

Intelligence Report

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‘SOVEREIGN’ CITIZEN KANE

THE CONSPIRATORIAL IDEOLOGY BEHIND A DOUBLE COP-KILLER IS SPREADING RAPIDLY

PLUS

‘PATRIOT’ PARANOIA

Top 10 conspiracy theories

FROM RUSSIA, WITH LOVE?

English-language TV network
plugs imaginary U.S. plots

CONSPIRACY IN ‘COURT’

A vitriolic pastor takes
on the president

The Paranoid Style

BY MARK POTOK

IN WEST MEMPHIS, ARK., A MAN AND HIS son shoot two police officers to death after being pulled over. In Washington, D.C., one man murders a guard at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, while a year later another badly wounds two Pentagon police officers. In Austin, Texas, a man commits suicide by flying his small airplane into an IRS building, setting off an inferno and killing an



employee. In Pittsburgh, a man murders three police officers called to his house.

What do these men have in common? What could have motivated them to murder, often dying themselves in the bargain?

In each case, they were motivated by conspiracy theories.

James von Brunn, who killed the museum guard in June 2009, believed that Jews controlled the world, including President Obama. Joseph Stack, who died in the February 2010 crash in Austin, thought that government “thugs and plunderers” were destroying the country and that the IRS had no right to tax U.S. citizens. John Patrick Bedell, who a month later tried to kill two police officers near the Pentagon, saw America as being in the grip of a narco-conspiracy whose protagonists had murdered an Air Force colonel. And Richard Poplawski, who shot to death three officers called to his home by his mother in 2009, was certain the government was planning gun confiscation, martial law and concentration camps.

In this issue, we take a hard look at what historian Richard Hofstadter famously called “the paranoid style in American politics.” We dissect the top 10 conspiracy theories of the antigovernment “Patriot” movement and talk to a leading scholar of such thinking. We report on a Russian English-language TV news show that is obsessed with U.S. conspiracy theories. And we examine, in great detail, the bizarre ideology of “sovereign citizens,” a branch of the resurgent Patriot movement that believes most Americans have no obligation to obey laws, regulations or tax codes, especially those imposed by the federal government.

Jerry and Joseph Kane, the father-son pair who murdered two West Memphis police officers and badly wounded two more this May before being shot to death themselves, were true believers. They had traveled the country giving seminars in a practice that supposedly allows people to avoid home foreclosure — one of many sovereign-citizen schemes popping up around the country. The strength of their beliefs was reflected in the angry rants of the elder Kane’s common-law wife, Donna Lee Wray, who didn’t seem to spend much time grieving. Instead, in line with sovereign theory, she demanded \$1 million from those who wrote about the case (including me) for each time they mentioned her “copyrighted” name.

How does this kind of conspiracist thinking lead to violence?

Michael Barkun, a professor emeritus at Syracuse University and the author of *A Culture of Conspiracy: Apocalyptic Visions in Contemporary America*, said that most of those who believe in such theories end up convinced that anyone who disputes their ideas “is just another part of the plot.

They’re either members of the conspiracy or lackeys of it. Everything is connected to everything else. What may be utterly mundane to us has sinister connotations for the conspiracy.”

Eventually, Barkun said, everyday life “becomes magnified into a battle with the forces of evil, and people develop a psychological investment in their worldview. They come to believe that they know the truth, but that evil forces are out to destroy them. So in the end, these theories can be used to legitimate violence, in the sense that they tell the believer he is an embattled minority who represents righteousness.”

Mark Pitcavage, the director of investigative research for the Anti-Defamation League, said there are two basic ways that conspiracy theories lead to violence. “The first way is less common, but more direct,” he said. “It’s clear that Richard Poplawski’s actions, for example, were substantially motivated by antigovernment conspiracy theories about gun confiscation, martial law and concentration camps — the holy trinity of conspiracy theories. More broadly, conspiracy theories affect a much larger number of people by creating an atmosphere of paranoia, distrust and disbelief that can contribute to someone deciding to undertake violent acts.”

Most experts agree that conspiracy culture has been spreading rapidly in this country — the appearance of large numbers of “birthers” and “9/11 truthers” is testimony to that. And while the vast majority of those people will certainly never lash out with criminal violence, a small and desperate minority will. By itself, that should be reason enough for all of us to squarely take on these claims and call them out for what they really are: disingenuous and dangerous lies. ▲



ON THE COVER

12 ‘Sovereign’ Citizen Kane

This May, a man and his son opened fire on police officers in West Memphis, Ark., killing two and wounding two others before being killed themselves. While it would be tempting to dismiss the murders as an isolated event, Jerry Kane and his young son were in fact members of the “sovereign citizens” movement — a dangerous, radical-right movement, driven by conspiracy theories, that may comprise 300,000 people.



36 From Russia, With Love?

Russia Today is a Kremlin-financed, English-language television channel meant to make Russia look good. But the channel, available to some 200 million viewers, also seems to be devoted to making America look bad — in particular, by plugging a series of baseless conspiracy theories mostly emanating from the U.S.’s extreme right.



42 Reich and Wrong

After sponsoring several fighters, a California “street wear” firm that has ties to racist skinheads and employs Nazi images on its products has been banned by three Mixed Martial Arts leagues. Hoelzer Reich clothing, some of which was worn once on national TV, features Waffen-SS symbols and references to a “Fourth Reich.”



26 ‘Patriot’ Paranoia

The last two years have seen a major upsurge of the radical right, particularly the antigovernment “Patriot” movement. The core ideology of this movement revolves around a set of conspiracy theories, most of which implicate the federal government. From chemtrails to the Fed, we look at the Patriots’ top 10 alleged conspiracies.

PAUL ROGERS (PATRIOT PARANOIA); FROM RT.COM (FROM RUSSIA, WITH LOVE); FROM HRAIFEL.COM (REICH AND WRONG)

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20 The Sovereigns

A dozen leaders of the contemporary “sovereign citizens” movement — some of them promoters of the so-called “redemption” scam — are profiled.



35 Seeing Evil

Michael Barkun, a leading academic expert on the relationship between religion and violence, discusses conspiracy culture in America and how it flourishes.

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A Tennessee “Patriot” uprising ends in arrests; Gulf oil spill conspiracy theories spread; key racist leaders are arrested in Idaho and Kentucky; and other glimpses of extremism.

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A sampling of hate crimes and hate group activities from the second quarter of 2010 is summarized in state-by-state listings.

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In a bizarre spinoff of the radical “grand juries” popping up around the country, a Harlem pastor orchestrates a “trial” that finds the president guilty of many bad things.

LAW ENFORCEMENT INQUIRIES WELCOMED

The Intelligence Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) welcomes law enforcement inquiries regarding right-wing extremists and hate groups. Please direct questions during normal business hours to Joseph Roy Sr. via the SPLC’s general number, (334) 956-8200.



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INTELLIGENCE BRIEFS



CONSPIRACY THEORIES

As Gulf Oil Spreads, So Do Slippery Conspiracy Theories

One conspiracy theory after another has bubbled to the surface since millions of gallons of oil began spewing into the Gulf of Mexico after an April 20 explosion on a deep-water oil rig.

Those consumed by even more sinister scenarios than the spill itself ranged from fringe, far-right characters to more mainstream commentators.

The latter category included radio commentator Rush Limbaugh, who suggested that “hard-core environmentalist wackos” opposed to an energy bill that would increase offshore drilling may have been responsible. “What better way to head off more oil drilling and nuclear plants than blowing up a rig?”

Limbaugh asked. He offered no evidence at all to support his theory.

Dana Perino, a one-time spokeswoman for President George W. Bush, similarly wondered in a Fox News interview if the explosion was an act of sabotage. Talk radio host Mark Levin, for

his part, said that President Obama’s vow to send Department of Interior “SWAT teams” to the Gulf of Mexico was a precursor “to another form of government nationalization.”

That was some of the tamer talk circulating about the disaster. On the Internet, conspiracy theories were thicker



Rush Limbaugh, Dana Perino and Mark Levin

Intelligence Briefs contributors: Larry Keller, Mark Potok and Evelyn Schlatter.

HATE IN THE MAINSTREAM

“She’s a fucking raghead. ... We’ve got a raghead in Washington; we don’t need one in South Carolina.”

– Republican South Carolina state Sen. **JAKE KNOTTS**, to a reporter **June 3**, referring to GOP gubernatorial candidate Nikki Haley, the daughter of Sikh Indian immigrants

“[T]here is a definitive factor played by racial genetics in intellectual achievement.”

– Marysville (Wash.) school board member **MICHAEL KUNDU**, in a **June 3** E-mail to colleagues on why students of certain ethnicities struggle academically, citing discredited academic racist and Pioneer Fund chief John Philippe Rushton

“I grew up with niggers, wops and Jews.”

– Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge **DOMINIC AMATO** during a **June 14** court hearing, explaining to a black defendant why he could empathize in remarks that sparked a court investigation

“What kind of clothes people wear ... what kind of shoes people wear, what kind of accent they have ... sometimes it’s just a sixth sense they can’t put their finger on.”

– U.S. Rep. **STEVE KING** (R-Iowa) on the House floor **June 15** describing the “common sense indicators” officers can use to spot undocumented immigrants

“We could now charge you with the most vehement anti-Black behavior in the annals of our history in America and the world.”

– Nation of Islam leader **LOUIS FARRAKHAN**, in a belligerent **June 24** letter to national Jewish organizations seeking “sensible, intelligent dialogue”

“The vast majority of them are Indians, they’re short, they’re squat little Indians.”

– Talk radio host and Watergate ex-con **G. GORDON LIDDY**, describing Mexicans during the **July 6** broadcast of Radio America’s syndicated “The G. Gordon Liddy Show”

“You look like a fucking bitch in heat, and if you get raped by a pack of niggers, it will be your fault, all right? Because you provoked it.”

– Oscar-winning actor **MEL GIBSON**, in a phone call taped by his estranged wife Oksana Grigorieva, that was posted on **July 9** by Radaronline.com

“Now the army, if you will, of the extreme left is gathering, and they are coming to the conclusion of, ‘Cops are bad, kill the cops, they’re the oppressors.’ ”

– Fox News host **GLENN BECK** on the **July 12** edition of Premiere Radio Network’s “The Glenn Beck Program,” claiming “extreme left” groups like the Gray Panthers and the Center for Constitutional Rights were among the “baby killers” behind the “well-coordinated riot” that followed the trial of a California police officer who killed an unarmed black man

QUOTES ON THIS PAGE WERE COMPILED FROM MEDIA ACCOUNTS, WEB PAGES, E-MAIL GROUPS AND MEDIA MATTERS FOR AMERICA, A WEBSITE THAT MONITORS THE FAR RIGHT.

than oil on a pelican’s feathers.

Conspiracy-obsessed radio host Alex Jones and two others wrote an article on one of Jones’ websites insisting that “the incident could have been manufactured.” They claimed that Halliburton, the huge oilfield services corporation, acquired a company that suppresses oil-well fires and blowouts just a little more than a week before BP’s Deepwater Horizon rig exploded, killing 11 workers and causing an environmental nightmare. Plus, they said, there was a huge dumping of BP shares of stock in the days and weeks before the disaster, suggesting that certain people had prior knowledge the disaster would occur.

Elsewhere, Robert Rutherford of the antigovernment website Patriotspace.com, which describes itself as “a place where Patriots, Militias and Survivalists can meet and learn,” shot videos and filed reports from Grand Isle, La. Although other media reported oil had soiled the barrier island and the Audubon Society published photos online proving it was so, Rutherford found none of that. Instead, he reported seeing suspicious Army and Coast Guard troops in “full battle dress and even more unusual contractors in white helmets.” Without being specific, he suggested the government was up to no good.

Greg Evensen, a militia sympathizer and former Kansas state trooper whose essays and radio broadcasts are featured on apocalyptic Christian and militia websites, predicted in late May that the government would begin evacuating 40 million people around mid-June from areas that would become unlivable due to the use of toxic chemical dispersants being employed by BP to deal with the spill. June came and went with no evacuations.

And then there was John Kaminski, a writer of Internet screeds who says he “used to live on the Gulf Coast of Florida, but now is adrift in America from the poisons that have been put in the Gulf of Mexico by madmen who are trying to rule the world by destroying it.” He added: “It was done so they could remove everyone and allow the

UN troops a place to come land and take over our country. Perhaps this is what will happen to allow the USA to join Canada and Mexico for ‘their’ North American Union.”

Of course Kaminski also believes that the 9/11 attacks were the work of Jewish bankers, and that Jewish bankers are responsible for all wars that have occurred. Another conspiracy for another day.

MILITIA MADNESS

In Tennessee, a ‘Patriot’ Uprising Collapses

Up until April of this year, the Tennessee city of Madisonville was known simply as the hometown of Estes Kefauver, the U.S. senator who campaigned for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1952 in a coonskin cap, and who was Adlai Stevenson’s running mate in the 1956 presidential election won by Dwight D. Eisenhower. Kefauver was most famous for his role in leading a 1950 commission looking into organized crime.

That changed when members of antigovernment “Patriot” groups allegedly plotted to take over the town’s courthouse, if not the entire town of 4,700 people. If not for Darren Wesley Huff’s purported penchant for blabbing about the plot, there’s no telling what might have happened, according to a federal complaint.

Walter Francis Fitzpatrick was arrested in Madisonville on April 2 after he tried to make a citizen’s arrest of the foreman of the county grand jury. He was charged with inciting a riot and disrupting an official public meeting and posted bail later. The retired Navy commander is the leader of American Grand Jury, a Patriot outfit that goes around the country issuing meaningless documents calling for the indictment of President Obama for treason on the grounds that he is not a U.S. citizen. The documents are routinely disregarded by officials, but Fitzpatrick allegedly tried in this case to place the grand jury foreman under

arrest for “official misconduct.”

At his home in Dalton, Ga., Huff got wind of Fitzpatrick’s plight and mentioned to a bank manager that he was a member of the Georgia Militia. He allegedly said that he and members of eight or nine other militia groups were planning to go to Madisonville on April 20 — when Fitzpatrick had a scheduled court appearance — to “take over the city.” The bank official told the FBI, and agents questioned Huff at his home. Huff reportedly told them that yes, he and others were planning to help Fitzpatrick make citizen’s arrests — not just of the grand jury foreman, but of 24 officials in all. Officials say that Huff added that he would be armed with his Colt .45 pistol and AK-47 rifle, but that there would be no violence unless the militiamen were provoked.

The FBI watched Huff as he left his home for Tennessee in his Sierra pickup, adorned with the logo of the Oath Keepers Patriot group (see related story, p. 10). He was stopped in Tennessee and issued a warning for three traffic violations. He allegedly told officers that if he and others — including some he believed to be Oath Keepers — had enough armed people, they would take over the Madisonville courthouse that day and make arrests of people named in “arrest warrants” signed by Fitzpatrick. Otherwise, they would return in a week or two, Huff said, reportedly adding that he was ready to die for his rights and his beliefs.

Law enforcement officials observed Huff and more than a dozen others as they gathered outside the Madisonville courthouse, some of them openly displaying firearms. Several seemed to be conducting surveillance of the courthouse and the agents who were watching them. Courthouse employees had already been told to stay home in anticipation of the showdown, and

Fitzpatrick’s hearing was postponed. No citizen’s arrests were attempted, and no militiamen were arrested.

The next day, Huff spoke on a radio show about his drive to Madisonville and the fact that he had his AK-47 and ammunition with him. A few days after that he was arrested and charged with traveling across state lines with intent to incite a riot, along with transporting a firearm in furtherance of a civil disorder. Huff pleaded not guilty and is free pending a trial. For now, those two dozen Madisonville officials have not been nabbed by militiamen making citizen’s arrests.

EXTREMIST CRIMES

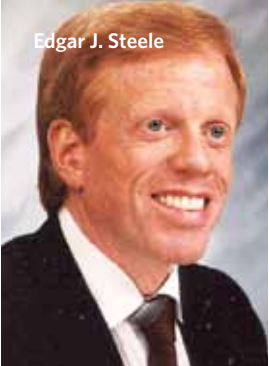
A Murder, Major Drug Charges and a Plotted Killing for Hire Vex White Supremacists

Racist leaders have been bedeviled lately by tabloid-worthy developments: One is under arrest for plotting to kill his wife, another was picked up on methamphetamine trafficking charges, and a third was murdered, allegedly by a black man he may have propositioned.

Idaho attorney **Edgar J. Steele**, best known for defending the late Aryan Nations founder Richard Butler in 2000, was arrested June 11 by federal authorities for allegedly hiring a man to kill his wife Cyndi, 53, and her mother. Steele allegedly told a long-time Idaho associate, Larry Fairfax, that he wanted the two women to die in a car acci-

dent so Steele could collect insurance money. In return, he was to pay Fairfax \$25,000 and give him some of the insurance proceeds.

Instead, Fairfax went to the police and agreed to wear a wire. He recorded Steele saying that he “wanted the plan carried out,” had “no second thoughts,”



and wanted Fairfax to make sure they were dead so he “wouldn’t have to take care of a paraplegic.”

Steele, self-proclaimed “attorney for the damned,” was denied bail after the judge learned of a recording of Steele trying to persuade his wife to lie about the Fairfax tapes. According to prosecutors, Steele on June 13 phoned his son Rex, 22, and later Cyndi — the woman Steele once called “my rock” — from jail to get Cyndi to say it wasn’t his voice in the recorded conversations with Fairfax.

Steele faces up 10 years in prison if convicted in a trial scheduled to begin on Aug. 9.

Meanwhile, 50-year-old **Ron Edwards**, the former imperial wizard of the Imperial Klans of America, appeared in court in Owensboro, Ky., on May 21 to face charges of drug possession and distribution and weapons violations. His girlfriend, Christina “Chrissy” Ann Gillette, faces charges of drug possession and distribution. Each was released on \$25,000 bond.

As a result of Edwards’ arrest and the police raid on his Dawson Springs, Ky., IKA compound, several prominent white nationalist groups yanked their support for Nordic Fest, an annual white nationalist Memorial Day event long hosted by Edwards at the compound. In its

Richard Barrett’s alleged killer, Vincent McGee, told police he had no idea of Barrett’s racist beliefs. He also claimed Barrett made advances toward him.

stead, a small racist gathering was eventually held at a location near Chicago.

Earlier, on April 22, attorney **Richard Barrett**, 67, a longtime white supremacist leader and founder of the Nationalist Movement, was found beaten and stabbed to death in his Pearl, Miss. home.

Vincent McGee, a 22-year-old ex-con and neighbor of Barrett’s who occasionally did yard work for him, was arrested almost immediately. McGee allegedly told authorities he attacked Barrett because Barrett made sexual

advances toward him. He also gave authorities other versions of the killing.

McGee, who is African-American, has tattoos that link him to the Vice Lords — Chicago’s oldest and second-largest street gang. He told authorities he didn’t know about Barrett’s racist background.

