

Threats Within: Comparing the Violence and Impact of America’s Most Active Extremist Groups

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I. Executive Summary

This report presents a comparative analysis of violent activity, damage, and prosecution outcomes linked to four U.S.-based ideological movements: Antifa, the Proud Boys, the Oath Keepers, and the Three Percenters. These groups have been involved in numerous high-profile confrontations, ranging from street-level protests to paramilitary actions targeting the federal government. While all four have engaged in illegal or violent activity to varying degrees, the scale, coordination, and prosecutorial outcomes differ dramatically.

Key findings include:

The Proud Boys and Oath Keepers have been centrally involved in the January 6, 2021, Capitol attack, with dozens of members convicted of felonies, including seditious conspiracy. Their operations involved tactical planning, encrypted communications, and intergroup coordination (Justice Department, 2023a; 2023b).

Antifa, by contrast, is a decentralized protest movement that engages primarily in episodic vandalism, property destruction, and confrontational counter-protests. While numerous arrests occurred during the 2020 unrest, few cases have resulted in federal conspiracy or extremist charges due to a lack of identifiable structure or command (Program on Extremism, 2021).

Three Percenters, a loosely affiliated militia movement, have participated in armed demonstrations and supported operations like January 6, though fewer high-profile convictions exist. Their threat is diffuse, often manifesting in localized paramilitary readiness rather than centralized violence (START, 2021).

Data indicates that far-right paramilitary groups pose a higher strategic threat due to their structure, planning capacity, and record of attempting to disrupt democratic institutions, while left-wing groups pose a more opportunistic and decentralized challenge centered around urban protest zones.

Group	Leadership	Planning Evidence	Seditious Conspiracy Convictions	Use of Weapons	Primary Threat
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Proud Boys	Structured	Yes	Yes	Moderate	Strategic disruption
Oath Keepers	Paramilitary	Yes	Yes	High	Armed insurrection
Three Percenters	Decentralized	Some	No (yet)	Moderate–High	Local militia escalation
Antifa	Decentralized	Rare	No	Low	Urban protest disorder

This report concludes with recommendations for better categorization of domestic extremist threats, improved public education, and a balanced law enforcement response that prioritizes actual threat level over political framing.

II. Introduction

Political extremism in the United States has surged in visibility and volatility over the past decade. From the mass protests following the 2017 Charlottesville rally and the 2020 George Floyd murder to the unprecedented insurrection attempt on January 6, 2021, Americans have witnessed the evolution of ideologically motivated violence from both the far left and far right.

This report examines four major movements that have shaped the modern extremist landscape:

1. **Antifa** – A loosely organized far-left protest movement known for direct action and counter-protest activity, often characterized by black bloc tactics.
2. **Proud Boys** – A far-right nationalist group with formal chapters, an identifiable leadership hierarchy, and a record of violent protest engagement.
3. **Oath Keepers** – A paramilitary-style militia group composed largely of former military and law enforcement personnel, known for tactical training and planning.
4. **Three Percenters** – A militia movement grounded in anti-federal ideology and support for armed resistance against perceived tyranny.

While all of these groups have faced media scrutiny and law enforcement attention, not all violent actions are equivalent in planning, scale, or intent. Some groups pose a strategic threat to democratic institutions, while others represent tactical threats to public safety during periods of civil unrest.

Research Questions

This report seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the organizational structure of each group, and how does that impact their capacity for violence?
2. What types of violent acts and property damage have been committed by each group, and how often?

3. How have law enforcement and the justice system prosecuted and convicted members of each group?
4. Which group presents the greatest operational threat, and why?

By examining both qualitative data (tactics, ideology, structure) and quantitative data (arrests, convictions, damages), this report offers a balanced, evidence-based comparison of each group's role in American political violence from 2016 to 2025.

III. Methodology

This section outlines the research methods, data sources, inclusion criteria, and analytical limitations of the comparative study. Given the ideological, organizational, and legal variability among Antifa, the Proud Boys, the Oath Keepers, and the Three Percenters, the methodology intentionally balances qualitative descriptions with quantitative indicators (e.g., convictions, charges, known damages) to create a reliable cross-group comparison.

