

PORTLAND POLICE BUREAU
INTERNAL AFFAIRS
Confidential Investigative Report
Investigator Stacey Rovinelli
Report Complete: December 13, 2021

Received & Approved By: IA
Commanding Officer Acting-
Captain Greg Pashley or Acting-
Lieutenant Scott Konczal

Initial A/Lt.SWK

Date 12/14/21

Date of Incident: June 2018
IA Case #: 2021-B-0035
PPB Case#: N/A
Complainant: Portland Police Bureau

Involved Members Interviewed:

| Member Name | DPSST | Assignment | Allegation Category | Allegation# |
|--------------------------|-------|------------|---------------------|-------------|
| 1. Officer Joseph WEBBER | 44629 | Central | Conduct | 1 |

Witness Members Interviewed:

| Member Name | DPSST | Assignment |
|-------------------------|-------|------------|
| 1. Officer Derek CARMON | 38197 | Training |

Civilian Witnesses

Jonathan LEVINSON

Allegations:

1. Officer Joseph WEBBER #44629 is a member of the Oath Keepers, which is known as an anti-government organization. (CONDUCT) (Directive 310.00 – Professional Conduct and Courtesy)
NOT SUSTAINED

Applicable Directives on Date of Occurrence:

| | | | |
|----|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1. | Directive 310.00 – Professional Conduct and Courtesy | Effective Date: | 02/28/2018 |
|----|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|

Incident Overview:

Jonathan LEVINSON, who works for Oregon Public Broadcasting made an inquiry with the PIO regarding “how PPB handles militia.” This inquiry was regarding Officer WEBBER’s association and/or membership in the Oath Keepers organization and whether this was a violation of PPB policy.

Investigative Narrative:

This case was assigned to me on October 13, 2021, after the public information officer (PIO), Officer Derek CARMON, received an email from Investigative Reporter Jonathan LEVINSON requesting a phone interview in regards to how the Bureau handles militia. Upon further inquiry, Mr. LEVINSON stated that he was in receipt of information that Officer Joseph WEBBER (#44692) was a member of the Oath Keepers; he wanted to know if being a member was in violation of policy because they are considered

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a militia or anti-government group. I reviewed the email string and researched the data Mr. LEVINSON referenced. I discovered that the data was retrieved from a group called Distributed Denial of Secrets (DDoSecrets). I retrieved the information they publicly published (Hacked Oath Keeper Data) but realized that information was not complete and did not include the membership lists. I requested and received a Zip file with the membership list information from DDoSecrets (Membership info from DDoSecrets). I reviewed information from the Oath Keepers website and various other sources. All of the above information is in the investigator reference material (IRM) section of the case file. I conducted interviews with Mr. LEVINSON, Officer CARMON, and Officer WEBBER.

Sequence of events:

On October 8, 2021, Jonathan LEVINSON contacted the PPB PIO by sending an email requesting a phone call in regards to how the Bureau handles militia. This email was triaged by Officer CARMON who responded by sending the following directive: **313.70 GENERAL CONDUCT – ASSOCIATIONS.**

Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB) Article by Jonathan LEVINSON (Exhibit 1)

“Dozens of Oregon law enforcement officers have been members of the far-right Oath Keepers militia” – The gist of the article is in the title. Mr. LEVINSON makes the following statements about Officer WEBBER: He appeared to join the Oath Keepers shortly after the pro-gun rally in Salem, Oregon, which was held in the early summer of 2018 and he is a Portland Police Officer. Mr. LEVINSON stated that he contacted Officer WEBBER by a phone number that appeared in the leaked database and that Officer WEBBER denied joining the group prior to hanging up. Officer WEBBER did not respond to follow-up texts.

Mr. LEVINSON said that OPB compared the data in the Oath Keepers leak against public records, social media, and state law enforcement certification to verify the information. The data includes names, membership join dates, and contact information for nearly 40,000 people across the country who paid dues to the organization. Other than those that paid for a lifetime membership, it is not clear from the data if people are still members.

Mr. LEVINSON wrote about the group’s ties to extremism and said that the group recruits people with experience in law enforcement and the military to prepare for what the organization characterizes as an inevitable armed conflict with the US government.

Hacked Oath Keeper Data

There were 5 gigabytes of information that DDoSecrets made available for public download. Due to the way this information is shared, I enlisted the help of Detective (Det.) Aaron SPARLING with the download. Det. SPARLING is a Lab Officer in the Forensic Evidence Division (FED). He setup an off-line computer to download the data. All information downloaded is located at K:\Common\RUN_IA FILES\2021 FILES\2021 B Cases\2021-B-0035\21b0035 - Thumb drive from DET Lab Ofc Aaron Sparling - IA recv 102621 copy from drive. This data contained chat logs and thousands of emails

allegedly taken from the Oath Keepers. The information is available for review, but does not pertain specifically to this investigation, as Joe WEBBER was not mentioned in them.

Membership info from DDoSecrets

Since the above information did not contain Officer WEBBER's name, I contacted DDoSecrets in an effort to vet the information that Mr. LEVINSON published. They responded and sent me a zip file with 16 documents (see IRM - Zip File Contents-ALL). I was able to download fourteen of those documents. I analyzed those documents by searching each one of them for "webber" (see IRM – Analyzed Data). Of those fourteen documents, "webber" appeared in five of those documents pertaining to Officer WEBBER:

The first document titled: **ok**. This document appears to be Officer WEBBER's initial membership information. It lists his username (webber_joe), the date/time (06/11/2018 @ 0:51), and email [REDACTED]

The second document titled: **members_100989_national-crisis**. It is unknown what this information represents. However, it is almost one year after Officer WEBBER's initial sign-up. It lists the same information as above except the date and time is 05/27/2019 @ 20:24. In addition, it lists his time zone as 503/971 (area codes of Oregon).

The third document titled: **emails_jpj**. This document lists Officer WEBBER's email [REDACTED]

The fourth document titled: **aggregate_numbers**. This lists Officer WEBBER's member number (38725), full name and home address and initial join date (06.10.2018 – unknown why there is a one day difference from the first document).

The fifth and final document titled: **store**. This document lists Officer WEBBER's email address.

It should be noted that the interview summaries documented below only highlight important points of the interviews. They are not intended to be verbatim accounts and do not memorialize all statements made during the interviews. Audio by the parties in the interview room were electronically recorded. These audio files were stored and transcribed. See the transcripts or listen to the audio for full details.

Interview with Officer Derek CARMON

Officer CARMON said the following: He was covering for the PIO when he fielded an email from Jonathan LEVINSON requesting information about policies for officers in militia groups. He spoke with Mr. LEVINSON on the phone and told him he would need to research the directives and get back to him. Mr. LEVINSON told Officer CARMON that the Oath Keepers had a data leak that named multiple law enforcement officers across the country as members. He continued and told him that one of the officers

was a Portland Police Officer named Joe WEBBER; he confirmed this information by calling his listed cell phone number. Mr. LEVINSON gave Officer CARMON the last four digits of the number he called and it matched with Officer WEBBER's listed personal cell phone number on the intranet. Officer CARMON said that he forwarded the information to Deputy Chief FROME. After talking with Deputy Chief FROME, Officer CARMON forwarded Directive 313.70 – General Conduct – Associations to Mr. LEVINSON and let him know that there was no comment, from the Chief's Office.

Interview with Jonathan LEVINSON

I attempted to interview Mr. LEVINSON over the telephone. However, he would not divulge any other information that was not included in his article referenced above.