Barrett was long rumored to be gay, despite a long history of denigrating homosexuals. He attracted many young men through a forum for skinheads, and created “The Spirit of America Day,” which for 40 years honored male high school athletes. That event has been recognized by Mississippi lawmakers.

Barrett never became a major leader in white supremacist circles, but

he drew substantial media attention by organizing rallies and filing free-speech lawsuits.

RELIGIOUS RIGHT

Pols, Nativists Make Common Cause With Gay-Bashers

The religious right has produced a stream of invective directed at homosexuals in recent years, much of it shocking in its virulence. But that hasn’t stopped elected officials, nativist leaders and others from jumping on a bandwagon marked by gross intolerance and false propaganda.

Rosanna Pulido cut her political teeth on bashing undocumented immigrants, but she took her message recently to a different sort of group — the vehemently anti-gay Illinois Family Institute (IFI). IFI has made the preposterous claim — based on the completely bogus work of anti-gay ideologue Paul Cameron — that the median age of death for homosexual men is 42, and that only 9% live past the age of 65 (the claim was removed earlier this year after public criticism from the Southern Poverty Law Center). This June, IFI official Laurie Higgins declared that fast food behemoth McDonald’s is “hell bent on using its resources to promote subversive moral, social and political views about homosexuality to our children.” Inflammatory claims such as these, however, didn’t deter Pulido, a fairly well known nativist who earlier had shown no interest in issues other than immigration, from addressing the IFI at a monthly breakfast meeting in June.

Pulido was the Republican nominee in a special election last year for Illinois’ 5th congressional seat, but was trounced in the general election by her Democratic opponent. She founded the Illinois Minutemen organization in 2005 and has worked as a regional field coordinator for the Federation for American Immigration Reform, an anti-immigration group with ties to white supremacy. Pulido, who is of Mexican



Cross-pollination on the right: Rosanna Pulido, a nativist and former official of the Federation for American Immigration Reform, spoke recently to the Illinois Family Institute, a particularly virulent gay-bashing organization.

descent, once told a reporter, “We are drowning in illegal aliens.”

Pulido’s coziness with the gay-bashing IFI was no more notable than that of some Minnesota elected officials’ with You Can Run But You Cannot Hide Intl. Inc., a music ministry that brings punk rock evangelism into public schools in the Midwest. On a May 15 radio show, the ministry’s front man, Bradlee Dean, applauded the call of some Muslims for violence against gay people. “Muslims are calling for the executions of homosexuals in America,” Dean said. “This just shows you ... they seem to be more moral than even the American Christians... . They know homosexuality is an abomination.”

After *Minnesota Independent* writer Andy Birkey reported his comments, Dean backpedaled, saying he does not favor the execution of homosexuals. Despite those remarks, Republican State Rep. Tom Emmer defended the ministry as a “pro-traditional marriage group” composed of “nice people.” And last November, Minnesota congresswoman and Tea Party darling Michele Bachmann was the keynote speaker at a fundraiser for the ministry.

Nobody made more jaw-dropping comments, however, than Bryan Fischer of the self-described “Christian” group, American Family Association. (The AFA’s founder, the Rev. Don Wildmon, has made dozens of highly controversial statements, including the claim that “anti-Christian” material on TV is a result of the media being largely controlled by Jews who work to undermine Christianity.) In May, Fischer related on his radio show the Biblical story of Phineas, who “found an Israelite in flagrante with a Philistine woman” and ran his spear through both of them. “God is obviously looking for more Phineases in our day,” Fischer declared in offering a bloody solution for “promiscuity.”

Fischer followed that assertion with a blog post in which he claimed, “Homosexuality gave us Adolph Hitler, and homosexuals in the military gave us the Brown Shirts, the Nazi war machine and six million dead Jews.” Fischer conceded that gays were persecuted by the Nazis — in fact, thousands were sent to concentration camps — but said this was “almost exclusively the effeminate members of the gay community in Germany, and ... much of the mistreatment was administered by masculine homosexuals who despised effeminacy in all its forms.”

HATE IN THE MAINSTREAM

Fox News Personalities Reaching for New Lows

Fox News continues to give the words “fair and balanced” a whole new meaning.

Take Fox commentator Glenn Beck. He has long demonstrated a knack for making remarks offensive to African Americans and Jews. In June, he managed to seriously

offend both groups in a span of just three weeks.

Speaking on his June 4 radio show, Beck praised a 1936 book by Nazi sympathizer Elizabeth Dilling, who once called President Dwight Eisenhower “Ike the Kike” and is still revered by many white nationalists. In the book that Beck recommended, Dilling wrote that Nazi Germany “has directed its attacks more against conspiring, revolutionary Communist Jews, than against nationalist German Jews who aided Germany during the war.” Dilling’s book, Beck told his listeners, was “from people who were doing what we’re doing now,” presumably a reference to his rhetoric against government misconduct.

Beck’s twisting of World War II history is hardly new. This is the same man who in August 2009 compared President Obama’s plan to expand the Peace Corps and AmeriCorps to “what Hitler did with the SS.”

Three weeks after the Dilling comments, Beck declared that the U.S. was moving in the right direction until the Civil War. “The things that have happened in this country, where it really started to go wrong, was in the lead up to the Civil War. And it became politicized, and it was all about slavery. Before then, we were moving on the right track,” Beck said.

Earlier in the month, Beck asserted that the U.S. civil rights movement had been “co-opted” by progres-



Glenn Beck



Luther King Jr.'s famous "I have a dream" speech at the same location. Beck said on June 15 that the event was an effort to "pick up Martin Luther King's dream that has been distorted." A day earlier, he said the dream had been "massively perverted." The comments from Beck, who has never shown any interest in civil rights, were imme-

sives. Along with Sarah Palin, he is one of the featured speakers scheduled for a "Restoring Honor Rally" at the Lincoln Memorial on Aug. 28 — the 47th anniversary of Martin

diately decried by civil rights leaders. Meanwhile, Fox Business News began a televised program in June called "Freedom Watch" that trots out a lineup of conservative all-stars. In its earlier, online-only version, the show has featured Alex Jones, possibly the leading conspiracy-monger in the United States. The show is hosted by Andrew Napolitano, a former New Jersey state judge who joined Fox in 1998.

"Fox & Friends" got into the act, too, interviewing

Allan Wall, a longtime contributor to the racist VDARE.com website, about immigration. Co-host Steve Doocy mentioned near the end of the interview that Wall writes for VDARE, but pro-



Fox's Steve Doocy (left) and Andrew Napolitano were among those who featured extremists as guests on their shows.

JUNE 22, 2010 • ATLANTA, GA.

A man identified as Frank McDade was part of a group called Project Rise Up that demonstrated in downtown's Woodruff Park to protest the imprisonment of "wrongly accused" black supremacist cult leader Dwight York. York, who used scores of different names throughout his career, founded a series of black nationalist groups and cults in New York and elsewhere before moving to Putnam County, Ga., in the early 1990s to set up the Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, which he described as a "sovereign" nation that would be free from the influence of white "devils." Once there, the Nuwaubians built an Egyptian-themed compound called Tama-Re on a 476-acre piece of land. York was arrested in 2002 on almost 200 counts of child molestation — a number prosecutors reportedly cut back from more than 1,000 simply to make their case more manageable — and ultimately sentenced to 135 years in prison on those charges and for conspiracy and financial crimes. Despite the claims of the protesters, the evidence against York, who had earlier been investigated for murder in New York, was widely seen as very strong and involved victims of both sexes, some as young as 4 years old. Since York's imprisonment, the Nuwaubian group has been in sharp decline. Still, Project Rise Up claimed that on the same day as the Atlanta protest, similar demonstrations were held in 14 cities around the United States and Canada. Malik Zulu Shabazz, leader of the black hate group the New Black Panther Party, has described York as "a great leader of our people and ... a victim of an open conspiracy."



FROM GLENBECK.COM (POSTER); RICHARD DREW/AP IMAGES (DOOCY); BOB D'AMICO/CORBIS (NAPOLITANO); JEFF DAVIS/JEFF.COM (MCDADE)

THE BLOTTER

Updates on Extremism and The Law

MAY 6 Prosecutors declined to file charges in a double stabbing at the Ritz-Carlton hotel in **Manalapan, Fla.**, that sent two long-time **neo-Nazis** to a hospital following a 2009 fight at a speech by **Holocaust denier** David Irving. Police had sought charges of aggravated battery against Christopher Nachtman, a former member of the **National Alliance**, and John Kopko, a former official of the **National Socialist White Workers Party**. The fight between the two apparently reflected tensions between **racist skinhead** groups.

MAY 13 A member of **Volksfront**, a **racist skinhead** group, was sentenced in **Norfolk, Va.**, to five years in prison after pleading guilty in connection with pasting more than 60 anti-Semitic and racist stickers on two synagogues. John Edward Grogan also will spend 25 years on probation and is to have no contact with Volksfront members.

MAY 17 A **neo-Nazi** in **Portland, Ore.**, pleaded guilty to mailing a noose to an NAACP official in **Lima, Ohio**, who had been publicly critical of the shooting of an African-American man by a white police officer. Daniel Lee Jones also mailed racist flyers to Lima residents. He faces up to 18 months in prison when sentenced.

MAY 18 Robert Joos Jr., a **Missouri white supremacist** and one-time leader of the **Sacerdotal Order of David Company**, was sentenced to 6½ years in prison for being a felon in possession of firearms and explosives. Joos was arrested in connection with the investigation of two brothers charged with mailing a package bomb to a black diversity officer in **Arizona**. Officials said Joos' property had long

been used as a training ground for underground white supremacists.

MAY 26 Teenager **Jeffrey Conroy** was sentenced to 25 years in prison — the maximum allowed — following his conviction for first-degree manslaughter as a **hate crime** in the 2008 stabbing of Ecuadorian immigrant **Marcelo Lucero**. Conroy and six young friends, several of whom later told police they were engaged in a sport they called "beaner-jumping," used **anti-Latino** racial slurs during the much-publicized attack. At trial, Conroy tried to blame a former friend for the death.

JUNE 2 A federal grand jury handed down a superceding, 15-count indictment against several self-described "Christian warriors" of the **Hutaree Militia**. The earlier indictment accused nine members of the **antigovernment "Patriot" group** of plotting to kill a police officer in **Michigan** and then ambush more officers at the funeral. The new indictment adds charges related to the illegal machine guns, short-barreled rifles and more than 148,000 rounds of ammunition and explosives that were found in defendants' homes. Four of the defendants were released on bail but ordered not to leave their homes.

JUNE 28 A federal appeals court reversed a trial judge in **Chicago**, ruling that he erred in dismissing a threat charge against **neo-Nazi** Bill White, former leader of the **American National Socialists Workers Party**. The charge related to White's Web post

attacking the foreman of a jury that sent another neo-Nazi leader, Matt Hale of the **World Church of the Creator**, to prison. White was already serving a 2½-year sentence in connection with threatening other enemies.

JULY 2 Two men with extensive connections to **white supremacists** and the Vagos motorcycle gang were arrested in connection with a six-month series of booby-trap attacks on police officers in **Hemet, Calif.** Nicholas John Smit and Charles Johnson, said to be enraged by a Hemet officer's 2009 arrest of Smit on drug and weapons charges, allegedly staged eight attacks on officers, including arson, zip guns rigged to fire automatically, and an attempt to fire a rocket at their station.



The Hutarees are accused of plotting to kill police.

JULY 2 Allen Goff, a rising figure in the **white supremacist Creativity Movement**, was sentenced to six months of probation and fined \$150 for carrying a concealed weapon. Goff was acquitted of the more serious charge of felony assault with a weapon after wounding a Latino teen in **Billings, Mont.**, in an incident he claimed was an accident. Prosecutors had argued that the shooting was racially motivated.

JULY 6 A **Kentucky** man pleaded guilty to threatening to assassinate the president in a poem that he posted to **NewSaxon.org**, a **neo-Nazi** social networking site. Johnny Logan Spencer Jr. of **Louisville** wrote: "And the inspiration on the [bullet] casing reads DIE negro DIE." He faces up to five years in federal prison when sentenced.

vided no information about the nature of the website that rails on about the dangers of immigration and an invasion of the Southwest by Latinos.

ANTIGOVERNMENT 'PATRIOTS'

Oath Keepers Group Battered by Members' Arrests

Oath Keepers, a two-year-old organization that encourages police officers and soldiers to disobey orders that may be unconstitutional, has long contended that it is about nothing more than protecting Americans' freedoms. Its leader has angrily denounced suggestions that the group is animated by radical beliefs, and accused critics of working to smear an upstanding, patriotic group.

But several recent developments have created problems for Stewart Rhodes, the Oath Keepers leader who says he merely wants to defend the Constitution.

This April, a suburban Cleveland, Ohio, man described by a prosecutor as the president of a local Oath Keepers chapter was jailed on 54 criminal counts related to his alleged storing of a live napalm bomb at his home, along with other explosives kept at a friend's home. The man, Matthew Fairfield, already had been sentenced in February to two years' probation for carrying concealed weapons.

During the same month in Tennessee, an armed man driving a pickup truck emblazoned with an Oath Keepers logo was arrested in a bizarre scheme to place two dozen officials in a town under arrest (see story, p. 5).

And in January, another self-described Oath Keeper, Charles Dyer, was arrested in Oklahoma for the alleged rape and forcible sodomy of a 7-year-old child; he was also charged with possessing a grenade launcher that had been stolen from a California military base in 2006.

A jury acquitted Dyer of the federal weapons charge but the sexual abuse charges are still pending. Dyer — who popped up often in YouTube videos to complain about the “New World Order” and other apparently looming dangers — had spoken on behalf of Oath Keepers

at a 2009 Tea Party event in Oklahoma. Just days before the appearance, Rhodes, who later sought to distance his group from Dyer, promised that Dyer would “deliver one heck of a fiery speech.”



Charles Dyer

ANTI-MUSLIM HATE CRIME

Pipe-Bombing of Crowded Mosque Latest Anti-Muslim Attack

Authorities have no suspects in the pipe-bombing of a Florida mosque during evening prayers on May 12. The incident is part of a spike in anti-Muslim violence in the last six months, according to Islamic rights organizations.

Approximately 60 worshipers were at The Islamic Center of Northeast Florida in Jacksonville when the device went off around 9:35 p.m. It caused a small fire in the back of the building, but no one was injured.

The FBI released surveillance video of what appears to be a middle-aged white man carrying a gasoline container in the area of the bombing. Investigators believe he is connected to the attack. Another surveillance video was released that showed a different man who entered the mosque April 4 and shouted anti-Islam epithets. Neither man has been found.

Ibrahim Hooper, spokesman for the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), said his organization has seen a jump in anti-Islamic incidents since

the attempted Christmas Day bombing of a Northwest Airlines flight as it approached Detroit. A Nigerian man later determined to have ties to al Qaeda was subdued by passengers when he tried to ignite explosives sewn to his underwear. Alejandro J. Beutel, government liaison for the Washington, D.C.-based Muslim Public Affairs Council, said his organization has noted the same trend.

Other recent anti-Islamic incidents noted by CAIR include:

- Ads on Miami and New York City buses directing Muslims to a website urging them to leave “the falsity of Islam” that were paid for by Stop the Islamization of America, a Muslim-bashing group headed by Tea Party favorite Pam Geller.
- A protester shouting a bomb threat at a June 28 demonstration against a proposed Brooklyn mosque.
- A man in Sunnydale, Calif., attacked on June 11 by two men who asked him if he was Jewish. When the victim said that he was Muslim, one of the men called him a terrorist and punched him in the face.
- An Edmond, Okla., resident who, on June 27, placed a handmade sign on her lawn that quoted a violent verse from the Koran. Next to the sign was placed a white cross with the words, “If this offends you, you have the right to leave.” The sign faced a home into which an Indian Muslim family was expected to



Bashing Muslims: A group called Stop the Islamization of America (SIOA) recently paid for large “Leaving Islam?” ads (below) on Miami and New York buses.



STEPHENS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE (OVER); FROM SIOA/ONLINE.COM (LOGO AND BUS SIGN)

move. The woman who posted the signs told a reporter that “there is no such thing as a peace-loving Muslim.”

ANIMAL RIGHTS EXTREMISM

Another Researcher Apparently Targeted for Death

Animal rights extremists may be responsible for cutting the brake lines of a University of California, Santa Cruz, marine biologist's car, believing the researcher conducted animal experiments. The biologist's wife discovered the damage May 24 when she noticed a puddle of brake fluid under the vehicle in the driveway of their home and alerted police.

The incident was the fourth directed at UCSC researchers in two years, three of which involved actions clearly intended to hurt humans. In years past, most violence related to animal rights has been directed at property.

Jerry Vlasak, the so-called “press officer” for the North American Animal Liberation Front (ALF), told ABC News he didn't know if ALF activists were behind the latest incident. Typically, anonymous activists acting in the name of ALF contact Vlasak's office to claim credit for their attacks. Vlasak said ALF hadn't received a communiqué regarding the latest incident but noted that such claims often aren't made for a month or more after attacks.

The targeted biologist, whose identity was not released, may have been selected because the saboteurs believed he conducts research on animals. But Santa Cruz Deputy Police Chief Rick Martinez said the scientist performs environmental conservation research and does not use animals.

In August 2008, UCSC molecular biologist David Feldheim's home and a fellow researcher's car were firebombed in separate incidents at a faculty housing area on campus. Feldheim suffered injuries to his feet as he escaped the home with his family. Police have no suspects in either case.

In February 2008, six masked intrud-

ers attempted to barge into another UCSC researcher's home during a child's birthday party. The researcher's husband was attacked when he tried to stop them. Four animal rights activists, two of whom were former UCSC students, were arrested a year later: Joseph Buddenberg, Maryam Khajavi, Nathan Pope and Adriana Stumpo. At press time, a trial date was expected to be set for some time this fall.

NATIVIST GROUPS

Minuteman Founder Accused of Family Violence, Again

Marital bliss continues to elude Minuteman founder Chris Simcox.

Simcox, 49, founder and former leader of the civilian border watch group Minutemen Civil Defense Corps, is the subject of a restraining order sought by his wife of five years, Alena Maria Lyras-Simcox, 30. According to her affidavit, Simcox threatened her with a gun in November 2009 and said he was going to kill her, their children, and any police she called to the scene. Simcox also allegedly has been sending his estranged wife threatening E-mails.