3.1 Data Sources

To ensure credibility and consistency, this report draws from the following publicly accessible and institutionally recognized sources:

U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) press releases and prosecution summaries (2020–2025), especially related to January 6 and protest-related arrests (Justice Department, 2023a; 2023b).

Academic studies and policy reports, including the Program on Extremism at George Washington University (PoE-GWU), the START Consortium at the University of Maryland, and peer-reviewed research in political science and criminology journals (Program on Extremism, 2021; START, 2021).

Congressional hearing records (e.g., Judiciary Committee briefings on political violence from both ideological spectrums) (Congress.gov, 2023).

Court records and media summaries, including federal indictments, sentencing memoranda, and Wikipedia entries on criminal proceedings for ease of access and timeline review.

Investigative journalism from outlets like The New York Times, Al Jazeera, WHYY, and PBS, particularly those cited in court filings or DOJ announcements.

3.2 Inclusion Criteria

The report includes only violent acts or incidents that meet the following criteria:

Ideological affiliation: The perpetrator(s) either self-identified with, or were credibly affiliated with, one of the four groups under review.

Violence or destruction: The incident involved physical confrontation, armed activity, property destruction, or coordinated threat to life/safety.

Public documentation: The act is documented in DOJ reports, academic analyses, or major media/journalistic databases.

Legal outcome: Where possible, court proceedings, charges, or sentences are confirmed to ground the comparison in facts.

3.3 Analytical Framework

The comparative analysis evaluates each group across five dimensions:

1. **Organizational Structure:** Leadership, coordination capacity, internal hierarchy.
2. **Tactical Behavior:** Frequency and type of violence (e.g., protest clashes vs. armed breach).
3. **Legal Outcomes:** Prosecutions, convictions, sentencing (especially for conspiracy).
4. **Damage Output:** Scope of destruction (property, injury, federal property damage).
5. **Threat Assessment:** Degree of risk to institutional order vs. civil unrest.

Each group is scored qualitatively on these dimensions, supported by quantitative data where available.

3.4 Limitations

While this report aims to offer balanced and evidence-based conclusions, several limitations must be acknowledged:

Attribution ambiguity: Especially for decentralized groups like Antifa and Three Percenters, determining “official” membership or operational responsibility can be speculative.

Media bias and reporting gaps: Left- or right-leaning media outlets may over- or under-report certain incidents, skewing public perception and data access.

State vs. federal charges: Many protest-related cases (especially Antifa-aligned vandalism) are handled at the state level and may not appear in DOJ databases, limiting comprehensive analysis.

Data imbalance: The January 6 Capitol breach created a surge in federal prosecutions for right-wing actors, increasing data availability for groups like the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers but not necessarily reflecting broader trends.

IV. Group Profiles & Organizational Structures

This section outlines the ideological foundations, leadership models, and mobilization strategies of each group: Antifa, the Proud Boys, the Oath Keepers, and the Three Percenters. Understanding each group's internal structure and communication approach is essential for contextualizing their behavior, capacity for violence, and prosecutorial exposure.

4.1 Antifa

Ideology & Mission:

Antifa, short for “anti-fascist,” is not a formal organization but rather a loose network of activists united by opposition to fascism, racism, and authoritarianism. Most adherents identify as anarchist, socialist, or anti-capitalist, and many reject the legitimacy of centralized power structures (Bray, 2017).

Organizational Structure:

Antifa lacks a centralized leadership hierarchy. Activists operate through **affinity groups** — small, decentralized cells that coordinate locally and temporarily. Communication is often informal and encrypted, with social media used for broader mobilization (Program on Extremism, 2021).

Recruitment & Coordination:

Recruitment typically occurs through social activism spaces, university organizing, or online networks like Reddit, Mastodon, or Signal. Mobilization efforts rely heavily on event-based callouts (e.g., “Stop the Proud Boys”) and publicized threats to marginalized communities or leftist spaces.

Tactical Orientation:

Tactics include black bloc protest formations, confrontational counter-protesting, property destruction (especially of banks or federal buildings), and occasional physical clashes with far-right demonstrators or police. Violence is generally opportunistic and locally organized.

4.2 Proud Boys

Ideology & Mission:

Founded in 2016 by Gavin McInnes, the Proud Boys describe themselves as “Western chauvinists” who reject political correctness and promote “anti-authoritarianism.” In practice, the

group often supports white nationalist rhetoric, Trumpist populism, and anti-leftist violence (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2022).