Interview with Officer Joseph WEBBER

Officer WEBBER said the following: He acknowledged receiving a phone call from Mr. LEVINSON inquiring if he was a member of the Oath Keepers. He confirmed his email address, cell phone number, and residence listed on the "Analyzed Data" sheet. He denied, currently, being a member of the Oath Keepers or having any association with them. He acknowledged joining the Oath Keepers in June 2018. He talked about what he knew when he joined, "...*had heard about the group. You know, it was kind of hard times for law enforcement. I heard they were pro-law enforcement, like a law enforcement/military/pro-America-type group. So, I looked at their website, nothing bad because I'm obviously, like, trying not to associate with anything bad. They looked okay. They were pro-Constitution and things like that. So, they had a forum, and if you become a member, you get into the forum*" (WEBBER lines 114-118). Once he got into the forum, he said there was no useful information so he did not do anything further. He denied ever renewing his membership or doing anything other than looking through the forum. He does not know what they did to vet his information as a law enforcement officer as the Oath Keepers did not ask for any other information other than payment.

Officer WEBBER denied knowing that the Oath Keepers are referred to as conspiracy theorists when he joined. He acknowledges knowing that information now because of the group's actions on January 6, 2021 at the Capitol; he described those actions as "dumb stuff". He articulated what his view of the Oath Keepers is currently, "*They don't stand for what they were supposed to stand for, at least what their website – you know, they're just a, like you said, a conspiracy group, and they don't align with my values at all*" (WEBBER lines 191-192). His initial belief was they stood for, "*The Constitution and the republic and, you know, open to law enforcement, military, so – you know, the typical pro-America thing, standing up for the Constitution*" (WEBBER lines 194-195).

Officer WEBBER acknowledged that his Oath of Office as a Law Enforcement Officer would supersede his membership in the Oath Keepers if they ever conflicted. When asked if membership in the Oath Keepers could bring discredit or reproach to the Bureau or the City of Portland, he said, "*Yeah. If you were a member, it could. Yeah*" (WEBBER lines 252). He reiterated that he is not a member.

Sergeant SCHMAUTZ added that there are groups that purport one ideation and then change over time.

Investigator Comments:

From their website: Distributed Denial of Secrets is a journalist 501(c)(3) non-profit devoted to enabling the free transmission of data in the public interest. We aim to avoid political, corporate or personal leanings, to act as a beacon of available information. As a transparency collective, we don't support any cause, idea or message beyond ensuring that information is available to those who need it most—the people.

From their website: Oath Keepers is a non-partisan association of currently and formerly serving military, police, and first responders, who pledge to fulfill the oath of all military and police take to “defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic.” The Oath, mandated by Article VI of the Constitution itself, is *to the Constitution*, not to the politicians, and Oath Keepers declare that they will not obey unconstitutional orders, such as orders to disarm the American people, to conduct warrantless searches, or to detain Americans as “enemy combatants” in violation of their ancient right to jury trial. The “Declaration of Orders We Will Not Obey” is located in the IRM section of the casefile. The group was founded by Stewart RHODES in 2009.

Definition of militia (per Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

Definition of *militia*

1a: a part of the organized armed forces of a country liable to call only in emergency *The militia was called to quell the riot.*

b: a body of citizens organized for military service

2: the whole body of able-bodied male citizens declared by law as being subject to call to military service

3: a private group of armed individuals that operates as a paramilitary force and is typically motivated by a political or religious ideology *specifically*: such a group that aims to defend individual rights against government authority that is perceived as oppressive

In 2020, the Intelligence Project identified 566 active extreme antigovernment groups. They identify the Oath Keepers as active extreme antigovernment group but not as a militia group. The Intelligence Project is a department of the nonprofit Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), a major civil rights organization based in Montgomery, Alabama, that specializes in monitoring, investigating, and curbing the American radical right. They said, the Oath Keepers was conceived as an organization with hierarchical leadership at national, state and local levels, one committed to establishing a network of activists it hopes will lay the groundwork for the creation of state militias.

It is important to look at the timeline of activity for the Oath Keepers as taken directly from [Oath Keepers | Southern Poverty Law Center \(splcenter.org\)](https://www.splcenter.org):

In August 2011, RHODES and his Oath Keepers traveled to Quartzsite, Arizona, to join in a protest in support of local residents who were ejected from a town council meeting after speaking past the allotted time and refusing to leave the meeting. The group's website called Quartzsite a "pivot point" for Americans finally to see the looming danger of the "New World Order."