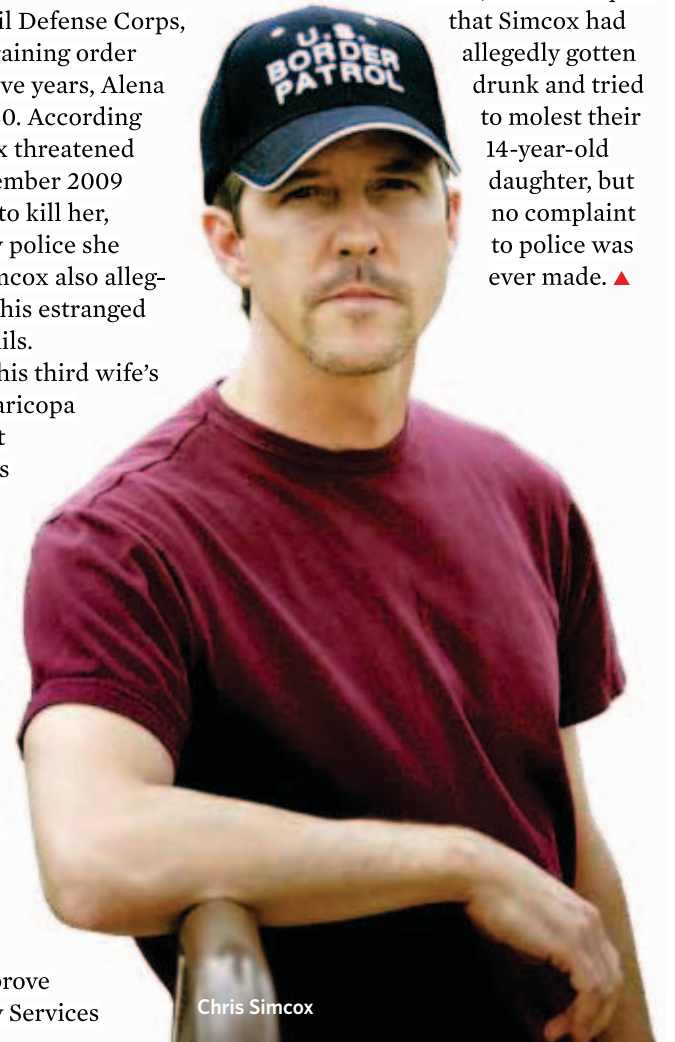
Simcox has denied his third wife's allegations. But the Maricopa County Superior Court granted Alena Simcox's request on April 16, ordering the nativist leader to vacate the house he shared with Alena, stay at least 200 yards away from her and their three children, and turn in all his guns.

Under Arizona law, a restraining order doesn't take effect until it is properly served on the defendant, which in Simcox's case did not prove easy. Fugitive Recovery Services

of Arizona (FRS), a bounty hunting service, spent weeks attempting to locate Simcox, even releasing a “Wanted” poster of him in early June that described him as “armed and dangerous.” Stacey O'Connell, co-owner of FRS and a former Minuteman colleague of Simcox, later told the *Intelligence Report* that Simcox finally was served with the restraining order on July 6.

This is not the first time Simcox has been accused of violence by a spouse. As revealed in a 2005 *Intelligence Report* article, Kim Dunbar, Simcox's second wife, sought to obtain custody of their teenaged son in 2001 because she feared her husband had become dangerous. In sworn affidavits, she alleged that Simcox was prone to violent rages throughout their 10-year marriage. His first wife, Deborah

Crews, told the *Report* that Simcox had allegedly gotten drunk and tried to molest their 14-year-old daughter, but no complaint to police was ever made. ▲



Chris Simcox



Cop-killers Jerry and Joe Kane were members of a rapidly growing radical-right movement that may now be 300,000 strong

‘Sovereign’ Citizen Kane

BY J.J. MACNAB



The moment of truth: 16-year-old Joe Kane as he opens fire on two Arkansas police officers.

It had been one of those mornings for West Memphis, Ark., police officers Brandon Paudert and Bill Evans. By 11:00 on May 20, they'd already spent three hours monitoring a suspicious rental truck and vehicle with Arizona license plates parked at a local motel, trying to determine whether the truck contained a shipment of illegal drugs. As members of the West Memphis Police Department's drug interdiction team, their job was to stop the seemingly endless flow of narcotics that passed through their town on busy Interstate 40. Officer Paudert called it in, and the West Memphis chief of police arrived at the scene to assess the situation.

When it was discovered that the truck and car was nothing more sinister than a grandmother moving her family, the good-natured ribbing began. After all, the chief of police was not just the officers' boss; he was Brandon Paudert's father.

"I told them to get off their butts and get back on the interstate," Chief Bob Paudert recounted later. "They were really laughing."

Chagrined, Paudert and Evans returned to I-40, watching for signs of drugs on the move through their jurisdiction. When Evans spied a white minivan with unusual Ohio license plates, he pulled the van over at the exit near Mile Marker 275, and called his partner for backup. Safety came first, and in the dangerous world of drug trafficking, there is no such thing as a routine stop.

Inside the white minivan, a 16-year-old boy named Joseph Kane remained in the passenger seat, while his father, Jerry, age 45, stood in front of the police SUV and argued with the offi-



End of watch: Police officers Brandon Paudert (left) and Bill Evans, seen here during an April drug bust, had worked together frequently. On May 20, at the hands of a father-son pair of "sovereign citizens," they died together.

cers. There was a tussle, and Jerry Kane pushed Officer Evans into a roadside ditch. The boy quickly emerged from the minivan with a loaded AK-47 and aimed at Evans. The officer put one hand on his pistol, and held the other up to the boy as if to signal "Stop." The boy shot Evans several times and turned his attention to Paudert, who took cover behind the police vehicle.

A package delivery man, exiting the highway at Marker 275, stopped his truck to witness the horrific scene. He called 911, and the alert went out: "Officer down!"

While Paudert was able to fire his pistol seven times, he was outgunned and the police vehicle offered little protection from Joe Kane's assault rifle. The boy chased Paudert around the police SUV, shooting him several times in the back of the head before returning to Evans in the ditch. There, he fired again. The Kanes then rushed to the minivan and pulled away, while Joe continued to shoot at the downed officers.

Another alert went out: "Two officers down!"

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MIKE DOUGLAS/THE EVENING TIMES

According to a preliminary investigation report, Brandon Paudert was struck 11 times and died at the scene; Evans was hit by 14 rounds and died at the hospital.

In the next 90 minutes, there was a frenzy of activity around West Memphis. The highways were closed, law enforcement from various agencies converged on the area looking for the white minivan with odd Ohio plates, and calls started coming in from alert citizens. The van was spotted at a local country club, a commercial truck terminal, and an apartment building. One witness claimed that Jerry Kane had asked for directions to the nearest Walmart. As seen in Walmart security videotapes of the parking lot, Joe Kane walked into the store and made a purchase, while his father removed the license plates from the vehicle.

The first to spot the van was an Arkansas wildlife officer who rammed into the Kanes' vehicle to prevent it from leaving. The Kanes fired more than a dozen rounds at the officer's truck, but he wasn't hit. As police converged on the scene, two more officers were wounded in a frenzied shootout before the Kanes were both killed. Crittenden County Sheriff Dick Busby was shot once in the shoulder, and W.A. Wren, West Memphis' chief of enforcement, was hit multiple times in the abdomen. Both men survived.

Over the next few days, West Memphis mourned the loss of its officers. At the same time, the department, other law enforcement officials, and the public at large began to question exactly what had provoked the violence.

Who are the 'Sovereigns'?

It would be tempting to dismiss the violence that took place that day as an isolated event — an unstable father and son who exploded in a moment of vicious, unexplained fury. The truth, however, is more frightening. Jerry Kane and his young son were active participants in the sprawling subculture of "sovereign citizens" in America: hundreds of thousands of far-right extremists who believe that they — not judges, juries, law enforcement or elected officials — get to decide which laws to obey and which to ignore, and who don't think they should have to pay taxes. While law enforcement officers may disagree on how to deal with or even label this extremist subculture, one thing is certain: it's trouble. The sovereign

YOUTUBE VIDEO

DEATH ON THE INTERSTATE

A TRAFFIC STOP TURNS DEADLY



11:36 AM Officer Evans pulls over "sovereign citizen" Jerry Kane.



11:46 AM Kane argues with Evans at the rear of the vehicle.



11:48 AM Joe Kane exits the vehicle with an AK-47 and opens fire.



11:49 AM The Kanes flee the scene, leaving two dying officers behind.



12:41 PM The Kanes' vehicle enters a Walmart parking lot.



1:20 PM Officer Neal rams the Kanes' vehicle to prevent escape.



1:45 PM The Kanes are both killed in a shootout with police.

movement is growing fast, and its partisans are clogging up the courts with their indecipherable filings. When cornered, many of them lash out in rage, frustration and, in the most extreme cases, acts of deadly violence.

It is difficult to say precisely how many sovereigns there are in the United States today, in part because there is no central leadership and no organized group that members can join — instead, there are a variety of local leaders with individualized takes on sovereign citizen ideology and techniques (see leader profiles, p. 20). Those who are attracted to this bizarre subculture typically attend a seminar or two, or visit one of the thousands of websites and online videos on the subject, and then simply choose how to act on what they've learned. Some start by testing sovereign ideology with small offenses such as driving without a license, while others proceed directly to taking on the IRS as tax protesters.

In the mid-1990s, the IRS estimated that there were approximately 250,000 such tax protesters in the U.S., not all of whom were full-blown sovereign ideologues. Since the late 1990s, an abundance of evidence suggests that the sovereign citizen movement's growth has been explosive, although there have been no more recent IRS estimates because Congress in 1998 prohibited the agency from tracking or labeling those who file frivolous arguments in lieu of paying their taxes. But a conservative estimate of the number of all kinds of tax protesters today would be about 500,000.

In the 2008 criminal tax trial of actor Wesley Snipes, whose tax filings made clear that he was a sovereign tax protester, IRS senior technical adviser Shauna Henline testified that the agency receives between 20,000 and 30,000 frivolous returns each year, along with roughly 100,000 letters from tax protesters. Earlier, in 2001, the U.S. Senate's Finance Committee held hearings on the growing movement and, by 2008, the Department of Justice had decided to introduce the National Tax Defier Initiative in a bid to target key movement leaders. "Simply stated," then-Assistant Attorney General Nathan Hochman said in announcing the DOJ initiative, "we want to pull back the curtain and show the public that the promoters of these tax and bogus schemes are not some wizards that have revealed the tax-free

universe to America, but instead are nothing more than garden variety hucksters and modern day snake oil salesmen, peddling their bogus tax products.”

Not all tax protesters are sovereign citizens, and many newer recruits to the sovereign life did not start out as tax protesters. But based on the available evidence, a reasonable estimate of hard-core sovereign believers today would be 100,000, with another 200,000 just starting out by testing sovereign techniques for resisting everything from speeding tickets to drug charges, for a total of 300,000. As sovereign theories go viral throughout the nation’s prison systems and among people who are unemployed and desperate in a punishing recession, this number is likely to grow.

Redeeming the ‘Strawman’

While many sovereign citizens own guns, their weapon of choice is paper. A simple traffic violation or pet-licensing case can end up provoking dozens of court filings containing hundreds of pages of pseudo-legal nonsense. For example, Donna Lee Wray, Jerry Kane’s “common-law wife,” was recently involved in a protracted legal battle in a dog-licensing case. She filed 10 sovereign documents in court over a two-month period, then declared victory when the harried prosecutor decided to drop the case. A three-year dog license in Wray’s Pinellas County, Fla., costs \$20.

Tax cases are even worse —sovereign filings in such legal battles can quickly exceed a thousand pages. While a normal criminal case docket might have 60 or 70 entries, many involving sovereigns have as many as 1,200. The courts are struggling to keep up, and judges, prosecutors and public defenders are being swamped.

It isn’t just the number of pages that is causing courts to sag under the weight of these filings. The documents are written in a kind of special sovereign code language that judges, lawyers and other court staff simply don’t speak. Sovereigns believe that if they can find just the right combination of words, punctuation, paper, ink color and timing, they can have anything they want — freedom from taxes, unlimited wealth, and life without licenses, fees or laws, are all just a few strangely worded documents away. It’s the modern-day equivalent of “abracadabra.”

At its core, the current sovereign belief system is relatively simple and is based on a decades-old conspiracy theory. At some point in history, sovereigns believe, the American government set up by the founding fathers — with a legal system the sovereigns refer to as “common law” — was secretly replaced by a new government system based on admiralty law, the law of the sea and international commerce. Some sovereigns believe this perfidious change occurred during the Civil War, while others blame the events of 1933, when America abandoned the gold standard. Either way, they stake their lives and livelihood on the

“How much more routine can you get than a father and son in a church van? Your guard is down and you’re just not ready for a shootout. We need indicators that tell us what to look for.”

— CHIEF BOB PAUDERT, FATHER AND BOSS OF SLAIN OFFICER BRANDON PAUDERT

idea that judges around the country know all about this hidden government takeover but are denying the sovereigns’ motions and filings out of treasonous loyalty to hidden and malevolent government forces. Under common law, or so they believe, the sovereigns would be free men. Under admiralty law, they are slaves, and secret government forces have a vested interest in keeping them that way.

The next layer of the scheme is even more implausible. Since 1933, the U.S. dollar has been backed not by gold, but by the “full faith and credit” of the U.S. government. According to sovereign researchers, this means that the government has pledged its citizenry as collateral, by selling their future earning capabilities to foreign investors, effectively enslaving all Americans. This sale, they claim, takes place at birth.

When a baby is born in the U.S., a birth certificate is issued, and the hospital usually requires that the parents apply for a Social Security number at that time. Sovereigns say that the government then uses that certificate to set up a kind of corporate trust in the baby’s name — a secret Treasury account — which it funds with an amount ranging from

\$600,000 to \$20 million, depending on the particular variant of the sovereign belief system. By setting up this account, every newborn’s rights are cleverly split between those held by the flesh-and-blood baby and the ones assigned to his or her corporate shell account.

The clues, many sovereigns believe, are found on the birth certificate itself. Since most certificates use all capital letters to spell out a baby’s name, JOHN DOE is the name of the corporate shell “strawman,” while John Doe is the baby’s “real,” flesh-and-blood name. As the child grows older, most of his legal documents will utilize capital letters, which means that his state-issued driver’s license, his marriage license, his car registration, his criminal court records, his cable TV bill, and correspondence from the IRS will all pertain to his corporate shell identity, not his real, sovereign identity.

The process sovereigns have devised to split the strawman from the flesh-and-blood man is called “redemption,” and its purpose is two-fold. Once separated from the corporate shell, the newly freed man is now outside of the jurisdiction of all admiralty laws. More importantly, by filing a series of complex, legal-sounding documents, the sovereign can tap into that secret Treasury account for his own purposes. Over the last 30 years, there have been hundreds of sovereign promoters packaging different combinations of forms and paperwork, attempting to perfect the process. While no one has ever succeeded, of course, they know with the religious certainty of a true cult believer that they’re close. All it will take is the right combination of words, say the promoters of the redemption scam.

Jerry Kane was one such promoter.

Why Do They Do it?

Newcomers drift into the movement in a variety of ways. Originally, the sovereign citizens movement mostly attracted white supremacists and anti-Semites, mainly because sovereign theories originated in groups who saw Jews as playing a behind-the-scenes role in manipulating financial institutions and controlling the government. Most early sovereigns, and some of those who are still on the scene, believed that being white was a prerequisite to becoming a sovereign citizen. They argued that the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, which gave blacks U.S. citizenship, also made black Americans permanently subject to federal and state governments, unlike themselves.

In recent years, however, most new recruits are people who have found themselves in a desperate situation and are searching for a quick fix. Others are intrigued by the notions of easy money and living a lawless life, free from any unpleasant consequences. (Moreover, many self-identified sovereigns today are black and apparently completely unaware of the racist origins of their ideology.) When they experience some small success at using redemption techniques to battle minor traffic

The aftermath: Police surround the Kanes’ vehicle after the final shootout in a Walmart parking lot. The body of Joe Kane lies in the foreground; his father’s hand can be seen behind the rear of the vehicle. The Kanes had removed their license plates less than half an hour earlier.

offenses or local licensing issues, they’re hooked. For many, it’s a political issue. They don’t like taxes, traffic laws, child support obligations or making banks rich, but they are too impatient to try to change what they dislike by traditional, political means.

In times of economic prosperity, sovereigns typically rely on absurd and convoluted schemes to evade state and federal income taxes and hide their assets from the IRS. In times of financial hardship, they turn to debt- and mortgage-elimination scams, techniques to avoid child support payments, and even attempts to use their redemption techniques to get out of serious criminal charges. Jerry Kane, who’d suffered a series of personal defeats in life, specialized in teaching a mortgage-elimination technique that had no basis in the actual law.

Once in the movement, it’s an immersive and heady experience. In the last three decades, the redemptionist subculture has grown from small groups of like-minded individuals in localized pockets around the nation to a richly layered society. Redemptionists attend specialized seminars and national conferences, enjoy a large assortment of alternative newspapers and radio networks, and subscribe to sovereign-oriented magazines and websites. They home school their children so that a new generation will not have to go through the same learning curve that they did to see past the government’s curtain to the common-law utopia beyond.

While the techniques sold by promoters never perform as promised, most followers are nonetheless content to be fighting



ALAN SPEARMAN/THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

the battle, and they blame only the judges, lawyers, prosecutors and police when their gurus’ methods fail. While most have never achieved financial success in life, they take pride in engaging the government in battle, comparing themselves to the founding fathers during the American Revolution.

In recent months, their movement has grown to the point where a group called the Guardians of the Free Republics is attempting to assemble its own common-law-based, alternative government on a national scale. Already, the group, which earlier this year demanded that the governors of all 50 states step down, claims to have set up a common-law court in every state. At least 1,350 people have signed up to serve as jurors on these pseudo-legal judicial bodies.

Liens, Litigation and Murder

A litigation plan based solely on conspiracies and absurd legal theories is doomed to fail. When the inevitable happens, the sovereign has two choices: he can admit he was wrong and fell for an obvious scam, or he can blame the government. Considering that most sovereigns were already desperate when they joined the movement, spending years and many dollars on worthless redemption techniques can only have worsened their situation. Realistically, some angry outbursts are to be expected when the moment of truth arrives.

Sometimes, those outbursts are aimed at self or family. But far more often, the sovereign takes aim at his perceived enemies. The judge that dismisses his claim, the county recorder who refuses his filing, the reporter that calls him a deadbeat dad, and the sheriff who evicts him from his foreclosed home — all are possible targets of a sovereign’s rage (see tips for law enforcement officials, p. 24). Since most sovereigns favor paper over guns, this revenge most often takes the form of retaliatory property liens and tax forms that are designed to ruin an enemy’s credit rating and cause them to be audited by the IRS.

But in those cases where a sovereign feels particularly desperate, angry, battle-weary and cornered, his next government

Murdered Officers Part of Deadly Trend

When 16-year-old Joseph Kane shot and killed two Arkansas police officers in May, it was only the latest in a disturbing trend of right-wing extremists murdering law enforcement officials. Kane shot West Memphis officers Bill Evans and Brandon Paudert a combined 25 times with an AK-47 after he and his father, Jerry Ralph Kane Jr., were pulled over in a traffic stop. The Kanes, who had traveled the country giving classes in “redemption foreclosure mortgage fraud,” went on to wound two other officers before being killed themselves.

