

THE X-RAY FILES // KLANSMAN CONVICTED IN BIZARRE PLOT

# Intelligence Report

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## MARGINS TO THE MAINSTREAM

Radical-Right Conspiracy  
Theories Have Invaded  
American Politics

PLUS

CARNAGE IN CHARLESTON: 'RACE WAR' MASSACRE  
PRO-CONFEDERATE FLAG BACKLASH IN FULL SWING



# Donald Trump, Conspiracy Theory and the Radical Right

BY MARK POTOK

Who, exactly, is Donald Trump appealing to?

In the first months of his Republican presidential campaign, the demagogic New York billionaire has poured boiling vitriol on anyone who dared to criticize him, proposed a crude immigration plan that virtually all sensible observers see as brutal and also completely unrealistic, and said that we can simply trust that his solutions for any number of other problems will be “terrific.”



And while the vast majority of analysts agree that he cannot win the GOP nomination, let alone the presidency, it seems obvious that he is damaging the party and its future. In the words of the widely read conservative commentator George Will, “Every sulfurous belch from the molten interior of the volcanic Trump phenomenon injures the chances of a Republican presidency.”

But Trump, so far, is leading the Republican field.

Although he has not asked for its support, he has won the applause of virtually the entire white nationalist movement, as we detail in this issue. But his appeal is clearly far broader than that. A hyper-nationalist, Trump has tapped into the anger of a growing constituency who see globalization changing the racial, religious and economic dynamics of the world around them. It is a phenomenon being replicated in Europe, where radical nationalist politics also are on the rise.

But part of it is also related to specifically American conditions, including the loss of a white U.S. majority that is expected over the course of the next three decades. As Thomas Edsall, a longtime and trenchant analyst of the far right, wrote in a *New York Times* opinion piece recently: “[T]he more important truth is that a half-century of Republican policies on race and immigration have made the party the home of an often angry and resentful white constituency — a constituency that is now politically mobilized in the face of demographic upheaval.”

Large portions of that constituency are not merely resentful. Operating in the absence of actual facts, or gleaning their information from a world of conspiracy-oriented websites and clueless “news” organizations, these men and women see the world as shaped by nefarious conspiracies — from secret Mexican plans to reconquer the American Southwest, to government plots to force the United States into a one-world government called the “New World Order,” to national educational standards

supposedly designed to make our children communists.

A September survey by Public Policy Polling measured Trump supporters’ affinity for baseless conspiracy theories directly. It found that 66% of them believe President Obama is secretly Muslim and 61% think he was not born in the United States — significantly higher numbers than for all Republicans.

And Trump is at home in that world. After all, in 2011 he repeatedly asserted that Obama was not born in America, and therefore was not eligible for the presidency — this despite a mountain of evidence, including a birth announcement in a Hawaiian newspaper. Trump had investigators working in Hawaii, he told one reporter, who were unearthing the truth. “They can’t believe what they’re finding,” he boasted. But that was the end of that. He never mentioned them again.

Even in 2015, long after Obama released his full birth certificate and after saying he no longer wanted to discuss the issue, Trump still was unsure if the president was lying. “I don’t know, I really don’t know,” he said.

Trump also has repeatedly attacked the Common Core educational standards, a favorite bogeyman of the far right, many of whose denizens think they are actually part of a plot to turn American children into mindless “global citizens.”

And, rejecting the conclusions of a consensus of scientists, he sneers at the very idea of global warming. During a cold spell in 2014, for instance, he tweeted: “This very expensive GLOBAL WARMING bullshit has got to stop. Our planet is freezing, record low temps, and our GW scientists are stuck in ice.”

In this issue, we take a look at 10 major conspiracy theories that originated on the radical right but have made their way into the American political mainstream. These baseless theories are today being pushed not merely by hyperventilating conspiracists like the radio host Alex Jones. They are being enabled by shocking numbers of politicians and others in the public square — people like Donald Trump.

The problem with conspiracy theories is that they substitute ignorance and suspicion for knowledge and reason, making it vastly more difficult for us to solve the very serious problems that face us. If we really believe that global warming is a hoax, the chances of solving the problem are slim indeed. If we think Mexico has secret invasion plans, fixing our immigration system may be impossible.

In the end, Donald Trump may be sidelined and leave the political arena he has dominated for most of this summer. But the anger he has tapped into is likely to shape the American body politic for years to come. ▲



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## 17 The X-Ray Files

A Klan member from New York was tried this summer for his role in a plot to build a fantastic X-ray weapon with which he hoped to kill large numbers of Muslims and others. As much as the conspiracy sounded like something out of a Batman comic, the man and his partner came surprisingly close to accomplishing their bloody mission.

### ON THE COVER

## 26 Margins to the Mainstream

Conspiracy theories are destructive to democracy, substituting ignorance and suspicion for knowledge and reason, and in the process making our nation's problems that much harder to solve. Nevertheless, a wide range of such theories have made their way into the political mainstream, aided and abetted by politicians, pundits and others in the public square. We examine 10 leading theories and some of their enablers.



## 20 Carnage in Charleston

Three years before Dylann Roof shot nine black people in a Charleston, S.C., church this June, he came upon the website of the Council of Conservative Citizens, a white supremacist hate group. Deriving his racist ideology from that site and others, Roof went on to become a classic "lone wolf," attacking without any help from others.



## 40 Furling the Flag

The Confederate flag has flown in venues around this country for 150 years, since the end of the Civil War. But photos of mass murderer Dylann Roof posing with the flag caused a wave of revulsion that led to efforts across the South to get rid of such racist symbols. Today, however, thousands of flag supporters are fighting back.

# Intelligence Report

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## 14 Trump Stump

A politician can't be blamed for all the views of his or her supporters. Still, it's remarkable how widely Donald Trump is backed by racist white nationalists.

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### 49 The Last Word

When Angelo John Gage isn't warning of "white genocide," he's busy as a "life coach" helping people with "negative emotions," phobias and other such problems.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT INQUIRIES WELCOMED

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







## [ HATE CRIMES ]

## Murders of Trans Women This Year Hits New High

Every November, just before Thanksgiving, friends, family and strangers gather across the country to read off the names of transgender men and women murdered over the course of the year. The mournful roll call is the Transgender Day of Remembrance.

This year, more names than ever will be added to the list. Between January and mid-August, at least 17 transgender women, most of them women of color, have been murdered in the United States, surpassing last year's death toll by four — with more than four months left in the year.

And the numbers could be even higher. As Advocate.com points out, the murder counts this year and last do not account “for individuals whose deaths were not reported or investigated, nor

for victims who were misgendered or not regarded as trans women in death.”

The women were slain from Miami to Los Angeles. They were shot, stabbed and beaten to death. One woman was repeatedly run over by an SUV. The oldest victim was a 66-year-old in California. The youngest was 17 and lived and died in the Deep South.

The violence, Chase Strangio, a staff attorney with the ACLU's LGBT & AIDS Project, told the radio program “Democracy Now!” three days after the murder of a transgender woman in Kansas City, Mo., is a national crisis and “a state of emergency for the transgender community” that is “disproportionately affecting transgender women of color, and particularly black trans women.”

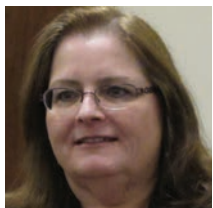
The violence, Strangio added, “includes all of the ways in which transgender people, particularly transgender women of color, have their lives cut short through systems of discrimination and through interpersonal violence that leads them to be killed, as these women have been.”

When the names of those murdered in 2015 are read on Nov. 20, Tamara Dominguez of Kansas City will be number 17.

Dominguez, 36, was killed around 3 a.m. on Aug. 15. Witnesses told police, according to a local television station, that they saw her step out of a dark-colored SUV. Moments later the male driver struck her with the vehicle and ran over her body at least two more times.

**“State of emergency”:** Every year, the Transgender Day of Remembrance, shown here being marked in West Hollywood, Calif., gains more urgency as the death toll mounts.

Visit [intelligencereport.org](http://intelligencereport.org) for more information on the state of hate in America.



Pants on fire: David Daleiden (from top), Troy Newman, Cheryl Sullenger and Albin Rhomberg are among the principal promoters of deceptively edited videos meant to blacken the reputation of Planned Parenthood.

Friends and family, according to Advocate.com, laid flowers at the crime scene, near the parking lot of a church.

Two days earlier in Johnston County, N.C., police discovered the body of 20-year-old Elisha Walker, buried behind a house. The authorities found her car burned and abandoned in the next county. Her family had reported her missing last fall.

Angel Arias, a 23-year-old member of the Latin Kings street gang, was charged with murder and felony vehicle theft in the case.

In June, another alleged Latin Kings gang member, Josh Brandon Vallum, 28, was charged in Mississippi with the springtime murder of Mercedes Williamson, a 17-year-old trans woman from the small town of Theodore, Ala. She was beaten to death and buried under debris on the Mississippi property owned by the suspect's father.

The oldest on the list of the dead is K.C. Haggard, 66, of Fresno, Calif. Her throat was slashed by a passenger in a light-colored SUV as Haggard, a former security guard, walked home early in the morning of July 23.

The SUV sped away. Haggard was later pronounced dead at a local hospital. She was victim number 11.

#### [ ANTI-ABORTION EXTREMISM ]

## Group Attacking Planned Parenthood Linked to Radicals

The group behind the recent spate of undercover videos accusing Planned Parenthood of illegally selling “body parts from aborted fetuses” is tightly linked to some of the country’s hardest-line anti-abortion extremists.

The founder of the Center for Medical Progress (CMP), which disingenuously describes itself as

a “group of citizen journalists,” is David Daleiden, who was previously the director of research for Live Action News, a group that produced earlier undercover videos also seeking to embarrass Planned Parenthood.

Those videos, like the more recent ones from CMP, were widely criticized for deceptive editing, which may explain why the biography of Daleiden on the CMP website does not mention Live Action at all.

A CMP board member, Troy Newman, is also the president of Operation Rescue, a hard-line anti-abortion group that boasted of aiding the CMP “investigation” with advice and material support and has demanded “criminal prosecutions of Planned Parenthood officials.”

In 2003, Newman issued a press release attacking “judicial tyranny” in the prosecution of Paul Hill, who murdered an abortion doctor and his bodyguard in Florida, and arguing that Hill, who was executed the same day, should have been able to present a defense of “justifiable defensive action.” A 2004 *Los Angeles Times* story described Newman shadowing clinic workers and seeking “not just to make their lives uncomfortable” but also to “disgust their friends and associates.”

Operation Rescue’s second most important officer, Senior Policy Advisor Cheryl Sullenger, has her own radical history. In 1988, she was convicted of conspiring to bomb a San Diego abortion clinic and sentenced to three years in federal prison. The indictment said that Sullenger provided gunpowder and other material for the bomb and gave a wig to the man who actually planted it, according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

Sullenger has written repeatedly about CMP’s videos and even provided a link to its press release about one of them.

A second CMP board member is Albin Rhomberg, who The Daily Beast described as having “a long and strident history of anti-abortion activism.” One woman told the publication that Rhomberg followed her “for an entire city block, barely three feet away, filming and shouting at me about my evil work at Planned Parenthood.”

In releasing the first two of a promised series of videos, the CMP boasted that it had caught Planned Parenthood officials discussing the for-profit sale of human tissue and other illegal practices, and a number of right-leaning politicians reacted almost immediately. Pushed by then-House Speaker John Boehner, Republicans on the House Energy and Commerce Committee began an investigation of Planned Parenthood, and the governors of several states have promised to do the same. Numerous Republicans also are trying to end all federal funding for the organization.

The CMP’s claims, however, were entirely false.

A whole array of news and other fact-checking organizations — from *The Washington Post* to Politifact to *The New York Times* editorial board — offered variations of NPR’s conclusion that the videos “contain no evidence that Planned Parenthood has done anything illegal.” The *Times* editorial board called CMP’s claims a “campaign of deception against Planned Parenthood.”

The CMP, which created a fake biomedical company for the sole purpose of trying to trap Planned Parenthood officials into selling body parts for profit, had taken hours of undercover video and edited it down to eight- and nine-minute videos.

When the tapes are viewed in their entirety, it is obvious that the Planned Parenthood officials only charged biomedical



companies that use the tissue for research for costs like storage and transportation — which is completely legal and accepted practice for tissue donors. That didn't stop CMP from baldly accusing Planned Parenthood of the "illegal sale of body parts from aborted fetuses."

David S. Cohen, a law professor at Drexel University Thomas R. Kline School of Law and the author of a new book on anti-abortion terrorism, told ThinkProgress that CMP's ties are telling. "There's a direct connection between [Operation Rescue], the Center for Medical Progress and some of the worst characters in the anti-abortion extremist movement," he said.

#### [ PARAMILITARY EXTREMISM ]

## Armed to the Teeth, Oath Keepers Get Lukewarm Receptions

After a year of sorrow, fear and anger over the police killing of an unarmed black teenager in Ferguson, Mo., last year, the one thing the troubled little city did not need this summer was a pack of self-appointed guardians of the U.S. Constitution, toting around assault rifles and wandering the tense streets filled with protesters and police.

But that is exactly the headache — make that the migraine headache — the St. Louis suburb got in the second week of August.

At least five members of the antigovernment, militaristic Oath Keepers showed up on the second night of demonstrations, marking the one-year anniversary of the killing of 18-year-old Michael Brown and the Black Lives Matter movement that was born shortly after his Aug. 9 slaying.

The night before the Oath



Keepers arrived tensions were sky high in Ferguson. A teenager brandishing a gun was shot by police.

Neither the "police nor protesters provided a warm welcome" to the heavily armed men as they waded into the largely African-American crowd, according to *USA Today*. "You're going to bring some un-commissioned citizens, white citizens, into a black community like this? It's disrespectful," Tala Aham, 30, told Reuters news service. "Here, in a black neighborhood, we're already living in a state of terror."

St. Louis County Police Chief Jon Belmar also expressed dismay, calling the presence of the Oath Keepers "unnecessary and inflammatory."

As for the Oath Keepers, they said they had come to town simply to protect property and the freedom — and the hides — of a couple of reporters from Infowars, the website of conspiracy king Alex Jones. But Infowars reportedly denied engaging Oath Keepers as private security.

A St. Louis-area Oath Keeper, Sam Andrews, told *Newsweek* that many African Americans in Ferguson told him that if they openly carried weapons like



the white Oath Keepers, the police would shoot them dead. Andrews argued with them, insisting the police would do no such thing. But after every single African American told him the same thing, Andrews said he realized that maybe there was a racial divide.

"St. Louis County police have so violated the people's rights," Andrews said, "that the people in the black communities here believe if they even thought about publicly exercising their

**Into the tinderbox:** Members of the conspiracy-minded Oath Keepers showed up in racially troubled Ferguson, Mo., packing an array of heavy weaponry.

God-given right for protection, for carrying a firearm, that they would be shot dead by the police — that’s a real issue.”

Andrews’ solution? More guns, more guns, more guns.

He said “we are flying black Oath Keepers in from around the country to educate the black leaders and the people of Ferguson that not only can you open carry, you should open carry.”

Ferguson was not the first stop on the Oath Keepers’ wacky tour of 2015.

In April, Oath Keepers and other antigovernment “Patriot” groups flocked to the hills of southwestern Oregon to make a stand against the federal government in what amounted to an argument over paperwork in the language in a claim dispute for an old gold mine.

The heavily armed Patriots gathered near the tiny town of Merlin, Ore., and nearby Grants Pass and Medford for what many of them seemed to hope would be an armed confrontation with the forces of the tyrannical Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

But the only confrontation was in a courtroom with briefs instead of bullets.

A spokesman for BLM said agency employees were flabbergasted that a dispute over unfiled paperwork could dissolve into a group of men brandishing weapons. “We have hundreds of claims down here,” the spokesman told the *Intelligence Report*, “and it’s not uncommon for us to come across operations that are not in compliance or don’t have documentation. So it’s kind of a shock to have this blow up like this.”

The Oath Keepers’ wackiness marched on into May. Stewart Rhodes, the founder of the group, spoke at the Arizona Liberty Caucus’ May 5 “Liberty On Tap.” A video of the speech, accord-

ing to *The Arizona Republic*, was obtained by Right Wing Watch, and it was a doozy.

In the video, the *Republic* reported, Rhodes calls Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., a traitor to the Constitution who should be tried, convicted, and “hung by the neck until dead.”

## [ ‘SOVEREIGN CITIZENS’ ]

# Army Officers, Sheriff’s Deputy Implicated in Radical Scams

“Heidi Lynn of the House of Webster” sounds like the title of an episode of “Masterpiece Theater.”

Instead, it is another chapter in what has become a long-running nonfiction serial about the scams and schemes of the anti-government “sovereign citizen” movement — people who believe that they’re not subject to most laws and who engage in an array of financial rip-offs.

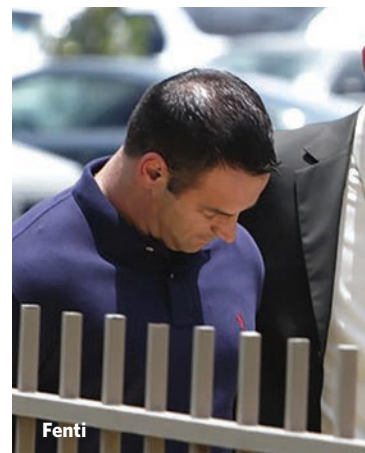
This installment features Heidi Lynn Webster, a 51-year-old retired radiologist and U.S. Army major, suspected of being a sovereign citizen and convicted of being a scam artist, who defrauded the government she once swore to defend to the tune of \$8 million.

Before Webster and co-conspirator Lawrence Fenti, an Army master sergeant, pleaded guilty last year to running an elaborate years-long scheme to steer millions of dollars in military contracts to her small North Dakota company and then overinflate invoices to benefit other businesses she owned, Webster filed hundreds of pages of legal documents in federal court in Texas.

In the documents, she referred to herself as “Heidi Lynn of the House of Webster” and insisted,



Webster



Fenti

as sovereigns are wont to do, that the court had no authority over her, according to *The Topeka Capital-Journal*. The judge in the case apparently waded through as many of the documents as he could stand before declaring them to be “hundreds of pages of what has come to be known as ‘sovereign citizen’ documents” and therefore “nonsense” and “nothing more than unintelligible gibberish.”

The federal prosecutor in the case, according to the paper, said Webster and her partner “treated the American taxpayers like their own personal ATMs, rigging bids for government contracts and inflating invoices for radiology equipment and services.”

Fenti was sentenced to four years in prison and ordered to pay \$400,000 in restitution.



Webster was facing six years behind bars and \$600,000 in restitution. She was scheduled to be sentenced on Feb. 6 but failed to appear.

She went on the lam.

The authorities sent out a warning, "Caution: WEBSTER is suspected of being a part of the Sovereign Citizens movement." A \$1,000 reward was offered for information leading to her arrest.

