

# ALL TRUMP'S RECIDIVISTS

Donald Trump and Stephen "Discount Goebbels" Miller have a plan. As the election draws near, they want to find every instance of an undocumented immigrant who commits a violent crime; that is and will continue to be their routine response when Trump's misogyny or his own crimes get coverage.

After Berman continued to push Leavitt on whether the posts were demeaning to women, she named girls and women who were killed by illegal immigrants to show the real harm caused by the Biden administration's open-border policies.

"I think what's demeaning to women is the fact that Kamala Harris and Joe Biden are allowing an invasion of illegal criminals into our country, many of whom have proven to be rapists and murderers. I think what's demeaning to women like Laken Riley and Jocelyn Nungara and Rachel Morin is the fact that they are no longer with us because of the policies of this administration, and that is what voters and your viewers care about, John," Leavitt responded.

This ploy closely parallels (and may herald) the way a transnational network of far right provocateurs blame migrants for violence – first in Dublin and then in the UK – as a way to stoke riots, a point I made to LOLGOP in our latest bonus video for the Ball of Threads Patron subscribers.

But there's a way to rebut Trump's focus on undocumented immigrants who commit crime: The growing number of Trump clemency recipients who've already committed other crimes.

There have been two stories in recent weeks

about recipients of clemency from Trump who have already gone on to commit further crimes.

Two weeks ago, Maggie and Mike got the old Trump obstruction team back together to write, again, about Jonathan Braun.

In their second story on Braun, they described how Braun used ties to the Kushners to get his sentence commuted, which disrupted prosecutors' efforts to get him to cooperate against others.

In working to secure his release, Mr. Braun's family used a connection to Charles Kushner, the father of Jared Kushner, Mr. Trump's son-in-law and senior White House adviser, to try to get the matter before Mr. Trump. Jared Kushner's White House office drafted the language used in the news release to announce commutations for Mr. Braun and others.

[snip]

The commutation dealt a substantial blow to an ambitious criminal investigation being led by the Justice Department's U.S. attorney's office in Manhattan aimed at punishing members of the predatory lending industry who hurt small businesses. Mr. Braun and prosecutors were in negotiations over a cooperation deal in which he would be let out of prison in exchange for flipping on industry insiders and potentially even wearing a wire. But the commutation instantly destroyed the government's leverage on Mr. Braun.

Since his release, Braun has faced other legal trouble, including for his predatory lending. Then, last month, he was arrested (and released on his own recognizance) on allegations of beating his father-in-law and wife.

On Tuesday, the police on Long Island arrested Mr. Braun after he allegedly

punched his 75-year-old father-in-law in the head. Mr. Braun struck his father-in-law twice as he tried to protect his daughter from Mr. Braun, who was chasing after her while the couple had an argument in their home, according to the Nassau County District Attorney's office.

Mr. Braun's wife, according to court documents, told police that Mr. Braun had assaulted her twice in the past five weeks. On July 17, the court documents said, Mr. Braun threw his wife off a bed onto the floor, "causing her substantial pain and bruising her legs."

Last week, on Aug. 12, Mr. Braun threw her to the floor and punched her in the head multiple times "causing her substantial pain, bruising" to her arms, legs and head and causing her to feel dizzy, the documents said.

Today, Judd Legum wrote of another instance of a guy released thanks to key ties to Trump: Jaime Davidson, who was sentenced to life without parole in 1993 for the murder of a cop tied to a drug buy.

Davidson was convicted of the murder of Wallie Howard Jr., who was working undercover as a federal agent. Howard was shot in the back of the head in a Syracuse, New York, grocery store parking lot in 1990. According to authorities, Davidson was a drug kingpin in New York and recruited three men to rob Howard of \$42,000 that Howard planned to use to buy four pounds of cocaine.

Robert Lawrence, a teenager at the time, testified at trial that Davidson handed him a .357 revolver hours before he shot Howard. Although Davidson was not present when Howard was killed,

prosecutors successfully argued that Howard's death was a reasonably foreseeable consequence of the robbery planned by Davidson.

On July 2, 1993, Davidson was sentenced to life in prison without parole.

