

Michigan Republican Party leader “jokes” about killing Democrats, anti-Trump Republicans

Kevin Reed
28 March 2021

In comments before a meeting of supporters last Thursday, Michigan Republican Party Chairman Ron Weiser “joked” that the top three elected Democrats in the state are “three witches” that the GOP needs to “take out,” “soften up” and get ready “for the burning at the stake.”

Weiser was speaking about Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer, Attorney General Dana Nessel and Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson at a meeting of the North Oakland Republican Club. He referred to them multiple times as “the three witches.”

The state chair made his comments—which were recorded on a smartphone video and shared on multiple social media platforms—in the course of reviewing Republican Party plans for the 2022 elections.

His two statements were, “I made the decision to continue to serve to make sure we have an opportunity to take out those three witches in two years from now,” and, “Our job now is to soften up those three witches and make sure that when we have good candidates to run against them that they are ready for the burning at the stake.” Weiser then added, “And maybe the press heard that too.”

These “jokes” were made less than six months since 14 men were arrested by the FBI for plotting to kidnap and kill Governor Whitmer and overthrow the government in Michigan. The group of individuals are part of a right-wing paramilitary group calling themselves the Wolverine Watchmen.

Although reports about the ongoing case against the conspirators had virtually disappeared from the corporate news coverage, a hearing for the three leaders of the plot that began on March 3 showed that one of the men planned to “hogtie” the governor and “put her

on display.”

In testimony given by an FBI informant placed within the Wolverine Watchmen group, it was also revealed that the individuals worked with other right-wing organizations in Ohio and Wisconsin and were planning to kick-off a “boogaloo”—a civil war—that would result in “installing” the Wolverine Watchmen as the new government. The informant said the plot included plans to target Attorney General Nessel and Michigan Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist, who is African-American.

Several of the Wolverine Watchmen involved in the plot to kidnap and murder the Democratic Party leaders are from the towns of Lake Orion and Clarkston in Oakland County where the Thursday’s Republican Party meeting was held.

Weiser used similar blood-soaked language Thursday in discussing plans to remove Michigan Representatives Fred Upton of St. Joseph and Peter Meijer of Grand Rapids Township, two of the ten Republicans who voted for the impeachment of then-President Trump on January 13.

In response to a question about what the Michigan Republicans were going to do about them, Weiser said, “Ma’am, other than assassination, I have no other way of even voting that, OK?” To this comment someone in the audience can be heard saying, “Don’t say that too loudly.”

These comments were also made less than three months after the storming of the US Capitol by a mob that was planning to kidnap and/or murder top congressional Democrats and the Republican Vice President Mike Pence.

That the leader of the Michigan Republican party is

making supposed jokes about assassinating “disloyal” members of his own party and murdering leading Democrats—as well as the enthusiasm with which these comments were received by his audience—is further evidence that the GOP is being converted into a party of the fascist ultra-right.

In predictable fashion, the pro-Republican wing of the media gave Weiser a pass on his comments and allowed the party leader to excuse himself by saying that while he should have chosen his words more carefully, “anyone who knows me understands I would never advocate for violence.” Assurances such as these are worthless in the present environment in which the Republican Party is responsible for the growth of the increasingly open assault on constitutional and democratic rights within the US.

Weiser also said he spoke to Representatives Upton and Meijer and told them that his “off the cuff remarks” received “more scrutiny from the media and leftists in the last 24 hours than the governor’s handling of COVID, the deaths she caused in nursing homes and unemployment issues impacting too many hard-working Michiganders to this day.” Meijer and Upton declined to comment on Weiser’s statements.

Other Republicans openly defended Weiser’s threats. Co-Chair of the Michigan Republicans Meshawn Maddock tweeted, “Too bad all the snowflakes in the mainstream media see misogyny where it doesn’t exist. Calling someone a witch is NOT misogynist. This is more of the same from the left—instantly label everything as ‘misogyny’ or ‘racist.’ This hurts real efforts to become a more just society.”

Meanwhile, various Democratic Party officials issued statements of protest. Mark Bernstein, a fellow University of Michigan Board of Regents member with Weiser, told the media that the comments were “blatantly sexist,” “dangerous” and “damaging to our state and the University of Michigan” and called on the Republican to resign from the board of regents.

The Republicans are taking an aggressive posture against Whitmer in an environment where the right-wing policies of the Democrats are completely exposed. Weiser is raising the nursing home deaths just as the Republicans in the state legislature have authorized funds to be used by any county prosecutor in Michigan who wants to prosecute the governor over the high number of COVID-19 fatalities in the state’s nursing

homes, a result of Whitmer’s order to transfer elderly patients diagnosed with coronavirus from hospitals back to nursing homes.

Following the lead of President Joe Biden, who has repeatedly called for Democratic Party “unity” with the Republican right, Gretchen Whitmer’s press secretary Bobby Leddy told the media, “As the governor has said repeatedly, it’s time for people of good will on both sides of the aisle to bring down the heat and reject this kind of divisive rhetoric, because we need to stay focused on what really matters, and that’s working together to get things done for Michigan’s working families.”

A spokesperson for Secretary Benson said only that the three female state officials have “experienced firsthand how this rhetoric is later used as justification for very real threats made against government officials, election administrators and democracy itself.”



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact