatrick scale, she said, which was developed in 1975 to estimate the response of different types of skin to ultraviolet light.

Unicode Consortium President Mark Davis, who works at Google, later emailed Parrott. "Well, it's been great to have you aboard;

without you we certainly wouldn't have come up with as good a solution!" he wrote in an email reviewed by The Post. "Now, we'll have to see how it plays out in practice; whether the new emoji modifiers are used!"

After weeks of silence, Parrott finally heard back from Edberg in October 2014. Apple would not be working with her on the emoji project. "Apple has its own team of human interface designers who want to handle all aspects of the emoji design," he wrote in an email. He added that he was "investigating whether Apple has any kind of program for mentoring app developers."

"I was really crushed," Parrott said.

In February 2015, Apple announced its new, diverse emoji and made the national news. Now, anyone who wanted more diverse options could simply hit a button on the keyboard, making Parrott's iDiversicons app unnecessary.

Parrott said she was disappointed in how they looked. One thing she had stressed at the Unicode meetings and to Apple is that tech companies shouldn't just change the skin color of emoji. They should also change the emoji themselves to reflect the difference in ethnicities. For instance, she said, an emoji depicting a Black person should have different hair as well.

Parrott got the sinking feeling that Apple's new diverse emoji would also eat into downloads for her app, which, despite media coverage, still hadn't grown significantly in downloads. Out of \$200,000 in expenses on her app and travel associated with the Unicode meetings, Parrott took a job in Seattle working for Boeing. The job separated her from her family.

Parrott shared her concerns with Edberg, who, still making an effort to help, went to Apple's marketing department, a power center at the company that controls decisions related to emoji. Parrott had hoped that Apple might promote her by listing iDiversicons as a suggested download on the App Store, or give her credit at the company's annual worldwide developer conference. Edberg told her Apple would not promote the app.

"That just really broke me when he said that," Parrott said. reed.bergotti@washpost.com

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Jennifer B. Lee, vice chairman of the emoji subcommittee of Unicode Consortium, the body that approves and standardizes emoji, on iDiversicons creator Katrina Parrott