Organizational Structure:

The Proud Boys are a **structured organization** with formal chapters, hierarchical leadership, and documented membership processes. Members are initiated through rituals and oaths. A national leadership tier existed prior to the January 6 prosecutions (Justice Department, 2023a).

Recruitment & Coordination:

Members are recruited through social media, YouTube, and alt-right forums, as well as real-world events. The group used encrypted platforms like Telegram and Parler to plan January 6 activities (DOJ, 2023a). Membership is male-only and often overlaps with other nationalist groups.

Tactical Orientation:

The Proud Boys have been linked to dozens of violent protest incidents, including brawls, street fights, and assaults on journalists. On January 6, they played a major role in breaching Capitol security, with leadership coordinating movement along the Capitol's perimeter and interior (House Select Committee, 2022).

4.3 Oath Keepers

Ideology & Mission:

Founded by Stewart Rhodes in 2009, the Oath Keepers recruit military veterans, law enforcement, and first responders who pledge to uphold the Constitution against perceived "tyranny." Their rhetoric combines libertarianism, anti-globalism, and Second Amendment absolutism (START, 2021).

Organizational Structure:

Oath Keepers operate as a paramilitary-style organization, with chapters, command hierarchies, and formalized communication. Their planning for January 6 included tactical gear, weapons caches, encrypted communication, and QRF (Quick Reaction Force) elements staged nearby (DOJ, 2023b).

Recruitment & Coordination:

The group targets veterans and police through patriot organizations, gun shows, and online spaces. Coordination uses encrypted channels like Zello and Signal. Oath Keepers often train in rural areas and share manuals or tactical resources.

Tactical Orientation:

Their tactics go beyond protest: armed patrols, staged defense of property during BLM protests, and direct participation in efforts to obstruct electoral certification in 2020. Multiple members were convicted of seditious conspiracy (DOJ, 2023b).

4.4 Three Percenters

Ideology & Mission:

The Three Percenters derive their name from the myth that only 3% of colonial Americans fought in the Revolution. They advocate for armed resistance against perceived federal overreach and align with sovereign citizen ideologies (Anti-Defamation League, 2021).

Organizational Structure:

Three Percenters are highly decentralized, often comprising independent militias with regional identities. Unlike the Oath Keepers, they rarely exhibit national command structures, making prosecutions harder.

Recruitment & Coordination:

Membership often emerges through Facebook groups, local firearm clubs, and YouTube militia networks. Coordination is semi-organized, with many members acting autonomously, especially during demonstrations or standoffs (e.g., the 2014 Bundy Ranch standoff).

Tactical Orientation:

While they participate in protests and armed demonstrations, Three Percenters have also been tied to plots against law enforcement, state officials, and infrastructure (e.g., a plot to kidnap Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer in 2020) (FBI, 2021).

Table 1: Structural Comparison Matrix

Feature	Antifa	Proud Boys	Oath Keepers	Three Percenters
Ideology	Anti-fascist, anarchist	Nationalist, populist	Anti-gov't, libertarian	Anti-federalist militia
Structure	Decentralized	Hierarchical	Paramilitary	Decentralized
Recruitment Style	Activist spaces	Online and in-person	Veteran/law enforcement	Militia & online
Coordination Method	Affinity groups, Signal	Telegram, Parler	Zello, Signal	Facebook, forums
Tactical Behavior	Vandalism, street clashes	Organized protest violence	Armed breaches, QRF	Armed protests, plots
Known Federal Convictions	Few	Dozens incl. conspiracy	Dozens incl. seditious conspiracy	Several, not national

V.1 Antifa-Aligned Protest Violence and Legal Outcomes

While Antifa is not a centralized organization and lacks formal membership rolls, numerous individuals claiming ideological alignment with Antifa have engaged in violent or destructive acts, particularly in the context of counter-protests and civil unrest. Most notably, violent incidents associated with Antifa escalated in Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington during the 2020 George Floyd protests and following far-right rallies.

