

Trump denounces actor-director Rob Reiner as “very bad for our country” following tragic killings

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Film director, actor and political activist Rob Reiner, 78, and his wife, photographer Michele Singer Reiner, 68, were found dead in their Los Angeles home December 14 from stab wounds. Their son Nick Reiner, 32, has been arrested in the killing and is being held without bail. Los Angeles police officials indicate he will be charged with first-degree murder.

In the immediate aftermath of the killings, Donald Trump spewed out repugnant and sinister remarks about Reiner, a well-known Democratic Party supporter and fundraiser and a persistent Trump critic.

On social media, Trump commented that Reiner,

a tortured and struggling, but once very talented movie director and comedy star, has passed away ... reportedly due to the anger he caused others through his massive, unyielding, and incurable affliction with a mind crippling disease known as TRUMP DERANGEMENT SYNDROME, sometimes referred to as TDS.

“Reportedly”? Where? Outside of Trump’s brain, there is no indication of any such report. The implication here is that Reiner more or less got what he deserved, having enraged others by his irrational hatred of Trump.

Forging ahead along the same lines, Trump asserted that Reiner “was known to have driven people CRAZY by his raging obsession of [sic] President Donald J. Trump,” insinuating again that the murder was carried out by someone infuriated by Reiner’s criticisms of Trump and acting to defend the president’s good name.

There was not one shred of evidence at the time, nor has any emerged since, that Reiner was murdered by someone angered over his criticism of Trump.

Reiner’s “obvious paranoia,” he went on, had reached “new heights as the Trump Administration surpassed all goals and expectations of greatness, and with the Golden Age of America upon us, perhaps like never before. May Rob and Michele rest in peace!”

Again, these are the comments of the president of the United States, who has a finger on the nuclear button.

slain political opponent, describing tortured, a crippled mind, obsessed, incurably afflicted with hostility ... what social or political type speaks like this, hurling insults and abuse at a man who has just been horribly murdered? This is not the language of “routine” or “traditional” bourgeois politics in America. There is no precedent for it. It is the fevered, paranoid, delusional rhetoric of a fascist demagogue, with an imitation thrown in of some second-rate television Mafioso.

On Monday, Trump followed up on his social media message in response to a question from journalists, “I wasn’t a fan of his [Reiner’s] at all. He was a deranged person as far as Trump is concerned,” he told reporters speaking in the third person for some reason. “The Russia hoax, he was one of the people behind it. I think he hurt himself career-wise. He became, like, a deranged person. Trump derangement syndrome. So I was not a fan of Rob Reiner at all in any way, shape or form. I thought he was very bad for our country.”

The reference to Russia concerns Reiner’s claims, echoed by many leading Democrats during Trump’s first term, that the latter was “controlled by Russia” under Putin and to the director’s role as a co-founder of the Committee to Investigate Russia in 2017.

In any event, the comments as a whole did not appear to be directed at the media or official political establishment, where they were generally criticized, even by Republicans. More isolated and unstable than ever, Trump can only be directly addressing the far-right trash who remain loyal to him. The attack on Reiner amounts to an incitement against other figures who are also “very bad for our country.” Presumably, their deaths too would be “very good for our country.”

Trump has now gone from silence over the violent attack on Nancy Pelosi’s husband by a fascist supporter in November 2022 and lies and obfuscation in the case of the Minnesota Democrats murdered in June 2025 to open gloating.

Trump stopped just short of congratulating the murderer. All of this comes in the aftermath of the Charlie Kirk assassination and the reactionary braying about that saintly racist and neo-fascist and the persistent attacks on anyone who dared to speak the truth about Kirk. What a filthy travesty that was! The newfound “civility” lasted as long as it took Trump to make a meal of the next episode that suited his filthy agenda.

Trump’s comments were described as “sick” and depraved by

various Hollywood figures and others. Comic Jimmy Kimmel, who has recently been a target of the president's wrath, noted on his late-night show that

"It's so hateful and vile," Kimmel said of the post. "When I first saw it, I thought it was fake. My wife showed it to me this morning. I was like, 'Even for him, that seemed like too much.' But nothing is ever too much for him."

Musician Jack White commented on social media,

Trump you disgusting, vile, egomaniac loser, child ... To use someone's tragic death to promote your own vanity and fascist authoritarian agenda is a corrupt and narcissistic sin. Shame on you Trump and anyone who defends this.

Countless others, including actors involved in Reiner's various films, issued similar statements.

Kathy Bates, who won an Academy Award for her role in Reiner's *Misery* (1990), commented in a statement: "I'm horrified hearing this terrible news. Absolutely devastated. I loved Rob," adding that he "fought courageously for his political beliefs."

In a joint statement, *This is Spinal Tap* (1984) star and co-writer Christopher Guest and his wife Jamie Lee Curtis said they were "numb and sad and shocked." They went on, "There will be plenty of time later to discuss the creative lives we shared [and] the great political and social impact they both had on the entertainment industry, early childhood development, the fight for gay marriage and their global care for a world in crisis."

Rob Reiner was the son of Carl Reiner, the famed comic personality, writer and performer, who died in 2020 at the age of 98. The younger Reiner, born in the Bronx and raised in Hollywood, grew up surrounded by entertainers and performers. He first appeared in a television series at the age of 14 and, five years later, founded a comedy improvisation group.

He came to widespread prominence in the popular Norman Lear-created comedy *All in the Family*, which ran from 1971 to 1979. Reiner appeared in 185 episodes of the show, which topped the Nielsen ratings from 1971 to 1976, the first television series to have done that for five consecutive years.

Reiner moved on primarily to directing films in the 1980s, achieving success with audiences in *This is Spinal Tap*, *Stand by Me* (1986), *The Princess Bride* (1987), *When Harry Met Sally...* (1989), *Misery* (1990) and *A Few Good Men* (1992) in particular.

He was also a staunch Democratic Party supporter and fundraiser, one of the most prominent such figures in Hollywood. He has been sharply critical of Trump at various times over the past decade. In a 2017 interview with *Variety*, he termed Trump "mentally unfit" to be president. On another occasion, he described the current resident of the White House as the "single-

most unqualified human being to ever assume the Presidency of the United States." In 2024, he called Trump a "criminal" and a habitual liar.

The same year, in an interview with *The Guardian*, Reiner indicated he thought American democracy was threatened with destruction.

The question at this election is: do we want to continue 249 years of self-rule and American democracy? Or do we want to turn it over to somebody like Donald Trump who has said that he wants to destroy the constitution, go after his political enemies and turn America into an autocracy? We see autocracy making its move around the world. And so if we crumble, there's a danger that democracy crumbles around the world.

Nick Reiner, the 32-year-old son of Rob and Michelle Reiner, had apparently been suffering from drug addiction for years. *People* magazine notes that in a 2016 interview, he revealed that the problems

began in his early teens and eventually left him living on the streets. He said he cycled in and out of rehab beginning around age 15, but as his addiction escalated, he drifted farther from home and spent significant stretches homeless in multiple states.

The "chaotic period of addiction—including nights and sometimes weeks sleeping outside—later became the basis for the semi-autobiographical film *Being Charlie*, which he co-wrote.

"Now, I've been home for a really long time, and I've sort of gotten acclimated back to being in L.A. and being around my family," Nick told *People* at the time.

NBC News reports that Nick Reiner had been disruptive at a holiday party Saturday. He "made other guests uncomfortable with his behavior at the holiday party, which was hosted by comedian Conan O'Brien, one person said. Another person said Reiner's parents were upset and embarrassed about their son's behavior at the party and expressed worries about his health." Only hours later, his parents were dead.



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