In 2013, four years after its formation, the Oath Keepers announced the planned formation of "Citizen Preservation Teams," which now are called the more sanitized name of "Community Preparedness Teams" (CPTs). CPTs are armed community teams, or militias, meant to prepare for disasters, natural or otherwise, and defend Americans against the New World Order.

In April 2014, RHODES and several fellow Oath Keepers traveled to the Nevada ranch of Cliven BUNDY, answering a nationwide call BUNDY made asking militiamen to join him in standing up to federal officials seeking to seize his cattle because he had refused to pay federal grazing fees for some 20 years.

Later in 2014, members of the Oath Keepers showed up in Ferguson, Missouri, during the unrest that followed the death of Michael BROWN, a Black man, by Ferguson police officer Darren WILSON. Protests broke out in the city following the grand jury's decision not to indict WILSON. Heavily armed members of the Oath Keepers were seen on rooftops in what they said was an effort to protect businesses from rioters. Local police released a statement announcing that the group broke the law by "providing security without first obtaining a license." They called on the group to cease their activities.

In 2015, an Oregon chapter of the Oath Keepers acted in support of Rick BARCLAY and George BACKES, two Oregon gold miners whose operations the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) alleged were in violation of government regulations. The miners received a "Notice of Noncompliance" and were ordered to stop their mining activities, submit the appropriate paperwork and fees for their operations, or file an appeal. The miners filed an appeal and asked the Oath Keepers to provide security to protect them and the mine against the BLM, claiming the BLM had a history of "burning down cabins and confiscating property at whim, without due process."

Also in 2015, Oath Keepers in Montana put out another call to action, summoning members to help another local miner fight the government – even though the Forest Service had been working with the miner for some time to resolve the issue. Ultimately, again, no real confrontation occurred.

In early 2016, when members of the same BUNDY family that was at the center of the 2014 Nevada standoff got interested in another conflict with the federal government, this one in Harney County, Oregon. When two ranchers near Burns, Oregon, were ordered back to prison for arson of public lands after an appeals court decided their initial sentences were too short, Ammon and Ryan BUNDY, sons of Cliven, got involved. The BUNDYS and other sympathizers tried to get Dwight HAMMOND, 73, and his son, Steven HAMMOND, 46, on their side, denouncing the HAMMONDS' resentencing and the management of public lands by federal agencies. But the HAMMONDS said they were planning on reporting to prison, did not want their help, and asked them to return to Nevada.

Despite this, the BUNDYS and a number of other heavily armed militants decided to break away from apro-HAMMOND rally in Oregon and occupy the headquarters of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, a famous birding location. The standoff with federal and other law enforcement agencies lasted 41 days. It ended when officials arrested the BUNDYS and others at a roadblock near the refuge.

The Oath Keepers did denounce the Malheur occupation because, as RHODES wrote, “it is not being done with the consent of the locals or at their request, without the request of the Hammond family ...and because it is not in direct defense of anyone.”

While criticizing the occupation, the Oath Keepers did take part in a coalition of militias in the Pacific Northwest called the Pacific Patriots Network, which served as a “buffer” between the occupiers and government forces. The Pacific Patriots Network also includes antigovernment extremist groups aligned with the Three Percenters, and the Oath Keepers’ contingent is the very same chapter that took part in Operation Gold Rush in Oregon in 2015.

During the 2016 presidential election, the Oath Keepers were at it again, with RHODES announcing “Operation Sabot 2016” as a method to prevent the election from being stolen from Donald TRUMP, something the candidate repeatedly predicted. “[W]e call on you to form up incognito intelligence gathering and crime spotting teams,” RHODES said. “And go out into public on election day, dressed to blend in with the public ... with video, still camera, and notepad in hand, to look for and document suspected criminal vote fraud or intimidation activities.” And he made clear that it was the Democrats, not the Republicans, who might steal the election. “We are, indeed, most concerned about expected attempts at voter fraud by leftists,” RHODES said. “But we will spot, document, and report *any* apparent attempt at vote fraud or voter intimidation ... as is our duty.”