In 2009, five law enforcement officers and a museum security guard were slain in three incidents in which the suspected shooters reportedly had each

expressed displeasure with the election of President Obama. That was the most since 1995, when six officers were murdered by right-wing extremists, five of them in the Oklahoma City bombing that also left 163 other people dead.

The victims last year included three Pittsburgh police officers allegedly shot and killed by Richard Poplawski, who a friend said feared that President Obama was going to restrict gun ownership. (Poplawski’s case is pending). In Okaloosa County, Fla., two sheriff’s deputies were shot and killed by U.S. Army Reservist Joshua Cartwright, who was then killed in a shootout. Cartwright’s wife told officials her husband had been “severely disturbed”

by Obama’s election, and local authorities said that he had been interested in joining an antigovernment militia. In Washington, D.C., neo-Nazi James von Brunn shot and killed a security guard at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Von Brunn, 88, who died later while in custody, wrote in a notebook that “Obama does what his Jew owners tell him to do,” according to a police affidavit.

Since 1990, law enforcement officers have comprised nearly 15% of the victims of far-right killings — 49 out of more than 400 fatalities — according to a report published this year by the University of Maryland. Local and state officers have accounted for more than 70% of these law enforcement deaths.



Stressed out: With their finances in shambles, Jerry Kane and his son Joe traveled the country giving sparsely attended seminars on avoiding foreclosure while clad in white suits. When Jerry Kane was arrested in New Mexico for driving without a license (booking photos above), he seemed to grow ever angrier than in the past. A month later, the Kanes, now cop-killers, were dead.



contact, no matter how minor, can be his final straw. The resulting rage can be lethal.

Jerry and Joe Kane were not the first sovereigns to lash out at a routine traffic stop and it’s unlikely they’ll be the last. In 1995 in Ohio, a sovereign named Michael Hill pulled a gun on an officer during a traffic stop. Hill was killed. In 1997, New Hampshire extremist Carl Drega shot dead two officers and two civilians, and wounded another three officers before being

killed himself. In that same year in Idaho, when brothers Doug and Craig Broderick were pulled over for failing to signal, they killed one officer and wounded another before being killed themselves in a violent gun battle.

And, in a 1993 case that bears an eerie similarity to the recent events in West Memphis, an Alabama officer approached a family’s car in a strip mall parking lot. A shopper there had told the officer that a boy in the back seat was asking for help. The officer walked to the car and asked to see the father’s driver’s license. There was an argument, and the father made some typical sovereign claims. Then, without warning, the father pulled out his gun and shot the officer. Badly wounded, the officer tried to run to his car, but instead met the wife of the sovereign, who pulled out her own weapon and shot him dead. The couple had warrants out for their arrest in Florida, and the car they were driving had unusual sovereign-style license plates. Sovereign citizens George Sibley and Linda Block were executed for the murder by the state of Alabama several years later.



Heart to heart: West Memphis, Ark., Detective Jimmy Evans (left), whose brother was murdered by Joe Kane, talks with Wildlife Officer Michael Neal. Neal rammed his truck into the fleeing Kanes’ vehicle, preventing their escape and drawing a hail of bullets from the fugitives.

Citizen Kane

May had been a stressful month for Jerry Kane. He’d been traveling around the country with his teenage son, giving seminars to financially strapped individuals and promising them the tools to avoid foreclosure. His seminar fee ranged from \$100 to \$300 “per man,” but a man was free to bring his wife and children for that price. If a follower were in really dire straits, Kane would let him attend free.

As a former long-haul trucker, Kane was used to long hours on the road with his son, but in his most recent online radio show, he’d told his followers that he was frustrated with the seminar circuit and planned to cut his scheduled tour off early, after one more date in Florida. A recent seminar in Denver had

been a disaster — no one had shown up — and he’d just completed a two-day event in Las Vegas, traveling thousands of miles in his old Plymouth Voyager. Despite his efforts and time, only six people had attended.

To make matters worse, Kane knew that driving cross-country was risky. As a sovereign citizen and a member of the larger antigovernment “Patriot” movement — a free man who believed that the Constitution guaranteed his right to travel without restriction — he was breaking a number of laws. He didn’t have a driver’s license. His van was registered to an accommodating ministry in Ohio. There was a brick of marijuana in the car. And, most importantly, he had outstanding warrants for his arrest in two states. In Ohio, he faced charges of forgery and theft by deception. And only a few weeks earlier, he’d been arrested in New Mexico for driving without a license and concealing his identity. He’d been preparing a series of documents to file in New Mexico that were designed to punish the police officer who arrested him. Kane was determined to make the officer and his family pay.

On May 20, Jerry and Joe Kane were driving east on I-40 from Las Vegas to their last seminar and a new life in Florida. Kane had met a Floridian named Donna Lee Wray at one of his foreclosure seminars three months earlier, and they had fallen in love. Father and son were headed, they thought, to a bright new life. Instead, they left a trail of human wreckage and smashed-up hopes and dreams.

Today, even after learning many of the facts behind the sovereign citizens movement that helped lead the Kanes and others to murder, the late Officer Paudert’s boss and father, the West Memphis chief, struggles to make sense of what happened. Bob Paudert mourns his son and the other casualties of the collision of sovereign citizen ideology and law enforcement, and he worries that his personal tragedy could repeat itself with other police officers on roads around the nation.

“How much more routine can you get than a father and son in [what looked like] a church van?” he asked in an interview. “Your guard is down and you’re just not ready for a shootout. We need indicators that tell us what to look for.”

There are telltale signs of sovereign citizens — strange license plates, unusual comments about the Fed and other government agencies, and so on (see story, p. 24). But they are not always easy to spot. And while not all are violent — sovereign leaders around the country have had mixed views of the Arkansas shootout, from painting the Kanes as heroes to various wild-eyed conspiracy theories about them being “set up” by government forces — there is little to suggest that the killings have weakened the movement. Donna Lee Wray, for example, reacted to the death of her new family by firing off angry missives demanding, among other things, that she be paid \$1 million every time her “copyrighted” name is printed by those writing about the case. The number of sovereigns across America is clearly expanding, and with that growth comes an increasing level of danger.

Bob Paudert, in an emotional interview with the *Intelligence Report*, said he knows only too well what the cost can be. “It was the worst day of my life, ever,” the chief said. “I hope no parent has to go through what we’ve been through.” ▲

The Sovereigns

The leadership of the “sovereign citizens” movement is populated with men who market a variety of generally nonsensical, and often illegal, schemes to avoid taxes, eliminate debts and extract money from the government. Many of these leaders specialize in the so-called “redemption” scam (see story, p. 12), a bizarre technique that supposedly allows participants to tap into huge amounts of cash that the government is thought to keep in their name. What follows are short profiles of a dozen of these leaders. The leaders’ websites are listed under their names.

BARTON ALBERT BUHTZ, 70 Sunland, Calif.



For years, Barton Buhtz, who styles himself “Barton Albert: Buhtz” in the peculiar punctuation of the sovereign citizens movement (see “name punctuation,” p. 25),

promoted a redemption scheme that taught clients how to print fraudulent U.S. Treasury checks to pay their taxes, purchase real estate, and pay credit card and other bills. This was a variation of a scheme attempted by members of the Montana Freemen, a sovereign citizens group that was active in the 1990s. Buhtz promised clients that the fake checks were a legal means of accessing a secret Treasury account that the government has set up based on every American’s future earnings (see story, p. 12). While Buhtz claimed the phony checks can purchase anything, he personally only accepted cash as payment for his seminars and services. In 2007, Buhtz was convicted on multiple felony counts for helping clients pass a total of \$3.8 million in phony checks, and in 2009 he was sentenced to 36 months in federal prison. He is set to be released in 2012. A number of his former clients are currently either in prison or fighting criminal charges.

SAMUEL LYNN DAVIS, 55

Boise, Idaho

www.StatusIsFreedom.com

www.commercialredemption.com



Samuel Lynn Davis, who goes by the nickname “I am: Sam,” is one of the more popular redemption seminar hosts in the country, and dozens of his seminar videos

have been uploaded to YouTube.com. In addition to the websites listed

above, Davis shares Web space with other key redemption gurus (including, until his death, Jerry Kane) at www.privateaudio.homestead.com. In his seminars, he boasts that he hasn’t filed a tax return since 1998 but doesn’t disclose that he currently has \$53,000 in outstanding state and federal tax liens. Davis is one of the elders in the Guardians of the Free Republics, a sovereign group that claims to have recently set up “common-law courts” (see story, p. 12) in all 50 states. On March 3, 2009, Davis and his common-law court partner “Rabbi” Shawn Rice were indicted in federal court on 31 counts of bank fraud and money laundering. Rice remained a fugitive at press time. Despite his upcoming trial in Las Vegas, Davis has advised his clients that everything is going as planned.

RONALD DELORME, 64

Bismark, S.D.

www.officialpnlsbna.org



Ronald Delorme is the leader of one of the newest and most prolific sovereign schemes to hit the U.S., a phony Native American tribe called The Little Shell

Pembina Band of North America. Delorme claims that an enormous land parcel totaling 53 million acres (most of North Dakota plus portions of South Dakota, Montana, and Manitoba) belongs to the sovereign tribe, and anyone who pays the fee can become a member. In effect, the tribe offers one-stop-shopping for the modern sovereign — freedom from taxes, a tribal license plate, a phony law license, even fake malpractice and automobile insurance. The faux tribe also advises members on how to pass counterfeit checks and avoid falling into the jurisdiction of the American courts. “Rabbi” Shawn Rice, fugitive co-defendant of Samuel

Davis (see profile above), is a member of this tribe. In 2007, a Little Shell subsidiary called Gold-Quest was charged with running a \$27.9 million Ponzi scheme. The tribe responded by filing a \$1.7 trillion lawsuit against the SEC.

NATURE EL BEY, 33

Taj Tarik Bey

Asbury Park, N.J.



“Lord Nobles” Taj Tarik Bey (real name and age unknown) and Nature El Bey (formerly known as Lee S. Crudup) are two of the leaders of a rapidly growing black nationalist religious movement called Moorish Science Temple of America — part of the larger and expanding phenomenon of



black sovereign groups. The group considers itself sovereign in that it counsels followers to pay taxes to the temple, rather than to the IRS. Like other sovereigns, members do not carry state-issued driver’s licenses (but instead use temple identification cards) and, when charged with crimes, consider themselves to be outside the jurisdiction of any federal, state, or local court. The group markets itself primarily through booklets and videos posted on YouTube, and its sovereign schemes have been spreading rapidly in the last two or three years through the nation’s urban neighborhoods and prison system.

ROGER ELVICK, 71

Lakota, N.D.

In the 1980s, Roger Elvick was the first promoter to effectively distribute a redemption scheme to an eager and desperate audience of Midwest



farmers, and he is generally acknowledged as the founding father of the modern redemption movement. While phony Federal Reserve checks and similar

programs had been used earlier by far-right promoters Tupper Saussy and Conrad LeBeau, Elvick and the late white supremacist leader William Potter Gale were the first to dress up the scam with the legalistic terminology that now characterizes the sovereign citizens movement and sovereign redemption techniques. As a result of issuing such checks, Elvick spent seven years in the 1990s in federal prison, where he further fleshed out his scheme. In 2003, he was arrested again by the state of Ohio and charged with forgery, extortion, and corruption. The judge found him mentally unfit to stand trial, and he spent several months in a psychiatric institution before pleading guilty to the state charges. Elvick was released from prison in September 2007.

KURT F. JOHNSON, 47

DALE SCOTT HEINEMAN, 50

Union City, Calif.

www.thedoreangroup.blogspot.com



In just a few short years, Kurt Johnson and Dale Scott Heineman grew a tiny redemption-based debt elimination practice into the largest mortgage-elimination firm in the country, the Dorean Group, with thousands of clients in at least 35 states. They promised followers who were about to lose their



homes to foreclosure that they could own the home free and clear by simply transferring the

property to a trust controlled by the Dorean Group. Dorean would then file a fake grant deed with the county recorder and in the short time when it appeared in the record that the home was debt-free, the client would apply for a new loan and split the proceeds with promoters. Johnson, Heineman and four other salespeople in their thriving company were convicted on multiple felony counts in 2007. Johnson is currently serving a 25-year sentence in federal prison, while Heineman is serving 21 years.

DAVID WYNN MILLER, 61

Milwaukee, Wisc.

www.dwmlc.com



A former tool-and-die maker, the man who writes his name as “David-Wynn: Miller” — or, as he amusingly says it verbally, “David hyphen Wynn full colon

Miller” — came up with his “truth language” scheme as a result of a frustrating court experience in 1988, when he was going through a divorce. In short, all truth language sentences used in court filings must begin with the preposition “for,” contain at least 13 words, and use more nouns than verbs to be effective (he has claimed that only nouns have legal authority). David Wynn Miller considers himself a “Plenipotentiary Judge” in the Unity States of the World, and has named himself as the King of Hawaii, a feat he claims he accomplished when he converted Hawaii into a verb. Needless to say, Full Colon Miller’s clients have fared poorly in both civil and criminal courts, and at least one client has been required to undergo a psychiatric evaluation. Miller is one of the few sovereign gurus that can say he has clients in four different countries currently serving prison sentences. Despite these failures, Miller’s exotic punctuation scheme is rapidly growing.

WINSTON SHROUT, 62

Santa Clara, Utah

www.wssic.com



Winston ShROUT offers a popular seven-part series of seminars and sells several books and DVDs through his website. His materials focus on the “commercial process,”

instructing clients in the use of IRS Form 1099-OID to solve all of their tax and debt problems (see story, p. 12). Despite his alleged expertise, ShROUT currently has \$50,000 in outstanding tax liens, declared personal bankruptcy in 2001, and lost three federal civil cases in the last 10 years, including one in which a major bank sued both Winston and his sham “freeman” arbitration company.

JAMES TIMOTHY TURNER, 54

Skipperville, Ala.

www.americacanbefree.com



Tim Turner burst onto the redemption scene three years ago, offering a series of very popular seminars that promise attendees that they can pay off their mortgage, credit

card debt, and income tax bills using the “power of negative averments” (see definition, p. 25). He also claims to have cured leukemia in five days. Turner’s programs teach his clients to file dozens of meaningless court documents, and when the opposing parties don’t respond accordingly, to file absurdly large retaliatory property liens against them. For example, in one foreclosure case in which Turner was not even a party, he filed nine fraudulent liens totaling more than \$158 billion against the bank, its attorneys, the court trustee, and miscellaneous other participants. While Turner told his followers that he won the case,

he was actually sanctioned \$22,500 by the court. Most recently, Turner has taken over the leadership of the Guardians of the Free Republics, a group that earlier this year fruitlessly demanded that all 50 governors step down and now claims to have established common-law courts in all 50 states (see story, p. 12). According to his followers, Turner has canceled his seminar schedule and was in hiding at press time. In the past, Turner has worked as both a commercial fisherman and a FEMA employee.

DR. GLENN RICHARD UNGER, 59

Clifton Park, N.Y.

www.republicbroadcasting.org



The host of the popular online radio show “Take No Prisoners,” who uses the alias of “Dr. Sam Kennedy,” Dr. Glenn Unger is one of the more secretive redemption leaders. In

addition to using a false name, Unger doesn’t keep a marketing website and doesn’t allow followers to videotape his speaking engagements. He markets his “Beneficiaries in Commerce” program as a cure-all for everything from tax bills and debt elimination to what he calls “prison extraction.” Unger was a founding member of the Guardians of the Free Republics and received some unwelcome publicity earlier this year when the FBI investigated the group for threatening state governors. In a recent coup by fellow sovereign Tim Turner (see profile, p. 22), Unger was pushed out of the Guardians group. Despite his stealth, the IRS found Unger and hit him with a \$116,000 federal tax lien last September. Furthermore, at least three of Unger’s clients have gone to prison as a result of following his program; in a fourth case, the judge found the defendant mentally unfit to stand trial as a result of the nonsensical documents he filed with the court. ▲

‘SOVEREIGN’ IDIOTICON

A Dictionary of the Peculiar

Adherents of the “sovereign citizens” movement and of sovereign financial scams like “redemption” are known for their bizarre use of language and Byzantine belief system. What follows is a lexicon — or, more precisely, an idioticon, a dictionary of a peculiar dialect — meant to help court officials, law enforcement officers and the general public make their way through the sovereigns’ verbal fog.

14th Amendment citizen

Sovereign citizens describe 14th Amendment citizens as subject to federal and state governments, unlike themselves. Because the amendment gave citizenship to freed slaves, a racist variant of sovereign-citizen theory holds that blacks are subject to the governments and that being white is a prerequisite to being a sovereign citizen. Others claim all state citizens were converted by the constitutional amendment to “Federal Citizens,” who can only be freed by a process known as “asseveration.”

Accepted for value

When a sovereign receives a bill from the IRS, a bank, or even the cable company, under a twisted reading of the Uniform Commercial Code, he believes he can simply

write “Accepted for Value” on that bill and it will be paid by his secret Treasury Direct Account, set up by the government when he was born (see Treasury Direct Account, p. 25).



< Admiralty law/ common law

According to sovereign beliefs, there are two types of law: common law and admiralty law. Since the U.S.

went off the gold standard in 1933, sovereigns say, no one has been able to pay a debt with “real” money, and therefore the country has been operating under commercial law, which sovereigns equate with admiralty law, the law of the seas. Thus, they argue, completely speciously, that Americans have been deprived of their original common law, under which the government can only impose regulations on citizens with their consent, since 1933.



‘Patriot’ Paranoia

With the resurgence of antigovernment militias has come an upsurge in conspiracy theories. What are these Patriot beliefs?

BY ALEXANDER ZAITCHIK ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL ROGERS

Conspiracy theorizing has flourished as a virtual art form in all nations and across all political persuasions. But the American radical right has to be considered a strong contender for the title of modern conspiracy champion. A vast body of academic literature exists exploring this history, of which Richard Hofstadter’s 1964 essay, “The Paranoid Style in American Politics” is the most famous. Hundreds of books and articles have chronicled the rise (and fall) of an unceasing march of disparate conspiracy-based movements that, at different points in American history, have trembled before and warned against imaginary threats posed by Catholics, Mormons, Jews, American Communists, Freemasons, bankers, and U.S. government officials and agencies.

Scholars continue to debate the psychological and sociological origins of conspiracy theories (see related interview, p. 35), but there is no arguing that these theories have seen a revival on the extreme right in recent years. Over the last two decades, a far-right conspiracy culture of self-proclaimed “Patriots” has emerged in which the United States government itself is viewed as a mortal

threat to everything from constitutional democracy to the survival of the human race. This conspiracy revival — which has been accompanied by the explosive growth of Patriot groups over the last year and a half — kicked into overdrive with the 2008 election of President Barack Obama, who is seen by Patriots as a foreign-born Manchurian candidate sent by forces of the so-called “New World Order” to destroy American sovereignty and institute one-world socialist government.