5.1.1 Significant Violent Events

Date	Location	Summary of Incident	Source
May–Aug 2020	Portland, OR	Nightly riots involving property destruction, Molotov cocktails, assaults on police.	DOJ, 2020a; Al Jazeera, 2020
June 20, 2020	Seattle, WA	CHOP/CHAZ zone declared “autonomous,” armed standoff; shootings occurred inside zone.	Seattle Times, 2020
Nov 4, 2020	Multiple cities	Antifa demonstrators in Portland smashed windows after 2020 election results.	DOJ, 2020b
Jan 20, 2021	Inauguration Day	Federal courthouse vandalized in Portland; anarchist signs; arrests made.	DOJ, 2021a

5.1.2 Scope of Violence

Type: Graffiti, broken windows, arson, Molotov cocktails, and occasional physical assaults on counter-protesters or police.

Targets: Federal buildings, courthouses, police precincts, corporate retail, and right-wing demonstrators.

Notable Patterns:

- ⇒ Violence generally occurred at night, often involved black bloc formations.
- ⇒ Arrests were usually for state-level misdemeanors or vandalism.
- ⇒ No known seditious conspiracy or firearm trafficking charges filed.

5.1.3 Legal Outcomes and Federal Charges

Event/Operation	Federal Charges Filed	Number of Arrests	Notable Outcomes
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Portland Riots (2020)	Arson, civil disorder, assault	96+	Most cases dismissed or resolved via plea deals (DOJ, 2021b)
Inauguration Day (2021)	Destruction of gov't property	15+	Few long-term sentences; many local charges not pursued
Nationwide 2020 Unrest	Assault, interfering with police	100+ (estimated)	DOJ launched Operation Legend and “Protecting American Communities Task Force”

Note: DOJ later dropped most federal charges related to protest violence in 2021, especially in Portland, where public pressure and prosecutorial backlog led to case dismissals (Justice Department, 2021b; NPR, 2021).

5.1.4 Summary

Although individuals aligned with Antifa ideology were involved in frequent and sometimes extreme protest violence (particularly during 2020), the lack of centralized leadership, the episodic nature of incidents, and the predominance of state-level misdemeanors over federal charges make it difficult to compare them directly to more structured groups like the Proud Boys or Oath Keepers.

The FBI has acknowledged that “Antifa is not a terrorist organization” and that most incidents are best categorized under “anarchist extremism” rather than domestic terrorism (FBI Director Wray, 2020, testimony).

Table 2: Sample Federal Charges Filed Against Antifa-Aligned Individuals (2020–2021)

Charge	Number of Cases	Jurisdiction	Average Sentence
Civil Disorder	~35	Oregon, Washington	6–12 months (mostly suspended)
Assault on Federal Officer	~12	Portland, OR	12–18 months
Arson / Molotov Use	~6	Washington, D.C., Oregon	24–48 months
Destruction of Government Prop.	~15	Portland, D.C.	6–24 months

V.2 Proud Boys-Aligned Violence and Legal Outcomes

The Proud Boys are a self-described “Western chauvinist” group known for violent protest behavior, street fights, and direct participation in the January 6, 2021, Capitol attack. Unlike Antifa, the Proud Boys operate with a defined leadership hierarchy and documented membership rituals, making them more easily targeted under conspiracy statutes.

5.2.1 Significant Violent Events

Date	Location	Summary of Incident	Source
Dec 12, 2020	Washington, D.C.	Clashes with Antifa; stabbings near Black churches; Proud Boys blamed for destruction.	Washington Post, 2020
Jan 6, 2021	U.S. Capitol	Led coordinated breach of Capitol; disrupted certification of Electoral College votes.	DOJ, 2023a; House Select Committee
Sep 2020–20 21	Multiple states	Dozens of violent confrontations with Antifa, BLM protesters, and journalists.	SPLC, 2022

5.2.2 Scope of Violence

Type: Coordinated mob violence, organized protest brawls, destruction of federal property, obstruction of justice.

Targets: Left-wing demonstrators, journalists, and government institutions (e.g., the Capitol).

Notable Patterns:

- ⇒ Group wore matching tactical gear on Jan 6, used encrypted apps to plan.
- ⇒ Leadership layer engaged in multi-state coordination.
- ⇒ Known to initiate violence rather than merely react.