U.S. marshals searched for her in her native Kansas and other parts of the Midwest but she managed to give them the slip for months.

But this July, the marshals finally nabbed her in Urbana, Ill., and "Heidi Lynn of the House of Webster" became "Heidi Lynn of the House of Detention."

Speaking of being locked up, that's the condition Bibb County, Ga., Deputy Sheriff Albert Gordon Murray found himself in this May, charged with being part of a ring of sovereign citizen house thieves.

Murray, 53, who investigated property crimes as a deputy sheriff, was seen changing the locks on a vacant \$140,000 house he did not own after allegedly filing false liens and possession affidavits for the property — standard operating procedure for sovereign citizen real estate hustles.

A real estate agent — a real one — with a prospective buyer in tow arrived at the house while Murray was fiddling with the locks. Murray, the Bibb County sheriff said, handed the agent what Murray called an "affidavit of possession." While the agent was studying the bogus document, Murray pulled the agent's client off to the side.

Then he offered to sell him the house for just \$60,000 — a real steal in more ways than one.

A couple of days later, Murray was sitting in a jail cell and out of a job.



### "Kill The Faggot."

—The name of a video game in which points are earned by shooting LGBT people, uploaded briefly on **May 4** and created by California Christian shoe promoter **RANDALL HERMAN**, who complained afterward about the "idiots" who were offended



### "Don't be scared of these dirty Jewish Zionist White Supremacist thugs."

—Lincoln University Journalism Professor **KAUKAB SIDDIQUE**, in a **May 30** Facebook post attacking Muslim-basher Pamela Geller that also described CNN as part of the "Zionist media" and the Council on American-Islamic Relations as a "sell out"



### "He's injecting, like a virus, Muslims from Syria into all-white communities in America. Last summer, he took infected children from Honduras and put them in every school district that he could."

—Talk radio host **MICHAEL SAVAGE**, attacking President Obama as a "con man shyster" for his actions with respect to immigration, on his **June 2** show



### "I'm almost to the point of wanting them all segregated on one side of town so they can hurt each other and leave the innocent people alone."

—Fourth-grade teacher **KAREN FITZGIBBONS** of Bennett Elementary School in Wolfforth, Texas, discussing black people and a police officer's resignation after being videotaped slamming a 14-year-old black girl to the ground, in a **June 9** Facebook posting



### "They're bringing drugs, they're bringing crime, they're rapists, and some I assume are good people."

—Billionaire **DONALD TRUMP**, describing Mexican immigrants based on what he claimed "border guards" were telling him, in a speech on **June 16**



### "He needs to be praised for the good deed he has done."

—Mabank, Texas, volunteer firefighter **KURTIS COOK**, in a social media post that resulted in his firing, shortly after Dylann Roof's **June 17** racist massacre of nine black people in a Charleston, S.C., church



### "Innocent people died because of his position on a political issue."

—National Rifle Association board member **CHARLES L. COTTON**, on **June 18**, blaming the Rev. Clementa Pinckney's support for gun control for the deaths of Pinckney and eight of his parishioners in a racist rampage in Charleston, S.C., the day before



### "Gorilla face Michelle, can't disagree with that. The woman is not attractive except to monkey man Barack."

—Airway Heights, Wash., Mayor **PATRICK RUSHING**, in a Facebook comment publicized on **July 11** that resulted in the City Council unanimously demanding his resignation



### "[T]here is only one solution to the homosexual agenda, and that is death."

—Anti-gay activist **THEODORE SHOEBAT**, son of anti-Muslim hard-liner Walid Shoebat, in a **July 24** column about the Boy Scouts and homosexuality



### "She is just a cheap, street walker knee grow who lays down for white men."

—Newton County, Ga., Commissioner **JOHN DOUGLAS**, in a Facebook comment that was publicized on **July 26**, about a black woman who desecrated the American flag



Savaging Islam: Jon Ritzheimer and Pam Geller seem to be vying for the title of the most obnoxious critic of a faith shared by more than 1 billion people.

#### [ ANTI-MUSLIM HATE ]

## Geller, Ritzheimer Lead Provocative Islam-Bashing Events

When it comes to spreading prejudice and Islamophobia across the land, Pamela Geller, president of the American Freedom Defense Initiative, is the heavy-weight champion.

In the spring, Geller and her organization put on a highly charged and purposefully provocative competition in Garland, Texas, to crown the best cartoon mocking the Prophet Muhammad. Two Muslim men from Arizona took the bait. They opened fire outside the May 3 event, injuring one security guard in the ankle, but were killed by quick-thinking police before anyone else was hurt.

Then, a few weeks later, Geller tried to plaster city buses and



subway trains in Washington, D.C., with ads featuring the winning drawing. The city said no and ended up banning, at least temporarily, all “issue-oriented” advertisements from Metro stations and buses.

Even Juan Williams, a black Fox News contributor, told Geller during a joint appearance on the Fox show “Hannity” in late May that the ads were a bad idea. Williams told Geller, according to *The Washington Post*, that she seemed to be “trying to provoke” unnecessary controversies that could offend and demean Muslims.

Geller, champion of Islamophobia that she is, fired back, accusing Williams of being a “fierce” bully, who wants to “enforce the shariah.”

But these days, an F-bomb-dropping, assault rifle-carrying, pistol-packing ex-Marine with a clean-shaven head from Arizona is working hard to snatch from Geller the title of most cartoonish anti-Muslim activist in America.

His name is Jon Ritzheimer.

In late May, Ritzheimer held his own Prophet Muhammad cartoon-drawing contest in front of the Arizona mosque where the two men killed in Texas had worshipped. Ritzheimer asked contestants and supporters to come armed — and not to forget their American flags.

He also made up and sold special T-shirts for the occasion. Across the front of the shirts were the words, “Fuck Islam.”

About 250 “mostly armed anti-Muslim demonstrators,” as the *Post* put it, answered Ritzheimer’s call. They were met by an equal number of counter-protesters “defending the faith.”

Phoenix resident Jason Leger, wearing one of Ritzheimer’s “Fuck Islam” shirts, accepted an invitation to join the evening prayer, the *Post* reported. Inside the mosque, Leger took his shoes off. He kneeled. He learned. “I saw a bunch of peaceful people,” he told the paper. “We all got along. They made me feel welcome, you know.”

Apparently, the T-shirts weren’t selling well enough, because shortly after the rally Ritzheimer set up a GoFundMe page, seeking \$10 million in donations to provide security for his family. He said he had been receiving death threats since the mosque protest and he needed to fortify his home.

“I refuse to profit from this and any additional funds will go to Children’s hospital,” he wrote on his page, according to the website Vocativ. “You Have My word on That! And should I decide to run for John McCain’s seat in the Senate that is up for



grabs this election, money will go towards starting my campaign as well.”

But within a couple of days and just \$115 of the \$10 million goal raised, GoFundMe removed Ritzheimer’s page.

## [ NEO-NAZIS ]

# National Alliance Faces Bequest Loss, Financial Accusations

In this installment of the ratings-challenged soap opera, “As the Nazis Turn and Turn and Turn — in Circles,” an appeals court in Canada and a middle-aged accountant afraid of being murdered on a West Virginia mountaintop are making life miserable and costly for the one-time big bad wolf of American neo-Nazis, the National Alliance (NA).

In West Virginia, after spending months documenting evidence of alleged embezzlement, money laundering and more than \$2 million in unreported taxable income, the accountant hired by the NA, Randolph Dilloway, 49, called police in May saying he’d been threatened at gunpoint by one of the headquarters staff.

Dilloway fled the NA mountaintop compound outside Mill Point, W.V., and ran almost a mile to a nearby residence, where he called 911.

As the Alliance would soon learn, there is nothing worse than an accountant scorned.

Active in the white supremacist scene for more than a decade, Dilloway was secretly hired by the NA’s new chairman, William “White Will” Williams, to conduct a forensic audit of the group’s finances after a series of accusations of financial improprieties. Dilloway moved to the compound last winter and went to work. What he found over the next five months was not pretty.



Dilloway



Williams

Dilloway, in a move seen by former comrades as high treason, told the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) that he warned Williams and the Alliance’s attorney that the group’s financial records showed a “prosecutable pattern of embezzlement and income tax fraud going back at least 15 years.”

Hundreds of thousands of dollars, for example, were missing or misappropriated. But his findings, Dilloway told the SPLC, were “basically ignored.”

Before running for his life, Dilloway had full, unsupervised access to dozens of boxes of poorly organized documents and data disks. He made copies.

So that sound you hear coming from the NA’s mountaintop is not the sound of music. It is the ring of another nail being driven into the coffin of a group that is only a pale shadow of its former self.

It is a similar sound that drifted south across the Canadian border this summer.

In late July, a Canadian appeals court upheld a lower court decision invalidating a bequest worth an estimated \$220,000 that was left to the NA.

The trial court in New Brunswick had ruled two years earlier that the estate left by Harry Robert McCorkill could not go to the Alliance because that contravened Canadian law and public policy. The judge, who was acting on a lawsuit filed by McCorkill’s estranged sister, Isabelle Rose McCorkill, found that the Alliance “incites hatred” and its goals were “criminal in Canada and that is what makes this request so repugnant.”

Richard Warman, a lawyer who has brought 16 successful cases against hate groups and racist individuals in Canada, was exultant about the appeals court ruling. “The National Alliance was looking for world domination, but they just got a lesson in geography and different legal systems. This time, as ‘South Park’ says, ‘Blame Canada!’”

## [ PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS ]

# ‘Religious Freedom’ Cited to Defend Public Discrimination

In the name of “religious freedom,” Jim Crow-style signs of bigotry and intolerance have been popping up across the country in recent months.

In June, a small-time and small-minded businessman in Tennessee taped a handwritten sign to the glass front door of his hardware store in Washburn, proclaiming, “No Gays Allowed.”

“A lot of people have called and congratulated me,” the store owner, Jeff Amyx, told a local television news station.

Amyx, however, wanted to make sure no one got the wrong idea about the sign or the con-

“Freedom” to hate: Tennessee businessman Jeff Amyx is one of a number of people openly discriminating against people they don’t like in the name of religious liberty.





## Olathe, Kansas

Sept. 8, 2015

The week after he was convicted of the hate murders of three people he mistakenly thought were Jews, a jury recommended the death penalty for Frazier Glenn Miller, a long-time white supremacist and former Klan leader. The recommendation capped an 11-day trial in which Miller represented himself, spent most of his time in court trying to justify his hatred of Jews, and ended his final presentation to the jury by shouting "Sieg Heil" and giving a Nazi salute. In April 2014, Miller used a shotgun to murder retired physician William Corporon, 69, and his grandson, Reat Underwood, 14, outside the Jewish Community Center in Overland Park, Kan. He then drove to the nearby Village Shalom retirement home, where he shot dead Terri LaManno, 35. Miller — who asked police immediately after his arrest, "How many did I get?" — showed no remorse throughout the trial, even telling jurors at one point: "I hate Jews. I thrive on hate. Hate gets me through my day." Miller had been active in the white supremacist movement for decades, heading up at various times the Carolina Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and the White Patriot Party, and serving time on weapons charges. Sentencing was scheduled for Nov. 10.

tents of his heart. "I don't hate people," he insisted. "It's not the people I hate; it's the sin that I hate."

In Michigan, the owner of Dieseltec Automotive Repair put up an electronic sign of discrimination. Brian Klawiter posted his declaration of bigotry in March on the Facebook page of his Grandville business.

After complaining that the rights of "conservative Americans are being squashed more and more every day," and proclaiming, "I am a Christian," Klawiter added: "I would not hesitate to refuse service to an openly gay person or persons. Homosexuality is wrong, period. If you want to argue this fact with me then I will put your vehicle together with all the bolts and no nuts and you can see how that works."

The governor of Louisiana, Bobby Jindal, posted a sign of his own, although perhaps not as crudely. In May, Jindal signed a religious freedom executive order, aimed at, as Nola.com put it, "protecting people who oppose same-sex marriage."

The American Civil Liberties Union, a gay rights advocacy group and six New Orleans residents sued the governor in June, charging the executive order was unconstitutional and sanctioned discrimination. The plaintiffs alleged that the so-called "Marriage and Conscience Order," according to Nola.com, is "meant to protect people, businesses and nonprofits from losing access to professional licensing, tax benefits and other governmental services if they refuse to support same-sex marriage."

In other words, "individuals and companies would be able to discriminate against same sex couples, without facing repercussions."

Indeed, most of the hand-

REUTERS/ALISON LONG/KANSAS CITY STAR/POOL



written signs, Facebook posts and typed executive orders and legislation, such as Indiana's religious freedom law, were written because of same-sex marriage victories from the Supreme Court to the court of public opinion.

In April, shortly after Indiana's Republican governor, Mike Pence, signed the state's "religious freedom" bill into law, his fellow Republicans "moved rapidly," according to *The Washington Post*, to amend it, adding language that "grants protections to employees, tenants and customers regardless of race, religion, disability or sexual orientation."

The bill was amended after a national outcry from entertainers who cancelled concerts and the NCAA, which threatened to hold future sporting events elsewhere. Officials were also reacting to pressure from several large companies, including Apple, the Gap and Eli Lilly.

#### [ NEO-CONFEDERATES ]

## League of the South Chief Talks About Race War, 'Jewry'

As the country becomes more and more diverse, the neo-Confederate League of the South (LOS) has in recent years adopted increasingly racist, anti-Semitic and violent rhetoric.

In May, its president, Michael Hill, who sports a white beard to give him the look of a Confederate Army officer, wrote an article for the LOS website entitled, "A few notes on an American race war."

"Negroes are more impulsive than whites," Hill wrote. "Tenacity and organizations are not the negroes [sic] strong suits. If [a race war] could be won by ferocity alone, he might have a chance. But like the adrenaline rush that sparks it, ferocity is



short lived. And it can be countered by cool discipline, an historic white trait, and all that stems from it."

Around the time Hill was fantasizing about race war, he was also pointing his verbal musket at what he suggested was one of the South's main problems — "Jewry," and what he depicted as the Jewish-controlled media. "ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN, MSNBC, and other largely Jewish-Progressive owned media would doubtless fan the flames, justifying black behavior while conversely condemning white reaction," Hill wrote as he contemplated difficulties that will face the white man.

These racist rantings might be quickly dismissed if not for the news first reported on the Southern Poverty Law Center's Hatewatch blog that the LOS was forming a uniformed, paramilitary unit called "The Indomitables" and tasked with advancing a second southern secession. Indeed, at least one long-time LOS member had already received excellent weapons training at taxpayer's expense



Michael Hill (top) has led his neo-secessionist group in an increasingly radical direction — a fact that cost Anniston, Ala., police Lt. Josh Doggrell his job this spring.

as a member of the Anniston, Ala., police department.

Anniston police Lt. Josh Doggrell, who joined the LOS in 1995, was recorded on video addressing a League conference in 2013. The video was later posted to YouTube by the Southern Nationalist Network. Doggrell was joined at the conference by another Anniston police lieutenant, Wayne Brown.

On the video, Doggrell boasts that his superiors were well aware of his associations. "It's always wonderful to go back and show my bosses all the radicals

that I cavort with on weekends,” he said. For Doggrell, the LOS was apparently also a family affair. In 2013, his 2-year-old son was already a member.

The video came to the attention of Hatewatch this spring, which then made public Doggrell’s membership in the white nationalist hate group. Within about 48 hours, Doggrell was fired. Brown was allowed to retire, according to a local television station.

On the 2013 video, Doggrell recounts an interaction with his then chief the year prior. Doggrell told the chief that he would not “sell out his position with the League” and if it came down to it, he’d “choose the League.”

The chief responded, according to Doggrell, “We pretty much think like you do.”

[ FINANCING HATE ]

## Reddit Shuts Down Some Racist, Anti-Semitic Web Forums

After a months-long campaign by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) and others, Reddit, a huge online bulletin board, finally decided in August that some of its most racist, hate-filled Web forums violated its standards and were making Reddit “worse for everyone else.”

A handful of Reddit forums were banned, including “CoonTown,” “bestofcoontown” and “WatchNiggersDie.”

Making that decision did not come quick or easy. In July, according to *Wired* magazine, Reddit’s new CEO, Steve Huffman, first attempted to

simply “quarantine” the forums — known as “subreddits” — behind E-mail verification gates. A few weeks later, however, Huffman announced the racist subreddits were being banned outright.

“We are banning a handful of communities that exist solely to annoy other redditors, prevent us from improving Reddit, and generally make Reddit worse for everyone else,” the CEO said in a statement.

Before “CoonTown” and the like were kicked to the curb, Reddit banned a subreddit called “GasTheKikes,” a move that did not sit well with Andrew Anglin, the founder and operator of the neo-Nazi website, *Daily Stormer*. Anglin said that banning the forum in July appeared to be “the beginning of the end of one of the very last remaining free speech outlets on the internet” and was

# BLOTTER

UPDATES ON EXTREMISM AND THE LAW

### MARCH 21

FBI agents arrested Michael Conrade Sibley, 67, of **Marietta, Ga.**, after he allegedly confessed to leaving two homemade pipe bombs in a backpack at **Vickery Creek Park in Roswell** in November 2014, and charged him with attempting to damage federal property. Sibley, who described himself as a “patriot,” is said to have also put in the backpack a Koran, a book about Kuwait and a map with a Jewish center in **Atlanta** circled, along with writing a Muslim-sounding name on its label — an apparent attempt to frame Muslims for an attempted terrorist attack.

### MARCH 24

Steven Timothy Snyder, a 38-year-old **Michigan** man

believed to have been a member of a violent skin-head gang called the **Fond du Lac Boot Boys** in his teens, robbed a bank in **Wausaukee, Wis.**, apparently killed a 59-year-old man he encountered while fleeing, and then died in a shootout in **Fond du Lac** with Trevor Casper, a 21-year-old state trooper who was also killed. A man with the same name and birth date as Snyder was arrested in March 1996 after attacking a Fond du Lac home. He was tattooed with the words “White Power” and was carrying literature from the National Alliance, the leading neo-Nazi group of the period.

### APRIL 7

**Genesee County, Mich.**, offi-

cials announced the arrest of a couple, both of them local school bus drivers, for embezzling at least \$50,000 from the woman’s mother and using it to amass an arsenal of 30 weapons, including a .50-caliber machine gun and 17,000 rounds of ammunition, hidden in a secret basement bunker. Steven and Sarah Nick of **Davison Township** were tied to the **Southeast Michigan Volunteer Militia** and had marked a bulletproof vest with the words “We Kill For Peace.”

### APRIL 29

Two men who worked for the **Florida** Department of Corrections in **Lake Butler** and were also members of the **Traditionalist American**



Newcomb



Moran

**Knights of the Ku Klux Klan** pleaded not guilty to conspiring to murder a black former inmate with whom they had quarreled. Charles Newcomb was a dismissed corrections trainee and David Moran was a correctional officer before their arrests. A third man, a guard and Klan member named Thomas Driver who had worked with Moran at the DOC’s Reception and Medical Center, was arraigned earlier on the same charges.

### MAY 15

Rejecting arguments that





**Nazis of a feather:** Andrew Anglin, who has spent time with members of the fascist Golden Dawn group in Greece, was enraged by Reddit's banning of the "GasTheKikes" forum.

an overreaction because the title "GasTheKikes" was "in jest, and was not really calling for the gasing of kikes."

The world of online hate has long been dominated by crude and blatant racists and neo-Nazi Web forums such as Stormfront and Vanguard News Network. But Reddit is different and much, much bigger. It was

recently spun off into its own independent entity from Advance Publications, the parent company of Conde Nast.

Getting Reddit to smell the electronic crosses burning was only one front in the SPLC's campaign to pressure respectable websites to stop doing business with and thereby enabling Internet racists.

In the wake of revelations that Dylann Roof, the alleged Charleston, S.C., church shooter, was "awakened" to the "epidemic" of so-called black-on-white crime by the Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC), PayPal — one of the world's largest online money transfer services — suspended the white nationalist hate group's account after being contacted by the SPLC.

Despite moving to suspend the CCC's account after the racially charged church massacre in June (see story, p. 20), PayPal had been well aware of its part in helping the group raise money. On multiple occasions over the past year, the SPLC had contacted the organization about more than 60 known hate groups using PayPal's services to solicit donations and sell merchandise used to fund hate. ▲

he had been led astray by his older brother, a federal jury sentenced Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, 21, to death in the **Boston** Marathon bombing. The attack, which left three dead and more than 260 wounded in April 2013, was meant as retaliation for what Tsarnaev reportedly called "U.S. crimes" in Muslim countries like Iraq and Afghanistan. His older brother, Tamerlan, died during the attack.

## JUNE 2

Two members of the **St. Louis** chapter of the **New Black Panther Party** pleaded guilty to conspiring to use bombs to attack the police chief of **Ferguson, Mo.**, the **St. Louis County** prosecuting attorney,



and a local police station during protests over the August 2014 shooting of Michael Brown by a Ferguson police officer. Brandon Orlando Baldwin, 24, and Olajuwon Davis, 23, were each expected to be sentenced to seven years in prison after agreeing to plead guilty to four felony counts.

## JUNE 7

A man with an 18-year history of hating the government killed his wife, three small children and himself in their

remote cabin in **Montana's Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest**. Officials found "**constitutionalist**" and other **antigovernment** literature in the truck of Augustine "Mike" Bournes, who former friends said had been furious at the government since being acquitted of false imprisonment in 1997.

## JULY 9

A father and son, described by the local sheriff as "**anti-police, antigovernment, radical extremists,**" allegedly lured a 70-year-old, armed **Yavapai County, Ariz.**, Sheriff's Office volunteer to their home and shot him three times. Officials said Gregory Niedermeyer, 49, opened fire first with a

.50-caliber sniper's rifle and was then joined by his son, Jason Niedermeyer, 24. The volunteer survived. The motive was unclear, but officials found a marijuana farm at the Niedermeyer home.

## JULY 22

The FBI arrested three men in **Phoenix** who allegedly were planning to steal drugs and money from cartel members trafficking across the Mexican border. Two of the three — Robert Deatherage and Parris Frazier — belonged to the **Arizona Special Operations Group**, a border militia that has provided security to Jon Ritzheimer, who led an armed anti-Muslim rally outside a Phoenix mosque in May.

# TRUMP STUMP

**As the presidential candidacy of Donald Trump took off, white nationalists across the country rallied to his message**



You can't blame a politician for the politics of their every supporter. You can't even blame that pol for failing to denounce every ugly thing his or her enthusiasts might say. But at some point, you have to wonder. Such is the case with Donald Trump. ¶

It's often difficult to tell exactly what Trump's positions are, because, outside of immigration, he has offered almost no details about them. But as the first three months of Trump's unexpectedly super-charged campaign for the GOP nomination for president unfolded, it became clear that he was very much the preferred candidate of virtually the entire white nationalist movement in America.



Trump never asked for that support. But he got it. And when a plethora of media outlets began to report on that fact, Trump's response was tepid indeed. He didn't need David Duke's endorsement, he said of the infamous former Klan leader who he suggested he'd barely heard of; indeed, the billionaire New Yorker known for his boastfulness added in the same breath, he really didn't need anyone's.

Whether Trump is consciously dog-whistling to racist extremists or simply following his own star, he has increasingly delighted the racist right, many of whose denizens were initially deeply skeptical of his candidacy. After Trump released his six-page immigration plan — which included calls for deporting some 11 million people, forcing Mexico somehow to pay for a 1,900-mile border wall, and revoking the 14th Amendment's promise of birthright citizenship — Duke exulted.

"I praise the fact that he's come out on the immigration issue," Duke told listeners of his radio show after the mid-August release. "I'm beginning to get the idea that he's a good salesman. That he's an entrepreneur and he has a good sense of what people want to hear, what they want to buy. ... And I think he realizes that his path to popularity, toward power in the Republican Party, is talking about the immigration issue. And he has really said some incredibly great things recently. So whatever his motivation, I don't give a damn. I really like the fact that he's speaking out on this greatest immediate threat to the American people."

Pressed to renounce Duke's backing by reporters for Bloomberg Politics, Trump, who earlier said he didn't need anyone's endorsement because "everybody likes me," responded, "Sure I would, if that would make you feel better."

### From the Start

Donald Trump's appeal to the radical right was there from the start, in the June 16 speech announcing his candidacy. "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best," he said. "They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with [them]. They're bringing drugs, they're bringing crime, they're rapists, and some I assume are good people."

White nationalists responded almost immediately. Members of the White Genocide Project,

a racist group formed to push the baseless claim that a "genocide" of white people is occurring around the world, started a White House petition calling on President Obama to honor Trump for "opposing white genocide."

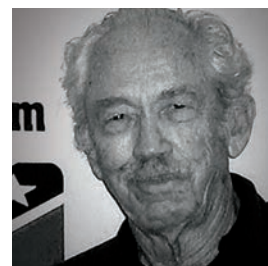
Jared Taylor, one of the nation's leading white nationalists and founder of the racist journal *American Renaissance*, praised Trump for his characterization of Mexicans. "Americans, real Americans, have been dreaming of a candidate who says the obvious, that illegal immigrants from Mexico are a low-rent bunch that includes rapists and murders," Taylor said in a video on his website.

Gregory Hood, an avid white nationalist writer for Richard Spencer's *Radix* journal, also chimed in, declaring that "Trump is worth supporting. He is worth supporting because we need a troll. We need someone who can expose the system that rules us as the malevolent and worthless entity it is. We need someone who can break open public debate. We need someone who can expose and heighten the contradictions within the system. And we need someone who can call out the press, the politicians, and the pseudo-intellectuals as the empty shells they are."

Trump was not the first politician to raise the hopes of American white nationalists. In recent years, racist support developed for then-U.S. Rep. Ron Paul (R-Ky.), who has been accused of but denied authoring anti-black writings, and then-U.S. Rep. Tom Tancredo (R-Colo.), a virulent opponent of immigration. But by far the most of that kind of support seen in recent years went to Pat Buchanan, the white nationalist columnist, former MSNBC commentator, and well-known "culture warrior" who ran unsuccessfully for president in 1992, 1996 and 2000.

Even more extremists fell in line behind Trump after the release of his immigration plan — a plan that is almost indistinguishable from the policy proposals made by John Tanton, a white nationalist who founded the Federation for American Immigration Reform and essentially created the modern nativist movement.

Singing his praises: White nationalists David Duke (from top), Jared Taylor, Richard Spencer and Olaf Childress were among the many professional racists turned on by the candidacy of Donald Trump.





Many Americans, including large numbers of Latinos, see Donald Trump's comments about immigrants as plainly racist.

Richard Spencer, who heads the white nationalist National Policy Institute and has called for “peaceful ethnic cleansing” to halt the “deconstruction” of white culture, is a former editor at the Buchanan-founded *American Conservative*. After seeing the plan, Spencer told *The New Yorker* magazine that Trump reflected “an unconscious vision that white people have — that their grandchildren might be a hated minority in their own country. I think that scares us. They probably aren’t able to articulate it. I think it’s there. I think that, to a great degree, explains the Trump phenomenon. I think he is the one person who can tap into it.”

Jared Taylor, in an *American Renaissance* piece entitled “Is Trump Our Last Chance?,” put it like this: “Donald Trump’s new position paper on immigration makes it official: He is easily the best presidential candidate on border security and immigration since Pat Buchanan. And we can be sure he is not a bait-and-switch politician who excites supporters with a few sensible ideas and then betrays them. Mr. Trump has single-handedly made immigration the key issue of this election. His heart is in it when he says we need to build a wall, deport illegals, and have an immigration ‘pause’ until every American who wants a job gets one.”

### Language, Violence and Elitism

It has become clear over the years that when public figures savage minority communities — calling them rapists and drug dealers, for instance — a climate of fear and bigotry often follows that ultimately leads to hate violence. Trump’s toxic anti-immigrant rhetoric, so prominent in the news today, has consequences.

After the release of Trump’s immigration plan, dozens of threads about the candidate appeared on Stormfront, the world’s largest hate forum, founded and still run by a former Alabama Klan leader. In one, a poster suggested that it would only be plausible to deport about 25% of undocumented immigrants.

“Everyone in favor of shooting the rest ... raise your hand,” another replied.

“You have my sword,” chimed in still another, posting that message alongside a photograph of an assault rifle with several clips and a handgun.

It wasn’t only the professional racists who haunt Stormfront who sounded like that. At a major Trump speech in Mobile, Ala., one person could be heard shouting “white power!” Olaf Childress, editor of *The First Freedom*, was passing out the openly racist tabloid to people in the crowd estimated at up to 30,000. And another Trump fan advocated violence to *The New York Times*: “Hopefully, he’s going to sit there and say, ‘When I become elected president, what we’re going to do is we’re going to make the border a vacation spot, it’s going to cost you \$25 for a permit, and then you get \$50 for every confirmed kill.’ That’d be one nice thing.”

In the early morning hours of Aug. 19, that kind of talk came to a head when two white men leaving a Red Sox game in Boston came across a homeless Latino man. They beat the man badly with a metal pipe, then urinated in his face. Following their arrest, one of them reportedly told police, “Donald Trump was right, all these illegals need to be deported.” Asked about his language and the hate attack, Trump limited himself to

saying that his followers “are very passionate. They love this country and they want this country to be great again. They are passionate.”

A day later, he condemned the crime a little more directly.

On Sept. 9, Trump took on another minority group — Muslims. Teaming up with a fellow GOP presidential hopeful, Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas), he joined a rally in Washington, D.C., sponsored in part by the Center for Security Policy, one of the country’s most influential anti-Muslim groups. The rally drew counter-protesters, including activists for undocumented immigrants angered by Trump’s statements. His supporters spit on the counter-protesters and even pulled one girl’s hair.

To Cas Mudde, a Dutch scholar and expert on the radical right who is currently teaching at the University of Georgia, Trump is an elitist nativist who is appealing to far-right elements in America like many others before him.

“Trump himself doesn’t hold a populist radical right ideology, but his political campaign clearly caters to populist radical right attitudes, and his supporter base is almost identical to the core electorate of populist radical right parties in (Western) Europe,” Mudde wrote in an opinion piece published in *The Washington Post*.

“However, Trump also stands in a long tradition of American nativism, going back to the Know Nothings of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, of American anti-establishment politicians, and of conservatives who claim to be the right ‘CEO’ to make America great again. But, in contrast to the rich history of U.S. populism, Trump is an anti-establishment elitist. *He* is better than everyone, i.e., both the elite and the people!” ▲



# THE X-RAY FILES

**Two men, one a Klan member, tried to build a weapon to irradiate Muslims and others. They came closer than you might think**

**BY RYAN LENZ**

ALBANY, N.Y. — For the better part of two years, Glendon Scott Crawford labored diligently to build a weapon — an industrial-strength radiation device that could kill silently without his victims ever knowing why they were getting sick. The cause of their deaths would be a mystery. ¶ Crawford called his weaponized X-ray device “Hiroshima on a light switch,” described his would-be victims as “medical waste,” and mapped out potential targets including the White House, the United Nations and the New York governor’s mansion. But he was most interested in attacking Muslims, and actually scouted mosques and other Islamic targets in Albany and Schenectady. ¶ Crawford even talked about concealing the weapon in a large panel truck on the side of which he would paint “Halal Chicken” to lure Muslim victims.

But an elaborate, 14-month FBI sting landed Crawford, now 51, in federal custody in 2013. And this August, the self-described member of the United Northern and Southern Knights of the Ku Klux Klan was finally convicted of attempting to acquire and use a radiological dispersal device (making him the first person convicted under a statute passed in 2004), conspiring to use a weapon of mass destruction, and distributing information relating to weapons of mass destruction. He faces 25 years to life in prison when he is sentenced in December.

His partner, Eric J. Feight, now 56, was arrested with Crawford but pleaded guilty in June 2014 to providing material support to terrorists and agreed to testify against Crawford. Feight faces up to 15 years when he is sentenced this fall.

The case took over a year to investigate and almost two more years to come to trial. Two FBI field offices were involved, along with a blizzard of undercover agents, informants, text messages, E-mails, burner phones and hidden cameras recording secret meetings in hotel rooms.

“The plot was real here,” Andrew Vale, the special agent-in-charge of the FBI’s Albany office, told reporters after Crawford’s conviction. “No matter how extraordinary the plot seemed, the threat was real.”

It actually went beyond the extraordinary and into the fantastic.

### **How to Build a Death Ray**

Despite having only a high school degree, Crawford, an industrial mechanic at General Electric in Schenectady, amassed what prosecutors believe was enough information about radiation to actually design the weapon, which would use an industrial X-ray machine as a starting point. He ultimately acquired the X-ray machine late in the investigation, although it was provided by an undercover FBI agent and had been modified so it could hurt no one.

And, with the help of Feight, an outside contractor for General Electric, he

managed to design, acquire the parts for, construct, and successfully test a remote initiation device meant to trigger the X-ray machine.

The basic idea was that the machine would be mounted inside a panel truck, which could then be driven to locations like alongside a mosque. The driver would then leave the truck, travel up to half a mile away, and activate the trigger. After irradiating the victims inside, he could then turn off the device, return to the truck and safely drive it away long before anyone realized what had happened.

**“WE COULD STOMP THE  
NEW WORLD ORDER OUT  
OF FUCKING EXISTENCE.  
NO ONE COULD GET NEAR  
IT AND LIVE TO TELL  
ABOUT IT.”**

Kevin Luibrand, Crawford’s attorney, argued that it was all talk and that the government had entrapped his client. “The complete book on Scott Crawford is a piece of paper, an idea and some strong political beliefs,” he said in his opening statement. “Scott was a big talker.”

But the jury didn’t buy that.

After all, Crawford and Feight might have been smart about assembling the know-how and parts to build their death ray. But while Feight worked diligently to build the remote firing device, Crawford was trying to find commercially available X-ray tubes and, more importantly, someone to finance them.

And that’s where his smarts ran out.

### **Shopping Mass Murder**

In April 2012, Crawford walked into Congregation Gates of Heaven, a Jewish synagogue in Schenectady. Nervously

standing back from the receptionist, he told her he needed someone to “help him with a type of technology that could be used by Israel to defeat its enemies ... while they slept.” He wanted money to buy an industrial-grade X-ray device and to weaponize it.

Gates of Heaven officials turned him away, notified the FBI, and the case against Crawford began.

Then Crawford contacted the Jewish Federation of Northeastern New York with the same proposal. The result, unknown to him, also was the same.

In August 2012, four months after he approached the Jewish groups in upstate New York, Crawford contacted Chris Barker, the North Carolina-based imperial wizard of the Loyal White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, according to court testimony. But Barker was facing federal firearms charges and looking to make a deal in exchange for leniency. From the first minute they spoke on a phone — Crawford had made his initial contact by leaving a voicemail for Barker, who then contacted the FBI — the FBI was on the line, recording everything.

“It’s a way to set things right,” Crawford told Barker in one of their first conversations. “I think you’ll find it to be your cup of tea.”

### **‘A Beautiful Thing’**

When they finally met in person, after Crawford arranged a meeting and drove to North Carolina, Barker was wearing a wire for the FBI, and Crawford was even more eager to talk. He said Islam was “infectious” and spoke excitedly about Muslim and United Nations conspiracies against America.

The X-ray machine was his solution.

“First the Mexican invasion. Now the Muslim invasion. They are trying to strike a death blow to American culture,” Crawford told Barker as the tape recorder rolled. “We could stomp the New World Order out of fucking existence. No one could get near it and live to tell about it.”



Crawford did show some squeamishness. He insisted that Barker swear that if they were to acquire the technology, Barker would never use it against American soldiers. Barker agreed.

Meeting later with an undercover FBI agent, Crawford described his plans for acquiring “a radiation emitting device that could be placed in back of a van to covertly emit ionizing radiation strong enough to bring about radiation sickness or death against Crawford’s enemies,” according to the original criminal complaint.

“Radiation poisoning is a beautiful thing,” Crawford said.

During a meeting at an Albany coffee shop three months after he saw Barker, Crawford and Feight met two undercover FBI agents. Over coffee, Crawford introduced Feight as his “software guy” who could build the remote-controlled initiating device. The pair referred to themselves as “The Guild.” Individually, Crawford and Feight said they went by “Dimitri” and “Yoda.”

“What do you know about us?” one agent asked Feight during that meeting.

“Not a lot,” Feight replied. “I have to admit, having never been involved in anything like this before, you know, at first it made me a little bit nervous. I’ve done nothing for a lot of years but just shoot my mouth off and I ... see how effective that’s been. So although I would still like to maintain as much plausible deniability as I can, like you say, you know, [in] for a penny, [in] for a pound.”

It would be seven months more before federal officers finally made their move. On June 18, 2013, after Crawford and Feight had successfully tested their remote triggering system, FBI agents arrested the two men.

### The Price of Terror

The case was a remarkable one for a number of reasons. A member of a Klan group approaching Jewish organizations for help is a rarity today, to say the least — most contemporary Klan groups are violently anti-Semitic. The idea of



“The Guild”: Eric J. Feight (top left) and Glendon Scott Crawford worked together to construct a remote-controlled X-ray weapon for the mass murder of Muslims and others. All the while, Crawford lived in an unprepossessing house in Galway, N.Y.

an X-ray weapon capable of murdering hundreds of people at a stroke sounds like something out of a Batman comic — except that Crawford and Feight seem to have come genuinely close. The foolishness exhibited by the men in their attempts to finance their operation was astounding — by the end, they were literally surrounded by FBI undercover agents and informants, but never seemed to suspect a thing.