Since Obama’s election, the constituent theories within the overarching narrative of the New World Order have increasingly made inroads into the mainstream national discourse. Thanks to conservative cable news hosts like Glenn Beck (of Fox News) and Lou Dobbs (formerly of CNN), conspiratorial rants about FEMA concentration camps and the “North American Union” have been

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beamed directly into the living rooms of millions of Americans. Websites popular with Tea Party conservatives, meanwhile, have further stoked fears of a socialistic one-world government takeover by “un-American” forces. Joseph Farah’s WorldNetDaily.com, for example, has grown its influence by peddling paranoia about the president’s birth certificate and AmeriCorps’ “domestic armies.” Earlier this year, the John Birch Society, a group with a long history of hatching and promoting wild conspiracy theories (including the idea that President Eisenhower was a communist agent), co-sponsored the Conservative Political Action Conference, an annual powwow of leading conservatives and Republican Party figures. Speakers at this year’s conference included such mainstream names as *Washington Post* columnist George Will, former GOP presidential candidate Mike Huckabee and Republican House Minority Leader John Boehner.

Here is a compilation of 10 of the most popular conspiracy theories currently circulating on the radical right and, increasingly, on points of the political spectrum much too close to the center for comfort. >>

01 Chemtrails

In the world of Patriot antigovernment paranoia, New World Order forces attempt to manipulate and control the unwitting population from every conceivable source and direction — from the images on your television screen to the very water that comes out of your kitchen tap. In recent years, the New World Order has been meddling most nefariously from above, high among the clouds.

Few Internet-age antigovernment conspiracies have spread as quickly or as widely as the idea of “chemtrails”: the belief that air and water vapor contrails that form in the wake of high-altitude aircraft are really clouds of toxic soup being deliberately sprayed by hundreds, if not thousands, of secret government planes executing the designs of the New World Order. What is the insidious purpose of the chemtrails program? It depends which paranoid Patriot you ask. The most popular theories include population control, weather manipulation, and outright human extermination. If, as some cultural historians suggest, the UFO sightings of the 1940s and 50s were the skyward projection of early atomic-age fears, chemtrails are the climate-change-age corollary, with cultural panic over pollution and strange weather mixing with deeper traditions of Patriot antigovernment animus.

Hundreds of websites currently peddle chemtrails theories, along with books, DVDs and all manner of survivalist gear. They maintain that toxic clouds in the sky are easily distinguished from normal contrails by their longer duration and expansive dissipation patterns. Most of the spraying is believed to take place at night over the population centers of the NATO countries, especially the United States.

Who, exactly, is responsible for the program? There are conflicting schools of thought here as well. But among Patriot groups it is generally agreed that some alignment of New World Order lords — sometimes referred to as the Illuminati — is busy spraying cities and towns with pathogens. In the grimmest of the scenarios, the spraying represents the first of a two-stage depopulation program. Stage one involves spreading pathogens to weaken humanity’s collective immune system; once general T-cell weakness is attained, goes the theory, we can expect aerial dispersal of smallpox or anthrax to finish us off.

Fear over chemtrails long ago spread beyond the Patriot fringe. Twenty years ago, the buzz surrounding chemtrails had grown to the extent that the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration felt compelled to issue a joint “Aircraft Contrails Factsheet.” The six-page illustrated report patiently explained the science of contrails, such as the role humidity plays in the variance between how long contrails linger and spread, sometimes forming cirrus cloud cover, and pointed out that they have zero impact on human health.

But as these things go, official efforts to confront the conspiracy only fueled its growth. It is today bigger than ever, commanding adherents across the globe.

02

Martial Law

If Patriot groups fear anything more than the water vapor in the sky, it is the imminent imposition of martial law. A long-standing and central plank of the Patriot catechism is the belief that one day — very soon! — federal forces, in league with the states, will suspend constitutional government and institute a police state.

During the first few years after the 9/11 attacks, this fear was also discussed on the left. But what was a temporary concern there has long been an absolute certainty on the far right. Today, hundreds of Patriot groups around the country are actively preparing for the declaration of martial law, some of them by mapping wilderness areas, learning how to set booby traps, studying and practicing guerrilla warfare tactics, and setting up short-wave radio communications systems. The question is not if, but when, the New World Order will come crashing down.

Patriot groups believe the legal groundwork for the inevitable imposition of martial law is being laid in Washington, within the pages of a steady stream of classified National Security documents and directives. At the local level, meanwhile, they suspect town and city governments are also in on the plan, as evidenced by their passing of emergency powers ordinances.

Once the legal mechanisms are in place, all that’s needed is a “crisis trigger,” for which Patriots are constantly on the lookout. Whether this trigger is real or manufac-

ured matters less than the fact that it will succeed in frightening the population into submission and be used to justify suspension of the Constitution. This crisis trigger could take any form. Common scenarios suggested on Patriot discussion boards include economic collapse, followed by massive social unrest; a global (and likely government-created) pandemic; multiple acts of mega-terrorism (again, featuring government collusion); or possibly a fraudulent presidential election, resulting in rioting in major cities around the country.

Patriot groups often refer to the unelected junta that will rule the coming police state as a “metropolitan government.” This language, like the martial law scenario, has a long pedigree. As Patriot/survivalist Don Harkin explains in the *Idaho Observer*, a conspiracy rag popular among militia groups: “Metropolitan government was exposed in the late 1950s by Jo Hindman. ... [Today] this unconstitutional form of government is being implemented all over the country — particularly in the nation’s more densely populated areas such as Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, Portland and Seattle.”

Once the “metropolitan government” is instituted, most Patriots are certain they will immediately be rounded up and sent to internment camps — which takes us to our next conspiracy.

03 FEMA

Concentration Camps

Following the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City by Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols, the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Domestic Terrorism held hearings on the Patriot/militia subculture that bred and nurtured the bombers. Throughout the hearings, a running theme expressed by Patriots was a fear that “urban gangs,” directed by Washington and possibly acting in concert with U.N. and foreign troops, would sweep in from the coasts, confiscate their guns, and round them up. This home-invasion force would hold down the streets during the imposition of martial law, then send the members of Patriot militias to internment camps run by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which most Patriot groups consider to be “the executive arm of the coming police state.”

This conspiracy has recently surged in popularity, especially after the Senate in March 2009 passed the Serve America Act, the meat of which was a multi-billion-dollar expansion of AmeriCorps, a federal program that employs many inner-city youths in community service jobs. For the Patriot fringe (and media enablers like Glenn Beck), the thought of billions of dollars going to employ inner-city youth evoked images of “domestic armies.” Soon, the far-right media was full of warnings about “Obama’s brown shirts” and “slavery.”



The renewed chatter about “FEMA concentration camps” took many forms. Glenn Beck promised to “look into it.” Films such as “Camp FEMA: American Lockdown,” featuring conspiracy-monger Alex Jones, have been wildly popular on conspiracy-driven websites like martiallawssurvival.com, outselling all previous conspiracy-driven pseudo-documentaries. Aerial photographs, each supposedly showing secret government holding facilities, went viral on the Web.

Of course, the photos showed nothing of the sort. A careful review of some of the photographs carried out by *Popular Mechanics* editor James Meigs made clear that the visual “evidence” was bogus in every instance. For example, a photograph of an alleged secret prison was actually a North Korean work camp. Other photographs showed nothing more sinister than well-known National Guard training centers and Amtrak rail yards.

Just as the agencies responsible for air travel and air quality have tried to respond to the chemtrails conspiracy allegations, so, too, has FEMA gone on record reassuring Americans that it has no intention of abrogating the Constitution or rounding up citizens. An internal FEMA memo, however, made clear that agency brass understands the losing-battle nature of trying to quell the conspiracies. “Most people know us as the agency that responds to natural disasters,” the memo read. “Others believe we have a somewhat sinister role. For the latter, it is not realistic to think that we can convince them otherwise and it is advisable not to enter into debate on the subject.”



04 Foreign Troops on U.S. Soil

While “urban gangs” are considered a leading candidate to enforce a New World Order (NWO) lockdown, they are not the only threatening force clouding the Patriot mind. There is also a belief on the radical right that treasonous government officials are colluding with other governments to suppress Americans with the use of foreign troops. Patriots believe this foreign assistance will be necessary due to the patriotism of America’s own troops. As explained on the Patriot website libertyforlife.com, many U.S. active military personnel and veterans would likely refuse orders to suppress the rights of their fellow citizens, and so “the US/NWO/UN government is importing foreign troops into the USA to do what US soldiers did to Iraq.” Among the many Patriot groups dedicated to resisting this is the Oath Keepers, made up of veteran and active-duty U.S. military personnel.

Whose troops, exactly, would be deployed here? Those of whichever allies the U.S. is partnering with at any given moment. For example, Patriot sites were atwitter with news that, in July 2009, FEMA organized a terrorist-response exercise in conjunction with troops from 14 allied countries, including Australia, Canada, Mexico and the United Kingdom.

After the 2009 exercise, the Web burst with YouTube clips attempting to alert people to the sinister presence of foreign troops. Like other popular conspiracies to see a revival in recent years, this one is hardly new. In 1997, one Patriot blogger warned that Red Chinese troops would be allowed to take over America. The fevered language of this Clinton-era theorist nicely captures the frantic energy that has always defined Patriot conspiracy culture, as well as the racial dimension never far from the surface of so many conspiracies:

“During the 1950’s, the elitists planning for world government made plans to use occupation forces in every country that did not submit to their greedy, arrogant ambitions. Their plan called for using Chinese troops in America... Now that American soldiers have been used in Kuwait, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo, a precedent has been set to bring the red Chinese troops here. The UN could justify such an action if the Black Muslims instigate a race war. I expect this scenario if the Democrats loose [sic] the White House and Congress in the 2000 elections. Comrade Clinton could not be slicker in making himself Commandant of Gulag America.”

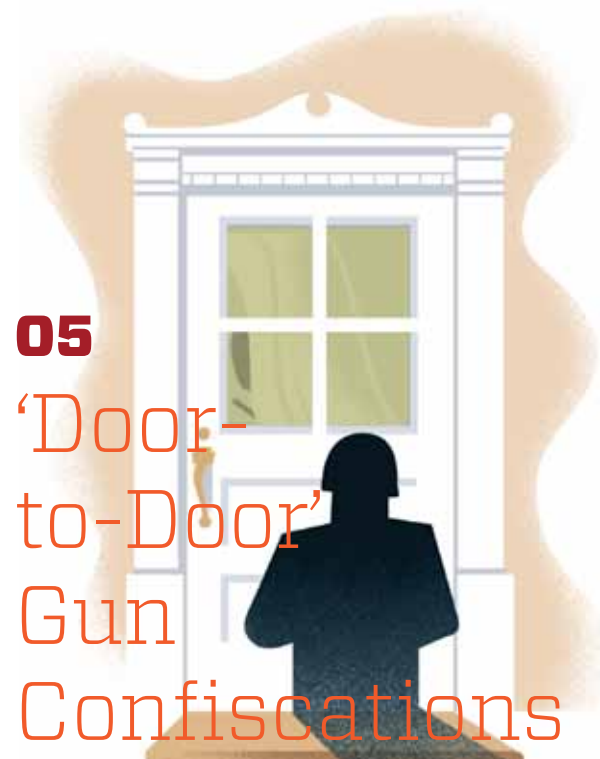


05

‘Door-to-Door’ Gun Confiscations

One of the defining features of Patriot/militia subculture is an obsession with firearms. Patriot groups stockpile them, train using them, and, perhaps most of all, worry about losing them. Any attempt to restrain their gun rights is viewed as the thin-edge-wedge of a New World Order crackdown. Patriots believe it inevitable that NWO forces in black masks and jackboots — and possibly UN blue helmets — will one day be sent door to door to take away their weapons by force. This fear is also stoked by mainstream figures within the conservative movement. Wayne LaPierre, the president of the National Rifle Association, a major player in the Republican Party coalition, is the author of a book entitled, *The Global War on Your Guns: Inside the UN Plan To Destroy the Bill of Rights*. In 2006, Louisiana Republican Sen. David Vitter attached an amendment to a domestic-security spending bill that prohibited the confiscation of legally owned guns during an emergency. The measure passed by a vote of 84-16.

Within Patriot subculture, the gun-confiscation fear sometimes dovetails with other conspiracies of an anti-Semitic flavor. Proponents of gun control in these instances are seen as representing a New World Order cabal run by Jews. At the website Real Zionist News, for example, a New York State gun control law aimed at protecting police officers was described as “the first step toward confiscation.” According to the site, “The real agenda is to disarm law-abiding GENTILES, whom Zionist Jews fear will soon discover Jewry’s anti-American, freedom-hating mission.”



06

9/11 as Government Plot

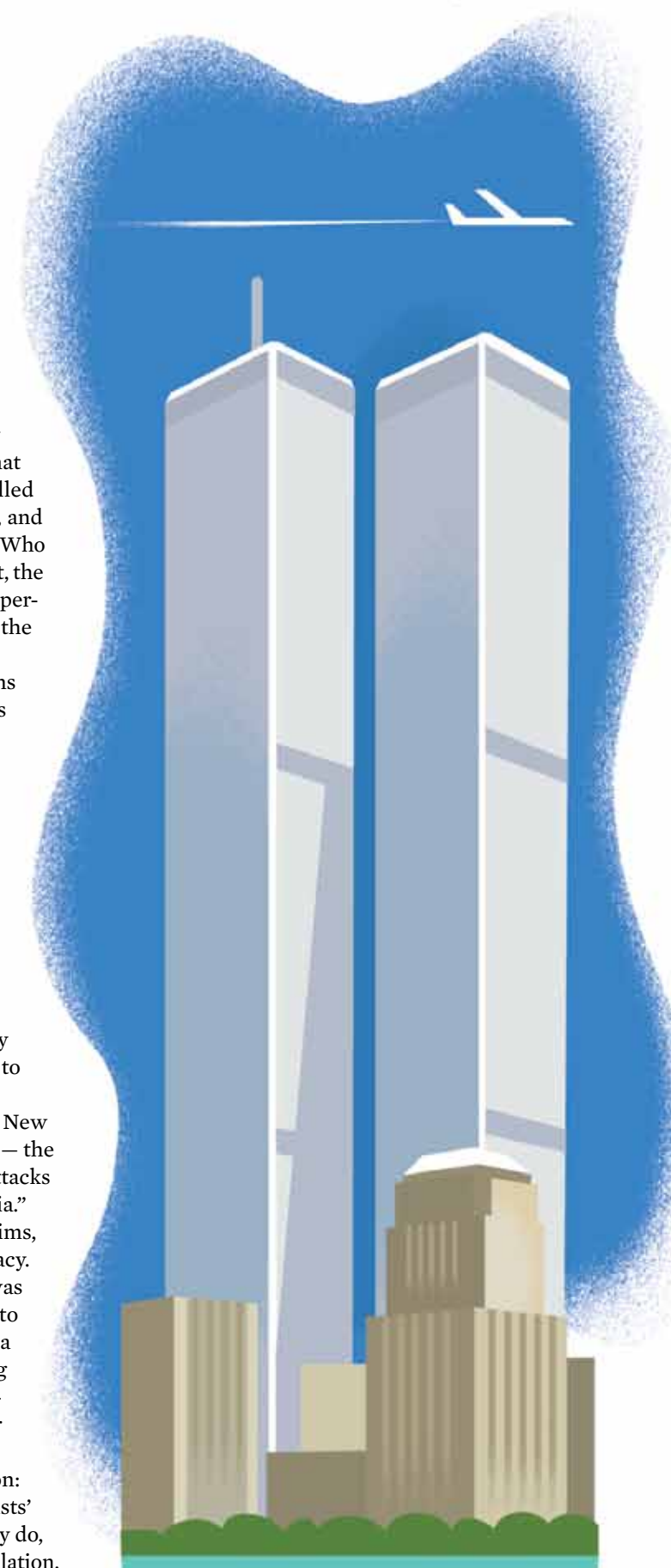
The Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C., were seen by both the far left and far right as fitting the bill for an intentional “crisis trigger.” In the weeks and months after the attacks, a subculture of “9/11 Truthism” emerged in which the attacks were seen as anything but a simple case of well-trained Al Qaeda operatives flying planes into landmark buildings. Instead, “truthers” argued that the World Trade Center buildings were destroyed by controlled demolitions, that a missile brought down United Airlines 93, and that a missile — and not an airliner at all — struck the Pentagon. Who was responsible? The U.S. government, of course. On the far left, the reason seen for attacking the American people was to justify a perpetual state of war; on the far right, it provided an excuse for the government to, at long last, institute a police state.

On both extremes, a distinct current of anti-Semitism runs through 9/11 conspiracies. Especially in the right-wing variants associated with Patriot groups — and in a number of radical-right black separatist group as well — the central agents are often very pointedly described as either high officials of Jewish descent or outright Israeli agents. Another feature of anti-Semitic 9/11 conspiracies is the popular claim that 4,000 Israelis and Jews did not show up for work at the World Trade Center on the morning of the attacks. The origins of that conspiracy theory appear to have come from a statement by the Israeli Foreign Ministry that some “4,000 Israelis” were in the New York and Washington areas the day of the attacks. Here again, we see how a misread or misconstrued fact can be distorted through paranoia and multiplied by the power of the Internet, allowing totally unfounded rumors to travel the globe at warp speed.

For many Patriot groups dedicated to the fight against the New World Order — often referred to as “American Revolution II” — the American people have been denied the truth about the 2001 attacks by “the New World Order-controlled corporatist-Jewish media.”

Of course, when this media does mention 9/11 truther claims, this, too, is seen as evidence of a conspiracy within a conspiracy. For example, when former White House official Van Jones was found to have signed a petition calling for an investigation into truther-related allegations, Patriots saw the subsequent media attention as a ruse. “Our patriot movements are totally being hijacked,” said Jeffrey Grupp of the popular conspiracy website AntiMatterRadio.com, “not by infiltrators, but by a takeover of our patriot discussions.”

That’s typical of most conspiracies in the Patriot pantheon: When the mainstream media does not address the conspiracists’ allegations, it is proof of their propaganda role. And when they do, it is a sign of an even more sophisticated and perfidious manipulation.





07 Population Control

For the conspiracy-minded, there is no such thing as an accidental tragedy or historical caprice. Each epidemic, mass industrial poisoning and medical advance (vaccinations, in particular) is just another highly suspicious example of the latest technologies being employed to further the agenda of hidden New World Order forces.

When the fluoridation of the U.S. water supply began in the middle of the last century, proto-Patriot groups screamed of a poisonous plot by communists in high places. A half century later, when the Food and Drug Administration approved aspartame as an ingredient in numerous food items, the descendents of the anti-fluoride conspiracists sounded yet another poison-ingredient alarm. But even aspartame paled in comparison to the threat supposedly posed by the avian flu virus, which many Patriots, from the late 1990s to the present, believe to be the result of research conducted at the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases at Maryland's Fort Detrick.

