

# The Michigan conspiracy isn't a joke

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Fascist vigilantes were welcomed by police and the county sheriff to threaten Black Lives Matter demonstrators.

Thirteen fascists were [arrested on Oct. 8](#) for plotting to kidnap and kill Michigan

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. There were [also plans to assassinate](#) Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam. Both governors are Democrats.

Most of the initial media coverage of those arrested has portrayed them as bumbling losers. That's despite their use of encrypted communications and plans to use an 800,000 volt taser. Poor and working people should consider the Michigan plot as extremely dangerous.

These fascists are precisely the social material that's used by the wealthy and powerful to terrorize people. Seven of them belong to the Wolverine Watchmen, an armed vigilante group.

Michigan's Barry County [Sheriff Dar Leaf](#) claimed these fascists were merely planning to make a "felony arrest" of Gov. Whitmer. Leaf appeared with some of them at a Grand Rapids rally protesting the public health measures needed to combat the coronavirus. He knows two of the indicted conspirators, Michael and William Null.

Cops and fascists work hand in hand. On Oct. 15, [Newport News, Va., police](#) provided armed members of the ultraright Boogaloo movement with a sound system and chocolate milk.

After a Black father, Jacob Blake, was shot seven times in front of some of his children by Kenosha, Wis., Officer Rusten Sheskey, racist armed vigilantes came to town. They were welcomed by police and the county sheriff to threaten Black Lives Matter demonstrators. Kyle Rittenhouse killed two anti-racists, seriously wounded another and was allowed to escape Kenosha.

Trump helped incite vigilante violence by tweeting "Liberate Michigan!" on April 17, two days after armed right-wingers converged on Michigan's state Capitol in Lansing. They wanted the COVID-19 safety shutdown stopped immediately no matter

how many Black and Brown people would die in Detroit.

Trump also tweeted “Liberate Virginia!” and “Liberate Wisconsin!” The Wolverine Watchmen planned to take Gov. Whitmer to Wisconsin to be killed.

The Trump supporters were just foot soldiers for the billionaire class who considered the public health measures to be profit-killers. Unlike Black Lives Matter protesters, none of those who were carrying long guns in Lansing were fired upon by the police with rubber bullets or tear gas.

Lifting these restrictions led to [a massive increase](#) in COVID-19 infections in the Upper Midwest. In Wisconsin’s Menominee County, home to the Menominee Nation, one out of every 22 people has caught the coronavirus, twice the U.S. rate.

### **Shock troops for the ruling class**

To paraphrase the political prisoner Jamil Al-Amin, once known as H. Rap Brown, using thugs to attack a people’s movement is as American as apple pie.

Thousands of Black people were murdered by the Ku Klux Klan during the overthrow of Reconstruction state governments in the 1870s.

Hundreds of Black people were murdered by mobs in East St. Louis, Ill., in 1917 and Tulsa, Okla., in 1921. During 1919, white racist mobs in Chicago and other cities were allowed to kill Black people. Police only intervened after Black people fought back.

In 1961, Anniston, Ala. police gave Ku Klux Klan members 15 minutes to try to kill Freedom Riders who were traveling together in defiance of segregation laws. Their Greyhound bus was set on fire.

Klansman Byron De La Beckwith assassinated Mississippi NAACP Field Secretary

Medgar Evers in 1963. [Beckwith was acquitted](#) after Mississippi Gov. Ross Barnett came to court to shake hands with him in front of the all-white jury. It was only in 1994 that Beckwith was convicted on federal charges for killing Medgar Evers.

The labor movement has also been a victim of mob violence.

Industrial Workers of the World organizer Frank Little was lynched by vigilantes in 1917 for leading a strike of copper miners in Butte, Mont. IWW member Wesley Everett was murdered by a mob in Centralia, Wash., in 1919.

The Black Legion, which despite its name was a split-off from the Ku Klux Klan, [killed union organizers in Michigan](#). It's widely thought that Rev. Earl Little, the father of Malcolm X, was murdered by these terrorists.

United Auto Workers president Walter Reuther led a drive against communists in the union and later fought the League Of Revolutionary Black Workers. That didn't prevent him from being [nearly killed at his Detroit home](#) in a 1948 assassination attempt. Local police and the FBI didn't want to find who did it.

In 1937, Reuther and other UAW organizers were viciously beaten by Henry Ford's private police outside the Rouge complex in Dearborn, Mich. No one was ever prosecuted for the assaults.

Ford used thousands of his cops to terrorize workers. Only the UAW's victory at Ford in 1941 stopped these goons from attacking employees.

We can't depend on the capitalist government to even count our votes. It's foolish to think the police will protect us from their fascist buddies, like the Wolverine Watchmen.

Greensboro, N.C., police and agents from the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms allowed Klansmen and Nazis to murder five anti-racist protesters on

Nov. 4, 1979. Four of the martyrs were members of the Communist Workers Party.

In the 1960s, the Deacons for Defense and Justice defended civil rights organizers against Klan violence. Today's people's movement needs to defend itself as well.