The conspiracy also reflected rising anti-Muslim hatred in the United States and abroad, fanned by a network of hate groups and right-wing propagandists and also by news about atrocities carried out by Islamist extremists.

The plot was not, however, an artifact of a resurgent or reinvigorated Klan. There are today 23 different and often squabbling Klan groups in the United States, comprising a total of perhaps 4,000 Klansmen. The comparison is to some 4 million Klan members in the 1920s, and 40,000 in the mid-1960s. Even

as the radical right has grown in America, the Klan has continued a long decline. And Crawford clearly acted without assistance from other Klan members or groups.

But it was a grim reminder of what extremists can do.

Another example came in 1997, when four members of the True Knights of the Ku Klux Klan plotted to bomb a plant in Texas that processed natural gas and contained thousands of tons of deadly hydrogen sulfide gas. Federal officials, who were tipped to the plot and arrested the conspirators before anyone was hurt, said later that the bombing would have killed 10,000 to 30,000 people.

The plot by Scott Crawford and Eric Feight had similar potential. If they had managed to actually attack a mosque or another kind of Islamic center, they very well might have murdered hundreds — proof, once again, that right-wing extremists, even ones who sound unhinged, are capable of unspeakable ruin. ▲

# CARNAGE IN CHARLESTON

The accused South Carolina terror killer represents a new kind of violent racist, a 'lone wolf' radicalized entirely on the Internet

BY MARK POTOK

Six weeks before the June 17 massacre in Charleston, S.C., the president of the Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC), raging over an article about crime in Charleston, wrote about “successfully managing the coming race war.”

Dylann Roof, the accused mass murderer, was likely listening. As he wrote in a later manifesto explaining his reasons for killing nine black parishioners in a Charleston church, he drew his first racist inspiration from the CCC.

In the same April post, the CCC's Earl P. Holt III advised “White Crackers” to buy “a handgun for self-protection, and a shotgun for protecting your home.”

Roof bought a .45-caliber Glock pistol that month.

Three weeks before the slayings, Holt advocated lynching black people in another posting on the CCC's website. “A tall tree, a short rope, and a good knot are not an expensive endeavor,” the hate group leader wrote.

Roof, according to authorities, was already planning the slaughter.

Five days before the shootings, Holt wrote that “as much as I hate ‘those people,’” he was still “somewhat repulsed at the thought of wreaking revenge on innocent nigras [sic], not involved in crimes against whites.” But then Holt added that black people “think nothing of taking revenge against ANY WHITE.”

Roof, as he wrote later, was enraged by black-on-white crime.

Two days before the slaughter, Holt suggested that “[o]ld guys like me” should “pretend to be intoxicated, hang-out in ‘the hood,’ and bring along a large-caliber handgun (with backup!) and help mitigate black crime at its source.”

Roof, apparently writing just minutes before the attack on Emanuel AME Church, seemed to respond to Holt directly. “I have no choice,” he wrote on a website, The Last Rhodesian, that authorities later confirmed was his. “I am not in a position to, alone, go into the ghetto and fight. ... We have no skinheads, no real KKK, no one doing anything but talking on the internet. Well someone has to have the bravery to take it to the real world, and I guess that has to be me.”

To some, this bloody-minded back and forth sounds almost like call and response. Although it will likely never be known if Roof was responding directly to Holt's violent talk, it is a fact that Roof wrote in his manifesto that he began his racist odyssey by typing the words “black on white crime” into Google and coming upon the CCC site. “I have never been the same since that day,” he wrote.

In the aftermath of the killing, Holt's most incendiary posts vanished and he receded into the background, replaced as CCC spokesman by a more presentable white supremacist. But no amount of spin, or of the CCC's insisting its information on black-on-white crime was accurate, could mitigate the fact that a young man full of murderous hate had been directly inspired by an organized hate group.

## Growing Up Dylann

Dylann Storm Roof was not the most stable of characters. According to a profile by The Associated Press, he was “a troubled and confused 21-year-old, often drunk and occasionally threatening violence as he alternated between partying with black friends and spouting white supremacist slogans to white friends.”









**Un-American activities:** When Dylann Roof wasn't busy planning the future race war, he liked to burn American flags.

The story described his childhood in “an unstable broken home amid allegations of marital abuse and infidelity.” His parents broke up shortly before he was born, and the woman his father later married, Paige Hastings, became, in effect, his surrogate mother, according to court filings from their eventual divorce.

Hastings’ mother told the AP that Roof, who she described as “so sweet and bright” as a toddler, became increasingly obsessive about things like germs and his haircuts as he grew up, ultimately failing ninth grade twice and finally dropping out of high school in 2010. In the year before the shootings, things got worse.

Workers at a Columbia, S.C., shopping mall called police in February when Roof began asking suspicious questions about their closing times and schedules, and officers arrested him for possessing the drug Suboxone, the AP reported. The next month, police searched his car and found empty magazines for an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle. In April, he was arrested again for trespassing at the mall, where he’d been told not to return after the February incident, the AP said.

Meanwhile, Roof had been exploring the world of hate.

According to his own manifesto, “the event that truly awakened me” was the February 2012 shooting of Trayvon Martin, an unarmed black teenager,

AP IMAGES/STEPHEN B. MORTON (CHURCH); LASTERHODSON.COM (ROOF)



**"We have no skinheads, no real KKK, no one doing anything but talking on the internet. Well someone has to have the bravery to take it to the real world, and I guess that has to be me."**

by a white vigilante named George Zimmerman. Roof, who wrote that it was "obvious" that Zimmerman was justified, described finding the CCC website and his "disbelief" at seeing "pages upon pages of these brutal black on White murders."

It seems almost certain that Roof did not have face-to-face contact with CCC officials. But the CCC was highly active and visible in South Carolina.

Roan Garcia-Quintana, for instance, is a CCC board member who ran as a Republican for the state Senate's District 7 seat in 2008 and came in second with 27% of the vote. He also was part of Gov. Nikki Haley's re-election committee until he was forced out in 2013, after his CCC role was widely publi-

cized. Another example is Kyle Rogers, the South Carolina-based webmaster for the CCC who was also a delegate to the Charleston County Republican convention in 2007. In 2013, GOP officials in Dorchester County, S.C., confirmed that he was a member of that county's Republican Executive Committee despite their efforts to dump him.

Rogers also runs an online flag store, Patriotic-Flags.com, that sells, among others, the flag of the former apartheid governments of Rhodesia, today known as Zimbabwe, and South Africa. Roof's Facebook page included a photo of him wearing smaller versions of those flags, not sold by Rogers, sewn on his jacket. Other photos of Roof showed him posing

with the Confederate battle flag, a fact that set off a major backlash against that divisive symbol (see story, p. 40).

It was apparently not only the CCC website that interested Roof. The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) used plagiarism software to analyze Roof's 2,000-word manifesto. It found a number of postings on The Daily Stormer, a guttural neo-Nazi website, that were remarkably similar to parts of the manifesto. The postings were signed by "AryanBlood1488." In the neo-Nazi lexicon, 14 is a reference to the "14 Words," a white supremacist slogan, while the 88, because H is the eighth letter of the alphabet, represents the words "Heil Hitler."

## The Council of Conservative Citizens: What Is It?

The group that first attracted Dylann Roof to organized racism and may have inspired his murder of nine black South Carolinians was formed in 1985 as the modern reincarnation of the White Citizens Councils, which were set up in the 1950s and 1960s to resist the desegregation of Southern public schools.

The Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC) was founded by Gordon Baum, a St. Louis attorney who had been the Midwest field director of the White Citizens Councils. It included several other officers of the older organization, and was built using that group's mailing lists. It has chapters around the South and in some other states, and is strongest in Mississippi, where the original group began.

The CCC initially worked to put up a veneer of respectability, and it hosted hundreds of local, state and even national politicians over the years at its events. Most Americans first heard of it in 1998, when a scandal erupted over the revelation that then-Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) had spoken to its members five times. As a result, Republican National Committee Chairman Jim Nicholson asked party members to quit the group because of its racist views.

Nevertheless, six years later, a Southern Poverty Law Center investigation found that no fewer than 38 federal, state and local elected officials had attended CCC events between 2000 and 2004, most of them to give speeches.

After that, the CCC stopped publishing the names of politicians who worked with it or spoke to its members, and very few are believed to have done so since that time.

The CCC is unrepentantly racist. Its platform statement says that it opposes "all efforts to mix the races of mankind." It has described black people as a "retrograde species of humanity" and "genetically inferior," complained about "Jewish power brokers," accused immigrants of turning America into a "slimy brown mass of glop," and called LGBT people "perverted sodomites." It even named Lester Maddox, the now-deceased, ax handle-wielding, arch-segregationist former governor of Georgia, as its so-called "Patriot of the Century."

— Mark Potok

Dylann Roof's rage was reaching the boiling point.

### Into the Abyss

At about 8 p.m. on June 17, Roof walked into Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in downtown Charleston, where a Bible study was under way. The church, originally built in 1816, houses the nation's oldest black congregation south of Baltimore. One of its co-founders, Denmark Vesey, was suspected of planning a slave rebellion in 1822 and was hanged, along with 34 others, as a result.

Whites then burned the church to the ground, but it was rebuilt and much later became a key space for civil rights organizing known as "Mother Emanuel."

According to survivors' accounts, Roof asked for the senior pastor — the Rev. Clementa Pinckney, who was also a well-known state senator — and sat down beside him. About an hour later, at 9:05 p.m., he pulled out a gun and aimed it at 87-year-old Susie Jackson. But Jackson's nephew, Tywanza Sanders, reportedly tried to calm him down and asked him why he was threatening the group.

"I have to do it," Roof said, according to several accounts. "You rape our women and you're taking over our country. And you have to go."

Sanders jumped in front of his aunt and was the first to be killed. Then Roof methodically shot the other victims, reloading his gun five times in the process. According to some accounts, he spared one woman, Sanders' mother, because he expected to die and wanted a witness to tell the world what had happened.

Although Roof was able to get away after the massacre, he was quickly iden-



**Before Charleston:** Brothers Matt and Tyler Williams, along with neo-Nazi Keith Luke, were early examples of American terrorists apparently radicalized entirely via the Internet. This June, Dylann Roof joined that murderous fraternity.

tified by relatives who saw news footage of several security camera images taken of him at the church. At about 10:45 a.m. the next morning, Roof was arrested in Shelby, N.C., after a witness saw his car, which had also been described in news accounts, and notified police, who pulled him over without bloodshed.

A day later, Roof made his first court appearance, via a videoconferencing system, for a bond hearing. What happened there set the tone for an extraordinary wave of sympathy for the victims from across the country. Survivors of the attack and relatives of several of the victims told Roof in highly emotional and moving remarks that they had already forgiven him and were praying for his soul.

In the aftermath of a state grand jury's indictment of Roof, the federal

government filed 33 hate crime charges that alleged he had chosen his victims based on their race. Federal prosecutors, who are expected to bring their case in January 2016 at the earliest, had not, at press time, decided whether or not to pursue the death penalty.

Roof is scheduled to be tried on capital charges in state court on July 11, 2016.

### Age of the Wolf

Dylann Roof is the latest violent actor to dramatize the rise of the radical right in recent years, especially since the 2008 election of Barack Obama highlighted the ongoing demographic shift in the United States, where non-Hispanic whites are expected to fall to under 50% of the population over the next 30 years.

But he also dramatizes two other things: the radicalization of racist Americans exclusively through propaganda found on the Internet, and the rise of the "lone wolf" — a terrorist who acts completely alone, with help from no one.

In the 1990s, when most Americans were introduced to the World Wide Web, many sociologists and related specialists felt it was nearly impossible to recruit individuals to commit radical violence through a computer screen. The prevailing wisdom was that real recruiting only happened in face-to-face encounters.

But there were some early indications that that wasn't entirely so. In 1999, brothers Matt and Tyler Williams carried out arson attacks on three synagogues and an abortion clinic in Sacramento, Calif., and killed two gay men in their home. It eventually emerged that the brothers apparently had been drawn into the racist theology of Christian Identity solely through their readings on the Internet.



## New DVD for Law Enforcement on 'Lone Wolves'

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) is releasing its fourth training video for law enforcement officials, "Understanding the Threat: The Rise of Lone Wolves." A DVD is bound into the law enforcement edition of this issue of the *Intelligence Report*, but may be viewed by others at the SPLC's website.

The video, a short film designed to be shown at roll call, focuses on the rise of terrorists and other violent political activists who act entirely on their own, without the help, financing or guidance of other individuals or groups. Although many terror attacks were once orchestrated by groups, that is no longer true. In fact, a recent SPLC analysis found that fully 74% of domestic terrorist attacks over the last six years were carried out by lone wolves. If attacks undertaken by two people are added to the lone wolf cases, they amount to a stunning 90% of some 63 incidents.

Earlier SPLC law enforcement training videos have focused on "sovereign citizens," people who believe most laws don't apply to them; racist skinheads, known for their brutality and affinity for violence; and Aryan prison gangs, which in recent years have increasingly spilled from behind bars onto city streets.

All four videos, along with a number of other materials specifically meant to assist law enforcement officials, are on the SPLC's "Law Enforcement Resources" page at [www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/law-enforcement-resources](http://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/law-enforcement-resources).

That was a highly unusual case at the time. But as the years passed — and the Internet became a more ubiquitous source of information, especially among younger people — the novelty wore off. First Al Qaeda and, much more recently, ISIS found ways to use the Internet to radicalize people and urge them to terrorist violence.

A more recent case is that of Keith Luke, who shot three black people, killing two of them, on the day after Obama was inaugurated in January 2009. Luke, who later appeared in a court with a bloody swastika carved into his forehead, told police he had intended to go on that evening to kill Orthodox Jews at a local synagogue. He also told them he had spent the previous six months reading racist websites, where he learned that whites were facing a "genocide" at the hands of other races.

Roof may be the clearest example yet. He specifically talked in his manifesto about the galvanizing effect that the CCC website had on him, and no evidence of any personal contact with hate groups or racist activists has emerged.

In the same way, lone wolf terrorists have gone from being relative rarities to the most common form of political violence seen in the United States. A recent SPLC study, surveying the last six years of domestic terrorism in America, found that fully 74% of 63 incidents were carried out by lone wolves. If cases where two perpetrators were involved are added, that rose to a stunning 90%.

It wasn't always so. During the civil rights era, for example, a large percentage of Klan attacks on civil rights activists and their allies were, in fact, planned and often executed by groups.

But as law enforcement has become better at breaking up or punishing such conspiracies, they have increasingly faded.

Again, Roof is an excellent example. Although he occasionally posted remarks on white supremacist websites, there is no evidence at all that he had any help, although he did reportedly speak of violence in talks with friends.

### Point of No Return

Dylan Roof's manifesto, while far from a piece of polished writing, did reflect a close familiarity with the white supremacist movement — a familiarity he gained through three years of reading the CCC and similar racist websites.

He talked about "the Jewish agitation of the black race." He claimed that depictions of slavery as brutal were "based on historical lies, exaggerations and myths." He defended segregation as a benign tactic simply meant "to protect us from them." He asserted that black people have "lower Iqs [sic], lower impulse control, and higher testosterone levels" than others. He decried white flight to the suburbs, defended "race mixing" white women as victims, and discussed why East Asians — who he claimed "are by nature very racist" — are important potential allies.

And, at the end of these years of indoctrination, Roof arrived at a frightening conclusion: "[B]y no means should we wait any longer to take drastic action."

The message of the CCC and the universe of white supremacist websites had finally gotten through to Dylan Storm Roof. And as a result, nine black churchgoers attending a Bible study in Charleston, S.C., would not live to see another dawn. ▲

**CONSPIRACY THEORIES ORIGINATING  
ON THE EXTREME RIGHT HAVE INVADED  
AMERICAN POLITICAL LIFE.  
AND THAT'S NOT GOOD FOR DEMOCRACY**

# MARGINS TO THE MAINSTREAM

BY MARK POTOK & DON TERRY // ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL MARSICANO

**“There is nothing makes a man suspect much,  
more than to know little.”** FRANCIS BACON, *Of Suspicion*, 1625

America, as the historian Richard Hofstadter famously noted in 1964, is a place peculiarly given to “the paranoid style” of politics — the idea that history is no accident, but rather the outcome of a series of conspiracies. The surface of events is never what it appears, but instead hides deep, dark and destructive forces.

What Hofstadter called “movements of suspicious discontent” have targeted imaginary threats ranging from the Illuminati, Freemasons and Jesuits of long ago all the way to the Communist infiltration alleged by Joseph McCarthy and the John Birch Society in the mid-20th century. And since Hofstadter’s seminal essay, the list of alleged evildoers has kept on growing, especially on the far right, where global elites are today seen as secretly laboring to build a totalitarian “New World Order.”

Although it is difficult to make valid historical comparisons, it is hard to avoid feeling that our country is drowning in an even larger ocean of conspiracy theories now than in decades or centuries past: President Obama is a Kenyan and a Marxist bent on seizing the weapons of all Americans; Common Core educational standards are part of a plot to impose communism on the U.S.; military exercises in Texas this summer are actually a first step toward martial law; and on and on and on.



One factor fertilizing such beliefs is the proliferation of alternative forms of media, from cable television and talk radio to social media and a seemingly endless number of websites. Almost any belief that a person has, no matter how far out or disconnected from the facts, has some kind of “news” source to back it up.

But what may be even more important in the highly polarized political environment of the United States in recent years has been the willingness of large numbers of politicians — either because they really believe or because they are willing to pander shamelessly to the extremists in their bases — to legitimize the fairy tales. Whether or not Texas Gov. Greg Abbott truly believes that a military exercise this summer was a prelude to martial law, he acted as if he might.

These kinds of words have consequences. When Sarah Palin accused the president of organizing “death panels” as part of his health care plan, the debate veered from the serious to the ridiculous. When hundreds of thousands of Americans swallowed the claim that Mexican, U.S. and Canadian elites were secretly planning to merge the three countries, it helped to derail any hope for enacting comprehensive immigration reform. When politicians allege a global conspiracy behind a United Nations sustainability plan, preserving the planet becomes even harder.

Conspiracy theories, in other words, are destructive to democracy; they substitute ignorance and suspicion for knowledge and reason, and make it that much harder to deal with the many problems before us. As Francis Bacon suggested almost four centuries ago, conspiracy theories are a way for weak minds to deal with a complex world — and to wreck any chance for finding real solutions.