5.2.3 Legal Outcomes and Federal Charges

Event/Operation	Federal Charges Filed	Number of Arrests	Notable Outcomes
January 6 Capitol Riot	Seditious conspiracy, obstruction, assault	38+ Proud Boys members	6 leaders sentenced to 10–22 years (DOJ, 2023a)
Dec 2020 D.C. Clashes	Assault, hate crimes, conspiracy	4+	Multiple hate crime enhancements; 1 arson conviction

Other 2020–2021 incidents	Assault, incitement, unlawful assembly	Numerous	State-level charges, some federal conspiracy counts filed
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5.2.4 Summary of Sentencing

The Proud Boys’ involvement in January 6 led to some of the most serious federal sentences handed down for domestic extremism in modern U.S. history. Leaders including Enrique Tarrio, Joseph Biggs, and Ethan Nordean received between 17 and 22 years in prison for seditious conspiracy (DOJ, 2023a; New York Times, 2023).

Notably, Tarrio was not even physically at the Capitol during the riot but was still convicted due to his planning and leadership role.

Their clear chain of command and pre-event coordination allowed the DOJ to apply RICO-like logic, creating a prosecutable framework for group liability.

Table 3: Selected Proud Boys Federal Sentencing Outcomes (Jan. 6 Case)

ame	Role	Charge	Sentenc e
Enrique Tarrio	National Chairman	Seditious conspiracy, obstruction	22 years
Ethan Nordean	Regional Leader (WA)	Seditious conspiracy	18 years
Joseph Biggs	FL Chapter Organizer	Seditious conspiracy	17 years
Dominic Pezzola	Broke first Capitol window	Obstruction, assault	10 years

5.2.5 Analysis

The Proud Boys’ level of organizational discipline, military-style planning, and proximity to power (e.g., frequent mention in Trump rally contexts) differentiate them from other protest groups. They represent a model where protest turns to planned insurrection, with legal consequences reflecting the gravity of their actions.

V.3 Oath Keepers-Aligned Violence and Legal Outcomes

The Oath Keepers are a paramilitary-style group formed in 2009, recruiting primarily from veterans, law enforcement, and first responders. With a mission to defend the Constitution against perceived government tyranny, they are among the most organized and militarized of U.S.-based extremist groups. Their involvement in the January 6 Capitol riot resulted in the first seditious conspiracy convictions in over a decade.

5.3.1 Significant Violent Events

Date	Location	Summary of Incident	Source
Jan 6, 2021	U.S. Capitol	Organized armed “stack” formation breached Capitol; aimed to stop certification.	DOJ, 2023a; House Select Committee
2014	Bunkerville, NV	Armed standoff with federal agents during Cliven Bundy cattle dispute.	FBI Reports, 2014; SPLC
2015–2020	Ferguson, MO; Kenosha, WI	Offered armed “protection” during racial justice protests; considered escalation risks.	ADL, 2021

5.3.2 Scope of Violence

Type: Armed threats, paramilitary coordination, seditious conspiracy, obstructing federal processes.

Targets: Federal agents, Congress, and those seen as “violating the Constitution.”

Notable Patterns:

- ⇒ Tightly coordinated operational planning with encrypted comms (Signal, Zello).
- ⇒ Weapons stored off-site on Jan 6, suggesting premeditated force potential (DOJ, 2022).
- ⇒ Focus on defensive posture rhetoric masking offensive behavior.

5.3.3 Legal Outcomes and Federal Charges

Event/Operation	Federal Charges Filed	Number of Arrests	Notable Outcomes
January 6 Capitol Riot	Seditious conspiracy, obstruction, firearms offenses	24+ Oath Keepers	11 convictions; Stewart Rhodes sentenced to 18 years

Bundy Standoff (2014)	Assault on federal officers, obstruction	Charges later dropped (jury nullification)	Legal ambiguity in militia contexts
Ferguson/Kenosha Deployments	Unlawful assembly, open carry violations	Few arrests	Most cases dismissed or not pursued by local authorities

5.3.4 Summary of Sentencing

In May 2023, Oath Keepers founder Stewart Rhodes was convicted of seditious conspiracy and sentenced to 18 years in federal prison, making him the highest-profile figure punished for the Capitol attack (DOJ, 2023b). Prosecutors proved that the group:

- ⇒ Pre-planned the assault weeks in advance.
- ⇒ Positioned “Quick Reaction Forces” (QRFs) outside D.C.
- ⇒ Used military tactics and encrypted communication to mobilize.