In June 2017, Oath Keepers participated in “March Against Sharia” rallies organized by ACT for America, an anti-immigrant hate group. Oath Keepers claimed they were providing security for rally goers against imagined threats from the left.

In January 2017, the Oath Keepers along with Three Percenters coordinated volunteer security operations for TRUMP’s inauguration to protect against any possible violence from “jihadist terrorists” or “radical leftist groups.” Oath Keepers provided similar armed security details for TRUMP rallies in Minnesota and Texas in October 2019.

In December 2018, the Oath Keepers website advertised a call to action for a “Border Operation,” encouraging engagement in paramilitary activity to prevent the “invasion” of “illegals” into the country and to provide “security for border ranches and families.”

During the pandemic, and the installation of public health safety measures, Oath Keepers responded by claiming to “protect” and support businesses and business owners who reopened in defiance of these guidelines.

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On May 16, 2020, Stewart RHODES spoke at a rally in Palestine, Texas, organized in opposition to pandemic safety mandates, and the group hosted a similar event on May 23 in Austin, Texas.

Oath Keepers also responded to a request for protection by salon owner, Shelley LUTHER, when she reopened her business on April 24 against public health mandates and then tore up a cease-and-desist letter from local authorities. LUTHER was arrested for her violation of public health orders and fined \$7,000. RHODES himself participated in a protest outside of the Dallas County Jail in Texas where LUTHER was being held. On May 30, John SHIRLEY, a constable in Hood County and a member of the Oath Keepers board, issued a call to action, encouraging members to show up armed with rifles to provide security outside Luther's salon.

Oath Keepers responded and were stationed in Granbury, Texas, outside Lift the Bar gym, supposedly to "protect" the owner from arrest for violating COVID-19 orders. RHODES, in a blogpost posted to the group's website, claimed authorities "backed off" once they knew Oath Keepers and others had shown up.

Oath Keeper member and tattoo shop owner, Roberto MINUTA, requested the group's presence for the reopening of his business. In response, the group posted a call to action on their website. A handful of members, including Rhodes, showed up in Newburgh, New York on May 30, 2020, to support MINUTA. MINUTA later was connected to the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection, acting as a security guard for Roger STONE earlier that morning before participating in the insurrection himself later that day. He has since been arrested on several charges and is included in the larger conspiracy case with over a dozen other Oath Keepers for their coordination efforts ahead of Jan. 6. MINUTA has been indicted on the conspiracy charge. The case is being prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia and the Department of Justice National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section.

Oath Keepers showed up at Black Lives Matter protests during protests in summer 2020 following the police killing of George FLOYD, a Black man. In response to the racial unrest that followed, RHODES posted the following statement to the group's Facebook account: "I see some of you conflicted about how to handle what's going on in the streets of this country, I too was conflicted but let me say this. Maybe you better read that Oath again it said protect the constitution from all enemies foreign and or here's the part you better read slowly ... Domestic ... Once these thugs turned to burning, killing and looting, they became domestic enemies."

In June 2020, a police officer who was on duty and policing a George FLOYD protest in Costa Mesa, California, was caught donning a Three Percenter patch with the words "Oath Keeper." This is one example of a larger trend and strategy among antigovernment extremist groups to recruit and infiltrate law enforcement and military organizations.

Throughout his presidency, Stewart RHODES and the Oath Keepers fully embraced TRUMP, and with help from Info wars host Alex JONES, increasingly promoted far-right conspiracies as the 2020 election approached.

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After the results of the 2020 election were announced, RHODES and the Oath Keepers urged TRUMP to use the Insurrection Act to maintain his position of power and reject the results of the election. The group has continued to argue that the election was stolen from TRUMP and participated in several “Stop the Steal” protests. On Nov. 14, the group attended the Million MAGA March in D.C. and provided security at a rally in Atlanta, Georgia, on Nov. 21. Many of the same right-wing personalities at these events took part in the Capitol insurrection weeks later.