What follows are 10 key conspiracy theories that have made their way from the margins of our society to often shock-

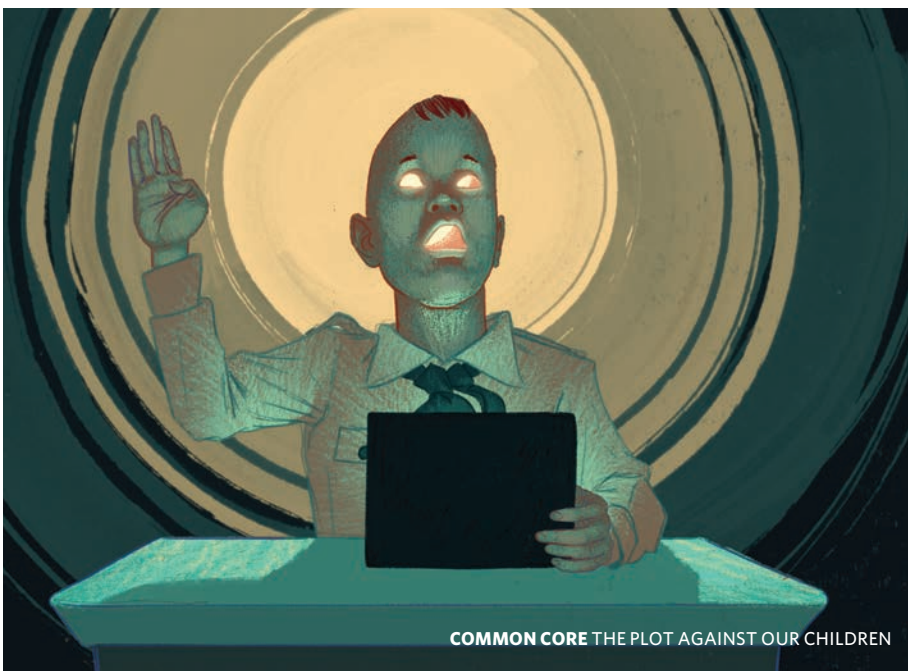
ing levels of acceptance in the political mainstream. In addition to describing the theories, their origins and the reality of the situation, we take on some of the chief enablers of these destructive tall tales.

## 1 COMMON CORE

Ever since the Supreme Court ruled in 1948 that outside groups like churches couldn’t provide religious instruction in public schools — the first of a series of court decisions meant to ensure such schools would be

lifestyle,” communism and globalist ideology, all the while collecting detailed and highly personal information about millions of citizens.

In actuality, the Common Core is a set of standards for math and language arts/literacy developed by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers and released in 2010. It does not mandate any particular curriculum or readings, although it does offer “exemplar” texts as examples of the books students should be



COMMON CORE THE PLOT AGAINST OUR CHILDREN

genuinely secular — far-right forces in America have increasingly rejected the very notion of public education, attacking it as part of an anti-God, socialistic plot to poison our children’s minds.

The latest and most virulent example of that is the rapidly spreading idea that the Common Core State Standards, an ambitious effort to lift student achievement across the country, is actually a dangerous conspiracy to indoctrinate young people into “the homosexual

able to understand at various grade levels. Although tests are not mandated by the Common Core, two federally funded consortia have been developing examinations that could ensure the standards have been met.

At their most benign, attacks on the Common Core have portrayed the standards as either a key step in a federal takeover of public education or yet another reform attempt that overemphasizes testing and standardization. But in

the hands of radical groups like the John Birch Society and a whole array of far-right groups and politicians, the proposed program has morphed into what former Fox News host Glenn Beck characterized as “Communism. We are dealing with evil.”

Forty-five states adopted the initially uncontroversial standards in a bid to improve the competitiveness of the American work force. But the brouhaha has had consequences: Indiana, Oklahoma and South Carolina have withdrawn from the standards, and at least a dozen other states have seen similar legislation introduced.

Virtually all the radical claims about the standards are false. They do not mandate any particular texts — other than the Declaration of Independence, the Preamble to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address. They do not promote homosexuality. They are not critical of Christianity, nor do they promote Islam. They do not require the collection of individual data that will then be sold to private interests. They don’t push the idea of global warming or hector students about “social justice” or being good “global citizens.” They are not part of a plot to impose a global government known as the “New World Order.”

**THE ENABLERS** Although more and more outlandish conspiracy theories are part of mainstream American political culture, wildly untrue claims about the Common Core have far more “mainstream” proponents than most. Politicians from around the country and all levels of government, pundits, a large number of Christian Right and anti-LGBT groups, and many others are part of the paranoid chorus.

**David Barton**, a discredited Christian “historian,” claimed the Common Core “is not education, it’s political indoctrination.” **Troy Towns**, the minority outreach director for the Alabama Republican Party, said, “When I heard the word ‘common,’ the first thing I thought of was communism.” He described the standards as helping the government “tak[e] over everything, contro[l]

the way you think, what you do, education, health care.”

**Phyllis Schlafly**, founder of the right-wing Eagle Forum, decried the Common Core’s “active promotion of gay marriage.” Another Eagle Forum leader, **Christina Michas** of Palm Springs, Fla., linked it to Nazism and the “ultimate goal” of setting up “internment or reeducation camps.”

A senior fellow at the American Principles Project, founded by Christian Right thinker and law professor **Robert George**, said that the standards are part of “utopian, grandiose planning for a managed global economy” sought by “socialists.” **Jane Robbins** added that they “advance the model of a command economy.”

Right-wing commentator **Michelle Malkin** denounced “collectivist agitators” who have “chipped away at academic excellence in the name of fairness, diversity and social justice” and claimed that through Common Core, “Washington meddlers” are gathering data on children that the government will sell to “the highest bidders.” Never one to mince words, **Glenn Beck** headlined one recent piece “Common Core: A Lesson Plan for Raising Up Compliant, Non-Thinking Citizens.”

And the politicians have chimed in, too. Sen. **Rand Paul** (R-Ky.) called the standards a “dangerous new curriculum” and joined with seven others to sponsor legislation banning any federal funding for them. U.S. Rep. **Jim Bridenstine** (R-Okla.) said they are “much like socialism.” Wrapping it all up, Tea Party activist **Terry Bratton** last year told an Alabama Senate committee that the Common Core standards are simply “anti-Christian, anti-Catholic and anti-American.”



MILITARY EXERCISES PRELUDE TO MARTIAL LAW

## 2 MILITARY EXERCISES


When Texas Gov. Greg Abbott this summer ordered the Texas State Guard to “continuously monitor” the Jade Helm 15 U.S. military training exercise for possible violations of civil liberties or other rights, he was roundly criticized for legitimizing baseless fears that the exercise was really a first step in imposing martial law.

And rightly so. As one Republican veteran of the Texas Legislature said, Abbott either “actually believes this stuff” or was willing to “pander to idiots” as a matter of political opportunism. “Is there anybody who is going to stand up to this radical nonsense that is a cancer on our state and our party?” Todd Smith asked.

But there is a real seed from which martial law conspiracy theories, common to both some segments of the far left and especially to the radical right, have grown. Martial law has been declared in the United States about a dozen times, the most recent after Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. More to the point, frightening contingency plans for imposing martial law really have been drawn up.

The first public notice of these plans appeared in 1984 in, of all places, *The Spotlight*, a now defunct anti-Semitic tabloid, under the headline “Reagan Orders Concentration Camps.” The story, which





turned out to be substantially accurate, focused on another military drill, Readiness Exercise 1984, “which postulated a scenario of massive civil unrest and the need to round up and detain large numbers of demonstrators and dissidents,” according to Political Research Associates.

In 1987, a far more complete account of plans drawn up under the Reagan Administration appeared in *The Miami Herald*. The story reported that Lt. Col. Oliver North, then embroiled in the Iran-Contra scandal, had prepared a plan to suspend the Constitution in the event of crises including “widespread internal dissent or national opposition to a U.S. military invasion abroad.” A collaborator, then-Federal Emergency Management Agency Director Louis Guiffrida, had years earlier discussed in a paper how, in the event of an uprising by black militants, martial law might be declared and some 21 million “American Negroes” interned.

Since then, fears of martial law have metastasized on the far right. In 1996, for example, *Soldier of Fortune* magazine ran a breathless story about the Army’s Delta Force carrying out a nighttime exercise in Houston. By that time, the idea that the government intended to impose martial law at any moment had become a core theory of the antigovernment “Patriot” movement. And it still is today.

But the claims about Jade Helm are absurd.

The exercise was not part of a plot by the White House and the Pentagon to impose martial law. Closed Walmarts in the seven Southwestern states where it is occurred are not connected by secret tunnels and won’t be used to intern dissidents. New dome-shaped facilities built by the Federal Emergency Management Agency as storm shelters are not “Death Domes” where insurrectionists will be housed. Blue Bell Ice Cream trucks are not

being converted to portable mortuaries.

Although some criticism of the military and the militarization of police in the United States may well be legitimate, Jade Helm 15 is just what officials say it is: An exercise by about 1,200 Special Operations troops that ran between July 15 and Sept. 15, mostly on private land, to prepare for fighting overseas.

**THE ENABLERS** The idea that Jade Helm 15 is really a nefarious government plot apparently originated with **Alex Jones**, the hyperventilating conspiracy theorist who broadcasts from Austin, Texas, six days a week. In March, according to *The Boston Globe*, Jones told some 1 million listeners he had “huge breaking news.” He had obtained a map showing where the operation would take place — and showing that Texas and Utah were designated “hostile” territories on that map. “This is going to be hellish,” he said. “[T]his is just a cover for deploying the military on the streets.”

From there, it raced across the radical right at something close to the speed of light. Militia members, other “Patriots,” and thousands of posts and comments on websites and forums echoed Jones’ alarm, all the time adding new details.

But the surprise wasn’t that so many Internet sleuths had conspiratorial ideas; it was that those ideas were more or less endorsed by many politicians. Texas Gov. **Greg Abbott**, naturally, was the most notorious. But U.S. Rep. **Louie Gohmert** (R-Texas) chimed in, saying some were “concerned that the U.S. Army is preparing for modern-day martial law” and adding that “patriotic Americans have reason to be concerned.” U.S. Sen. **Ted Cruz** (R-Texas) said he

would be asking tough questions of the military. And Sen. **Rand Paul** (R-Ky.) said he would look into the matter.

**3 AGENDA 21** Agenda 21 is a nonbinding, essentially toothless United Nations natural resources sustainability plan for our increasingly crowded planet. It’s a wish list, not a must-do-or-else list. The plan was signed in 1992 at the Rio Earth Summit by the leaders of 178 countries, including President George H.W. Bush, who is no sane person’s idea of a wild-eyed, tree-hugging, anti-development environmentalist more concerned with woodpeckers than people.

But when it comes to Agenda 21, there are not enough tinfoil party hats to go around. Ever since the plan was announced 23 years ago, groups like the John Birch Society (JBS) have been doing



“It sounds so friendly. So meaningful. So urgent. But the devastation to our liberty and way of life is the same as if Lenin ordered it.”

their best to transform Agenda 21 in the American public mind into a secret plot to impose a totalitarian world government, a nefarious effort to crush freedom and American sovereignty in the name of environmentalism.

It's not just extremists singing this looney tune. In January 2012, the Republican National Committee bought into the propaganda, denouncing Agenda 21 in a resolution as a “destructive and insidious scheme” that is meant to impose a “socialist/communist redistribution of wealth.”

To listen — if you can stand it — to the rants of the Birch Society and its many allies on the radical right, Agenda 21 will lead to a “new Dark Ages of pain and misery yet unknown to mankind.” It is “a comprehensive plan of utopian environmentalism, social engineering, and global political control,” the “most dangerous threat to American sovereignty” yet.

Agenda 21, they say, will “make our nation a vassal” of the UN, result in the “destruction of our lives,” force rural areas’ population to be “decimated,” and lead to having “90% of the population murdered.”

The truth is Agenda 21 is not a treaty. It has no force of law, no enforcement mechanisms, no penalties, and no significant funding. Yet fear, lies and talk of flocks of black helicopters blocking out the sun and smashing freedom when they land are winning in too many places. Alabama, for instance, has passed a law meant to outlaw any effect of the plan. Earlier, in that state's Baldwin County, all nine members of the Planning and Zoning Commission quit in disgust after the County Commission killed their local development plan “on a pretext so devoid of relevance and merit as, in our opinion, to elicit only ridicule,” they wrote in their resignation letter.

After the County Commission acted, the audience cheered and sang “God Bless America.”

**THE ENABLERS** Name a right-wing conspiracy theory of the last 60 years and chances are the John Birch Society was

sitting near the front of the bandwagon.

The assault on Agenda 21 is no different. Although the Birch Society has been gunning for the UN since the early 1960s, it did not fully commit to the anti-Agenda 21 crusade until 2011, when it began devoting resources and foot soldiers to it. “We’re in a fight to save our country,” the group’s CEO, **Arthur R. Thompson**, said of that battle in 2013. “We’re in a fight to save the people who are unwilling to bend their knee to a totalitarian state.”

Before JBS joined the fray, **Tom DeWeese**, founder of the American Policy Center, which focuses on “environmental policy and its effect on private property,” had been waging an almost one-man anti-Agenda 21 campaign. “It sounds so friendly. So meaningful. So urgent,” DeWeese wrote in 2009. “But the devastation to our liberty and way of life is the same as if Lenin ordered it.”

DeWeese was soon joined by a number of far-right groups, including the Constitution Party, which was founded in 1992 and says its goal “is to restore American jurisprudence to its Biblical foundations and to limit the federal government to its Constitutional boundaries.” The party’s Florida chairman, **Bernie De Castro**, put it like this: “Agenda 21 is the most dangerous threat to America’s sovereignty that is coming at us like a whirlwind and yet so few Americans are aware of this diabolical threat to them and their families.”

In an alarming 2012 fundraising letter, three-time presidential candidate and former U.S. Foreign Service officer **Alan Keyes**, a protégé of President Ronald Reagan, said: “Enemies who hate America, despise liberty, and want the United States transformed ... into ... a global, socialist state ... are relentlessly advancing a seditious new plan — Agenda 21 — to make our nation a vassal of the United Nations.”

Prominent politicians like former House Speaker **Newt Gingrich** (R-Ga.) and Sen. **Ted Cruz** (R-Texas) have also contributed to this agenda of fear and silliness as they denounce the plan that



Cruz has claimed would “abolish” golf courses and paved roads.

## 4 NORTH AMERICAN UNION

On March 23, 2005 — a date which will live in infamy, if you listen to the conspiracy conjurers of the American right — President George W. Bush, his Mexican counterpart, Vicente Fox, and Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin met in Waco, Texas, and signed the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP).

To most observers, SPP was a benign, slow-moving attempt to coordinate technical trade and security policies among the three countries. But to right-wing conspiracy theorists, the agreement was the beginning of the end of American sovereignty, the first official steps down a dark road jammed with brown-skinned people and leading to the so-called North American Union, or NAU.

There is, of course, no such union or plan to merge the three nations into a borderless mass that uses a single currency, the “Amero.” American sovereignty is safe. Yet, that hasn’t stopped the NAU bogeyman from becoming the dominant conspiracy theory animating the anti-immigration movement for the last 10 years. (A related theory, which emerged from the American Border Patrol hate group, says that Mexico has a secret “Plan de Aztlán” to reconquer the American Southwest.)

In 2007, *The Boston Globe* described the NAU as perhaps “the quintessential conspiracy theory for our time,” one that “elegantly weaves old fears and new realities into one coherent and all-encompassing” kooky package.

In a nutshell — emphasis on nut — the theorists say the NAU is a plot by elitists in the government and on college campuses that will result in Mexico sending millions more of its citizens to the United States, “using bilingualism to subvert America,” as Daneen G. Peterson puts it. Peterson researches the perils of the “One World Order” and runs stopthenorthamericanunion.com, a website

devoted to unmasking the “globalists” behind the NAU.

On her site, Peterson calls Bush, Fox and Martin “The Treasonous Triumvirate” for signing SPP and clearing the way for the NAU with their “multiple acts of treason” and “deceptive double-speak.”

In the United States, Peterson claims, there is “a government cabal bent on destroying our sovereignty,” while the Mexican “invasion of America” continues with “Hispanics who balkanize our cities and towns and arrogantly corrupt our unifying national language.”

The seditious cabal is said to also include the Council on Foreign Relations and the alleged Dr. Frankenstein of the NAU, the late American University professor Robert Pastor.

In other words, as Peterson says on her website, “Treason Abounds.”



NORTH AMERICAN UNION U.S. SOVEREIGNTY ON THE BRINK

**THE ENABLERS** Lest you think the NAU conspiracy theory is only being pushed by one unwound webmistress, think again. The John Birch Society — whose founder once called President Dwight D. Eisenhower a communist agent — has been pushing NAU fears for years. And it also has made its way into the mainstream.

In 2006, four congressmen — U.S. Reps. **Virgil Goode** (R-Va.), **Ron Paul** (R-Texas), **Walter Jones** (R-N.C.) and **Tom Tancredo** (R-Colo.) — sponsored a resolution opposing a “NAFTA superhighway” that conspiracy theorists believe is connected to the NAU. In 2007, Tancredo demanded an end to the SPP and insisted that belief in the NAU theory was not limited to “right-wing kooks.”

A somewhat less mainstream group, the Coalition to Block the North

American Union, was formed in 2006 by the late **Howard Phillips**, three-time presidential candidate for the theocratic Constitution Party and founder of The Conservative Caucus. Phillips' co-founders in the coalition were the Eagle Forum's **Phyllis Schlafly** and **Jerome Corsi**, author of the notorious "Swift Boat" book attacking and distorting 2004 presidential candidate John Kerry's Vietnam service. Corsi accused President Bush of having a "secret agenda" and warned that "an executive branch coup d'etat may be under way."

The coalition had almost 70 members, many of them members of the Constitution Party. Others included **Brent Bozell** of the Media Research Center; **Bay Buchanan** of Team America; **Tom DeWeese** of the American Policy Center; **Joan Hueter** of the American Council for Immigration Reform; the Rev. **William Owens** of the Coalition of African American Pastors; **Ronald D. Ray** of the Coalition of American Veterans; **Chris Simcox** of the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps; **Elizabeth Ridenour** of the National Council on Bible Curriculum in Public Schools; and several leaders of the American Independent Party.

## 5 SHARIAH LAW

For more than six years, much of the American right has been afflicted with a feverish brain disorder that writer Adam Serwer calls "sharia panic."

The fever shows no signs of breaking any time soon.

The disorder is a delusional and apparently highly contagious conspiracy theory that contends American Muslims are trying to undermine the U.S. Constitution and maybe even overthrow the government someday by implementing Shariah religious law in legal



proceedings across the country.

The truth is that Shariah is essentially a code of ethics, or, as *The New York Times* put it, "Islam's road map for living morally and achieving salvation." In some Islamic countries, it forms the basis of an often harsh legal code that governs crime, public morality and other matters. It is occasionally used in other countries in private civil contracts between individuals (such as agreements between spouses to abide by its precepts in any future divorce), just as Christians or Jews will sometimes draw up private contracts about similar matters based on their own religions.

But it cannot, under the Constitution, supersede American law.

Nevertheless, to a growing number of mostly Republican legislators from Vermont to Alabama, Shariah has become — particularly around election time — a blueprint for world domination. So to thwart the sneaky Muslims — and pick up a few more votes — politicians have introduced bills in almost three

dozen states in recent years, seeking to ban Shariah law in U.S. courts. In the last five years, eight states have actually passed such needless measures.

