

Grand jury indicts six accused in Michigan governor kidnap plot

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The men were arrested and charged with plotting to kidnap Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer. (Photo: Internet)

Lansing, December 18 (RHC)-- Six men facing charges of plotting to kidnap Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer were indicted by a grand jury this week, the U.S. attorney's office for western Michigan said on Thursday.

The men — Adam Fox, Barry Croft, Ty Garbin, Kaleb Franks, Daniel Harris and Brandon Caserta — were arrested and charged in October with conspiring to grab Whitmer, a Democrat, from her vacation home earlier this year.

Some of the men belong to an anti-government group called Wolverine Watchmen. At least one of the defendants, Fox, considered Whitmer to be a sort of tyrant because she had ordered gyms closed in the state to stem the spread of the novel coronavirus, according to prosecutors.

Obtaining the grand jury indictments, which came down on Wednesday, was a necessary step to proceed with the federal prosecutions, the US attorney's office said in a statement. Parker Douglas, a lawyer representing Harris, said Harris had pleaded not guilty because "there was no actual conspiracy to kidnap Governor Whitmer."

"As you can see from the indictment, the government is extremely vague regarding the alleged conspiracy's nature, the alleged conspiracy's object and any steps my client allegedly took to agree with the conspiracy," Douglas wrote in an email.

If convicted at trial, the defendants, who are in jail after being denied bail, would face a maximum sentence of life in prison. The indictment accuses the men of discussing kidnapping Whitmer, meeting in July in Wisconsin to practise using assault rifles, and surveilling Whitmer's vacation home in August and September, mapping out how far it was from the nearest police station.

Some of the men also bought supplies for kidnapping, the indictment said. In September, Fox bought a Taser-style stun gun and placed a \$4,000 order for explosives with someone he did not realize was, in fact, an undercover agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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