Since BIDEN’s election and inauguration, RHODES and Oath Keepers have continued to spout unfounded conspiracies aimed to undermine the Biden administration, claiming it is an illegitimate presidency, controlled by “Chicom/Globalists” and has urged followers to disregard any policies or orders issued by the Democrats. At a March 2020 event in Laredo, Texas, Rhodes continued more of the same rhetoric, claiming China was behind the election and that Biden was a Chinese puppet.

The same article goes on to talk about ten individual arrests occurring from 2009 to 2016. It then talks about the eighteen Oath Keepers indicted for the Capitol insurrection.

This case originally listed Directive 313.70 – General Conduct – Associations for review as sent to Mr. LEVINSON. However, Directive 310.00 – Professional Conduct and Courtesy was found to be a more appropriate fit.

Investigator Recommended Finding(s):

On November 23, 2021, I completed the investigation into the allegation made against Officer WEBBER. In recommending these findings, I have reviewed the Portland Police Bureau Directives that were in effect at the time this incident occurred to determine if there was a violation of policy or procedure.

Allegation #1 – Officer Joseph WEBBER #44629 is a member of the Oath Keepers, which is known as an anti-government organization. (CONDUCT) (Directive 310.00 – Professional Conduct and Courtesy)

Directive 310.00 – Professional Conduct and Courtesy states, in relevant part:

Definitions:

Professional Conduct: The standard by which member behavior that is not specifically addressed in other Bureau directives is evaluated. The Bureau expects member behavior to reflect the highest of law enforcement industry standards. This includes, but is not limited to, member adherence to all applicable laws, rules, and Bureau directives and member application of the law. The Bureau also requires that members fulfill their professional duties, act with the utmost respect for the Constitutional rights of all people, and communicate in a professional manner at all times. Members shall refrain from conduct that unduly affects Bureau operations or unduly erodes public trust.

Procedure:

1. Professional Conduct.

1.1. Members, whether on duty or off duty, shall be governed by the reasonable rules of good conduct and behavior, and shall not commit any act tending to bring reproach or discredit to the Police Bureau or the City of Portland.

Finding:

NOT SUSTAINED – Officer WEBBER acknowledged joining the Oath Keepers in 2018. He said the extent of his membership was only viewing their forums. In order to do this, he needed to pay the \$50 membership fee. Once inside, he realized there was not anything useful in the forums. He denied renewing his membership. In 2018, the data on the Oath Keepers was muddled; there were sporadic events, described above, since the Oath Keepers inception in 2009 that questioned whether they were an anti-government militia. As stated in this article: [Inside The Pro-Trump Militant Group The Oath Keepers - The Atlantic](#) from November 2020, there are many members who left the group because the Oath Keepers changed from when they joined and that their values no longer aligned. This article talks more specifically about Stewart RHODES' behavior; how erratic it became and how it affected the group. Searching for articles prior to 2020 and 2021 was difficult because so many have been recently written. The current data is skewed toward the fact that the Oath Keepers is an extreme radical right wing group (see multiple articles in the IRM section of the case file). I did find one article ([Pamplin Media Group - Hacked data from Oath Keepers reveals name of Lake Oswego police officer](#)) that talked about how a member, a Lake Oswego police officer, signed up for an email list then, after doing further research, realized that the group did not align with his values. He, too, appeared as a member in the hacked data. The allegation in this case refers to professional conduct; acting with the utmost respect for the Constitutional rights of all people and refraining from conduct that unduly affects Bureau operations or unduly erodes public trust. I do not have any information other than that Officer WEBBER was a member of the Oath Keepers in 2018. I do not have anything to show that he violated anyone's Constitutional rights or that he directly participated in any conduct that unduly affected Bureau operations or eroded public trust. The question here is whether his membership, alone, in the Oath Keepers is a violation of the directive. I do not believe that one day of membership to view informational forums and not participating in any events constitutes unprofessional conduct. Based upon the information gathered in this case, I cannot definitively say whether or not he is currently a member of the Oath Keepers, or participated in anything other than viewing their forums. Therefore, this allegation is not sustained.

Exhibits:

1. [Dozens of Oregon law enforcement officers have been members of the far-right Oath Keepers militia - OPB](#) (7 pages)