In the Patriot mind, population control is often intimately linked to gun rights. After all, they say, it was gun control that led to large-scale slaughters in nations as diverse as Idi Amin's Uganda, Josef Stalin's Russia, Adolf Hitler's Germany and Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's Turkey. American citizens, they believe, once deprived of their guns, will be next in line for a slaughter worthy of the history books.

What is the point of limiting — or even intentionally decimating — the U.S. population? One Patriot theory says the United Nations wants to create a "biosphere" out of most of the United States, and that eliminating the humans who put pressure on the environment will be a necessary first step.

Increasingly, devastating weather events are considered the result of government-engineered efforts to depopulate the country. In Patriot circles, Hurricane Katrina was not only seen as a pretext to begin confiscating guns, but is sometimes viewed as a man-made disaster orchestrated in secret government command centers where sophisticated high-altitude weapons control both the weather and the minds of men.

Chief among these weapons is one allegedly operating high above the earth, appropriately enough named after the instrument traditionally favored by mythological angels.



08 HAARP

This is the "Death Star" of the Patriot conspiracy galaxy, around which so many other conspiracies orbit and often intersect.

According to the U.S. government, the High-frequency Active Auroral Research Program is a joint scientific research project of the Air Force and Navy, based in Gakona, Ala., whose stated purpose is "studying the properties and behavior of the ionosphere, with particular emphasis on being able to understand and use it to enhance communications and surveillance systems for both civilian and defense purposes."

Few true-blue Patriots believe that — and they aren't alone in their skepticism. Earlier this year, former Minnesota governor and tele-conspiracist Jesse Ventura visited the HAARP site for his TV show in an attempt to probe the official claims and find out "what's really going on." For those enthralled to a Patriot view of the world, the government's description of HAARP only scratches the surface. To the conspiracy-minded, HAARP is a government program tasked with creating secret directed-energy weapons, instruments for weather and mind control, and even potent new methods to cause earthquakes. Predictably, after January's devastating earthquake in Haiti, some Patriot sites noted that the neighboring Dominican Republic was undamaged, leading them to speculate that the U.S. government was responsible and had targeted Haiti alone — ignoring the more relevant explanation that the Republic's capital and major population center, Santo Domingo, was 160 miles from the quake's epicenter.

Discussions of HAARP often overlap with the chemtrails conspiracy. Many Patriot sites argue that NATO aircraft are spraying the toxic soup as part of a top-secret HAARP-related weather-modification program, or are refining a new-generation of high-frequency atmospheric weapons developed at the HAARP research center. Any number of wild-eyed (and self-published) introductions to the subject of HAARP are circulating on the web; one example is *HAARP: The Ultimate Weapon of the Conspiracy*, by Jerry E. Smith.

09 The Federal Reserve Conspiracy

It wasn't long after its creation under Woodrow Wilson that the Federal Reserve System became a central fixture in the world of right-wing conspiracy. It was seen, rightly, as introducing European-style central banking into the United States. It was also seen, this time wrongly, as the latest form of spreading Jewish and banker control over every aspect of American life. No one did more to promote anti-Fed hysteria in the early years than automobile magnate Henry Ford, who in the 1920s penned a multi-volume, anti-Semitic conspiracy opus called *The International Jew*, in which the Fed plays a starring role.

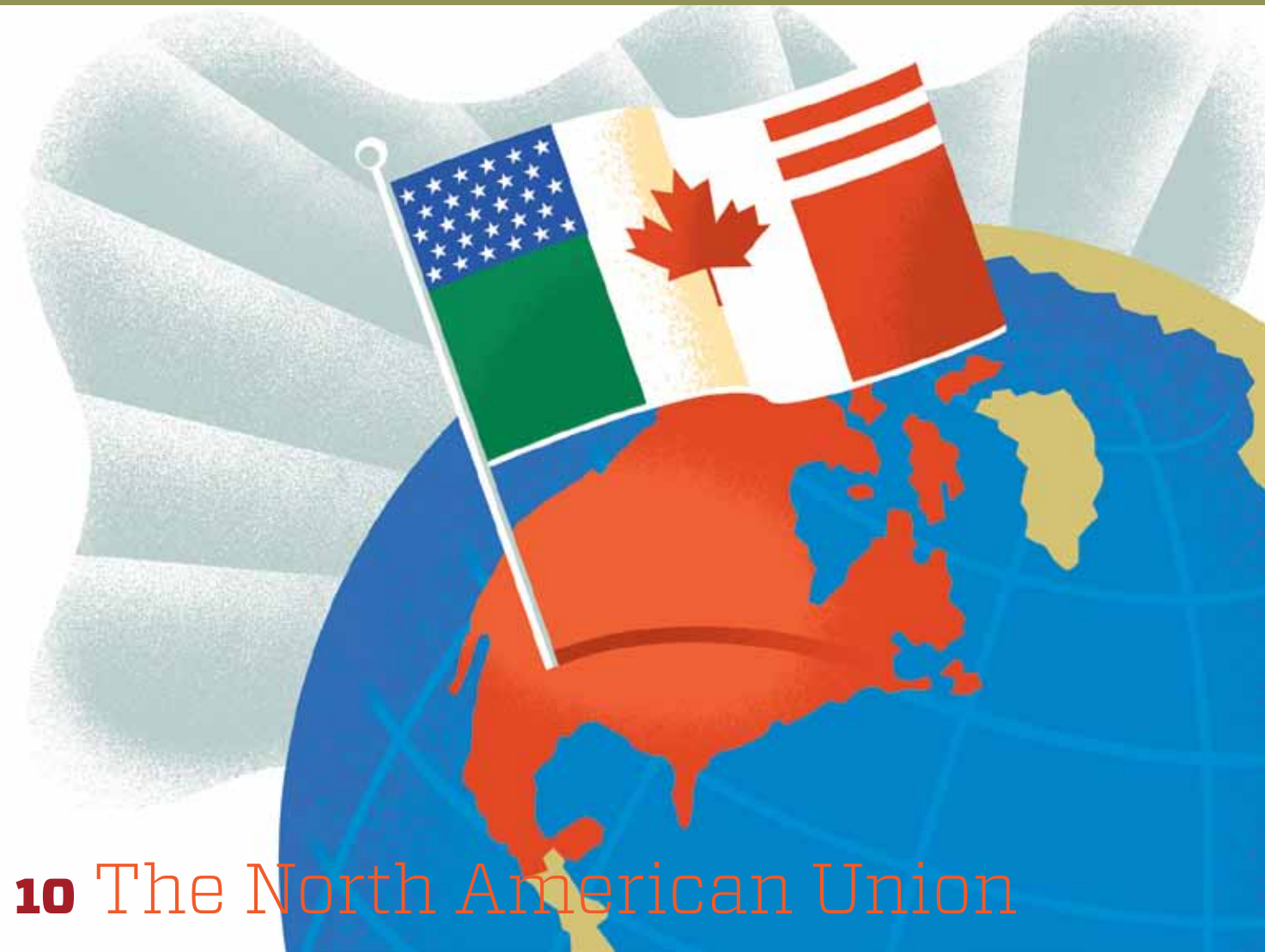
Ford's modern-day ideological descendants in the Patriot movement continue to view the Fed — without question, an opaque institution to most — through a lens colored by deep suspicion, paranoia, and hatred. For many, it remains the ultimate symbol of New World Order power, in both Jewish and non-Jewish variants. Nor is anti-Fed paranoia limited to the Patriot fringe. Both the Idaho-based neo-Nazi group Aryan Nations and the black separatist Nation of Islam have claimed significance for the fact that the Federal Reserve System and the Anti-Defamation League both were founded in 1913.

In May 2009, a group of leading radical rightists convened on the South Georgia key known as Jekyll Island, where 100 years earlier bankers and government

officials first hashed out plans for what became the Federal Reserve System. This meeting played a key role in launching the current resurgence of militias. Less than five months into the Obama Administration, the Jekyll Island conclave warned of "increasing national instability," worried about the coming New World Order, denounced secret schemes to merge Canada, Mexico and the United States, and furiously attacked the President Barack Obama's "socialized" policies.

Which leads, appropriately, to our final top conspiracy.





Since the passage of NAFTA in 1993, fears of economic dislocation and loss of sovereignty have animated both sides of the political spectrum. On the left, these fears are centered on the growth of transnational corporate power at the expense of U.S. labor and national policy. In some circles on the right, the trade bill is seen as the beginning of the so-called “North American Union” (NAU), the goal of a secret plan to merge the United States with Mexico and Canada and, in the process, eliminate sovereign government for each country. It is also a dominant conspiracy theory animating the hard-line anti-immigration movement, which overlaps heavily with Patriot territory.

As proof of the NAU plot, left- and right-wing conspiracy theorists typically point to the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP), a series of working groups between the countries of North

America to study regulatory cooperation in transportation, energy, aviation, the environment and more. To many adherents, participants at these meetings plot how best to send millions of Mexico’s citizens to the United States, erect international courts designed to overrule and undermine American law, and pass continental hate crime laws that will send anti-gay Christian preachers to prison, and more.

In recent years, the paranoia about the SPP process has become so intense that a proposed highway project linking Canada, Mexico and the United States — the NAFTA-inspired Canamex Corridor concept which has managed only 85% completion after 15 years of planning — is seen as part of an evil design that will end with the Mexican government seizing control of Kansas City’s Missouri River port. Other conspiracy theorists

fear that a new currency, the “Amero,” will displace American dollars — though no U.S. official of even marginal influence has ever proposed such a thing. (This last fear is odd coming from Patriot circles that otherwise have no love for Federal Reserve-issued greenbacks.)

As with so many conspiracies, the NAU plot is often inflamed by real news items that are seen as vastly more significant than they really are. This is especially true when the news items involve traditional New World Order bogeymen. In 2005, for example, when the Council on Foreign Relations released a document entitled “Building a North American Community” — calling for exploring the idea of further integration of Canada, the United States and Mexico — Patriot sites responded as if the report were a New World Order directive, spelling the imminent end of national sovereignty. ▲

Seeing Evil

A scholar discusses conspiracy theories in America and the dangers they pose to the political process

Michael Barkun is a professor emeritus of political science at the Maxwell School, Syracuse University. A leading expert specializing in political extremism and the relationship between religion and violence, Barkun is the author of numerous books, including *Religion and The Racist Right: The Origins of the Christian Identity Movement* and *A Culture of Conspiracy: Apocalyptic Visions in Contemporary America*. The *Intelligence Report* interviewed him about conspiracy culture in the United States and how it flourishes.



What has changed over the years, and what remains the same?

Clearly, the Internet allows ideas to spread and become “mainstreamed” much more easily and quickly. Notions that once would have remained within isolated subcultures can now spread to the larger society with astonishing speed. Just think of the “birther” phenomenon. On the other hand, there are certainly continuities — for example, hostility toward financial institutions and immigration, both of which were common among conspiracists in the 19th and 20th centuries.

What’s the most striking aspect of today’s resurgence in conspiracy culture?

I think it’s the way conspiracism has blended into popular culture. That is, it’s become an element in mass popular entertainment. We see it in popular literature, television programs and films. One need only point to the novels of Dan Brown or “The X-Files.” Now, it might be said that such treatments trivialize the ideas and sanitize them, in the sense that they separate the ideas from some of their more sinister political implications. But conspiracy beliefs have now become so common in popular enter-

tainment that they have been legitimized.

Is it possible to convince conspiracists that they are wrong through the use of sound logic and copious evidence?

Yes and no. If the conspiracy idea involves a single, limited event — say, the 9/11 attacks — it may well be possible to convince a believer that he or she is wrong based on a marshalling of evidence. On the other hand, if the conspiracy

idea is more sweeping — say, the belief that the Illuminati or the Trilateral Commission or some other cabal controls world politics — then the likelihood is that attempts will fail, for two reasons. First, believers in these kinds of sweeping conspiracy theories often believe that seemingly contradictory evidence has been cunningly planted by the conspiracy itself to mislead the unwary. Second, believers often think that those trying to debunk conspiracy theories are allies of the conspirators. This is especially true if the critics are, say, academics or journalists.

Why are conspiracy theories dangerous?

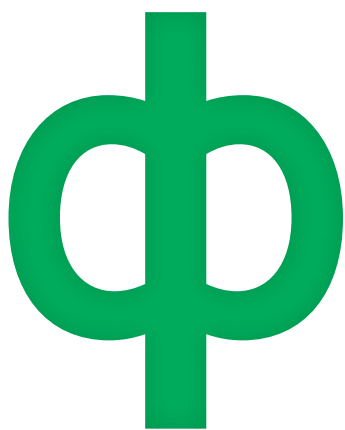
The danger of conspiracy theories lies, first, in their oversimplification of the political process; second, in their tendency to look for scapegoats upon whom blame might be heaped; and, third, in the likelihood that they will push believers entirely out of the political process, since many conspiracy theories assert that political institutions are irrelevant. This last danger is the most serious, since those alienated from the political process may choose violence rather than the ballot box. ▲

FROM RUSSIA, WITH LOVE?

AN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE RUSSIAN TV CHANNEL IS WORKING TO SPREAD 'PATRIOT' CONSPIRACY THEORIES ABOUT THE U.S. WORLDWIDE BY SONIA SCHERR



© PAVEL WISOCKI/REUTERS/CORBIS IMAGES



Five years ago, Russia Today made its debut as a news network aimed at enhancing Russia’s image in the West. Recently, however, the Kremlin-financed television channel has devoted considerable airtime not only to coverage that makes Russia look good, but to coverage that makes the United States look bad. Over the past year and a half, Russia Today has reported with boosterish zeal on conspiracy theories popular in the resurgent “Patriot” movement, whose adherents typically advocate extreme antigovernment doctrines. Its slickly packaged stories suggest

that a legitimate debate is under way in the United States about who perpetrated the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, for instance, and about President Obama’s eligibility for high office. It also frequently quotes U.S. extremists as authorities on world events or interviews them at length without asking anything more than softball questions. One British journalist called Russia Today “a strange propaganda outfit” after appearing on a show in which the host injected Sept. 11 revisionism.

Unlike most U.S.-based Patriot radio shows that do the same, the Moscow-headquartered Russia Today has a large global audience tuning in via cable, satellite and the Internet. In North America, Europe and South Africa, some 200 million paying viewers — including a growing number in the United States — have access to the network. Last year, more Washington, D.C.-area viewers told Nielsen Media Research they preferred to watch primetime news on Russia Today than on such other English-language foreign networks as Deutsche Welle (Germany), France 24, Euronews (France), CCTV News (China) and Al Jazeera English (Qatar). On YouTube, Russia Today ranks among the top 10 most-viewed news and political channels of all time. It employs some 2,000 staff worldwide, including about 100 in its recently opened Washington, D.C., office. (That makes its staff larger than Fox News, which reports a worldwide staff of 1,200, and about half the size of that of cable news pioneer CNN.) Russia Today has launched sister networks in Arabic and Spanish in addition to its flagship English broadcasting service.



Russia Today’s vision of the U.S. today — a Byzantine nation animated by all kinds of dark conspiracies — is beamed out to as many as 200 million people. The network has regularly featured 9/11 “truthers,” Obama-bashing “birthers,” conspiracy theorists and white supremacists, all without batting a critical eye.

Though a spokeswoman for Russia Today declined to give the amount of its annual budget, the Russian government has pumped millions into the network since its inception in 2005.

Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, deputy director of the Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law at Stanford University’s Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, said the network’s target audience appears to be second- and third-generation members of the Russian diaspora in the United States and abroad, along with foreign investors and international media. “It’s clearly a pro-Russian perspective; that’s the purpose of Russia Today,” she said. “Sometimes, a pro-Russia perspective involves an anti-somebody-else perspective — and we’re the most useful target at certain times.”

Plugging 9/11 Plots

Russia Today’s officials, who have long insisted that they operate without government influence despite multimillion-dollar subsidies, contend that the network is simply presenting a fresh take on the news. (Full disclosure: *Intelligence Report* Editor Mark Potok appeared on the April 26 edition of Russia Today’s “CrossTalk” program to discuss the rise of militias. The network also aired an interview with a militia leader who criticized the Southern Poverty Law Center’s characterization of militia groups.) In a statement to the *Intelligence Report*,

Russia Today Editor-in-Chief Margarita Simonyan called the network’s editorial policy “open and balanced” and dismissed criticism that the channel gives undue airtime to fringe ideas. “We don’t talk about 9/11 any more than U.S. media discusses who was behind the 1999 explosions in Moscow,” she wrote, referring to a series of deadly apartment bombings that helped spark the Second Chechen War. “Moreover, our own journalists have never claimed or even as much as hinted that the U.S. government may have been behind the tragedy of 9/11.”

That last claim is debatable at best. Russia Today has churned out dozens of stories that focus solely on the perspective of “9/11 truthers” — the small minority that, despite overwhelming evidence, rejects the government’s finding that the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks were perpetrated by al-Qaeda terrorists flying planes into buildings. Last year, for instance, independent producer Lori Harfenist, whose program “The Resident” is carried regularly on Russia Today, interviewed New Yorkers on the street about whether they thought Sept. 11 was “an inside job.” “Eight years after the attacks on U.S. soil on Sept. 11, 2001, questions still loom as to whether there were more people involved or if the U.S. government had anything to do with it,” she said in her introduction to that program. “Do you think the events were purely terrorist attacks or do you

think there were conspiratorial forces behind them?” The following statement appeared on the television screen throughout the segment: “New Yorkers unsure whether 9/11 was terrorist attack or inside job.”

Russia Today also appears to give credence to the Sept. 11 truthers in its news and commentary. For instance, the network reported on Oct. 13, 2009, that a judge would not let New Yorkers vote on whether to launch a new investigation into Sept. 11. “If a government by the people ignores the people, many wonder if here democracy is becoming a hypocrisy,” the reporter concluded. The channel also spoke extensively with Luke Rudkowski, the founder of We Are Change, a group that not only seeks “the truth” behind the Sept. 11 attacks but also frets about a looming “one world order,” a classic Patriot fear. “We go up to members ... we shake their hands and we ask them what happens when you meet with the world’s elites and banking media corporations and governments all around the world in secret,” Rudkowski said in the April 13, 2009, interview. The Russia Today host did not challenge Rudkowski’s suggestion of international conspiracies by world elites, a common theme on the U.S. radical right. On Feb. 11, Russia Today interviewed another We Are Change activist. Manny Badillo claimed that newly released Sept. 11 photos prove that explosives, not planes, brought down the buildings.

At the time of the last anniversary of Sept. 11, the channel published a four-part series on its website titled “911 Reasons why 9/11 was (probably) an inside job.” The articles, by Russia Today commentator Robert Bridge, report uncritically on discredited notions about Sept. 11, including the possibility that a bomb inside the towers contributed to their collapse and that the CIA had advance knowledge of the attack. On March 10, one of Russia Today’s top stories was headlined “Americans continue to fight for 9/11 truth.” That story, about a Pennsylvania gathering of Sept. 11 truthers, reported incorrectly that the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) listed Rudkowski’s We Are Change as a hate group along with the Ku Klux Klan. (In fact, this year the SPLC added We Are Change to its Patriot group listing, which is distinct from the hate group listing and includes hard-line antigovernment organizations that engage in groundless conspiracy theorizing.)

