

Fourth January 6 hearing documents fake electors plot and fascist threats against election officials, workers

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On Tuesday, the House Select Committee on January 6 held the fourth in a series of televised hearings detailing the plot led by Donald Trump to overturn the 2020 presidential election and seize dictatorial power.

Tuesday's hearing focused on the attempt to pressure Republican-led legislatures in six pivotal states that voted for Biden to submit fake slates of pro-Trump electors, creating the conditions for the courts, and perhaps Trump himself, still the lame-duck president, to intervene to block congressional certification.

Trump and the 147 Republican members of Congress who voted against certification after the insurrectionary mob had been cleared out of the Capitol, as well as their backers in the military, the police and the intelligence agencies, counted, with good reason, on the Democrats to capitulate and agree to a filthy compromise that would leave Trump in power.

As in the previous hearings, the main witnesses were conservative Republicans who backed Trump's campaign for reelection, but balked at joining his flagrant effort to overturn the election and the US Constitution. Once again, the Democratic-led panel presented them as heroic examples of "good Republicans" who saved American democracy—part of the Democrats' effort to rehabilitate the Republican Party and cover up the role of the Supreme Court and the institutions of the capitalist state in general in the mounting assault on democratic rights.

Tuesday's hearing underscored even more than those that preceded it the systematic and at times violent reprisals unleashed by Trump on officials and even local election workers who stood in the way of his dictatorial aims. Trump's gangster methods, and the fact that he remains at large, along with his top co-conspirators like Rudy Giuliani, John Eastman, Mark Meadows, Peter Navarro and Sidney Powell, demonstrates that the threat of fascism and dictatorship continues and American democracy remains at death's door.

The first panel of in-person witnesses consisted of Rusty Bowers, the speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives, Brad Raffensperger, the Georgia secretary of state, and his chief operating officer, Gabriel Sterling.

Bowers testified that Trump and Giuliani called him to demand that he convene a special session of the state legislature to select a fake slate of pro-Trump electors in opposition to the certified slate

of Biden electors. Arizona voted for Biden by a margin of 10,457 votes.

Bowers said he repeatedly pressed Giuliani for evidence to back his claim that hundreds of thousands of votes of undocumented immigrants and thousands of votes of dead people had swung to election to Biden, and Trump's lawyer never produced any. He quoted the former New York mayor as saying, "We've got lots of theories. We just don't have the evidence."

Bowers also said that Eastman, the Trump lawyer who pushed the notion that state legislatures had "plenary" authority to reject electors based on the popular vote and certify their own slate, when pressed on how he could legally sanction the dismissal of the popular vote, told him, "Just do it and let the courts work it out."

Eventually, Bowers testified, a fake slate of electors was adopted by a group of Arizona state lawmakers behind his back.

He said that his office received 20,000 emails and "tens of thousands" of voice mails from Trump supporters. He reported that a mob of Trump backers came to his home and one of them, wielding a pistol and threatening his neighbor, had "three bars on his chest," the symbol of the fascist Three Percenters militia.

The committee also showed a video of Trump supporters illegally entering the Arizona House of Representatives building and refusing to leave. The group included Proud Boys who remained inside and men with rifles on the outside.

Bowers also told the committee that on the morning of January 6, he received a call from US Representative Andy Biggs, Republican from Arizona, urging him to decertify the Biden slate of electors from Arizona. Biggs was heavily involved in the "Stop the Steal" campaign that prepared the way for the attempted coup.

Significantly, the committee did not ask Bowers about the role of Virginia Thomas, the wife of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, in the pressure campaign to overthrow the election result in Arizona and nationally.

"Ginni" Thomas emailed Bowers and state Representative Shawna Bolick on November 9, 2020, just after the media called the race for Biden, and urged that they intervene, saying that the responsibility to choose electors was "yours and yours alone." Spouting the line of Eastman, who had clerked for her husband, she wrote, "Article II of the United States Constitution gives you an awesome responsibility: to choose our state's Electors... please take action to ensure that a clean slate of Electors is chosen."