"All of this in spite of the fact that no instance of sharia law superseding U.S. Constitutional law exists," Todd Green, author of *The Fear of Islam: An Introduction to Islamophobia in the West*, wrote in the Huffington Post this spring. In any case, he added, "at one percent of the population, Muslims are not in the position to impose any kind of law on any state."

The bills are essentially the same across the country. They are modeled after legislation written by a 59-year-old Hasidic Jew, David Yerushalmi, a lawyer who is widely considered to be the driving force behind the anti-Shariah movement. He is also, according to the Anti-Defamation League, a man

"with a record of anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant and anti-black bigotry." One of Yerushalmi's clients and close allies is Pamela Geller, perhaps the best-known and most unhinged anti-Muslim ideologue in the United States.

Yerushalmi began writing his model statute — "American Laws for American Courts" — in 2009. The statute, according to the *Times*, "would prevent state judges from considering foreign laws or rulings that violate constitutional rights in the United States." Yerushalmi admitted later that his purpose was not so much to ban the imposition of Islamic religious law — already impossible under the Constitution — but "to get people asking this question, 'What is Shariah?'"

In 2010, backed by a \$60,000 campaign funded by the Muslim-bashing group ACT! for America, the bill was passed in Oklahoma with 70% of the vote. But the Oklahoma law explicitly targeted Shariah and was later struck down by a federal court. After that, the anti-Shariah



movement wised up and watered down its bigotry, shifting its focus and language onto banning all foreign laws.

But “as these restrictions pile up,” according to an article in 2014 on the website of the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law, “the bans come full circle and reveal their true purpose: to demonize the Islamic faith.”

**THE ENABLERS** While conceding that Shariah was “not an imminent threat in Oklahoma yet,” Republican then-state Rep. **Rex Duncan**, a chief sponsor of that state’s anti-Shariah bill, told ABC News in 2010 that “[i]t’s a storm on the horizon in other states,” adding, “The only entities that could oppose this measure are those that admittedly support applying international law and sharia law in American courts.”

**Cathie Adams**, the former chairwoman of the Texas Republican Party and current leader of the Texas chapter of **Phyllis Schlafly’s** Eagle Forum, has said that immigration reform is a “tool of Satan that will lead to the enactment of Sharia law and usher in the End Times.”

The anti-Shariah movement is not confined to statehouses across the country. It has national allies as well. In a speech to the American Enterprise Institute in 2010, former House Speaker **Newt Gingrich** said, “I believe Shariah is a mortal threat to the survival of freedom in the United States and in the world as we know it.” In 2011, Republican presidential candidate **Herman Cain** told ThinkProgress that he would not appoint a Muslim to his administration or as a federal judge because there is “this creeping attempt, there is this attempt to gradually ease Sharia law and the Muslim faith into our government.” In 2012, as a candidate for the U.S. Senate from Texas, **Ted Cruz** described Shariah as “an enormous problem.”

**6 GUN GRAB** For at least the last half century, many Americans, goaded by groups like the John Birch Society and more recently the National Rifle Association, have believed that a government “gun grab” is just around the corner. Despite living under what are among the most relaxed gun ownership laws in the industrialized world, huge numbers think that this seizure is planned as a first step toward dictatorship.

These fears are now a core theory of the antigovernment “Patriot” movement, which believes that various elites are about to impose martial law, seize all civilian arms, and toss any who resist into secret, government-run concentration camps. That, in turn, is seen as the prelude to the imposition of global government.

For many on the far right, the 1993 federal raid on religious cultists in Waco, Texas, proved the point. The Branch Davidians were manufacturing and selling weapons, and that, to the extremists, is why the government initiated the bloody siege. Guns mixed with heterodox ideology would not be permitted.

When Barack Obama appeared on the national political scene in 2008 as the

Democratic candidate for president, the conspiracy theorists went into overdrive.

The National Rifle Association (NRA) spent a whopping \$15 million on a national campaign — bearing the scare slogan “Prepare for the Storm in 2008” — that, according to Factcheck.org, made “unsubstantiated claims that Obama plans to ban use of firearms for home defense, ban possession and manufacture of handguns, close 90 percent of gun shops and ban hunting ammunition.”

All of these claims, of course, were false.

But they persist to this day, with almost every new mass shooting described by conspiracy theorists as a “false flag” operation designed to terrify Americans into accepting draconian gun control measures. In the first years of Obama’s presidency, such fears drove a massive surge in gun and ammunition sales. At the same time, the NRA and other far-right activists have claimed that a United Nations treaty meant to regulate international arms trafficking is aimed at taking away Americans’ guns — a complete falsehood, as it would apply to no country’s internal gun laws.

A key claim made by the fear-mongers, based on a couple of fabricated quotes, is



that Hitler imposed gun control as a first step in his dictatorship and genocide of the Jews. In fact, as numerous scholars have conclusively demonstrated, Hitler's 1938 German Weapons Act actually dramatically loosened a gun control regime forced on the country after Versailles — except for Jews. And, as historians point out, even if the Jews had been armed, they would have been no remote match for a military apparatus that was able, for a time, to take on much of the world.

**THE ENABLERS** In recent times, the NRA, and particularly its executive vice president, **Wayne LaPierre**, has been the lead purveyor of the gun seizure myth, helped along mightily by radical antigovernment groups and conspiracy-mongers like **Alex Jones**.

But he's gotten plenty of other help as well.

Shortly after Obama was elected in 2008, Milwaukee radio host **Mark Belling** told his audience that "[e]verybody's buying guns before Obama comes in and outlaws them all." A few days later, **G. Gordon Liddy**, the convicted Watergate felon and radio host, warned that people should not register their weapons no matter what the law said. In early 2009, far-right ideologue **Ann Coulter** warned that "Big Brother [is] coming in and taking our guns and schools and doctors."

Then-Fox News host **Glenn Beck** sounded similar that year, saying Obama "will slowly but surely take away your gun or take away your ability to shoot a gun, carry a gun. He will make them more expensive, he'll tax them out of existence." In the same way, in his 2012 propaganda tome *Here Come the Black Helicopters!*, Fox News contributor **Dick Morris** devoted a chapter to the bogus claim that the proposed UN treaty regulating international gun sales would allow the Obama Administration to "[c]onfiscate and destroy all 'unauthorized' civilian firearms."

And in 2013, Sen. **Rand Paul** (R-Ky.) warned that Obama was working with "anti-American globalists" at the UN —

"The military-industrial complex is transforming our once free nation into a giant prison camp."

which he said was controlled by "petty dictators and one-world socialists" — to plot a major U.S. gun confiscation. Then-Senate Minority Leader **Mitch McConnell** (R-Ky.) joined in, telling supporters in an E-mail that they were "literally surrounded. The gun-grabbers in the Senate are about to launch an all-out assault on the Second Amendment." He was wrong.

**7 FEMA** For decades, as the stubborn conspiracy theory goes, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has been secretly building 600 to 800 concentration camps on American soil, some equipped with gas chambers. The empty camps are scattered across the country, waiting to swing into action once the oligarchs in D.C. declare martial law on behalf of their buddies at the United Nations.

Railroad boxcars and cheap coffins are also ready to ship unruly American citizens away — to either the camps or, if the people resist too much, to mass graves.

It's such an outlandish grim fairy tale that even ultraconservative commentator Glenn Beck, himself a conspiracy theory promoter (see Agenda 21) who initially said of the FEMA theory that he "wanted to debunk it" but couldn't, spent two nights in April 2009 doing just that.

"I'm sick of seeing the E-mails about FEMA camps," Beck declared on his now-defunct Fox News show. "Look, let's just stick to the facts. There is enough truth out there that pisses people off. We don't need all the lies."

Beck said that, along with the "9/11 truthers," the "evil concentration camps" claim is "one of the most pervasive conspiracy theories on the Internet because it comes with supposed video" with "well over a million views on YouTube."

Beck's guest for the debunking was James Meigs, then editor-in-chief of *Popular Mechanics*, which did an even more detailed debunking of its own. (The same magazine in 2005 had published an important knockdown of 9/11 conspiracy theories.) For example, pictures of a "confirmed concentration camp built on American soil in rural Wyoming" were actually images of forced-labor camps and prisons — in North Korea.

The images, according to *Popular Mechanics*, were taken from a Washington D.C.-based human rights group's report exposing North Korea's hidden prison camps.

On the show, Beck asked Meigs about a video showing a small building, purportedly the entrance, equipped with motion-activated detectors and electronic turnstiles, to an American concentration camp, surrounded by a fence.

It was portrayed as some kind of American Auschwitz, Meigs said.

But researchers from *Popular Mechanics* visited the site and found, according to Meigs, "an Amtrak repair facility in Beach Grove, Indiana."

"Well," Beck said, "Auschwitz had trains. I'm just saying."

"But once you go down that road," Meigs replied, "if somebody wants to be convinced of that, they can't really debunk that."





Beck pointed out that the videos were not new and even predated all the Obama-did-it conspiracy theories.

“This video,” Meigs said, “actually dates from about 1995. But like so many of these conspiracy theories, it gets re-cut and re-edited and circulated around the Internet.”

And so, the concentration camp conspiracy theory marches on.

Recently, fuel was added to that fire by an unlikely source, retired general and former Democratic presidential candidate Wesley Clark. In an interview on MSNBC in July, Clark called for World War II-style internment camps to be revived to combat Muslim extremism.

“If these people are radicalized,” Clark said, “and they don’t support the United States and they’re disloyal to the United States as a matter of principle, fine, that’s their right. It’s our right and our obligation

to segregate them from the normal community for the duration of the conflict.”

In some basement somewhere in America, a new video is hurriedly being edited.

**THE ENABLERS** One of the earliest mentions of the FEMA theory came in 1982, in a newsletter of the extreme-right, anti-Semitic Posse Comitatus warning “hardcore Patriots” would be interned in FEMA-run detention camps. It picked up speed with the 1987 revelation that then-FEMA director **Louis Guiffrida** had collaborated with Lt. Col. **Oliver North** on a secret plan to suspend the Constitution in case of widespread internal dissent or other crises (see *Military Exercises*).

**Linda Thompson**, an Indianapolis lawyer and militia enthusiast, in 1994 produced her third conspiracist video,

“America Under Siege,” alleging FEMA was building a system of concentration camps. One of the places she named as such a camp turned out to be the Amtrak repair facility in Indiana.

In 2009, **Stewart Rhodes** formed a radical-right group called the Oath Keepers, composed largely of current and former members of the military and law enforcement, that listed the 10 “Orders We Will Not Obey,” which included any command to herd Americans into concentration camps. (Rhodes did not mention FEMA by name.) Around the same time, **William Lewis Films** and **Gary Franchi Productions** released a film, “Camp FEMA: American Lockdown.”

The following year, conspiracy-monger **Alex Jones** produced and directed “Police State 4: The Rise of FEMA,” a similar film that he boasted “conclusively

proves the existence of a secret network of FEMA camps... . The military-industrial complex is transforming our once free nation into a giant prison camp.”

On his Facebook page in 2012, Jones linked to a story from Disclose TV, “List of All FEMA Concentration Camps in America Revealed.” Jones’ Infowars.com website is littered with similar stories with headlines such as “Exclusive: Government Activating FEMA Camps Across US,” “Secretive FEMA Camp Drill Running in Iowa” and “Bombshell: FEMA Camps Confirmed.”

## 8 MONEY MANIPULATORS

The fear that regular people are being ruthlessly exploited by financial elites — bankers, major business interests and other players in high finance — goes back almost to the first days of our nation. And while it is certainly true that moneyed interests have long taken advantage of the financially vulnerable, the American far right has specialized in conspiratorial explanations with no basis in reality.

As early as the 1790s, many people suspected that Freemasons — a fraternal group whose sometimes secretive practices engendered many specious conspiracy theories — were covertly controlling U.S. government policies through financial and other manipulations. This ultimately fed into a national debate a full century later over banking, credit, money and the use of gold and silver.

Such theories gained a particularly nasty twist with the publication in the very early 1900s of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a forgery alleging a Jewish plot to take over the world and, through control of the banks, all its wealth. Although the book attacked Jews for financial troubles in Russia, it reached American automaker Henry Ford, who popularized the idea of Jews sabotaging the U.S. economy.

Suspicious about elite financial plots heated up in 1910, when a group of bank moguls and U.S. senators gathered at Georgia’s Jekyll Island resort to plan



what would become, in 1913, the Federal Reserve, the system that today regulates the money supply in America. Later conspiracy theorists, like G. Edward Griffin, author of the 1994 book *The Creature From Jekyll Island*, see this as the beginning of a massive rip-off of the American people. Today’s antigovernment “Patriot” movement despises the Fed, which it wrongly claims is controlled by “international bankers” (often described as Jewish bankers) who manipulate the system to their own advantage. Patriots say that paper money, or “Federal Reserve Notes,” is not real money like gold.

Another landmark event in this world of conspiracy theories is President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s 1933 dropping of the gold standard, which meant that the government no longer promised to redeem paper money for gold. At around the same time, Father Charles Coughlin, an infamous anti-Semitic radio broadcaster, popularized the term “banksters,” by which he meant Jewish bankers.

In contemporary times, a whole array of malefactors have been identified by the radical right as manipulating American finance at the expense of the rest of us: the Rothschilds, Roosevelts and Rockefellers, the British royal family, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Trilateral Commission and the Bilderberg

banking summits. For neo-Nazis, naturally, the enemy is always the Jews.

Of course, there is nothing whatever to any of these theories. Indisputably, banking and other financial interests have sometimes worked to profit unfairly at the expense of others. But the idea that there is an elaborate plot by an identifiable group of conspirators to defraud America and its citizens is entirely false.

**THE ENABLERS** Through the centuries, a huge number of people, some of them powerful men like **Henry Ford**, Father **Charles Coughlin** and **Adolf Hitler**, have promoted various false conspiracy theories about financial manipulation, in the case of those three blaming the Jews. They are far too numerous to list.

**Dennis Fahey**, an anti-Semitic Catholic writer, was one who wrote of “money manipulations” during the 1940s. In 1971, another virulent Jew-hater, the late **Eustace Mullins**, began writing about similar plots, ultimately influencing many neo-Nazis and others on the radical right. **G. Edward Griffin**, who in 1994 wrote *The Creature From Jekyll Island* about the alleged evils of the Federal Reserve, has denied being an anti-Semite, but a number of his critics disagree.

For decades, the John Birch Society (JBS) has played a primary role in promot-



ing a series of similar conspiracy theories, although they do not point to Jewish evil-doers. JBS pamphlets in recent years have pushed gold in place of paper money and said the Fed has put Americans at “the mercy of booms and busts unleashed by the mandarins of high finance to serve their own political ends.”

In his 1991 book *The New World Order*, **Pat Robertson**, chair of the Christian Broadcasting Network and host of “The 700 Club,” talks about secret forces whose “principal goal is the establishment of a one-world government where the control of money is in the hands of one or more privately owned but government-chartered central banks.” He identifies evildoers who include the Illuminati, the Council on Foreign Relations, Freemasons and certain Jewish banking families.

More recently, both former congressman **Ron Paul** and his son, Sen. **Rand Paul** (R-Ky.), have attacked the Fed and paper money, while the elder Paul has tirelessly promoted a return to the gold standard.

“It’s a frightening thought. Islamic terrorist training camps right here in America, in our backyards.”

And an endless list of companies selling gold and silver have sought to take advantage of the conspiratorial beliefs of many on the far right by urging them to buy metal instead of saving dollars.

## 9 SECRET MUSLIM TRAINING CAMPS

Pushers of the conspiracist canard that there are between 22 and 35 secret Muslim terrorist training camps hidden in plain sight in rural areas scattered across the country have a simple explanation for why the authorities

have not cracked down to save America from the peril of homegrown jihad.

Local police and sheriff’s departments, not to mention the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security, have their heads in the sand, probably because of too darn much political correctness.

“We toured a lot of these camps and by and large all the camps have a pretty good working relationship with the police department or the sheriff that is in the immediate area,” Martin Mawyer, head of the Christian Action Network, which is listed as a hate group by the Southern



SECRET MUSLIM TRAINING CAMPS THE ENEMY WITHIN

Poverty Law Center, complained to the far-right online “news” outlet WorldNetDaily this January. “Whenever we’ve tried to meet with any of these police agencies and present our findings they won’t let us in to show any of the evidence. Maybe it’s just to keep their heads buried in the sand because they certainly don’t approach this group with any degree of seriousness.”

Despite the dismissive reception from law enforcement, the campinistas have been pushing the conspiracy theory hard for years, compiling lists of the suspected terrorist compounds and making videos about them. One of those is “Homegrown Jihad: The Terrorist Camps Around U.S.,” which was produced by Mawyer’s group and since 2012 has had nearly 400,000 views on YouTube.

Islamberg, one of the alleged “terrorist training camps” in upstate New York, is a popular target of the conspiracy theorists — figuratively and, earlier this year, literally.

In actuality, Islamberg, located about 110 miles northwest of New York City near the town of Hancock, is home to a small community of mostly African-American Muslims. It is one of at least a dozen similar enclaves around the country. A Reuters story about Islamberg this June ran with a headline describing it as “a tranquil Muslim hamlet in the Catskills.” Six months earlier, a local sheriff’s office spokesman told a radio show host that he knew Islamberg well and was “perplexed” by the idea that it posed a threat. Asked about a grainy video made by the Islam-bashing Clarion Project claiming to show women engaged in paramilitary training there, he said that “nothing we have developed or had contact with has made us believe there is any credit to those videos.”

But to an “array of far-right organizations,” as Reuters put it, Islamberg is a terrorist training camp, featured in the “Homegrown Jihad” video and endless Internet rants. And a 63-year-old former congressional candidate from Tennessee, Robert Doggart, was apparently inspired by the training camp hysteria. In July, a federal grand jury indicted Doggart for

allegedly soliciting others to burn down the mosque at Islamberg.

Another location that often appears on the lists of training camps is the Alabama town of Marion, population 3,686.

On July 25, 2002, less than a year after the horror and mass murder of the 9/11 attacks, ABC News published a story about a possible terrorist training camp linked to Muslim extremists, operating just outside of Marion. The camp was called “Ground Zero.”

The report talked provocatively about “[b]ullet-riddled police cars and a school bus with mannequin targets” scattered across the property and, inside a huge shed, “an equally macabre scene: shot-up mannequins, male and female, in domestic settings, some with red, blood-like stains on them.”

“The looming question for law enforcement,” ABC said, “is whether there is a connection between the camp and the al Qaeda terror network.”

ABC did acknowledge that the British man who owned the compound — described as probably an “unwitting accomplice” — said it was a legal training facility for law enforcement that provided world-class training in automatic weapons, urban warfare and other tactics, “supposedly to fight terror attacks.”

