

# [***Michigan AG executes search warrants on Google and X in ongoing 2020 fake electors probe***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BX8-6FW1-JBSS-S0R6-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; Google and X, formerly Twitter, recently provided hundreds of files to Michigan prosecutors for their 2020 election subversion probe, complying with search warrants that investigators obtained after [*CNN revealed secret social media accounts*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/26/politics/kenneth-chesebro-secret-twitter-account-kfile/index.html) belonging to pro-Trump lawyer Kenneth Chesebro, who played a major role in the fake electors plot.

The previously unreported warrants gave prosecutors access to new Chesebro emails and his private direct messages on Twitter. The warrants make clear that Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel is still gathering new information in her probe, nine months after [*she charged the state's fake electors*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/07/18/politics/michigan-fake-electors/index.html) with forgery and other crimes for signing certificates falsely claiming Donald Trump won the state in 2020.

A top member of her team [*testified last week*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/24/politics/trump-michigan-fake-electors-probe/index.html) that the investigation is ongoing and that Trump is an unindicted co-conspirator in the case, which is not expected to go to trial before the November election.

Michigan is among a number of states to investigate fake electors schemes. Just last week, Arizona prosecutors [*filed criminal charges*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/24/politics/arizona-criminal-charges-2020-election-subversion/index.html) against the pro-Trump electors there and allies of the former president who were involved in the efforts to overturn the 2020 election.

According to the new documents provided to Michigan prosecutors, which were obtained by CNN, Chesebro fruitlessly tried to bring several controversial pro-Trump figures to Washington, DC, to watch his "fake electors" strategy unfold on January 6, 2021.

He offered to pay for airfare and lodging at Trump's upscale DC hotel for former Milwaukee County Sheriff [*David Clarke*](https://www.cnn.com/2017/05/18/politics/milwaukee-county-sheriff-david-clarke-profile/index.html), as well as for the founder of the [*Gateway Pundit*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/24/media/gateway-pundit-declares-bankruptcy/index.html) conspiracy website, among others. It doesn't appear that anyone accepted his offers.

These messages also show how Chesebro aggressively reached out to conservative pundits and right-wing figures after Trump lost the 2020 election, prodding them to publicly promote his [*long-shot theories*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/04/politics/kenneth-chesebro-fake-elector-plot-texts/index.html) for how to subvert the Electoral College process.

The search warrants to Google and X were executed in March, shortly after CNN reported that Chesebro had concealed some of his social media accounts from prosecutors during his [*cooperation session*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/12/08/politics/kenneth-chesebro-cooperating-multiple-investigations/index.html) last year. Chesebro has not been charged in Michigan, and he has [*pleaded guilty*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/20/politics/kenneth-chesebro-georgia-election-subversion/index.html) in Georgia's election interference probe.

Chesebro's attorneys did not respond to CNN's request for comment.

After this story was published, Chesebro attorney Manny Arora said on MSNBC that he didn't try to challenge the search warrants because he had already voluntarily turned over much, if not all, of the materials to investigators.

"There is no legal jeopardy - we have been cooperating the whole time," Arora said. "... In order to be a good prosecutor, you want to make sure you get the search warrants, to just double check us, to make sure we've given them everything ... I don't think it amounts to a whole lot."

Gining up support

The direct messages obtained by CNN chronicle how Chesebro, while advising the Trump campaign on the fake electors plot, was also trying to garner friendly news coverage by relentlessly pitching to conservative radio hosts and pro-Trump pundits.

He shared what appeared to be unsolicited guidance to Gateway Pundit founder Jim Hoft, advising him on how to frame his site's coverage of the January 6 certification proceeding in Congress.

"It would help to publicize that if (then-Vice President Mike) Pence claims the power to resolve disputes about the electoral votes on Jan. 6, he'd simply be doing what (Thomas) Jefferson did," Chesebro told Hoft in a message on December 27, 2020.

"Excellent!! Thanks," Hoft responded, using the @GatewayPundit account.

Two days later, Chesebro told Hoft that he had reserved a block of rooms at the Trump International Hotel, and that Hoft could stay there "gratis" if he wanted.

Not long after that, Chesebro made similar offers to Clarke and his wife, as well as to Wisconsin-based radio host Vicki McKenna and her husband, according to emails obtained by CNN.

"Happy to pay for flights if that would help," Chesebro told McKenna, according to the documents. "It's really no big deal; I've done very, very well financially the last few years. And I would feel great having you able to be at the center of the Trump universe!"

Hoft informed Chesebro that he had his own lodging in DC. An attorney for Hoft declined to comment for this story. McKenna didn't respond to requests for comment.

Interview with investigators

When Chesebro met with Nessel's investigators in December, they asked about his social media accounts. In addition to concealing his secret Twitter account, Chesebro told investigators that he didn't use social media applications to send and receive private messages.

That denial is undercut by the materials X gave to investigators, which contain more than 160 sent messages and more than 25 received messages between 2014 and 2021, with most of them amid the 2020 election fallout.

During the closed-door interview, an investigator asked Chesebro which social media apps he used where people "can direct-message you, private-message you," according to a recording obtained by CNN.

Chesebro responded, "The only messaging apps I've used - like for messages, right? I understand that there's that capability - are iMessage." He further said, "I know there's direct message Twitter," but he did not say that he used Twitter for direct messaging.

Chesebro's lawyer didn't immediately respond to a request for comment about the discrepancy.

Instant pushback

In the wake of the 2020 election, Chesebro also sent some direct messages on Twitter to [*James Wigderson*](https://email.jameswigderson.com/t/j-ECB640C0A239FF032540EF23F30FEDED), a longtime writer on Wisconsin ***politics*** who ran a conservative news site. Chesebro was trying to gin up coverage of claims that there were irregularities in the Wisconsin results, according to documents obtained by CNN.

"You can spare me this stuff. Thanks. Trump lost," Wigderson told Chesebro, later adding, "I really don't have time for conspiracy theories. Thanks for understanding."

Parts of this exchange were previously reported by The New York Times.

Chesebro also privately pinged several other Wisconsin political pundits and legal scholars, including some whom he sparred with in public Twitter posts. Most were ignored.

One of the attorneys Chesebro privately targeted was Daniel Rodriguez, who attended Harvard Law School with Chesebro and is now a law professor at Northwestern University. On December 29, 2020, Chesebro sent a link to Rodriguez about a new lawsuit from the Trump campaign trying to overturn the Wisconsin results. Rodriguez replied with "LOL."

"I don't remember this exchange exactly," Rodriguez told CNN in an email, "but my best guess is that the 'LOL' was because this whole false electors lawsuit business was, and is, insane."

The Wisconsin litigation - like dozens of other Trump election suits - failed in court.

This story has been updated with additional details.

CORRECTION: This story has been updated to accurately reflect the educational background of Chesebro and Rodriguez.

By Marshall Cohen, CNN

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