

IF RICHARD BURR JOKES ABOUT ASSASSINATION IN SECRET, WHAT ELSE DOES HE JOKE ABOUT IN SECRET?

A tracker caught Senate Intelligence Chair responding to a request for a picture with a guy with an NRA hat on by joking about “putting a bullseye” on Hillary Clinton at an event for volunteers this weekend (the quip is after 34:30).

Nothing made me feel any better than, uh, I walked into a gun shop I think yesterday in Oxford. And there was a copy of Rifleman on the, on the counter. It's got a picture of Hillary Clinton on the front of it. I was a little bit shocked at that – it didn't have a bullseye on it.

After the comments became public, Burr apologized for them.

Mind you, Burr has a history of making inappropriate jokes about violence, even about assassination, even in public. In 2013, Burr joked with Treasury Secretary Jack Lew that his relative Aaron Burr assassinated Treasury Secretaries. And in the same year, Burr joked with John Brennan that drinking four glasses of water

“I'll be brief,” Burr told the nominee to lead the Central Intelligence Agency. “I see you're on your fourth glass of water and I don't want to be accused of waterboarding you.”

But this is different, because he laughed about violence from others against a public figure, rather than joking about his own

hypothetical violence. And it did so in a fairly closed event.

Given that as SSCI Chair Burr spends so much time huddling in secret with the intelligence community, Burr's persistent joking about assassination and related issues does raise questions about what else he jokes in his private sessions with spooks. That's especially true given how far out of his way he has gone to protect CIA from any accountability for torture.

Burr is, to his credit, virtually alone among an recent Gang of Four members for actually keeping what he learns from briefings secret. That means that, unlike this meeting (hilariously, after 13:00 in the recording, Burr kicks out someone he believes to be a tracker, but the person recording the meeting remained inside recording), we would never learn about how funny Burr thinks assassination is when meeting with those who actually carry them out.

That sure makes him an inappropriate person to head oversight of the intelligence community.