

Role of Virginia fascists in conspiracy to kill Northam and Whitmer comes into focus

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As preliminary hearings take place in the federal and state cases against 14 militia men who plotted to kill the Democratic governors in Michigan and Virginia, the political establishment and media are engaged in a conspiracy of silence as to the plot against Virginia Governor Ralph Northam.

Speaking yesterday in Southfield, Michigan, Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden referenced the plot against Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer and added, “Now we are finding out the same thing was happening in Virginia.” During a press conference this week in Richmond, Northam refused to discuss any details of the plot against his own life, citing an ongoing investigation.

Virginia borders Washington D.C., giving the state’s militias particular strategic proximity in the event that Trump refuses to accept an electoral loss and attempts to physically remain in the White House by appealing to his far-right supporters.

More information is coming to light regarding possible connections of Virginia militia and fascist groups to the plot against Whitmer and Northam.

In a remarkable scene on Thursday, Virginia fascist Boogaloo leader and discharged Marine Mike Dunn led an armed demonstration to the police station in Newport News, Virginia to protest a law banning open carry of assault rifles on government property.

By the time the armed fascists arrived at the police station, Police Chief Steve Drew had set up a sound system for Dunn. The two shook hands and exchanged gifts. Drew offered the fascist chocolate milk, and Dunn handed the police chief Mountain Dew—both tropes used by online fascists. The police chief and fascist then toasted, with Drew adding, “I support your right to free speech.” The police chief referred to the 20-year-old fascist as “Sir.”

In a YouTube video posted October 6—before the arrests in Michigan—Dunn announced a call for a “Boogaloo Unity Rally” to be held in Lansing, Michigan on October 17, this Saturday. This raises questions as to (1) what Dunn knew about the plot in Michigan and (2) what connections the conspirators in Michigan had with their Virginia counterparts.

“This month, 17th, 12 noon, Lansing, Michigan, the capitol building, we are having a Boogaloo Unity Rally,” Dunn wrote. He called on “traditional militias and all Boogaloo boys” to

attend and “bring all your kit, make sure you’re armed.”

In June, Dunn posted a video of himself, weapon in hand, threatening Northam. “I’m asking you to stand with me against the tyrannical government and the tyrannical governor,” he said. The Daily Beast reported that Dunn launched an event page titled “Physically DEMAND Ralph Northams Resignation” [sic].

According to the federal complaint filed against the conspirators in Michigan, representatives of militias from at least four or five states discussed planning to kill Northam as well as Whitmer during a June 6 meeting in Dublin, Ohio.

Notably, Dublin Police Chief Justice Páez told a community meeting on Tuesday that the FBI informed him the purpose of the meeting place was to allow for out-of-state participation. “The meeting location was for convenience, it was common traveling distance for people traveling from outside the Columbus area,” he said.

Was a representative of Virginia militias in attendance at the Dublin meeting on June 6? Since Northam’s assassination was planned at this meeting, this would seem like a likely conclusion. On Tuesday, the FBI agent in charge of the investigation, Richard Trask, testified that there were “representatives” from “at least four or five states” at the June 6 meeting. Moving the meeting to Ohio would facilitate participation from states like Virginia as well as groups from the South.

In court on Friday morning, Trask gave additional evidence both of the plot’s national scope and its relationship to the upcoming US presidential elections. Trask said it was not necessarily the case that the plotters planned to take Whitmer to Wisconsin to kill her, but that there was “talk of taking her to other states” as well.

Trask gave testimony that also indicated that the FBI first became aware of the plot in a state other than Michigan: “We became aware of a plot, not specifically this portion of it. It was through another division.”

Trask also spoke about the relationship between the plot and the upcoming presidential election.

A: There were multiple references to the election.

Q: Why would there be a need to kidnap Governor Whitmer at the election? She is not even running.

A: They referenced the election ... it could have related to the president ... the inference being that it had something to do with the presidential election.