The convictions affirmed that the Oath Keepers represented not just violent dissent, but a coordinated paramilitary threat to constitutional order.

Table 4: Selected Oath Keepers Jan. 6 Sentencing Outcomes

Name	Role	Charge	Sentence
Stewart Rhodes	Founder & Commander	Seditious conspiracy, obstruction	18 years
Kelly Meggs	Florida Leader	Seditious conspiracy	12 years
Jessica Watkins	Ohio Member	Obstruction, conspiracy	8.5 years
Kenneth Harrelson	Regional Leader	Obstruction	4 years

5.3.5 Analysis

The Oath Keepers’ use of military-grade tactics, encrypted planning, and explicit calls for armed rebellion place them in a category closer to domestic insurgents than conventional protest groups. Their actions reveal a dangerous fusion of political ideology, military training, and conspiratorial worldview.

While smaller in number than the Proud Boys, their potential for violence per member is arguably higher due to their military discipline and planning sophistication.

V.4 Three Percenters – Documented Violent Acts and Legal Outcomes

The Three Percenters (also styled 3%ers or III%ers) are a loosely affiliated, militia-style movement that emerged in 2008, based on the false historical claim that only 3% of American colonists fought in the Revolutionary War. The group promotes an anti-government, pro-gun ideology and has been associated with plots involving domestic terrorism, including bombings and kidnapping conspiracies.

Unlike the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers, Three Percenters are not centrally organized, but they are recognized as a domestic extremist threat by the FBI and DHS.

5.4.1 Significant Violent Events and Plots

Date	Location	Summary of Incident	Source
Oct 2020	Michigan	Three Percenter-affiliated plot to kidnap Gov. Gretchen Whitmer foiled by FBI.	DOJ, 2020; FBI, 2021
Jan 6, 2021	U.S. Capitol	Several Three Percenter members and affiliates participated in breach and planned violence.	DOJ, 2022; House Select Committee, 2022
May 2021	California	Air Force Sgt. Steven Carrillo (Three Percenter) killed federal officer in ambush.	DOJ, 2021; CNN, 2021
Various (2014–2021)	Multiple States	Armed standoffs with federal authorities (e.g., Bunkerville, OR wildlife refuge).	SPLC, ADL

5.4.2 Scope of Violence

Type: Bomb threats, firearms plots, anti-government conspiracies, assassinations.

Targets: Federal agents, politicians, left-wing demonstrators, law enforcement.

Notable Patterns:

- ⇒ Most Three Percenter threats were plot-based, often foiled pre-execution.
- ⇒ Emphasis on second-amendment extremism and revolutionary rhetoric.
- ⇒ Some members infiltrated military and police forces (ADL, 2021).

5.4.3 Legal Outcomes and Federal Charges

Event/Operation	Federal Charges Filed	Number of Arrests	Notable Outcomes
Gov. Whitmer Kidnapping Plot	Conspiracy to kidnap, weapons charges	14	Multiple life sentences and long-term federal sentences
Jan 6 Capitol Breach	Obstruction, conspiracy, weapons violations	15+ linked individuals	Some sentenced to 4–8 years; others pending
Oakland Ambush (2020)	Murder of federal officer, domestic terrorism	1 (Carrillo)	Life sentence without parole (2021)

5.4.4 Summary of Sentencing

The Whitmer kidnapping plot was one of the most serious post-9/11 domestic terrorism cases in U.S. history. The FBI prevented a multi-state militia coalition from abducting the sitting governor of Michigan, citing direct involvement from Three Percenter-aligned individuals.

- ⇒ Adam Fox and Barry Croft Jr. were sentenced to 16 years and 19.5 years, respectively (DOJ, 2023).
- ⇒ The case revealed use of encrypted messaging, training camps, and coordination with other militia cells.

Notably, the group’s ideology calls for violent uprising if the government violates their interpretation of constitutional rights.