Russia Today’s focus on Sept. 11 “truth” hasn’t gone unnoticed. Douglas Murray, a British journalist and conservative political commentator, posted a withering blog item earlier this year about his “CrossTalk” appearance. “You can probably imagine,” he wrote on Feb. 15, “indeed can see, the look of astonishment that I and my fellow guest felt when the presenter declared to us, in the middle of a discussion about a totally different subject, that ‘the people

Russia Today has been particularly interested in the controversy over Barack Obama's citizenship, raising questions at odds with a mountain of evidence.



that perpetrated 9/11 were not even fundamentalists at all.” (The show’s host, Peter Lavelle, told *The Moscow Times* that show had been a “fiasco” because bad weather had prevented him from lining up guests to argue both sides of the issue under discussion.)

Russia Today editor-in-chief Simonyan told the *Intelligence Report* that “the last time we talked about it [the Sept. 11 truthers movement] was in March.” On May 20, however, the channel published another article by Bridge on its website that again questioned the 9/11 Commission Report. The article asserted that the official report “has only served to fuel suspicions about that watershed moment that will dominate U.S. foreign and domestic policy for many years to come.”

Simonyan is by no means a seasoned veteran of the practice of objective journalism. Born in Russia of Armenian parents, Simonyan was only 25 when the Kremlin named her editor-in-chief of the new network five years ago. *Washington Post* Moscow correspondent Peter Finn, quoted in a September 2008 article on the website Russia Beyond the Headlines, called the network a “breathless cheerleader” for the Kremlin, one which carefully avoided topics deemed too critical of then-President Vladimir Putin. The article continued: “During the [2008] conflict in South Ossetia, one of Russia Today’s foreign journalists resigned, claiming that his reports

were being censored to meet the official line. Even longtime Kremlin adviser Vyacheslav Nikonov at first referred to Russia Today as ‘too amateurish.’”

Birthers, Militiamen and Racists

It’s not just conspiracy theories about Sept. 11 that preoccupy Russia Today. The channel has also reported on the false notion that Obama was born outside the United States and therefore is ineligible for the presidency. The channel in March interviewed Dr. Orly Taitz, an émigré from the former Soviet republic of Moldova and a chief proponent of the “birther” movement who gained notoriety in August 2009 by unveiling Obama’s supposed Kenyan birth certificate — a document quickly exposed as a laughable forgery — and also has made a whole raft of other completely unsupported claims. Though the host noted that major American media outlets have refuted birther claims, he did not state that Obama has made public his birth certificate, even when Taitz asserted that “Obama himself owed allegiance to three other nations.” Taitz has made other appearances on Russia Today.

Sometimes Russia Today seems to want to have it two ways. A July 31, 2009, article on its website reported that Hawaii officials had confirmed that Obama was born there. It went on to state, however, that Obama was “being asked a lot of questions,” including the “particularly embarrassing” one about

his birthplace. It quoted a correspondent for the far-right website World Net Daily who suggested that, if the birth certificate exists, Obama should display it. The article didn’t mention that White House spokesman Robert Gibbs told World Net Daily that the birth certificate is posted on the Internet.

In addition, a Nov. 25, 2009, Russia Today story reported that James David Manning, the black pastor of a Harlem church, not only sees “pure evil” in Obama — but also contends he’s not a U.S. citizen (see related story, p. 49). The story noted Manning’s views are controversial, but concluded, “Pastor Manning remains undeterred in his rhetoric, despite the criticism of his community.” (Manning is apparently a friend of Taitz, joining her for a tiny 2009 protest in front of Fox News’ offices in New York after Fox’s Bill O’Reilly called Taitz “a nut.”)

Manning isn’t the only fringe figure to whom Russia Today has given exposure. Conspiracy-minded radio host Alex Jones makes frequent appearances. In a softball interview last year, Jones rehashed a signature Patriot conspiracy theory when he described the United States as a tool of the “New World Order” and asserted that the world is “controlled by the Bilderberg Group.” (The Bilderberg Group is an international, invitation-only group of influential business and government figures that meets privately every year. Many on the American radical right, including a number of anti-Semites, have

“We don’t give
airtime to public
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in Russia consider
extremists.”

— RUSSIA TODAY’S
MARGARITA SIMONYAN

long seen the Bilderberg group as being behind all kinds of nefarious plots.) “The New World Order,” Jones said in his April 7, 2009, show, “is just a super-rich international mafia of oligarchs that are playing God, who want to abolish and bankrupt nation states so they can set up an international order, where the planet is owned by a private bank.” The host, Anastasia Churkina, did not challenge any of Jones’ claims. In fact, Russia Today has sought Jones’ opinion on topics ranging from Internet security to a Philadelphia school district’s webcam spying scandal to the BP oil spill response. (He sees a federal conspiracy in all these cases.) An April 16 story headlined “Alex Jones reacts to news of potential oil shortages” gives odd weight to the opinion of the self-described truth teller. Consider the story’s opening paragraph: “In a new report, U.S. military officials are warning of a drop in oil production as early as 2012, but Alex Jones says that this may be true, and if so, it is the result of a conspiracy.”

Longtime militia organizer Jim



Fringe characters like “birther” Orly Taitz, Obama-hating Rev. James David Manning, and 9/11 “truthers” and We Are Change founder Luke Rudkowski are regularly featured on Russia Today.

Stachowiak — a controversial figure even in Patriot circles — also is a regular guest on Russia Today. Earlier this year, the Georgia-based radio host appeared on the network to defend Charles Dyer, a prominent associate of the Patriot group Oath Keepers until Dyer was charged with child sex abuse in January. “We’re standing by Dyer,” said Stachowiak, who wore a “Don’t Tread on Me” hat and referred to the ATF (the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives) as the “American Terrorism Force.”

Even white nationalist Jared Taylor has found a platform on Russia Today. On Feb. 8 of this year, when Taylor participated in a “CrossTalk” discussion of whether Obama is a post-racial president, host Lavelle introduced him as an author and editor of *American Renaissance* journal but made no mention of his blatantly racist views. (In 2005, for instance, Taylor wrote in his journal: “Blacks and whites are different. When blacks are left entirely to their own devices, Western civilization — any kind of civilization



— disappears.”) Russia Today was also the only major media outlet to interview Taylor after

multiple hotels cancelled his magazine’s biannual conference in February. It did not seek comment from the activists behind the campaign to shut down the conference, which brings together prominent white supremacists and academic racists from the United States and abroad.

But editor-in-chief Simonyan denied the channel is providing a forum for extremists. “We don’t give airtime to public figures who you call extremist any more than CNN and other channels give airtime to people who many in Russia consider extremists,” she said.

Yet Russia Today is clearly serving the interests of those who promote the ideas that animate the burgeoning Patriot movement. The channel gets rave reviews on Patriot websites, including Jones’ Prison Planet Forum. “This is what mainstream news should be like,” one forum poster declared on May 7 — ironically overlooking that his ideal media outlet is heavily subsidized by and very likely beholden to a government. “Russia Today,” he said, “gets many kudos from me.” ▲

REICH AND WRONG

AFTER SPONSORING SEVERAL FIGHTERS, A CALIFORNIA CLOTHING FIRM WITH TIES TO RACIST SKINHEADS IS BANNED BY MIXED MARTIAL ARTS LEAGUES

BY DAVID HOLTHOUSE



Hoelzer Reich founders Jed and Jamie Vine say they never meant to offend anyone with the Nazi imagery that runs through their clothing. They chose the company's name out of "pride in our German heritage."

Three major Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) leagues have banned a "street wear" clothing company with ties to the racist skinhead movement. But the California-based company, Hoelzer Reich, continues to make inroads into mainstream youth culture by providing money and free garments to at last some professional MMA fighters and motorcycle racers. These athletes then wear the clothes, much of which displays Nazi imagery, in public appearances and in merchandise such as posters and screen savers.

Hoelzer Reich's enlistment of fighters is troubling because of MMA's skyrocketing popularity with young men aged 18-34 — a prized demographic not only for advertisers, but also for white supremacist recruiters. Televised MMA events since 2007 have routinely drawn 3 million to 6 million viewers, beating out NASCAR, Major League Baseball and National Hockey League sporting events in both the 18-34 and 18-49 male categories, according to Nielsen ratings.

In addition to the athletes, Hoelzer Reich also supports longtime white power musician Ed Wolbank, the former leader of the Northern Hammerskins, a notorious skinhead group.

Last fall, Wolbank was asked about his association with Hoelzer Reich by *Crime Pride*, a neo-Nazi magazine published in the Czech Republic. "It's a new clothing line company out of California that sponsors professional cage fighters, motocross riders and our band," Wolbank replied.

FROM INTELLECON



"Check out their gear, it is very cool!"

The "gear" produced by Hoelzer Reich consists mainly of T-shirts and hooded sweatshirts in the same black-red-and-white color scheme as the flag of the Nazi Party. They bear a variety of Nazi-era military images, including SS lightning bolts, Totenkopf death's heads, Iron Crosses, swastika-clutching eagles and SS officer rank insignias. Some of the shirts and "hoodies" bear the popular racist skinhead motto "Blood and Honor" (this was also the motton of the Hitler Youth). Others proclaim, in German, "*das vierte reich hat begonnen*," which translates to "The Fourth Reich has begun."

Hoelzer Reich is hardly the first street wear venture to appeal to skinheads with Nazi iconography or to promote its clothing line to white supremacists by providing free gear to hate rock bands for stage wear.

What sets Hoelzer Reich apart is sponsoring popular adrenaline sports athletes such as 22-year-old professional dirt bike racer Kody Koger. A poster on Koger's website shows him wearing black, red and

white biker leathers, jumping his motorcycle between Hoelzer Reich logos.

"I don't see what the issue is, to be honest," Koger told the *Intelligence Report*. "I think people just have too much time on their hands and their problem is they read too far into things. Just because there are skulls and iron crosses on some shirts doesn't mean it's racism."

Another well-known athlete sponsored by Hoelzer Reich is Niko Puhakka, a professional MMA fighter since 2002 with numerous neo-Nazi tattoos, including a life rune (a symbol, taken from a medieval Germanic alphabet, that represents the neo-Nazi National Alliance) and "Blood and Honour" (in addition to being the Hitler Youth slogan, the Nazis' 1935 Nuremberg race laws were known by that phrase) splayed across his chest.

The Finnish brawler is just one of at least seven mid- to high-level profes-

sional MMA fighters who entered into sponsorship agreements with Hoelzer Reich since the company began recruiting athletes last year.

"We truly enjoy sponsoring MMA fighters and helping them out financially to achieve their dreams ... and being involved with their careers," Hoelzer Reich co-owner Jamie Vine stated to *Cage Pages*, an online MMA publication, last December.

By her own account, Vine founded Hoelzer Reich with her husband, Jed, neither of whom had a previously documented history of involvement in the skinhead movement. "Hoelzer," she said, was Jed's great-great-grandfather's name, and they chose "Reich" out of "pride in our German heritage."

In March 2008, the *Report* revealed that rising numbers of racist skinheads were participating in organized MMA training and, in a handful of cases, fighting at a professional level. Following the publication of that article, Dana White, president of the premiere MMA leagues Ultimate Fighting Championships (UFC) and World Extreme Cagefighting (WEC),

David Holthouse is a former *Intelligence Report* staff writer and free-lancer based in Alaska.



declared a “zero tolerance policy” toward “any and all skinheads and other white power racials” competing in either the UFC or the WEC. (The WEC focuses on lighter weight classes, the UFC on fighters 155 pounds and above.) In a subsequent letter to the *Report*, White reiterated his firm position: “There’s no place in our sport—none—for that kind of bigotry and idiocy.”

Despite the zero tolerance policy, a Hoelzer Reich-sponsored fighter, Joe Brammer, appeared on national television wearing a Hoelzer-Reich T-shirt, replete with Iron Crosses and death’s heads, last December in the season finale of the hugely popular reality TV show “The Ultimate Fighter.” The show, which pits aspiring MMA fighters against one another in weekly elimination fights, is produced in direct cooperation with the UFC, one of the leagues overseen by White. UFC champions serve as coaches on the show and White periodically appears on the program. Among the contestants, the last man standing is awarded a six-figure UFC contract.



Brammer and his entourage wore the Hoelzer Reich gear for his weigh-in, a media event, and during his “walkout,” the pre-fight ritual in which the cameras focus on the fighter and his crew as they make their way from backstage to the octagon. (Brammer has never publicly expressed white supremacist views). Almost 4 million viewers watched. Brammer lost the fight, but his defeat did nothing to dampen the fast-burning controversy among the online MMA fan

Backing away: Mac Danzig (left), champion of the sixth season of “The Ultimate Fighter,” is one of those who have recently ended sponsorship deals with Hoelzer Reich.

community sparked by his walkout apparel. “If Brammer wants to wear this shirt down Main St., he is free to do so. The First Amendment guarantees him that right. But free speech does not mean consequence-free speech,” said Yahoo! Sports MMA writer Maggie Hendricks. “Fighters shouldn’t be able to wear shirts into the Octagon (and make sponsor money from broadcasts) that promote something so hurtful and offensive.” Attempting damage control, Hoelzer Reich posted this defense to several MMA forums: “The imagery and symbols used in our clothing line were chosen and referenced from several German and Prussian Military themes, based on our interest of WW1 and WW2 Germany. ... We did not realize that the brief association some of the imagery had with Nazi Germany over 70 years ago would still be so sensitive to so many people. The bottom line is: we NEVER meant to offend

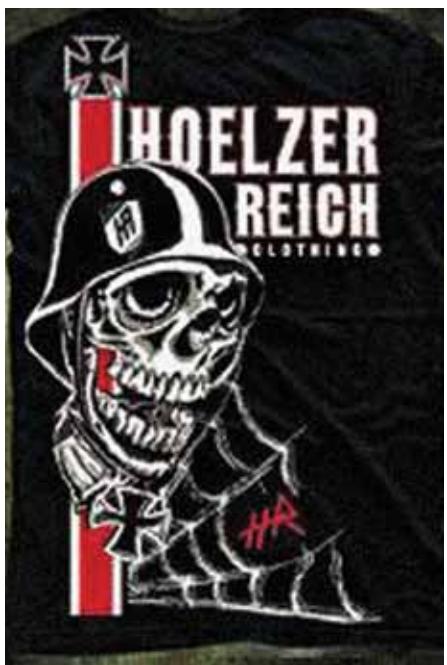
THE CANADIAN PRESS, PETER MCCABE/AP IMAGE (DANZIG), FROM HIRALITE.COM (SHIRT IMAGES)



ANYONE. We do not support the Neo Nazi ‘cause,’ nor do we promote any racist ideologies.” Incredulous MMA bloggers pointed out Hoelzer Reich’s association with hate rock musician Wolbank as well as its sponsorship of Niko Puhakka, the fighter with the neo-Nazi tattoos. The fallout was immediate. First, one of Hoelzer Reich’s best-known fighters, undefeated (14-0) Lyle “Fancypants” Beerbohm, severed ties with the company. “I’m no longer being sponsored by Hoelzer Reich, and I want to apologize to my fans,” he announced online. Next, Zuffa LLC, the parent company of both the Ultimate Fighting Championships and World Extreme Cagefighting, announced that fighters and their support staff were banned from wearing Hoelzer Reich clothing at weigh-ins, for walkouts, in the octagon during fights, or at any other UFC or WEC-affiliated public appearances. Zuffa’s banning of Hoelzer Reich had a punishing effect. The following day, Strikeforce, the third largest MMA league after those owned by Zuffa, issued



Among its Nazi-themed clothing, the shirt that stands out (above) is marked “das vierte reich hat begonnen” — “the Fourth Reich has begun.” a similar ban. “We will not permit our fighters to wear this type of apparel in our cage,” said Strikeforce director of communications Mike Afromowitz. At least three more fighters have publicly terminated their sponsorship deals with Hoelzer Reich in recent months, including Mac Danzig, the champion of the sixth season of “The Ultimate Fighter.” (Curiously, Hoelzer Reich continues to advertise Mac Danzig signature-line shirts online.) Along with Puhakka, MMA fighters who are still sponsored by Hoelzer Reich, according to the company, include: Jesse Newell, Justin “Punisher” Pennington and Marcus Sursa. Other than Puhakka, none of the Hoelzer Reich fighters have identified themselves as white supremacists. “Hoelzer Reich’s defenders ... say that the clothing only promotes German-American pride, and as a German-American, that offends me more



than anything,” said MMA sportswriter Hendricks. “I am proud to be German, and live in a traditionally German area of Chicago. We are all able to show our pride in Deutschland without paying homage to such a dark part of history.” ▲

FOR THE RECORD

INCIDENTS OF APPARENT HATE CRIMES AND HATE GROUP ACTIVITIES LISTED IN FOR THE RECORD ARE drawn primarily from media sources. These incidents include only a fraction of the approximately 191,000 reported and unreported hate crimes that a 2005 government report estimated annually. This listing carries a selection of incidents from the second quarter of 2010. Any additional listings can be found on the Intelligence Project’s website at www.splcenter.org.

ARIZONA

Phoenix • May 6, 2010

Gary Thomas Kelley, 50, was charged with second-degree murder as a hate crime after he allegedly shouted racial epithets and fatally shot Juan Varela, a 44-year-old Mexican-American man, in May.

CALIFORNIA

Apple Valley • April 2, 2010

Thomas McManus, 44, was charged with suspicion of a hate crime and felony vandalism for allegedly trying to force his neighbors to move by using racial slurs and vandalizing their house in April.

Costa Mesa • June 25, 2010

Ronald Allen Bramlett, a 65-year-old white man, was sentenced to eight years in prison for using racial slurs and threatening a 16-year-old black youth with a knife outside a drugstore in December.

Fullerton • April 16, 2010

David Anthony Parga, a 24-year-old reputed member of a Latino street gang, was charged with one count of a special circumstances hate crime for the benefit of a street gang, one count of street terrorism and a sentencing enhancement for criminal street gang activity and using a fire-arm in connection with the 2006 shooting death of a college student at a party in 2006. Prosecutors alleged Parga was motivated to commit the crime by his gang’s hatred of blacks.

Los Angeles • April 17, 2010

About 50 members of the National Socialist Movement held a rally to protest illegal immigration.

Los Angeles • May 24, 2010

The numerals “666” were scrawled in the kitchen of a

Catholic church, a knife was stuck into a religious painting and feces were left in the church’s auditorium.

Palm Springs • June 20, 2010

A 14-year-old boy was charged with suspicion of vandalism and damaging property to violate civil rights for allegedly spray-painting derogatory statements and pictures on homes and vehicles of several residents that referred to the victims’ perceived sexual orientation.

Richmond • May 22, 2010

Three Latino men allegedly shouted racial slurs and beat a white man.