Davidson got a commutation because his attorney is married to an attorney with close ties to Trump Organization, Alan Futerfas (who, among other things, allegedly withheld Russian-related emails from Mueller subpoenas and recently represented one of the guys convicted of insider trading on Truth Social stock).

In the waning days of Trump's presidency, Davidson eschewed the Office of the Pardon Attorney and sought relief directly from Trump. Davidson's attorney Betty Schein, had deep connections to the Trump White House. Schein and her husband, Alan Futerfas, represented people associated with the Trump Organization, including Donald Trump Jr.

Like Braun, Davidson was busted – and convicted – for assaulting his wife.

On March 31, 2023, a little more than two years after Davidson was set free by Trump, Davidson was arrested in Orlando, Florida, and charged with battery by strangulation and domestic violence. Davidson was accused of attacking Nayeli Chang, his wife of five months.

Legum cites another Trump recidivist: Eliyahu Weinstein, a fraudster who, DOJ charged, promptly returned to fraud shortly after release.

But he says something a bit surprising: He claims, "Davidson is the first person granted clemency by Trump known to be convicted of another crime."

That ignores Rand and Ron Paul associate Jesse Benton, who in 2022 was convicted of helping a Russian donate to Trump's 2016 campaign after having been pardoned for much earlier campaign finance crimes, though he committed the second campaign crime before being pardoned for the first.

DOJ had considered retrying Philip Esformes on medicare fraud charges, but that case ended in a time served plea in February.

Most importantly, Legum ignores a far more obvious example: Steve Bannon, who was pardoned for his Build the Wall fraud the same day that Davidson, Weinstein, and Braun had their sentences commuted, January 19, 2021. As we speak, Bannon is serving his four month sentence for blowing off the January 6 Committee subpoena, a crime committed in October 2021.

While his trial keeps getting delayed, Bannon is currently scheduled to face trial in New York state for the same fraud charges his three co-conspirators were convicted for on December 9. (Bannon was also treated as a co-conspirator in Guo Wengui's trial, though was never charged himself.)

And Bannon could yet be bested among Trump's clemency recipients for how quickly he returned to crime.

After all, four days after receiving his December 24 pardon, Roger Stone discussed January 6 with Trump personally, reportedly discussing Trump's plan to speak.

Several days later, at a dinner on the evening of December 27th, Stone thanked President Trump. In a post on Parler, Stone wrote that he "thanked President Trump in person tonight for pardoning me" and also recommended to the President that he "appoint a special counsel" to stop "those who are attempting to steal the 2020 election through voter fraud." Stone also wrote that he wanted "to ensure that Donald Trump continues as our

president.”<sup>245</sup> Finally, he added:  
“#StopTheSteal” and  
“#rogerstonedidnothingwrong.”<sup>246</sup> The  
Select Committee has learned that Stone  
discussed the January 6th event with the  
President, likely at this same dinner on  
December 27th.<sup>247</sup> The President told  
Stone he “was thinking of speaking.”<sup>248</sup>

And Stone’s speech at a Florida rally on January 3, 2021, was the basis by which Proud Boys Dan Scott and Chris Worrell were convicted of obstruction.

On January 3, 2021, Daniel Scott, Worrell, and other members of their local Proud Boy chapter attended a “Stop the Steal” rally in Naples, Florida. The headline speaker at this event was Roger Stone. Daniel Scott helped Stone up a ladder that Stone used to talk to the crowd. During this speech, Stone asserted that the 2020 presidential election was rigged due to voting fraud, and urged Florida’s U.S. Senators to vote against the certification of the Electoral College vote. Stone stated: “Rick Scott has a fundamental choice. He will either stand up for the constitution...” At that point, Daniel Scott yelled “Or give him the rope!” At another point in the rally, Daniel Scott chanted “Stop the Steal!” into a megaphone, along with the crowd at the rally.

It may have taken no more than ten days for Trump’s pardon recipients to start criming again. That’s unsurprising: For the people close to Trump (including Bernie Kerik, who played a key role in Rudy Giuliani’s cultivation of the Big Lie), he often pardoned them so that they could put their skills to work for him.

Trump wants to fearmonger about the very small percentage of migrants who turn to crime.

But there's a far higher percentage of people whom Trump plucked from prisons (or spared from prison entirely) who turned back to crime.

Which is not surprising. These are Trump's people, after all.