Trump has worked assiduously to mobilize fascist militias across Virginia. On January 20 of this year—exactly one year before the January 20, 2021 inauguration—militia groups from across the country gathered to oppose state gun restrictions.

During that rally, over 10,000 people descended on the Virginia Capitol armed with assault rifles in what now appears to have been a dry run for the type of plans developed by the Michigan plotters to “conquer” the state Capitol. Mike Dunn was present, as were hundreds of Oathkeepers, Three Percenters and Boogaloo Boys.

That day, Trump tweeted: “The Democrat Party in the Great Commonwealth of Virginia are working hard to take away your 2nd Amendment rights. This is just the beginning. Don’t let it happen, VOTE REPUBLICAN in 2020!”

Days before the rally, Northam declared a state of emergency, and the FBI arrested several members of a neo-Nazi organization called The Base. According to charging documents in that case, the Virginia neo-Nazis planned to fire into the crowd during the January 20 rally, triggering mass violence.

Vice News reported that one of those arrested was committed to attending a “hate camp in Michigan” organized by The Base. Weeks before their arrest, two of the plotters traveled to Michigan where a third conspirator had been staying. The Base is led by Rinaldo Nazzaro, a New Jersey ex-Pentagon contractor who worked for Special Operations Command (SOCOM), the elite assassination squad unit charged with carrying out the most secretive and illegal military operations. Last year, the Base also carried out attacks against synagogues in Wisconsin and Michigan.

Trump also drew a connection between Virginia and Michigan. On April 17, as anti-lockdown protests were planned across the country, Trump urged his supporters to “LIBERATE MICHIGAN” at the same time as he appealed to the far right to “LIBERATE VIRGINIA, and save your great 2nd Amendment. It is under siege!”

Virginia has been a hotbed of ongoing militia activity in the run-up to the November election. In an *Atlantic* article published October 4 titled “A pro-Trump militant group has recruited thousands of police, soldiers and veterans,” author Mike Giglio notes that groups like the Three Percenters, Oathkeepers and Boogaloo Boys are particularly active in Virginia, and that “so-called militia musters like this one” were “quietly happening all over the state.”

Giglio traveled with Oathkeeper leader Stephen Rhodes, who founded the organization in 2009. He describes one encounter

with Rhodes:

With him were two heroes of the militant right: Richard Mack, who popularized the idea that county sheriffs are the highest law in the land, and Mike Vanderboegh, the founder of the Three Percenters, an umbrella militia based on the myth that it took just 3 percent of the population to fight and win the Revolutionary War.

The organization Mack founded is the Constitutional Sheriffs and Police Officers Association, which includes Barry County, Michigan Sheriff Dar Leaf, who defended the Michigan plotters’ actions this week. David Clarke and Joe Arpaio—high level Trump associates—are also leading members.

In yesterday’s preliminary hearing, FBI agent Trask announced that plot leader Adam Fox appears to have been the Michigan state leader of the Three Percenters, which would indicate ties to Three Percenters in other states. “He is associated with that group and according to the Facebook page was listed as a leader or the president of that group.”

Additional information is also surfacing about the possible connection of the Republican Party and Trump administration to the plotters.

Salon reported today that Grand Rapids real estate agent and major Republican donor Ryan D. Kelly, head of the American Patriot Council, organized several events that the conspirators used to meet and plot their next steps. The American Patriot Council organized a May 18 rally in Grand Rapids in which Dar Leaf was photographed with conspirators Michael and William Null. The organization also led the June 18 rally in Lansing that conspirators used to meet and recruit other fascists to join their plot. Kelly has been photographed with Donald Trump and has donated thousands of dollars to the campaign of Republican Michigan US Senate candidate John James.

There is no lack of information available to federal and state officials as to the scope and depth of the plot, but almost none of it has been made public. The Michigan attorney general’s office told a state court Friday that it planned to present three witnesses, and the *Detroit News* reported that the attorney general asked for time to redact “information from 1,100 federal police reports, 84 recordings totaling 150 hours, approximately 5,000 pages on each Facebook account and 1,000 pages of text messages.”



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