The day after the ABC report, The Associated Press reported that that was, in fact, precisely what the camp was — a training facility for law enforcement. The police chief of Marion, saying he’d been misquoted by ABC, explained that the camp was used by police officers from Alabama and Louisiana. An FBI spokesman in Birmingham told the AP that his agency’s probe found no link to any terrorist or other unlawful activity. The state’s Department of Public Safety agreed.

And yet, 13 years later, Marion still shows up on Internet lists as one of the 22 secret Muslim terrorist training camps that the police just won’t do anything about.

**THE ENABLERS** Although **Martin Mawyer** appears to be the principal promoter of the Muslim training camp myth, no anti-Muslim conspiracy theory would

be complete without the input of **Pamela Geller**. Geller has been on the trail of the fictional camps since 2007 and says the authorities have not raided them “because there is a great reluctance among government and law enforcement agencies across the board, no matter who is president, to appear to be anti-Muslim.”

**Patti Pierucci** is another promulgator of the canard. She and Mawyer are co-authors of *Twilight in America: The Untold Story of Islamic Training Camps Inside America*. People who purchase the book on Amazon frequently also buy another page-turner, *How Obama Embraces Islam’s Sharia Agenda* by Andrew C. McCarthy.

**Sean Hannity**, along with a number of other Fox News hosts, has also tried to spread the word. In 2009, he devoted a segment of his program to the subject. His “expert” guest was Mawyer. “It’s a frightening thought,” Hannity said. “Islamic terrorist training camps right here in America, in our backyards.”

## 10 THE HOMOSEXUAL AGENDA

The idea that there is a “homosexual agenda” — a concrete plan, worked out with Machiavellian cunning and aimed at convincing straight Americans to accept the unacceptable — dates to the early 1980s, when the gay rights movement was for the first time ever beginning to gain a little bit of real political traction.

Perhaps the first important book to suggest a program of devious infiltration was Enrique Rueda’s 1982 tome, *The Homosexual Network*, which expanded more soberly on David Noel’s *The Homosexual Revolution: End Time Abomination*, a crude 1977 book that savaged homosexuality. A tsunami of similar publications, increasingly pointing to a detailed and secret gay agenda, soon followed. Beverly LaHaye’s 1991 booklet, *The Hidden Homosexual Agenda*, was typical.

There is some argument on the religious right as to just how the “agenda”





came to be. Some locate the beginning in early demands for gay rights like Carl Wittman's 1970 article, "Refugees from Amerika: A Gay Manifesto," which called for making alliances with other progressive movements and appealing to younger people. Later, a large number of anti-gay activists claimed it started with a 1990 book, *After the Ball: How America Will Conquer Its Fear and Hatred of Gays in the 90's*, by psychologist Marshall Kirk and advertising expert Hunter Madsen.

That book proposed a straightforward campaign — tactics such as speaking openly about homosexuality, portraying gays as victims and their enemies as bullies, and seeking sympathetic allies — but it was painted as an evil conspiracy.

Amusingly, other anti-gay forces mistook a 1987 satire in a Boston gay newspaper for a real plan. Among its most famous lines: "We shall sodomize your sons, emblems of your feeble masculinity, of your shallow dreams and vulgar lives." It ended with this: "Tremble, hetero swine, when we appear before you without our masks." It was even entered

into the Congressional record — minus its first line, saying it was "a tragic, cruel fantasy, an eruption of inner rage," a parody.

Over the years, the religious anti-gay right has added ever more florid descriptions of the alleged homosexual agenda. Anti-gay groups have repeatedly claimed, falsely, that the gay rights movement seeks to abolish all sexual age-of-consent laws. Many asserted that the American Psychiatric Association's 1973 declassification of homosexuality as a mental disorder was merely appeasement of gay activists. Efforts to prevent bullying of LGBT students in lower schools were depicted as cynical attempts to "recruit" children into the "homosexual lifestyle"

The truth is that there is no "homosexual agenda" beyond the decades-long attempt by LGBT people to win equal rights — to be safe in their homes and on the streets, to be able to marry the people they love, to not be discriminated against in housing, jobs and so on. But there most certainly is an anti-gay agenda, and it is one that often will stop at almost nothing in its efforts to smear LGBT people.

**THE ENABLERS** The history of those who work to isolate and defame LGBT people, in particular with respect to the alleged "homosexual agenda," is a long one. But it has gotten even worse as gay people have come closer and closer to real equality.

**Janet Porter**, president and founder of Faith2Action, said in an anti-gay documentary released earlier this year that "God and his commandments were kicked out of the classroom" and replaced with "a dark agenda that robs children of their innocence and puts their life at risk." Appearing with her in the film, "Light Wins," was **Scott Lively**, who claims that gay men orchestrated the Holocaust, and Sen. **Rand Paul** (R-Ky.) and former Arkansas Gov. **Mike Huckabee**.

**John Stemberger**, who heads Trail Life USA and opposed the Boy Scouts decision to allow gay Scouts, said that if the Scouts went further and allowed gay Scouting leaders, it would endanger "the safety and security" of the boys in the group and allow "the homosexual agenda to infiltrate the church."

Also this year, Christian Coalition founder **Pat Robertson** told a viewer of his TV show, "The 700 Club," that "the gays want to control everything" and warned that "[t]his is part of the left-wing agenda to do away with Christian values."

Countless others have chimed in on a variety of mythological plans attributed to the gay agenda, all of them baseless — that hate crime laws will be used to send pastors to prison if they publicly disagree with homosexuality, that speech will soon be curtailed to disallow any negative comments about LGBT people, that the legalization of same-sex marriage will destroy heterosexual marriage and so on.

In the words of **Janet Mefferd**, a far-right syndicated radio host, the country may be moving "toward a day when every Christian who supports real marriage might be made to wear a yellow patch on the sleeve ... to identify us as 'anti-gay haters.'" She didn't mention that the idea is ridiculous on its face and, in any case, would be entirely impossible under a constitutional system. ▲



# FURLING THE FLAG

After a massacre in South Carolina, the Confederate battle flag came under attack — and thousands of its supporters fought back

**BY HEIDI BEIRICH**



**FOR 150 YEARS** after the conclusion of the Civil War, the Confederate battle flag continued to fly, displayed at Deep South statehouses, by Southern “heritage” organizations, among groups of rebellious “rednecks,” at sporting events, and even on a car in the TV show “Dukes of Hazzard.” But this summer, in the wake of the massacre of nine people by a flag-waving white supremacist, the symbol also used as an emblem of the Ku Klux Klan came under unprecedented attack.

In a region where history and racism have often been whitewashed, Dylann Roof’s racist murders forced a debate that many had worked to suppress. Photos of Roof posing with the flag led to a societal reckoning that swept the South.

Less than a week after the killings in Charleston, S.C., Amazon, Walmart and eBay banned the sale of items bearing the symbol, also known as the “Southern Cross.” Conservative Southern politicians who had never said a critical word about the flag, along with many who had defended it as a legitimate and non-racist symbol of Southern heritage, came out against it. Writers like Charles Johnson of the Little Green Footballs blog penned thoughtful essays about why it should finally come down. On July 5, Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley ordered a variety of Confederate flags removed from the statehouse grounds. And on July 8, encouraged by conservative Gov. Nikki Haley, the South Carolina legislature passed a law that mandated the removal of the battle flag.

Polls showed broad support for removing the flag from government property, based on how offensive it is to many people, especially people of color, because of its history representing a regime that fought to defend slavery. For most, furling the flag seemed a necessary if belated step in repudiating racism and racist ideas.



But some white people saw things very differently. Surprising numbers of Southerners were genuinely outraged at the attack on the flag that they continued to insist represented only the best of Southern culture, despite conclusive historical evidence to the contrary. The backlash brought thousands into the streets.

More than 50 pro-flag rallies were held around the country over the first weekend in July. The next weekend, there were similar demonstrations at nearly 20 sites across eight Southern states, including Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia. While the number of protests and the audiences were smaller than that first weekend, two key protests in Ocala, Fla., and Memphis, Tenn., boasted impressive numbers, 5,000 and 500 respectively.

That was just the start.

**“American Kristallnacht”:** In a move also described by the radical right as “cultural genocide,” Gov. Nikki Haley signs a bill removing the Confederate battle flag from the grounds of the South Carolina Statehouse. Twenty-two days earlier, a 21-year-old flag enthusiast murdered nine people in a Charleston church.



**Lost Cause:** Across the South, as a movement to defrock the symbols of the Confederacy picked up steam, defenders of the battle flag struggled to make their case.

Between June 17, the day of the Charleston massacre, and Aug. 26, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) counted 218 pro-battle flag rallies, most of them in the former Confederate states. A total of more than 20,000 people turned out, based on the SPLC's tally. At least 67 more were planned in the coming weeks. Many of the rallies were spontaneous; but, giving the lie to the slogan of "Heritage, not Hate," racist groups like the Klan also played key roles in the backlash.

#### **Pride? Or Hate?**

Perhaps the reaction should not have come as such a surprise.

The battle flag has long had a major constituency, especially in the South. Facebook pages run by local "flagger" groups began popping up almost overnight after the Charleston killings, even

as most Americans mourned the victims' deaths. The association of the pennant with slavery, segregation, the Dixiecrats, and the Ku Klux Klan in its battle against civil rights, seems to matter not a lick to certain white Southerners. Shocking numbers of whites see the flag in positive terms.

In early July, a CNN poll found that 57% of all Americans viewed the flag more as a symbol of Southern pride than of racism. And these views have held fairly steady in recent years, with a 2000 poll also finding that most Americans saw it then, as well, as a symbol of Southern pride. But, to the surprise of no one, opinions are sharply divided by race. In the recent CNN poll, 72% of African Americans saw the battle flag as a symbol of racism, while just 25% of whites agreed.

NICK TOWSE/CNN/NORTHWEST FLORIDA DAILY NEWS VIA AP





peers, he repeatedly took photos of himself proudly flying the banner.

#### Hate Groups Step In

Although most flaggers have no known history in racist groups and say their support has nothing to do with hatred, organized hate groups have played a key role in fighting what they describe as the “American Kristallnacht” — a reference to the 1938 pogrom against Jews and Jewish property throughout Germany. The SPLC has documented the involvement of six major hate groups, sometimes as organizers.

The most prominent have been the neo-Confederate League of the South (LOS), which seeks a second Southern secession and the creation of a white-run country in the Southeast, and the Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC) — the same group that Roof cited as his first inspiration as a white supremacist (see story, p. 20). Other involved hate groups have included the racist Traditionalist Youth Network, the Loyal White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, and two neo-Nazi groups, the Aryan Nations and the much larger National Socialist Movement.

The LOS, a longtime defender of the Confederate battle flag and the Confederacy, was particularly well positioned to take advantage of the situation. The group has long railed against “Southern demographic displacement” and what it calls “cultural genocide” at the hands of nonwhite immigrants to the South.

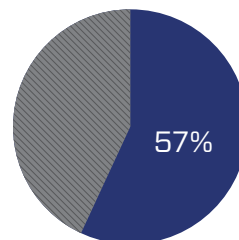
The racial divide is widest in the South. While 75% of Southern whites describe the flag as a symbol of pride and 18% call it a symbol of racism, those figures are almost exactly reversed among the Southern black population — just 11% see the flag as a sign of pride, while 75% see it as a symbol of racism.

But white support for the flag is linked to a lack of educational achievement. Among white people with a college degree, 51% see it as a symbol of pride and 41% as a symbol of racism. By contrast, 73% of whites who do not have a college degree see it as symbol of Southern pride and just 18% see it as symbolizing racism.

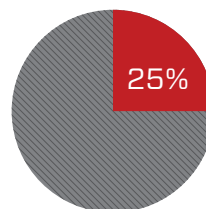
Dylann Roof, who was 21 at the time of the shooting and had dropped out of high school several years before, revered the flag. Like a surprising number of his

## THE CONFEDERATE BATTLE FLAG:

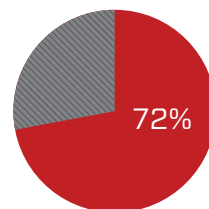
Hate or heritage?



Almost six in 10 Americans see the battle flag as primarily a symbol of Southern pride.

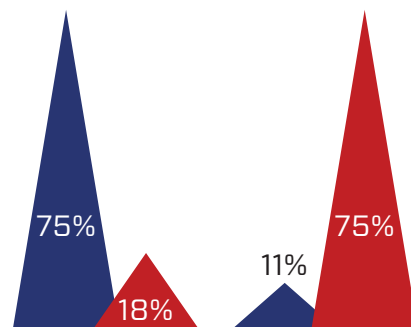


WHITES

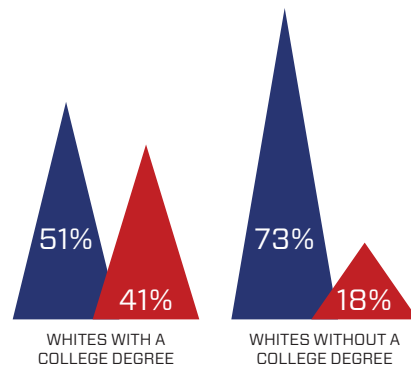


BLACKS

But African Americans are vastly more likely to see it as a symbol of hate.




The racial divide in how the flag is viewed is starkest in the South.



But white hostility to the flag goes up with educational achievement.

■ SOUTHERN PRIDE ■ RACIST SYMBOL



**“Why should  
we celebrate  
a heritage  
grounded in hate,  
a heritage whose  
self-avowed  
reason for  
existence was the  
exploitation and  
debasement of a  
sizable segment  
of its population?”**

“It lifts my spirits to see so many of you here to fight for your heritage, and to defend your livelihoods, and to protect what you love most and hold dear,” William Flowers, vice chairman of the Georgia LOS chapter, told a pro-flag rally from the front steps of the Alabama state Capitol in one example in late June. “We are pushing now to reach out and grab the hearts and minds of our fellow southerners and to pull them into believing that the politicians have betrayed them.”

A month later, LOS President Michael Hill sounded considerably more militant. “Southerners, arm yourselves, organize yourselves, and be prepared to defend your lives and property from those lawless elements that threaten them,” he wrote. “We encourage all patriotic Southerners to join us... Together, we can turn back the assaults of the Cultural Marxists and put them on the run.”

Members of the CCC, which has described black people as a “retrograde species of humanity,” have been highly active as well. Bradley Dean Griffin — a CCC board member who recently married Renee Baum, the daughter of Gordon Baum, who founded and led the CCC until his death in March — bemoaned the fate of white Southerners online and at various rallies after the Charleston killings.

“It’s not just Southerners who are under attack,” Griffin wrote in one essay in late July. “We’ve recently seen that ‘Confederate Lives Don’t Matter’ in Indiana or Ohio either. ‘Confederate’ these days is really just a synonym for a class of undesirable White people. This is why we need a nation of our own.”

Another CCC board member who has been active is James Edwards, host of the racist radio program “The Political Cesspool.” Edwards, who was at one time a member of the neo-Nazi National Alliance, has made a habit of inviting neo-Nazis, Holocaust deniers, anti-Semites, and other white nationalists on his program. In early July, he organized a Memphis rally that drew more than 500 supporters in response to the city’s decision to remove a monument to Nathan Bedford Forrest — a Confederate officer who later became the first grand wizard, or national leader, of the Ku Klux Klan — and to exhume his body from an adjoining grave.

“It’s certainly not as if our societal overseers didn’t hate the South and any symbol of our unique identity before the murders that took place in Charleston occurred,” Edwards wrote on his website. “But they have since fully exploited the tragedy in order to launch an attempt to completely eradicate the Confederate flag and any memory of the righteous cause for which it stood.”

Edwards’ paranoid rants about “societal overseers” and their attacks on the flag are typical of the LOS’ fear-mongering about a “genocide” allegedly aimed at white Southerners. The group recently went so far as to compare efforts to remove Confederate symbols and memorials to the destruction by the Islamic State, a violent Islamist group, of ancient monuments and historic treasures in Iraq and Syria.

### **The Role of the SCV**

The largest pro-Confederate group in the South is the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV), whose thousands of members are male descendants of Confederate soldiers. Although nominally opposed to racism — and, in the case of many members, sincerely so — the SCV played an important part in organizing the pro-flag movement that sprang up after the Charleston slaughter. The “heritage” group organized rallies and often shared the podium with hate group members.

A week after Gov. Bentley ordered the removal of Confederate flags from the Alabama Capitol grounds, two members of the SCV — Mike Williams, the group’s adjutant, and Andy Bodenheimer — led an “Alabama Heritage Rally.” They shared the podium at that rally with many leaders from the LOS. Bodenheimer, in fact, is a member of both the SCV and the LOS, and his case is not rare.

The SCV said little about its connection to the openly racist LOS, whose president opposes racial intermarriage and has described “white people in the South” as “preserving a kith and kin, blood and soil nation” established by Europeans.

But when it came to the Klan, the SCV did try to distance itself.

“The Sons of Confederate Veterans has a strictly enforced ‘hate’ policy,”

TRACY GLANTZ/THE STATE VIA AP (FATHER AND SON); CURTIS COMPTON/ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION VIA AP (GUN AT TALLY)

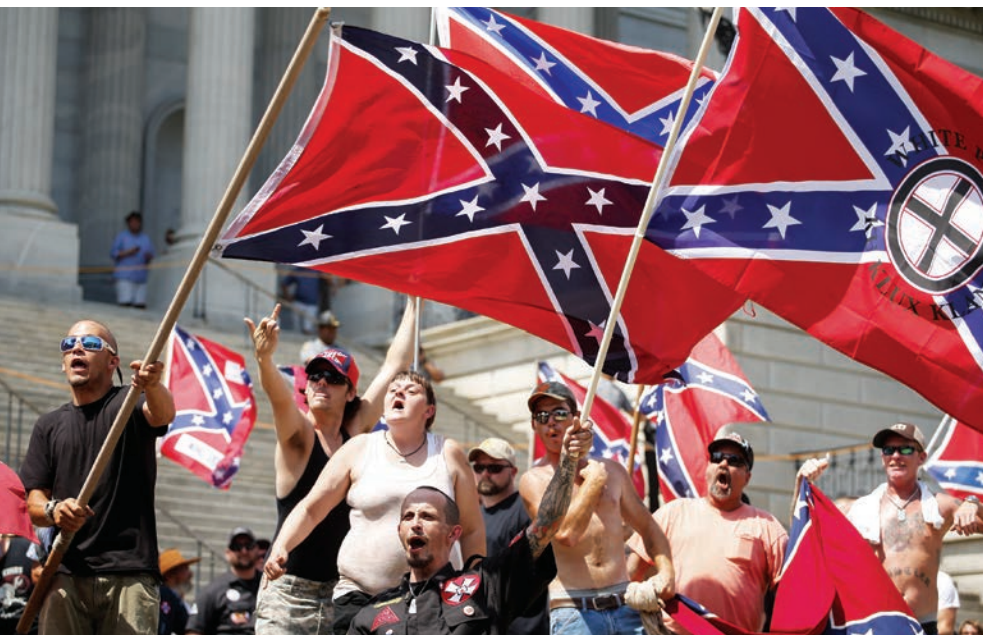




Stars fell on Alabama: Defenders of the Confederate battle flag came out (clockwise from left) in Montgomery, Ala. (first two pictures); at the South Carolina Statehouse (where a Klan rally was also held a week later); and at Stone Mountain, Ga., where the "second era" Klan was inaugurated in 1915.