Table 5: Selected Three Percenters Convictions (2020–2023)

Name	Role	Event	Sentence
Adam Fox	Plot ringleader	Gov. Whitmer kidnap plot	16 years
Barry Croft Jr.	Explosives expert	Gov. Whitmer kidnap plot	19.5 years
Steven Carrillo	Air Force Sgt., shooter	Oakland DHS ambush	Life (no parole)
Guy Reffitt	Capitol breach w/ gun	Jan 6 (TX affiliate)	7.25 years

5.4.5 Analysis

Though not as visible in street confrontations as Proud Boys or Antifa, the Three Percenters pose a serious threat due to their intentionality, military capability, and operational secrecy. Many plots were disrupted preemptively, but the group has already produced multiple federal murder convictions, attempted bombings, and anti-government insurrection attempts.

The group’s decentralized structure makes long-term prosecution difficult, yet their radicalization potential—especially among law enforcement and veterans—continues to raise concerns among federal agencies (DHS, 2022).

V.5 Comparative Analysis: Violence, Damage, and Aggression Index

To assess which organization exhibits the highest overall threat, this section compares Antifa, Proud Boys, Oath Keepers, and Three Percenters based on:

- ⇒ Number and severity of violent incidents
- ⇒ Level of planning and coordination
- ⇒ Target type (e.g., civilians, police, institutions)
- ⇒ Legal outcomes and sentencing severity
- ⇒ Risk to democratic order or public safety

5.5.1 Summary Comparison Table

Group	Notable Violent Events	Deaths Attributed	Federal Convictions	Avg. Sentence (years)	Primary Target	Ideology
Antifa	15+	1–2 (indirect)	Few	<1 (usually dropped)	Police, fascists, federal sites	Far-left / anarchist
Proud Boys	40+	5+	100+	4–18+ (including Tarrio)	Protesters, police, Congress	Far-right / nationalist
Oath Keepers	10–12	0 (attempted coups)	20+	4–18+ (Rhodes)	Government, institutions	Far-right / constitutionalist
Three Percenters	10–15	3+	30+	7–20+	Government, law enforcement	Anti-government / militia

Note: Numbers are based on DOJ data, public sentencing records, and credible academic sources from 2020–2024.

5.5.2 Aggression Index Scoring

We apply a **5-point scale** to rate each group in five categories:

Group	Event Frequency (1–5)	Violence Severity (1–5)	Conviction Rate (1–5)	Institutional Threat (1–5)	Planning & Coordination (1–5)	Total Score (Max 25)
Antifa	3	2	1	2	1	9
Proud Boys	5	4	4	4	3	20
Oath Keepers	3	5	5	5	5	23
Three Percenters	4	5	4	5	4	22

5.5.3 Key Findings

Most Coordinated Threat: Oath Keepers, due to encrypted planning, military stack formations, and seditious conspiracy charges.

Highest Lethality: Three Percenters, responsible for direct murder of law enforcement (e.g., Oakland DHS officer).

Most Visible & Active: Proud Boys, present at dozens of high-profile street confrontations and linked to five or more fatalities.

Most Decentralized: Antifa, often operating in loose cells without coordination or central command, resulting in fewer prosecutions but persistent vandalism.

5.5.4 Conclusion of Comparative Analysis

While all four groups present ideological and physical threats, the Oath Keepers and Three Percenters rank highest on the aggression index due to their operational sophistication and high-severity plots. The Proud Boys, though more visible in public clashes, have a broader but slightly less lethal footprint. Antifa, despite cultural visibility and controversial tactics, ranks significantly lower in direct violence and prosecutable coordination.

These findings reinforce the importance of threat-based rather than ideology-based assessments in counter-extremism policy.

VI. Recommendations and Policy Implications

The comparative analysis reveals a wide spectrum of violent activity, organizational structure, and legal consequences across four major protest-affiliated or extremist groups: Antifa, Proud Boys, Oath Keepers, and Three Percenters. Each presents unique challenges to law enforcement, policymakers, and civil society. The recommendations below are structured into four key domains: legal consistency, prevention, intelligence coordination, and public discourse.

6.1 Standardize Domestic Extremism Designations

Despite similar outcomes (e.g., property destruction, violent conspiracy, and fatalities), only some of these groups are regularly monitored as extremist threats.

Recommendation: Federal agencies should expand and clarify the criteria used to classify domestic threats based on *actions*, not *ideology*.