Sacramento • June 29, 2010

Georgia Silva, 52, and her husband, Joseph Silva, 56, were sentenced to 18 months in federal prison for shouting ethnic slurs and beating a native of India at a South Lake Tahoe beach in July 2007.

Santa Ana • May 28, 2010

Arash Riazati, 31, was charged with felony aggravated assault, felony hate crime-motivated assault and misdemeanor violation of civil rights by causing property damage after he allegedly threatened two Latino men with a metal chain.

Sunnyvale • June 11, 2010

A Muslim man who was holding a copy of the Koran was allegedly attacked by two men who called the victim a terrorist.

Ventura • June 20, 2010

Matt Engeman, 54, was arrested on suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon, making criminal threats, resisting an officer and a misdemeanor hate crime charge for allegedly attacking his landlord

and using racial slurs against him in front of police.

Victorville • June 21, 2010

Tommy Lee Rhea, 19, and Richard Butler Cambria, 17, were accused of shouting racial slurs and threatening a black family with a knife and baseball bats. Rhea pled guilty to assault with a deadly weapon and admitted to participation in a criminal street gang and was sentenced to four years in prison.

Cambria pled guilty to assault with force likely to cause great bodily injury and is awaiting sentencing. Neo-Nazi and gang writings and graffiti were allegedly found in Rhea’s residence.

COLORADO

Boulder • April 14, 2010

A 16-year-old was charged with ethnic intimidation for allegedly scrawling a racist death threat against Mexicans on a cafeteria table at a high school.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Washington • April 5, 2010

Christopher McDonald, 27, was sentenced to 120 days in jail for making anti-gay remarks and threatening a group of women with a knife in September 2009.

FLORIDA

Jacksonville • May 10, 2010

A homemade pipe bomb exploded at an Islamic center.

GEORGIA

Sandy Springs • April 24, 2010

Racist graffiti that included swastikas and sexual slurs was spray-painted on several cars and signs in a neighborhood.

Savannah • June 12, 2010

Keil J. Cronauer, 22, and Christopher C. Stanzel, 23, were charged with misdemeanor battery for allegedly beating a gay man.

IDAHO

Coeur d’Alene • April 19, 2010

Ira G. Tankovich, 48, was convicted of conspiracy to commit disturbing the peace for allegedly using a racial slur while threatening a Latino man in August 2009.

Idaho Falls • April 3, 2010

Aryan Nations recruitment fliers were placed inside plastic Easter eggs and left on lawns.

Idaho Falls • April 16, 2010

Rocks containing derogatory messages about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints were thrown through the windows of two LDS churches.

ILLINOIS

Chicago • May 11, 2010

An art display about hate crimes in a gallery at the School of the Art Institute was defaced with the words “kill all” and “Arabs.”

Des Plaines • May 3, 2010

Thomas Brodnicki, 45, was sentenced to three years in prison for sending disturbing E-mail messages to a woman he had been stalking physically and electronically for years, including demands that she marry him in order to have a “blue-eyed, blonde-haired” baby.

LOUISIANA

Athens • May 12, 2010

Joshua James Moro, 23, was charged with conspiring to interfere with another person’s civil rights after he allegedly participated in a cross burning near an interracial couple’s home in October 2008.

Denham Springs • June 17, 2010

Jason Fallon, 52, was charged with a hate crime, aggravated assault with a firearm and illegal use of a weapon after he allegedly used

racial slurs and threatened a black man while armed.

Downsville • June 24, 2010

Robert Jackson, 37, pleaded guilty to violating the Fair Housing Act by intimidating and interfering with another’s housing rights because of race after he placed a hangman’s noose in the carport of a family who had black visitors in 2008.

Shreveport • May 27, 2010

Daniel Earl Danforth, 31, was sentenced to four years in prison for his involvement in lighting a cross near the homes of a cousin and her black boyfriend. Danforth was convicted of hate crime and obstruction of justice charges in January.

MAINE

Anson • May 23, 2010

Fliers from the skinhead group Blood & Honour American Division were left on lawns.

MARYLAND

Joppa • May 6, 2010

James A. Kimble, 20, was charged with first-degree assault and hate crimes for allegedly hitting an off-duty black police officer in the eye with a glass beer mug at a bar while hurling racial epithets and threatening to hang him.

Middle River • April 30, 2010

A dead raccoon was found hanging from a noose in front of the residence of a family who emigrated from Africa.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston • April 1, 2010

Daniel Jourdet, a 52-year-old white man, was charged with civil rights violation, assault and battery, trespassing and disorderly conduct for allegedly taunting a transportation inspector with racial slurs and then punching him in the face.

Boston • April 22, 2010

Herbert Malloy and Hattie Boseman were charged with allegedly assaulting a female couple

on New Year’s Eve because of the couple’s sexual orientation.

Worcester • May 19, 2010

Douglas Griffin, 23, pled guilty to assault, threatening, assault or battery to intimidate, a civil rights violation and wanton destruction of property for using racial slurs and assaulting a black couple at a convenience store in 2008. Griffin was sentenced to two years in prison, but suspended the sentence for three years of probation.

MICHIGAN

Pontiac • June 8, 2010

Three men were sentenced to jail for burning a cross in the yard of a black family in 2009. Joshua Willhite, 20, received 180 days in jail after pleading no contest to commit ethnic intimidation. Travis Nesbitt and Jonathan Waite, both 19, each pleaded no contest to ethnic intimidation and were sentenced to 120 days in jail and three years of probation.

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis • May 12, 2010

Fliers from the United Northern and Southern Knights of the Ku Klux Klan were left in a neighborhood.

MISSOURI

Cape Girardeau • May 6, 2010

Two men allegedly yelled racial slurs and attacked a black man. Brothers Jerry Conrad, 23, and Timothy R. Conrad, 18, were charged with third-degree felony assault as a hate crime.

Columbia • April 8, 2010

Leonard B. Turner, a 59-year-old white man, was charged with suspicion of armed criminal action and assault for allegedly using racial slurs and threats before discharging a firearm in a scuffle with a black man outside a bar.

NEW JERSEY

Flemington • April 5, 2010

John Memmel, 37, was convicted of bias intimidation, terroristic threats and possession of an imitation firearm for an unlaw-

ful purpose for allegedly pulling alongside a black family in a car, pointing a fake handgun at them and using a racial slur while threatening to kill them in 2007. He was sentenced in June to five years in prison.

Plainfield • May 1, 2010

Two black youths, Andre Lee Rollins Jr., 18, and a 16-year-old, were charged with bias intimidation, robbery and aggravated assault after they allegedly used racial epithets while robbing a Latino man.

Trenton • April 19, 2010

Carl Hreha Jr., 28, a former computer technician for the state’s Attorney General’s Office, was found guilty of bias intimidation and computer theft after he programmed office computers to spew thousands of racist fliers from printers throughout the office in 2006.

NEW MEXICO

Farmington • April 29, 2010

Jesse Sanford, 24, William Hatch, 28, and Paul Beebe, 26, were charged with kidnapping and aggravated battery causing great bodily harm for allegedly forcing a 22-year-old mentally challenged man from the Navajo Indian reservation into their car, branding a swastika on his arm with a heated metal clothes hanger, shaving a swastika into his hair and drawing degrading words and pictures on his body with a marker.

NEW YORK

Brookhaven • May 1, 2010

Nicholas Kohler, 21, was charged with aggravated harassment for allegedly yelling ethnic slurs at Latino men outside a restaurant.

Brooklyn • June 5, 2010

Luis Newman, 43, was charged with menacing as a hate crime and possession of a weapon for allegedly yelling anti-gay comments at two men while slashing at them with a knife.

Brooklyn • June 28, 2010

Keith Phoenix, 30, was convicted of murder as a hate crime for beating to death Ecuadorean immigrant Jose Sucuzhanay in 2008 because of the victim’s ethnicity and because Phoenix thought Sucuzhanay and his brother were gay.

Cooperstown • April 2, 2010

A black youth allegedly was chased by a white teen who shot at him with a rifle. Anthony Pacherille, 16, was arrested and could be charged with second-degree murder.

New York • April 3, 2010

Two 15-year-olds and a 12-year-old were charged with assault as a hate crime for allegedly attacking Asian women in five separate incidents during a two-week span.

New York • June 5, 2010

A 43-year-old Brooklyn man was charged with a hate crime after he allegedly pulled a knife on two men and made anti-gay remarks.

North Baldwin • May 16, 2010

Two swastikas were scrawled on the doors of a synagogue.

Port Richmond • May 25, 2010

Joseph Papapietro, 25, pled guilty to a misdemeanor count of criminal mischief for ramming his truck into three Mexican-owned businesses in 2008 and was sentenced to a one-year conditional discharge after he was found mentally unfit to stand trial in October.

Richmond • June 24, 2010

A Mexican immigrant man was allegedly punched in the eye by three black men.

Riverhead • April 19, 2010

Jeffrey Conroy, 19, was convicted of manslaughter as a hate crime and gang assault in connection with the 2008 stabbing death of Ecuadorean immigrant Marcelo Lucero. Conroy also was convicted of attempted assault on three other Latino men.

Riverhead • April 20, 2010

Felicia Smith and Sean Allen,

both 19, were charged with robbery and conspiracy as a hate crime for allegedly robbing and threatening several Latino men between December 2009 and March of this year.

Spring Valley • April 10, 2010

Kyle Silceira, 16; Anthony Soto, 18; and Denise Lopez, 17, were charged with aggravated harassment as a hate crime and disorderly conduct for allegedly threatening several residents in an Orthodox Jewish neighborhood. Silceira also was charged with menacing as a hate crime because he held an aluminum bat.

Staten Island • April 5, 2010

Rolston Hopson, 27, and Tyrone Goodman and William Marcano, both 17, were charged with robbery and assault as a hate crime for allegedly shouting anti-Mexican slurs while beating a man with a wooden stick.

OHIO

Cincinnati • April 10, 2010

Four reported skinheads, three of them Army members, allegedly attacked a homeless man. Michael Hesson and Pvt. Riley Feller, both 24, were arrested on felonious assault charges in connection with the beating.

OREGON

Portland • June 10, 2010

Five people were arrested on charges of investigation into first-degree kidnapping and intimidation, second-degree robbery and third-degree assault for allegedly beating a man while using anti-gay slurs.

PENNSYLVANIA

Waverly • June 6, 2010

Bryan T. Holland, 21, was arrested for allegedly making racist comments and using his cell phone to send a woman a photo of him wearing a white hood and holding a drawing of a swastika.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Florence • April 20, 2010

Three men were sentenced for

threatening a black man with a chain saw in December, taking his car and then using a gun to threaten two white men who were attempting to help the victim. Thomas Howard Blue Sr., 49, was sentenced to 156 months in prison; Thomas Howard Blue Jr., 29, was sentenced to 36 months; and Judson Hartley Talbert was sentenced to 108 months.

Newberry • June 2, 2010

Gregory Ashton Collins, 19, was charged with murder for allegedly shooting a black man, 30-year-old Anthony Lamont Hill, in the head then dragging Hill's body behind his truck.

TENNESSEE

Columbia • April 22, 2010

Jonathan Edward Stone, 20, was sentenced to six years in federal prison after he and two other men broke into a mosque in 2008, painted swastikas and racist phrases on it and then burned it to the ground.

Lebanon • June 21, 2010

A black couple discovered a drawing of a man hanging from a noose and a racial epithet sketched on a vacation property's masonry entrance.

Murfreesboro • June 23, 2010

A sign marking the future site of an Islamic Center was vandalized for the second time in less than six months.

Nashville • June 2, 2010

A swastika and the letters "KKK" were spray-painted on a black woman's driveway and at a Latino neighbor's residence.

TEXAS

Beaumont • May 19, 2010

Letters on a sign outside a school district administration building were rearranged apparently in an attempt to spell a racial slur.

Cedar Springs • May 15, 2010

Two men were allegedly beaten with baseball bats and robbed by four men who yelled anti-gay slurs.

Grapevine • June 4, 2010

Thomas M. Fann, 57, was arrested after he allegedly grabbed a black power company representative around the neck and yelled racial slurs. Fann may be charged with making a terrorist threat.

Lubbock • April 12, 2010

Fliers from the Traditional Christian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan were left in a parking lot at Texas Tech University.

San Antonio • April 16, 2010

Cody Carmichael, 21, was charged with murder as a hate crime in the Feb. 21 shooting death of 24-year-old Troy Martinez Clattenburg allegedly because of Clattenburg's sexual orientation.

VERMONT

Bennington • April 24, 2010

A man who allegedly identified himself as a Nazi and his girlfriend allegedly used racial epithets while threatening several people, including a biracial child, with a BB handgun. Sara B. Ennis, 28, was charged with three counts of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and a misdemeanor charge of reckless endangerment.

VIRGINIA

Bedford • May 19, 2010

Darrell Bruce Orange, 50, pled guilty to burning a cross in an interracial couple's yard in November and was sentenced to nine months in jail.

Dumfries • May 11, 2010

Joseph W. Barnes, 18, was charged with destruction and defacing property for allegedly placing swastika stickers at a high school for several weeks.

Norfolk • May 6, 2010

Christopher John Brooks pled guilty to injury to a cemetery or church for placing anti-Semitic stickers on a synagogue and other places of worship in 2009. Brooks received a five-year prison sentence, all of which was suspended except for the year Brooks spent in

jail since his April 2009 arrest. On May 14 John Edward Grogan, 30, a member of the skinhead group Volksfront, was sentenced to 20 years in prison, with all but five years suspended, in connection with the same incident.

Roanoke • April 14, 2010

William A. White, former leader of the neo-Nazi American National Socialist Workers Party, was sentenced to 30 months in federal prison for threatening two individuals and for attempting to intimidate black tenants who were litigants in a federal housing discrimination lawsuit.

WASHINGTON

Bellevue • June 25, 2010

A van parked near a mosque and bearing advertisements about Islam was smeared with what appeared to be dog feces.

Olympia • June 22, 2010

A menorah at a Jewish center was knocked over and the words "Die Jews" were spray-painted on its base.

Shelton • April 29, 2010

A cross with three nooses tied to it was left at the home of an Alaskan Indian family and the tires of the family's car were slashed.

Spokane • April 1, 2010

Michael A. Brewer, 22, was charged with robbery and malicious harassment for allegedly yelling racial slurs while trying to rob the Latino owner of a taco truck at knife-point.

WEST VIRGINIA

Martinsburg • June 10, 2010

Kendra Sulick, 38, was convicted of three civil rights violations for harassing her black neighbors with racial slurs and threats between December 2007 and April 2009.

WISCONSIN

Fond du Lac • April 11, 2010

Racist fliers were left at residences.

Fond du Lac • May 10, 2010

Racist fliers were left on cars in a high school parking lot. ▲

Here Comes the Judge

In Harlem, a vitriolic pastor leads a 'trial' that ends in the conviction of the president. Who knew?

BY ROBERT STEINBACK

HARLEM PASTOR JAMES DAVID MANNING put President Barack Obama on "trial" in May on charges including treason, sedition, and, most importantly, not being a "natural-born" United States citizen, thus making him unqualified to hold the office. The verdict was both convincing and resounding: Manning proved himself guilty of first-degree irrelevance.

Had the trial and pre-ordained "convictions" of Obama, former Columbia University President Michael I. Sovern and the school itself on 17 criminal "counts" simply been presented as a mock trial intended to stir intellectual discussion, they might at least have provided grist for idle cocktail party banter. But the sheer silliness of the proceedings, punctuated by Manning's histrionic insistence that his trial was "legal" and its verdict "binding," erased even that forlorn hope.

Manning convened the May 14-18 tribunal, approved the judges, served as "prosecuting attorney," and provided the venue: his ATLAH World Missionary Church building on 123rd Street in Harlem.

After leading 40 to 50 people on a march around the Columbia campus, Manning spent the rest of the first morning getting people through metal detectors and into the building, said Salon.com's Alex Pareene, the only reporter from a reputable U.S. media outlet to attend. As soon as the 75 or so spectators (Manning had expected 30,000) were finally settled in, the proceedings broke for lunch.

It went downhill from there. Manning evidently failed to properly coach prospective "jurors" on how to handle the faux "voir dire" process. Manning "was trying to get them to say they would be impartial," Pareene said. "He'd ask, 'If evidence were provided that [Obama] was innocent, could you

find him innocent?' At first, they kept saying, 'No, I think he's guilty.'"

Manning named Columbia and Sovern as "co-defendants" for supposedly enabling Obama to fake attendance at Columbia in the early 1980s, when Obama *really* was a CIA operative training in Al-Qaeda terrorist camps in Afghanistan and Pakistan. (Actually, Al-Qaeda was formed in 1988 at the earliest.) Manning, who did not respond to an interview request from the *Intelligence Report*, had not released a transcript of the proceedings as of early July. But in a video excerpt of the trial posted online, Manning introduces some of his evidence "proving" Obama never attended Columbia: In his autobiography *Dreams From My Father*, Obama writes that he arrived in New York inquiring about an apartment "in Spanish Harlem," near the university. But, Manning declared, the Columbia campus is on Manhattan's West Side, while Spanish Harlem is on the East Side. Aha!

The president doesn't appear to be at serious risk of being perp-walked to the hoosegow in handcuffs with a jacket covering his face. Indeed, Manning in a post-trial press conference grudgingly acknowledged that his "court" lacked authority to execute arrest warrants and warned that the verdict should not be used by anyone as an excuse to "attempt to effect an arrest of Mr. Obama."

Manning has been a dedicated "birther" conspiracy club member — and, as an African American, a somewhat unique one — since that bandwagon began rolling in 2008. From video recordings made before and after the trial, it appears Manning hoped his exercise would validate numerous "indictments" handed down by so-called "citizen grand juries" of the antigovernment "Patriot" movement.



Trial of the century? Not really, but Obama-hater and Rev. James David Manning did his best to make it seem that way.



Citizen grand juries evolved from the "sovereign citizen" movement (see story, p. 12), a movement that contends that individuals can opt out of the jurisdiction of federal and state governmental authority and create, among other things, their own courts.

Aside from a few obscure website mentions, Manning's "verdict" appears to have landed with a dull thud, even among the Patriot faithful. In the weeks since, Manning seems to have drifted into increasingly bitter ideological isolation. In a June 10 Web post, the pastor disparages not only Obama but Republicans, Democrats, Tea Partiers, the "dung head" (mainstream) media, Bill O'Reilly, Glenn Beck, Congress, and California political hopefuls Carly Fiorina and Meg Whitman, among others. The last good guys in Manning's bizarre world are "high-ranking U.S. military officers" supposedly poised to arrest Obama in a coup d'état. Alas, until they act, Manning will labor on trying to prove Obama has pulled the wool over virtually everyone's eyes but his own. ▲

BEETO MATTHEWS/AP IMAGES (MANNING); FROM THEDAILYVOICE.COM (ATLAH)

The SPLC *Intelligence Report* Offers New Online Investigative Resources

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