This is the authoritarian notion that was put forward by Justice Antonin Scalia during the Supreme Court case *Bush v. Gore*, which halted vote-counting in Florida and hijacked the 2000 election for Bush, who had lost the nationwide popular vote and likely the popular vote in Florida as well. The Democrats' capitulation in 2000 paved the way for the intensifying attack on democratic processes today.

Ginni Thomas renewed her pressure on Arizona legislators the following month, on the eve of the certification deadline for the states, December 14, contacting a total of 26 lawmakers. Bolick is currently running in the Arizona primary elections to become the next secretary of state.

The Democrats, including those on the January 6 Committee, have refused to call for Clarence Thomas's impeachment, though he is clearly implicated in the conspiracy and has refused even to recuse himself from cases related to January 6.

The testimony of Georgia election officials Raffensperger and Sterling largely reiterated their previous exposures of Trump's efforts to overturn Biden's victory in Georgia (11,779 votes) and the gangster methods he and his allies employed to pressure them. Sterling on December 1, 2020 denounced Trump for inciting violence against state election officials and demanded that he repudiate it, something Trump never did.

Representative Adam Schiff, who led the questioning, focused on Trump's notorious 67-minute telephone call to Raffensperger on January 2, 2021. In that call, Trump declared, "I just want to find 11,780 votes." He went on to threaten the Georgia secretary of state with criminal prosecution, and warned that if he continued to defy the White House, it would be "dangerous" for him.

Raffensperger testified that he received thousands of threatening texts and emails, many of a sexual nature attacking his wife. At one point, a pro-Trump mob broke into his daughter-in-law's home.

A second panel consisted of a former Fulton County, Georgia (Atlanta) election worker, Wandrea ArShaye Moss, with video testimony by her mother, Ruby Freeman, who sat behind her in the audience. The lives of these working class women have been devastated by false accusations leveled against them publicly by both Giuliani and Trump as part of their effort to overturn the election result in Georgia.

Giuliani went to Georgia in December of 2020 and broadcast a conspiracy theory that was entirely concocted and thoroughly debunked by Raffensperger and Sterling. He claimed that vote counters at the State Farm Arena counting center in Atlanta kicked out poll watchers on a pretext and then brought in suitcases stuffed with 18,000 fake votes, all for Biden. He posted a video showing "Shaye" Moss and her mother, who was at the center, and accused them by name at a state Senate hearing on December 10, 2020. Giuliani said the two passed around USB drives like "vials of heroin and cocaine."

In his January 2 telephone call with Raffensperger, Trump singled out Shaye Moss and her mother as central players in the supposed ballot stuffing operation, referring to "Ruby Freeman... a professional vote scammer."

Moss, who has since resigned her post as election worker, along with virtually all of her co-workers, told the committee, "It turned

my life upside down."

She said that her Facebook page was deluged with threatening messages, many overtly racist, following the allegations by Giuliani and Trump, and that ever since she fears for her life and the lives of her family members. She said her septuagenarian mother at one point called her in a panic saying people had come to her home to make a "citizens' arrest."

The committee showed a clip of Ruby Freeman's videotaped deposition, in which the mother said, "I have lost my sense of security, all because of a group of people, starting with (Trump) and his ally Rudy Giuliani, decided to scapegoat me, and my daughter, Shaye, to push lies about how the election was stolen."

Schiff noted that the FBI advised Freeman to leave her home and stay away for a number of weeks in advance of January 6, 2021 for her own safety. This is highly significant, since FBI Director Christopher Wray testified last year before Congress that his agency had no intelligence before January 6 warranting the conclusion that there was a significant risk of violence at the Capitol. This has been exposed as a lie, and no explanation has been given for the fact that the Capitol was left completely unprotected on the day Trump had set for mass protests that he promised would be "wild."

Schiff and company declared their deep sympathy for Moss and her mother. That, however, did not prevent him in his closing statement from saying, "Whether his [Trump's] actions were criminal will be for others to decide."

Trump, for his part, called Bowers "the latest RINO to play along with the select committee," in a tweet released in advance of the hearing. He followed this with a statement on his social media platform hailing the Texas Republican Party for adopting a resolution calling the Biden administration illegitimate. "Look at the Great State of Texas and their powerful Republican Party Platform on the 2020 Presidential Election Fraud," he wrote.



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