

Trump storms out of interview when asked about ties to Michigan conspiracy

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Video posted Thursday by Donald Trump of his partial interview with *60 Minutes*' Leslie Stahl reveals that the president abruptly ended the interview because Stahl asked him about his role in the plot by fascist militias to kidnap and kill two sitting governors, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer and Virginia Governor Ralph Northam.

Trump's walkout expresses the thuggish character not only of his personality, but of his entire political strategy. He conducted himself like a gangster, criticizing Stahl for daring to ask critical questions and repeatedly interrupting and insulting her.

Trump denied any involvement or responsibility in the plot, called Stahl "vicious," revealing an extreme sensitivity to the question of the plotters and their possible political connections. Trump has made clear he plans to mobilize fascist supporters to ignore the outcome of the November 3 election and attempt to stay in power. The Democratic Party has stopped referencing the plot even though Trump clearly views it as a massive political liability.

Roughly 30 minutes into the interview, the following exchange took place:

Stahl: What about the governor of Michigan, there was this plot, people were going to murder her?

Trump: I don't know anything about the plot. It was my Justice Department that is helping her. But the people are not liking her so much. She's got everybody locked down. Now we just won a [Michigan] Supreme Court [decision] where it's unconstitutional. The only one she doesn't have locked down is her husband.

Stahl: But you are a very powerful person,

and the people who love you, love you with passion. And if you go after someone like you went after her—

Trump: I haven't gone after her.

Stahl: —And then there are plots and threats

Trump: I haven't gone after her

Stahl: —And the same with Dr. Fauci. Yes you did.

Trump: I've helped her ... Oh, I do criticize her. I think the way she locked down Michigan was a disgrace. The way she closed churches in Michigan is a disgrace. Yeah, I think it's disgraceful.

Stahl: And you want to lock her up?

Trump: Of course not ... But when they lock down Michigan she is doing a tremendous disservice. Same thing with Pennsylvania, same thing with North Carolina.

Stahl: So you don't want to lock up governor Whitmer, but you want to lock up—

Trump: When did I say lock her up? Why would I want to lock her up?

Stahl: You were in front of a rally of people saying it, encouraging it—

Trump: I never said lock up the governor? Leslie, that is such a vicious thing you are saying. I would never say lock up the governor of Michigan.

Shortly after this exchange, a Trump adviser interrupted Trump and said they were running out of time. Trump then ended the interview.

This exchange raises questions as to what the Trump campaign is hiding as to its ties to the plotters and to those militias Trump plans to call into action in the

coming weeks.

His abrupt ending of the interview with Stahl took place as more information emerges about the extent to which fascist groups like those connected to the Michigan plot are preparing for the upcoming election. Trump has ordered these groups to “stand back and stand by” to come to his defense. Trump has repeatedly stated that the only way he could lose the election is if there was massive voter fraud—a claim that has no basis in reality.

A major report published yesterday by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data project (ACLED) in partnership with MilitiaWatch’s Hampton Stall details the nationwide “coalescence” of far-right groups in the run-up to the 2020 elections.

The report, “Standing by: Right-Wing Militia Groups and the US Election,” warns that this process poses “a serious threat to the safety and security of American voters. Throughout the summer and leading up to the general election, these groups have become more assertive, with activities ranging from intervening in protests to organizing kidnapping plots targeting elected officials.”

The report, authored by Stall, Roudabeh Kishi and Clionadh Raleigh, is the product of a meticulous five-month review of data compiled on the activity of over 80 militia groups in the US this year. The report concludes, “ACLED and MilitaWatch data indicate that right-wing militias have steadily ramped up their activities, and taken on an increasingly outsized profile within the national political environment.”

The report indicates that Donald Trump is primarily responsible. “There has been a major realignment of militia movements in the US from anti-federal government writ large to mostly supporting one candidate, thereby generally positioning the militia movement alongside a political party,” it explains. “This has resulted in the further entrenchment of a connection between these groups’ identities and politics under the Trump administration.”

According to the report’s authors, “While militia activity has been reported in at least 34 states and Washington D.C. since late May 2020, there are specific locations at heightened risk of militia activity during the upcoming election period and its immediate aftermath. For example, locations that have seen substantial engagement in anti-coronavirus lockdown

protests are at heightened risk.”

Those states at “the highest risk” of fascist violence on election day are Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Oregon. Those states at “moderate risk” are North Carolina, Texas, Virginia, California and New Mexico.

Fascist groups throughout the country benefit from support within law enforcement, the report states, explaining that the threat is greatest in “spaces where militia members cultivate personal relationships with police or law enforcement or where there might be a friendly attitude by law enforcement towards militia presence or activity.”

This makes the relative silence of the corporate media and Democratic Party all the more dangerous and politically criminal. The more details emerge about the plot’s national scope, its possible ties to Trump officials, the Republican Party, and dark-money sponsors, the louder the Democrats’ silence.

In a major speech delivered yesterday on behalf of Biden in Philadelphia, former president Barack Obama made no reference to the plot to kill two sitting governors from his own party. Though the press has universally declared that the speech was “scathing,” Obama did not make a single reference to Whitmer, Northam, Michigan, Virginia, Proud Boys, militia, the far-right, dictatorship or Trump’s statement that fascists should “stand by” for election day.

The Democratic Party has all but dropped the matter for fear that alerting the public about the threat of dictatorship will radicalize the population and engender social opposition to the entire political establishment.



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