

Man pleads guilty in conspiracy to kidnap Michigan governor

By ED WHITE
Associated Press

DETROIT — One of six men charged in an alleged plot to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer pleaded guilty Wednesday, Jan. 27, to conspiracy, admitting he group discussed an incredible scheme to snatch her at her lakeside vacation home and destroy a bridge to slow down police.

Ty Garbin’s guilty plea is a major catch for prosecutors, only about four months after arrests were made. His testimony would strengthen the government’s case against the others and back up evidence collected by informants and undercover agents.

Garbin appeared in federal court in Grand Rapids a few hours after prosecutors filed a plea agreement that is loaded with details about the operation and his pledge to fully cooperate with investigators. There is no agreement on his sentencing.

The FBI in October said it broke up a plot to kidnap Whitmer, a Democrat, by anti-government extremists upset over the coronavirus restrictions she imposed in Michigan. Six people were charged in federal court while eight others were charged in state court with aiding the alleged scheme.

In the plea agreement, Garbin, 25, of Hartland, admitted to more than six pages of stunning allegations. He said he and others trained with weapons in Munith, Michigan, and Cambria, Wisconsin, last summer and “discussed the plan to storm the Capitol and kidnap the governor.”

The plot, he said, eventually switched to Whitmer’s second home in Antrim County.

Garbin said he “advocated waiting until after the national election, when the conspirators expected widespread civil unrest to make it easier for them to operate.”

In September, the six men trained at Garbin’s property near Luther, Michigan, constructing a “shoot house” to resemble Whitmer’s vacation home and “assaulting it with firearms,” the plea deal states.

The men also made trips to Antrim County to surveil the home and the area, Garbin said.

Garbin said he sent a text message to someone who turned out to be a government informant, indicating that “if the bridge goes down it will stop the wave,” a suggestion that police would be delayed in responding to a kidnapping if a nearby bridge was blown up.

He said he also offered to paint his boat black for another night of surveillance.

Last fall, defense attorney Mark Satawa said Garbin had no intention to carry out a kidnapping, no matter what he might have said in recorded or online conversations. A “big talk” defense emerged as a strategy.



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Judge bars Biden from enforcing 100-day deportation ban

By NOMAAN
MERCHANT
Associated Press

HOUSTON — A federal judge on Tuesday, Jan. 26, barred the U.S. government from enforcing a 100-day deportation moratorium that is a key immigration priority of President Joe Biden.

U.S. District Judge Drew Tipton issued a temporary restraining order sought by Texas, which sued on Friday, Jan. 22, against a Department of Homeland Security memo that instructed immigration agencies to pause most deportations. Tipton said the Biden administration had failed “to provide any concrete, reasonable justifi-

cation for a 100-day pause on deportations.”

Tipton’s order is an early blow to the Biden administration, which has proposed far-reaching changes sought by immigration advocates, including a plan to legalize an estimated 11 million immigrants living in the U.S. illegally. Biden promised during his campaign to issue the moratorium.

The order represents a victory for Texas’ Republican leaders, who often sued to stop programs enacted by Biden’s Democratic predecessor, President Barack Obama. It also showed that just as Democratic-led states and

immigration groups fought former President Donald Trump over immigration in court, often successfully, so too will Republicans with Biden in office.

While Tipton’s order bars enforcement of a moratorium for 14 days, it does not require deportations to resume at their previous pace. Immigration agencies typically have latitude in processing cases and scheduling removal flights.

The Department of Homeland Security referred a request for comment to the White House, which issued a statement saying the moratorium was “wholly appropriate.”

“President Biden

remains committed to taking immediate action to reform our immigration system to ensure it’s upholding American values while keeping our communities safe,” the White House said.

David Pekoske, the acting Homeland Security secretary, signed a memo on Biden’s first day directing immigration authorities to focus on national security and public safety threats as well as anyone apprehended entering the U.S. illegally after Nov. 1. That was a reversal from Trump administration policy that made anyone in the U.S. illegally a pri-

ority for deportation.

The 100-day moratorium went into effect Friday and applied to almost anyone who entered the U.S. without authorization before November.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton argued that the moratorium violated federal law as well as an agreement Texas signed with the Department of Homeland Security late in the Trump administration. That agreement required Homeland Security to consult with Texas and other states before taking any action to “reduce, redirect, reprioritize, relax, or in any way modify immigration enforcement.”

Could more baseball Hall of Fame shutouts be on the horizon?



Eric Risberg/AP Photo, File San Francisco Giants’ Barry Bonds smiles after he hit his 73rd home run of the season in 2001. The baseball Hall of Fame won’t have any new players in the class of 2021 after voters decided no one had the merits for enshrinement on this year’s ballot.

By NOAH TRISTER
AP Baseball Writer

It could be a while before the Baseball Writers’ Association of America votes anyone new into the Hall of Fame.

BBWAA members delivered an empty class in this year’s election, which was announced Tuesday night. Curt Schilling received the most support, but the former pitcher was selected on 71.1% of the ballots, falling 16 votes short of the 75% needed for induction. Barry Bonds (61.8%) and Roger Clemens (61.6%) were the next-highest finishers.

It was the first time since 2013 that the BBWAA didn’t elect anyone. That year proved to be an exception. The writers elected 22 players from 2014-20. But there are signs that the 2021 shutout could be repeated next year — and perhaps the year after that as well.

Schilling came up short, his numbers barely budging from last year. He’s turned off voters with his behavior in recent years, including social media posts about Muslim

extremists, transgender people and journalists.

Schilling wrote on Facebook that he has asked the Hall of Fame to remove his name from next year’s ballot. Hall of Fame Board Chairman Jane Forbes Clark said in a statement the board “will consider the request at our next meeting.”

The BBWAA responded Wednesday and said “Schilling’s request to remove himself from the ballot is a violation of the rules set forth by the National Baseball Hall of Fame’s board of directors” are urged the board to reject the request. The BBWAA said Schilling “should remain on the ballot for consideration by the voting body for what would be his final year on the BBWAA ballot in 2022.”

Bonds and Clemens appear to have stalled as well amid suspicions of performance-enhancing drug use. They have one more year on the writers’ ballot, and Schilling does, too, unless the Hall abides by his request for removal.

Next year’s ballot is expected to include Alex Rodriguez and David Ortiz for the first time. Rodriguez was suspended for the 2014 season for violating Major League Baseball’s PED policy and collective bargaining agreement. The New York Times reported in 2009 that Ortiz was among those who tested positive in a 2003 survey designed to determine the degree of

steroids use in baseball.

Barring a significant change in the way the electorate approaches PEDs, it’s possible the BBWAA won’t vote anyone in next year, either.

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