

Wi-Fi sniffers strapped to drones—Mike Lindell's odd plan to stop election fraud

Enlarge / Mike Lindell pulls a wireless sniffing device off a drone.

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Election conspiracy theorist Mike Lindell claims he's going to stop voting fraud by flying drones near polling places to determine whether voting machines are connected to the Internet.

Lindell, the My Pillow CEO who helped finance Donald Trump's baseless election protests, "demonstrated" the technology at an event he hosted in Missouri this week (see video). Lindell's innovation appears to be a wireless sniffing device mounted on a drone, apparently attached with velcro.

"This was the lie that's been told to every person in our country... these electronic voting machines—from routers to printers to polling books—they're not online. Well, what if I told you there was a device that's been made for the first time in history that can tell you that that machine was online?"

The drone flew into the building and onto the stage, with Lindell pulling the device off the drone and telling the audience, "This wireless monitoring device, it just grabbed all of your cell phones, everybody in this room, every device

that's on the Internet right now."

The flying wireless monitor may have impressed Lindell's audience, but there doesn't appear to be any major advance in network monitoring technology here. Lindell said the gadget, which he calls a "WMD" for "Wireless Monitoring Device," detects nearby Wi-Fi networks and MAC addresses.

"Now we've got a way to monitor; we've never had this before in history. They can't lie to us anymore," Lindell said. "For this fall's election, we want to get every single parish in Louisiana covered, we're doing this right now." A Daily Beast article said Lindell's plan might violate Louisiana state laws on criminal trespassing and the use of unmanned aircraft to conduct surveillance. Lindell claimed he's already used the device in Florida.

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Red alert: "Router just went online"

"There's a command center where this information goes down and flashes, it'll go-'router online,'" Lindell said. It's not clear why a router connecting to the Internet would be evidence of election fraud, but Lindell provided that as an example multiple times. "If you're in this room and this is an election room, beep beep beep, router just went online, this red alert goes out there," he said.

A voiceover in a video shown to Lindell's audience described the system as follows:

We have been told that our election computers are never connected to the Internet. The WMD will put that to the test by detecting and reporting in real time Wi-Fi connections in county and state election offices. All Internet routers and access points will be reported as well as any devices to

which they connect. The WMD incorporates many years of research and state-of-the-art development. It is a low-weight, low-power device that uses only passive signal detection to detect online systems and it will never interfere with any normal network operations. When an online connection is detected the Election Crime Bureau master alert system will be quickly notified and the alert will be displayed on the alert webpage.

This would, of course, gather information on many devices that have nothing to do with voting machines, like the cell phones in Lindell's audience. "We could have gotten some actual election voting machines in here" for the demonstration, Lindell said. But Lindell said he didn't want to do that because of "what happened in Michigan when they went after Matt DePerno for having a machine."

DePerno is facing criminal charges for an alleged attempt to illegally access and tamper with voting machines. "I didn't want to take that chance; this is too important for the world," Lindell said. "I have a command center" that alerts will be sent to, but "I'm not going to say what state" the command center is in.

The video shown to Lindell's audience said the scanning system currently provides "the MAC address, the hardware vendor, and the first time the device was detected," and that "additional information will be continually added... all information is securely archived for later analysis. The Wireless Monitoring Device is ready to be deployed in any election from local to presidential."

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