- ⇒ Apply uniform legal thresholds across far-right and far-left groups.
- ⇒ Ensure Antifa-affiliated violence is prosecuted with the same urgency as militia-based violence.
- ⇒ Codify threat profiles using data from the DHS, FBI, and DOJ for public transparency.

“If violence is used to coerce democratic institutions, it must be addressed regardless of political orientation” (START, 2022).

6.2 Invest in Early Detection and Community Intelligence

Groups like the Oath Keepers and Three Percenters often radicalize in isolation, particularly within veterans and gun rights communities.

- **Recommendation:** Expand funding for:
 - ⇒ Community resilience programs in rural, veteran-heavy areas.
 - ⇒ Anonymous tip networks linked to FBI Fusion Centers for suspicious militia activity.
 - ⇒ AI-driven sentiment analysis of public platforms for early indicators of planned violence.

6.3 Close Legal Loopholes and Weaponization Gaps

Many of the most dangerous plots (e.g., Gov. Whitmer kidnapping, Capitol breach) exploited gaps in open carry laws, digital privacy, or militia organization protections.

Recommendation: Update legislation to:

- ⇒ Restrict armed group training on U.S. soil unless certified and registered.
- ⇒ Treat militia-affiliated conspiracy similar to gang statutes for enhanced sentencing.
- ⇒ Create state-level task forces that link DOJ and local prosecutors for ideological crimes.

6.4 Reinforce Civic Norms and Cross-Partisan Accountability

The normalization of political violence, especially in polarized media narratives, destabilizes democratic norms.

Recommendation:

- ⇒ Promote public education campaigns on the boundaries of civil disobedience vs. criminal extremism.
- ⇒ Encourage media platforms and influencers to apply consistent language to all protest violence (e.g., avoid excusing Antifa vandalism or glorifying Proud Boys violence).
- ⇒ Fund post-sentencing rehabilitation programs to deradicalize convicted extremists.

“Only by addressing the root causes of radicalization—alienation, grievance, and disinformation—can long-term risk be mitigated” (GWU Program on Extremism, 2021).

6.5 Balance Security with Civil Liberties

Overbroad crackdowns risk suppressing legitimate dissent and protest. The goal is not to criminalize ideology, but to isolate violent actors regardless of politics.

- ⇒ Avoid mass surveillance or guilt-by-association tactics.
- ⇒ Continue protecting peaceful assembly and protest rights under the First Amendment.
- ⇒ Build oversight mechanisms into any new intelligence-sharing tools developed in response to domestic threats.

Summary Table – Recommended Action Areas

Category	Key Actions
Legal Consistency	Apply uniform charges and designation criteria to all ideological violence
Community Prevention	Launch local resilience programs and radicalization awareness initiatives
Law Enforcement Coordination	Update laws, strengthen inter-agency tracking, and close weapons loopholes
Public Education & Media	Reinforce norms against violence, promote fact-based narratives
Civil Liberties Safeguards	Avoid overreach and preserve peaceful protest protections

VII. Conclusion

This report has presented a data-driven, balanced comparison of four major protest- and militia-aligned movements that have been active in the United States since 2016: Antifa, the Proud Boys, the Oath Keepers, and the Three Percenters. While each group differs in ideology, structure, and visibility, they all share a common thread—the use of violence, intimidation, or the threat thereof to influence political outcomes.

The comparative analysis, using real-world events and legal outcomes, revealed:

The Proud Boys - have had the most frequent public street-level violence and are directly tied to multiple deaths and felony convictions.

The Oath Keepers - demonstrated the highest level of tactical coordination and threat to democracy, especially during the January 6th Capitol insurrection.

The Three Percenters - pose a quiet but deadly threat, with plots involving murder, ambushes, and kidnapping of political leaders.

Antifa - while often associated with public unrest and property damage, lacks centralized planning and has produced fewer violent felonies or convictions, though it remains disruptive in protest environments.

The data suggests that policy responses should not be based on political bias, but on threat level, coordination, and intent to cause harm. Extremism is not exclusive to one side of the spectrum. Preventing future violence requires consistent legal standards, better community monitoring, and smarter public communication to distinguish protest from domestic terrorism.

Above all, the protection of peaceful dissent and the First Amendment must remain central, even as we confront rising threats from those who exploit that freedom to pursue violence and insurrection.

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