Charles Kelly Barrow, the SCV commander in chief, said in a press release after the Loyal White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan were granted a permit to rally for the flag in July at the South Carolina Capitol. “Anyone with ties to any racist organization or hate group is denied membership. Any member developing ties to these organizations will be immediately expelled. Prohibited organizations include the KKK, American Nazi Party, the National Alliance, or any organization expressing racist ideals or violent overthrow of the United States government.”



**Lay down with dogs:** The belligerent Klan rally on the steps of the South Carolina Statehouse didn't throw a great light on calmer defenders of the flag like (from left) SCVers Leland Summers and Dickie Phalen — or even white supremacist lawyer Kirk Lyons, who tried but failed to save a University of Texas statue of Jefferson Davis.

Given longstanding ties between the SCV and members of various hate groups, that seems a pretty empty statement. Over much of the last 15 years, the SCV has been rent by an internal civil war between racists — the so-called “Lunatics” faction — and the history clubbers, derisively termed the “Grannies”

by their opponents. While neither side has won a definitive victory, the SCV has seen more than its share of racist activists attempting to control the organization.

A primary example is Kirk Lyons, a white supremacist lawyer from North Carolina who was married on the grounds of the neo-Nazi Aryan Nations and has defended a number of racist criminals. Lyons also is the chief trial counsel of the Southern Legal Resource Center, a pro-Confederate organization that defends the battle flag in various court disputes. Lyons has been a leading figure in the SCV for years and plays a prominent role in the group's youth camps. In the early 2000s, he at one point said he could see no reason for the SCV to ban Klan members.

The CCC is also linked quite closely to the SCV. In January 2014, the CCC's founder, the late Gordon Baum, and two other CCC members — all of them also members of the SCV — were awarded “SCV War Veteran Medals” by the group's Missouri chapter. The list of SCV members active in hate groups is long.

### Fury and the Future

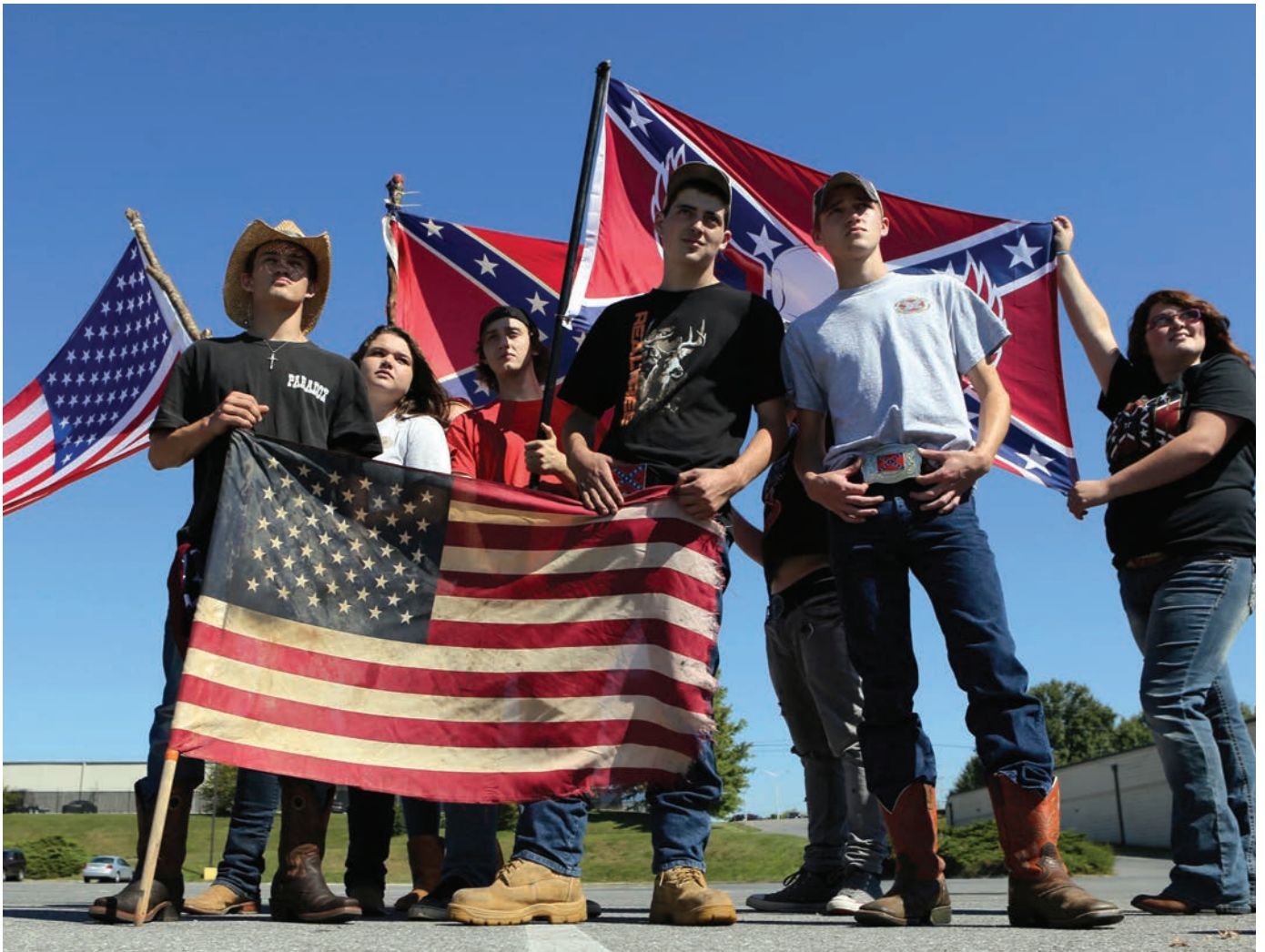
And then there were the unvarnished haters. While most of the pro-flag groups tried to seem reasonable, some individuals just didn't care.

At a major Aug. 1 rally at Stone Mountain, Ga. — the 1915 birthplace of the “second era” Klan — demonstrators were asked to abide by a “no racial slurs” rule. But, as reporters noted, not everyone listened. One young black woman was called a “greasy monkey nigger bitch.” And a protester, Allan Croft, was quoted saying, “Yeah, we didn't want our daughters to marry you and we didn't want our children to go to school with you.” Similar comments were made at other rallies.

Others allegedly moved beyond words. At the Loyal White Knights' rally in Columbia, S.C., a member of an anti-government group from Virginia came with “the intent to instill violence and hate among the other attendees with the ultimate goal of enticing riots to break out,” according to the Richland County Sheriff's Department. Stephen Loughman was later arrested for his activities.

REUTERS/CHRIS KEANE (KLAN RALLY), AP PHOTO/JEFFREY COLLINS (SUMMERS AND PHALEN), LAURA STEEDING/AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN VIA AP (LYONS)





And in Douglasville, Ga., a group of flaggers either crashed or simply passed by a black child's birthday event on July 25. The flaggers, some of them reportedly armed and all driving trucks flying numerous Confederate flags, roared by the party. One black witness said she had heard them threatening to "kill y'all niggers" and, in one video taken of the event, the same epithet can be heard from the trucks.

For all the anger, the campaign to remove Confederate symbols from public property, government calendars and elsewhere continues. In August, Georgia dropped Confederate Memorial Day from its official calendar. The same month, a statue of Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederate States of America, was packed up and wheeled away from a prominent location on the Austin campus of the University of Texas. Similar moves elsewhere are underway or being planned.

A century and a half after the end of the Civil War, despite enormous opposition from racists and those who misunderstand history, the Confederate battle flag, at least, may be losing its grip on the South. As historian Gordon Rhea suggested in a 2011 address to the Charleston Library Society, that is certainly a good thing.

"It is no accident that Confederate symbols have been the mainstay of white supremacist organizations, from the Ku Klux Klan to the skinheads," Rhea said that day. "They did not appropriate the Confederate battle flag simply because it was pretty. They picked it because it was the flag of a nation dedicated to their ideals, i.e., 'that the negro is not equal to the white man.' The Confederate flag, we are told, represents heritage, not hate. But why should we celebrate a heritage grounded in hate, a heritage whose self-avowed reason for existence was the exploitation and debasement of a sizeable segment of its population?" ▲

**Rebels with a cause:** Some 20 students at Christiansburg, Va., High School were suspended briefly for breaking rules against displaying the Confederate battle flag.



# For the Record

MAY — AUGUST 2015

INCIDENTS OF APPARENT HATE CRIMES AND HATE GROUP ACTIVITIES listed here are drawn primarily from media sources. These incidents include only a fraction of the almost 260,000 reported and unreported hate crimes that a 2012 Bureau of Justice Statistics report estimated occur annually. This listing carries a selection of incidents from May through August 2015. Any additional listings can be found on the Southern Poverty Law Center's website.

SPLC.CENTER.ORG/GET-INFORMED/HATE-INCIDENTS

## CALIFORNIA

### Palo Alto • July 15, 2015

A group of white men allegedly stabbed a Latino teen with a screwdriver in a parking garage after making offensive remarks about his ethnicity.

### Rialto • May 3, 2015

Jeremiah Bell, a 22-year-old black man, was charged with attempted murder and hate crime allegations after he allegedly beat a white man with a baseball bat.

### Sacramento • June 27, 2015

Jose Alvarez Espinoza, 34, was charged with assault, making willful threats and attempted offense because of race, color or religion after he allegedly used a racial slur and assaulted a woman on the street.

### Stanford • June 26, 2015

Lucas Joseph Ninow, 19, was charged with felony vandalism, misdemeanor vandalism and hate crime for allegedly spray-painting racist graffiti and swastikas on Stanford University student housing units.

## COLORADO

### Boulder • May 7, 2015

Jeffrey Klinkel, 32, was charged with felony menacing, explosive or biological hoax, and interference with an educational facility for allegedly sending envelopes with threatening messages and a white powder to a Jewish community center and synagogue in early April.

### Boulder • May 13, 2015

Paul Wettengel, 45, was charged with third degree assault and bias-motivated crime for allegedly assaulting a 21-year-old transgender man.

## FLORIDA

### Miami Beach • June 6, 2015

A swastika and anti-Semitic message were scrawled on a car.

## ILLINOIS

### DuPage County • June 22, 2015

Karen Komar, 49, was charged with three felony hate crime counts and three misdemeanor counts of aggravated assault after she allegedly used racial slurs and pointed a weapon at three teenagers, two black and one white, on a sidewalk.

### Plainfield • May 11, 2015

Andrew M. Machaj, 22, was charged with a hate crime and criminal damage to property for allegedly spray-painting a racial slur and swastika at the residence of several Western Illinois University students.

## LOUISIANA

### Clinton • July 25, 2015

Ronnie Barnes, 54, was charged with a hate crime and a misdemeanor after allegedly using a racial slur and questioning the gender of a 12-year-old boy.

## MICHIGAN

### Troy • May 1, 2015

James Duane Tree, 53, was charged with ethnic intimidation and assault and battery after allegedly using ethnic slurs and threatening to kill a Muslim man.

## MISSISSIPPI

### George County • June 2, 2015

Joshua Vallum, 28, was charged with murder for allegedly beating a transgender teen to death.

### Jackson • May 8, 2015

Robert Henry Rice was sentenced to 10 years in prison for his involvement in a conspiracy in a string of assaults in 2011 that targeted black residents.

### Moss Point • July 11, 2015

The letters "KKK" and white power were spray-painted on city signs.

## NEW YORK

### Buffalo • May 5, 2015

A threatening note with racist insults was wrapped around a brick and thrown through

a window of an interracial couple's residence.

### Lake Luzerne • June 14, 2015

Scott D. Bills, 19, and Bradley S. Moulton, 21, were charged with second-degree menacing as a hate crime after allegedly firing a BB gun at two men and shouting anti-gay slurs.

### Long Island • July 2, 2015

Elisa Pellino, 66, was charged with second degree aggravated harassment as a hate crime after allegedly leaving a racist telephone message at a church.

### New York • May 5, 2015

A gay couple at a restaurant was allegedly assaulted by two men who used anti-gay slurs.

### New York • June 1, 2015

Rolan Reid was charged with a hate crime for shoving a transgender woman onto subway tracks.

### New York • June 19, 2015

A group of black men allegedly attacked a white man on the street while yelling racial slurs.

### New York • July 11, 2015

Zin McDade, 29, allegedly punched a woman on the street while yelling anti-Muslim insults.

### New York • Aug. 4, 2015

The first gay couple married at West Point was allegedly attacked by a man yelling anti-gay slurs.

## NORTH CAROLINA

### Charlotte • June 25, 2015

A predominantly African American church was set afire only weeks after nine worshippers at a historic Charleston African American church were shot and killed by white supremacist Dylann Roof.

## OREGON

### Portland • July 2, 2015

Jeremiah Mauer, 31, was sentenced to 13 years in prison after pleading guilty to conspiracy to commit murder and second degree assault stemming from a

2014 incident in which he fired shots into a residence. Mauer was the founder of the United Aryan Empire, a white supremacist gang responsible for a number of fights and shootings last year.

## SOUTH CAROLINA

### Columbia • July 18, 2015

Members of the Loyal White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and the neo-Nazi National Socialist Movement held a pro-Confederate flag rally at the state capital. Earlier in the day, members of the New Black Panther Party demonstrated against the flag.

## TENNESSEE

### Memphis • May 7, 2015

A letter with a swastika on the envelope that threatened to blow up the Memphis Gay and Lesbian Community Center was left in the center's mailbox.

## WASHINGTON

### Seattle • June 28, 2015

Three unrelated hate crimes targeting gay men and a transgender woman occurred hours apart on the same day hundreds of people attended the annual gay pride parade in downtown.

### Seattle • July 7, 2015

Jeffrey Brooks Knothe, 57, was charged with malicious harassment after he allegedly used gay and racial slurs and spit on a gay couple and a black woman on a city bus.

### Spokane • July 4, 2015

Anti-Muslim graffiti was spray-painted on the wall of a community center where Bosnia Herzegovina Heritage Association members were observing Ramadan.

## WEST VIRGINIA

### Huntington • May 6, 2015

Steward Butler, 23, was charged with civil rights violations and battery for allegedly attacking two gay men.▲



# SELF-HELP FOR ARYANS

Angelo John Gage, infamous white nationalist, is into the human potential movement — and what it can do for racists

BY DON TERRY

When he isn't making YouTube videos warning of "white genocide" or leading his youthful band of white nationalists on to college campuses to protest, among other dark fantasies, the Marxist takeover of American higher education, Angelo John Gage is on the lookout for clients who have problems with "[n]egative emotions, stress, uncontrollable urges/behaviors, anxiety, irrational fears/phobias, traumatic memories, anger, resentment, weight, smoking cessation and much more."

At 31, Gage, a former Marine and failed congressional candidate from New Jersey, is the chairman of the National Youth Front, the youth wing of the radical-right hate group, American Freedom Party.

He is also a professional "life coach" and devoted practitioner of "NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) and Hypnosis strategies," made famous by self-help infomercial king Tony Robbins.

Robbins' motivational teachings, Gage says on his website offering counseling services via phone, Skype or in-house sessions, "greatly helped me, and as I experienced results, I became inspired to be like him so I began my own training as a NLP Practitioner in 2009."

A year later, Gage says, he graduated from something called the International Center for Positive Change and Hypnosis.

NLP is a controversial communication and personal development methodology. Although some call it a scam, millions of people — from the broke to billionaires and even, it seems, to bald-headed white nationalists — gobble up Robbins' self-help books and videos.

For Gage, NLP is also apparently



a weapon. On his blog, "Angelo John Gage: March against Marxism," Gage wrote last year that NLP, "when used properly, is like a mind-hacking program that can be used for good or bad." "The reason why I'm talking about NLP in this article," he added,

"is because our enemies are using it against us."

"Notice," he explained, "how the Marxists are always trying to censor certain words and phrases by labeling them as 'hateful,'" while "creating a politically correct matrix." That makes it hard "to wake up our fellow brothers and sisters," a state of affairs "exacerbated because of the Marxists' control of the media which enables them to disseminate their hypnotic language to our folk across the world on a daily basis ... ultimately leading them to commit racial and cultural suicide."

Now there are some "negative emotions."

Robbins no doubt would be appalled by Gage's politics, which include a heavy dose of racism. Shortly after nine African-American worshippers were gunned down last June at a historic black church in Charleston, S.C. — allegedly by a 21-year-old white racist — Robbins tweeted, "Sound off and help to annihilate Racism and its symbols!"

Gage, in a YouTube video posted the day after Robbins' tweet, had a take a little more along the lines of "irrational fears/phobias": The shooting was being used as another excuse "to blame white people" and "to take our guns," leaving the "psychopathic, tyrannical government" with all the firepower. He even questioned if the shooting had really happened.

He added, however, that if the shooting "happened the way we're told, it's a horrible thing. I condemn that."

Gage was born in Italy and brought to America when he was 2. He says he joined the Marines at 17, not long after watching the Twin Towers come down on 9/11. He served two tours in Iraq and came home a corporal, apparently haunted by the experience. "When I returned to civilian life after I completed my four years of service," he writes on his NLP website, "I realized that I had become lost, confused, and depressed. It was my own personal struggles that led me to discover the self-help world."

And that world, it turns out, can be helpful even to racist activists like Gage. He gives an example on his blog of NLP in action, an imaginary conversation between two people — A and B — discussing what Gage calls "Eurocide."

A: Have you heard about Eurocide (white genocide) going on today?

B: No. What the hell are you talking about?

A: It is the deliberate destruction of the indigenous European people, their nations and their cultures through anti-European policies perpetrated by anti-European forces.

B: That is ridiculous. That is not happening! White people rule the world!

A: How do you know it's not happening?

B: Because I don't see it happening!

A: So you have eyes that can see everything happening on this planet?

The theoretical exchange continues until Mr. B begins to see the contradictions in his thinking and asks to see some websites about Eurocide — one more victory for NLP, and for the Aryan race.

"Next time you are debating someone," Gage earnestly advises his fellow white nationalists, "try some NLP." ▲

# The SPLC *Intelligence Report* Offers Online Investigative Resources

The *Intelligence Report* is offering **free online resources** to help law enforcement track extremist activity in their communities and conduct criminal investigations. Check out our website and see all that we have to offer. [intelligencereport.org](http://intelligencereport.org)



Ever seen tattoos like these while on duty? Everything you wanted to know about Racist Skinheads and more is available on our website.

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