

Eric Trump planned rally at gun store where conspirator worked

## Questions mount about Trump's ties to Michigan fascist plotters

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The Trump campaign was forced yesterday to change the location of a rally scheduled for today with President Donald Trump's son, Eric Trump, initially set for Hudson Valley Guns in New Hudson, Michigan, after it became known that one of the 13 men arrested last Thursday for plotting to kidnap and murder Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer was a former employee of the store.

The store owners blamed Whitmer for the cancellation of the event, scheduled for today, writing in a Facebook post: "The Governor would have had a field day against the Trump campaign. They would accuse the administration of sending his son to a facility where terrorists work and train."

There is no doubt that the Trump campaign selected the obscure gun store for a major campaign event to signal encouragement for the plot against Whitmer. It is possible that the venue was selected precisely because one of the plotters had been employed there. The Trump campaign planned to still hold an event nearby, in an area within a few miles of where two of the plotters were arrested. The store owner refused to tell the media which of the 13 plotters was a former employee and claimed the Trump campaign told him they were changing the venue because it was not large enough.

In a campaign rally last night in Sanford, Florida, the first since he tested positive for the coronavirus, Donald Trump delivered a fascist rant before his unmasked supporters, denouncing "radical globalists" who "ravaged our cities." Trump said he was "standing up for the American worker and the American family" and opposing the "socialist left, the Marxist left." He issued a threat to arrest his political opponents, repeating, "We

will take care of it all after the election."

Referencing his own bout with the coronavirus, Trump said he was now "immune" from the virus and said he would "walk into the audience and kiss everyone, all the guys and all the beautiful women."

The venue change in Michigan comes as further details are emerging of the 13 plotters' connections to far-right networks operating in close coordination with the Trump administration and powerful figures within the Republican Party.

Two of the arrestees were photographed speaking alongside Barry County Sheriff Dar Leaf, who has been promoted by Fox News and is a member of the Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (CSPOA), a fascist network of police founded by former Arizona sheriff Joe Arpaio, which claims county sheriffs have extra-constitutional powers.

Leaf, who responded to the plot by defending the plotters as merely wanting to carry out a "citizens' arrest," was named "Sheriff of the Year" by the CSPOA in 2016. Arpaio, the former sheriff of Maricopa County, Arizona (Phoenix), was pardoned by Trump in 2017 after being convicted of contempt of court.

Questions remain as to the role of Leaf and the CSPOA in the plot against Whitmer. Another Trump acolyte who has been honored by CSPOA as "Sheriff of the Year" was David Clarke, then-sheriff of Milwaukee County, in 2013. Clarke was a major African American surrogate for Trump's 2016 campaign and a speaker at that year's Republican National Convention.

More recently, after FBI Director Christopher Wray testified about the danger posed by fascist militias in

September, Clarke reposted an article on his website that called for Wray to be fired for minimizing the threat of left-wing protesters. “And it is the FBI’s duty to address this terrorist threat and quell it,” the article reads. “This is the United States of America. Are we seriously going to just sit on our hands while terrorists run wild on our streets?! This is what Americans are asking as FBI Director Christopher Wray appears to be asleep on the job as terrorists yet again strike in a major U.S. city.”

The CSPOA claims membership by 400 sheriffs across the country, and argues that sheriffs have dictatorial powers. *Rolling Stone’s* Bridgette Dunlap wrote in 2017 that “the CSPOA shares management and board membership with the Oath Keepers, a much larger subset of the anti-government extremist movement.”

The CSPOA’s “operational director,” Sam Bushman, is the host of the far-right radio program “Liberty Roundtable.” Bushman has very close connections to the Trump administration. In the months before the 2016 election, Bushman hosted the following Trump supporters on his show: Donald Trump Jr., Eric Trump, former CIA Director James Woolsey, Roger Stone and David Clarke.

Bushman’s program also syndicates the “Political Cesspool” program hosted by neo-Nazi Holocaust denier James Edwards. Edwards’ show is featured on Stormfront, an openly Nazi website that celebrates the Holocaust and calls for reopening concentration camps to exterminate socialists, immigrants and Jewish people.

Roger Stone, former Trump adviser whom Trump pardoned in July, has been actively establishing close ties to the Proud Boys and the fascist QAnon conspiracy, which claims Donald Trump is fighting a child sex trafficking ring exposed by a supposed state agent named “Q.”

Stone has hired the Proud Boys as a personal security force. On October 6, Stone appeared on a QAnon YouTube channel. On September 10, Stone appeared on the fascist “Alex Jones Show” and urged Trump to invoke the Insurrection Act, impose martial law and carry out mass arrests of left-wing figures.

There are other leading Trump figures whose connections to far-right groups must be further explored.

According to a September whistleblower report filed by Brian Murphy, leading immigration official Ken Cuccinelli ordered employees at the Department of Homeland Security to downplay the role of white supremacist groups and their connection to the Trump administration, instead, ordering officials to present anti-police violence protesters as violent extremists. Cuccinelli has spoken before the Center for Immigration Studies, which the Southern Poverty Law Center describes as an “anti-immigrant hate group.”

Many questions remain about the role of fascist groups within federal agencies, especially Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Recent press reports confirm that the Trump administration’s “family separation” policy was intended to terrorize immigrant families and that it was spearheaded by officials in the Department of Justice.

The Democratic Party is downplaying the dangers of Trump’s ties to the extreme right and refusing to seriously investigate Trump’s potential ties to the Michigan plotters. Opposition to dictatorship cannot be left to the Democratic faction of the ruling class. It requires the independent mobilization of the international working class independent from the parties of the ruling elite.



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