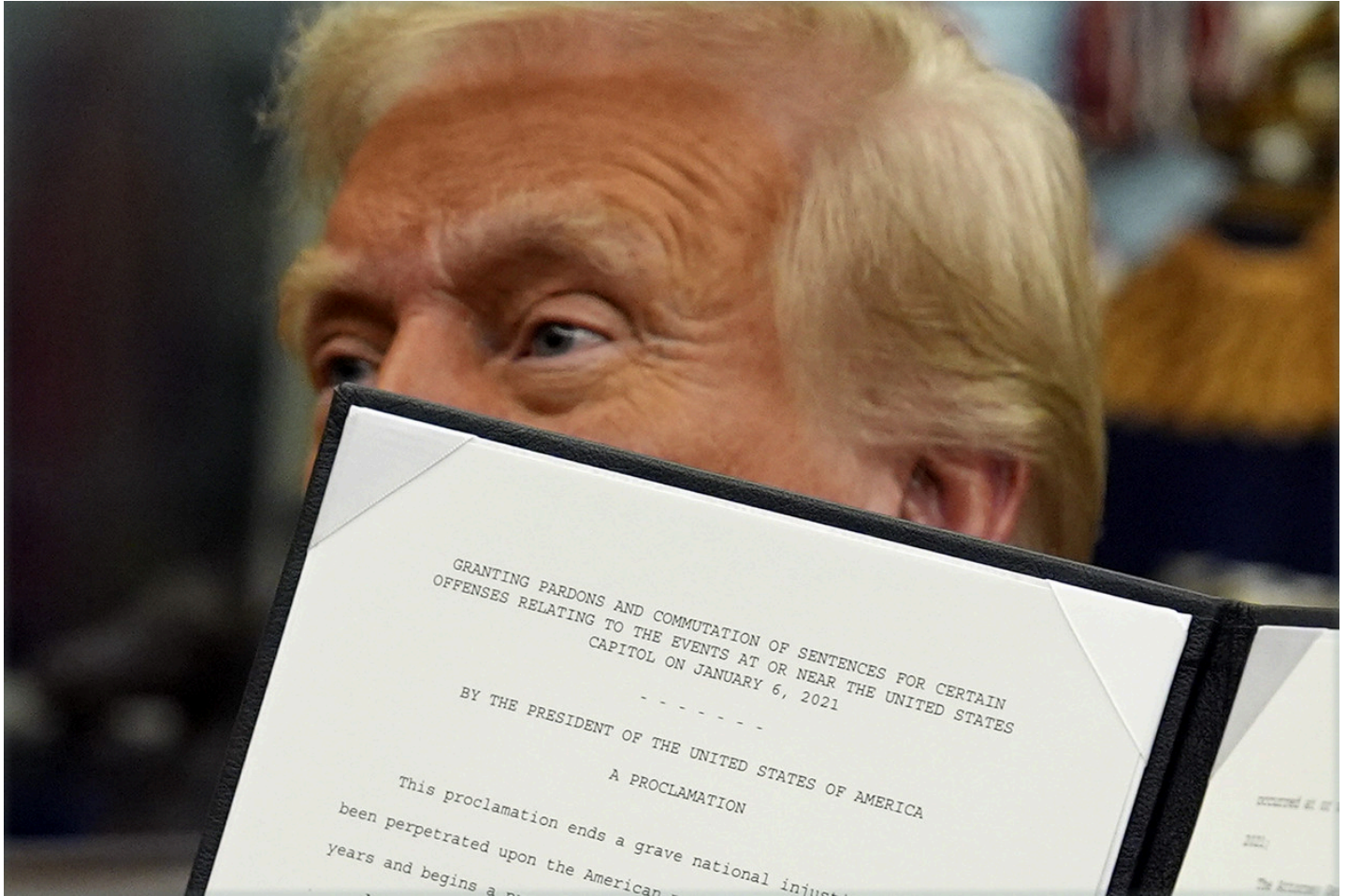


LEGAL

DOJ says Trump's Jan. 6 pardon covers man convicted of possessing grenades, classified info

It's the latest effort by federal prosecutors to deploy Trump's clemency order broadly.



President Donald Trump signed an executive order pardoning about 1,500 defendants charged in the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol. | Evan Vucci/AP

By KYLE CHENEY
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When FBI agents searched Jan. 6 defendant Jeremy Brown's home in 2021, they found a trove of illegal weapons — grenades, a modified AR-15-style rifle, a sawed-off shotgun — and a classified report he kept after departing the Army.

Brown, a retired Green Beret from Tampa, is serving a seven-year sentence for those crimes. But on Tuesday, the Justice Department said he should be

immediately released based on [President Donald Trump's mass pardons](#) for people convicted of storming the Capitol on Jan. 6.

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It's the latest effort by federal prosecutors to read Trump's clemency order so broadly that it sweeps in crimes that had no connection to the Jan. 6 attack — except that they were discovered in FBI searches stemming from the Capitol riot probe.

Also Tuesday, the Justice Department [similarly said](#) Trump's clemency covered a firearms conviction against former Jan. 6 defendant Dan Wilson, who was sentenced to five years in prison for illegal guns discovered in his Kentucky home.

The developments in the two cases followed the Justice Department's efforts last week to [broadly deploy Trump's pardons](#) on behalf of two other Jan. 6 defendants with separate gun-related charges.

The moves are an abrupt shift for the Justice Department, which had [previously argued](#) that the "plain language" of Trump's pardons covered only crimes that occurred on the actual day of Jan. 6 and in proximity to the Capitol.

Trump's [executive order](#) issuing the pardons said they applied to "offenses related to events that occurred at or near the United States Capitol" on Jan. 6, 2021.

The only Jan. 6 defendant who appears to be facing continued prosecution is Edward Kelley, who was [convicted by a Tennessee jury](#) last year for conspiring to murder the FBI agents and other law enforcement who investigated him. Kelley has argued that Trump's pardon should cover those offenses too — but so far the Justice Department has said Trump's pardon doesn't stretch that far.

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Wilson had been slated to report to prison Thursday before the Justice Department's reversal. Assistant U.S. Attorney Jennifer Blackwell [said the decision](#) was the result of "further clarity on the intent of the Presidential Pardon."


"I commend the US Attorney's office for their courage in reversing their position," George Pallas, an attorney for Wilson, said in an email. "President Trump has kept his promise to not leave any January 6 protester behind. As a nation it's time for us to move on."

Still, expanding the pardon to sweep in Brown's conviction puts the Justice Department in new territory. Separately from his conviction on the weapons charges and retaining classified information, Brown was charged for joining members of the far-right Oath Keepers and marching in military gear onto the restricted grounds of the Capitol on Jan. 6.

Brown repeatedly postponed his trial on the Jan. 6 charges while his other indictment was pending, and ultimately never faced a jury in the Jan. 6 case. That case was dismissed shortly after Trump took office, but he remained incarcerated as a result of the gun and classified information conviction.

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