

“These were *real men*, *White men*”:
Masculinity, Race, and the Rise of the White Nationalist Movement

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Abstract

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Emerging in the 1970s, the White Nationalist movement resurfaced in the late 2010s with the election of President Donald J. Trump. This far-right White supremacist movement is a breeding ground for domestic terrorist groups, and lone-wolf attackers. White Nationalism is predicated on the belief in White racial superiority and the belief that White people need a racial homeland in order to survive. Originally sparked as part of the White backlash to the Civil Rights movements and Black Power movements of the 50s and 60s, the ideas that animate this racist movement go back even further. Analyzing the trajectory of White supremacist ideas and violent White Nationalist groups since before the 1970s is vital for understanding the re-emergence of the White Nationalist movement and the real political impacts this ideology is having in early twenty-first century American society. This thesis seeks to understand this re-emergence by analyzing how White Nationalist thought has evolved, and the ways that White Nationalist groups use gender-based appeals to recruit members and promote their ideology. This movement and its ideology have been attractive to disaffected White men who believe that society has passed them by and who may be experiencing what scholars have called a “crisis of masculinity.” This thesis will examine how the White Nationalist movement has used the concept of masculinity in its publications, literature, and counter-media. The White Nationalist movement relies on propaganda that promotes the idea that the White race is in danger of going extinct, and that the White race needs saviours and protectors. In this way White Nationalist propaganda makes appeals to the manhood of their target audience while also promoting racial animosity and hatred. Their propaganda also relies upon scapegoating and the demonization of “others.” This movement has been growing since the 1970s and has become influential due to the success of White Nationalist groups using the Internet to promulgate their ideas. This thesis seeks to understand the history of this radical ideology and the ways that this movement has used appeals to masculine identity to reach new adherents.

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Introduction

In 2016, I was just beginning my undergraduate degree in history at the University of Ottawa. It was an exciting time; many of my friends in my first-year courses were taking double majors in political science and history, which seemed very pertinent, given all of the political upheavals in our midst. In my first semester of university, the 2016 presidential election was on everyone's mind. I remember attending watch parties for the debates, sharing memes about them on Instagram and Facebook; I also shared quips on Reddit (one of mine did quite well in the subreddit for the musical, *Hamilton*). Bringing the election up in class was a surefire way to derail a professor's lecture if people wanted to discuss something more interesting than that day's subject. This seemed like the first major historical event of which I was truly cognisant. My peers and I were engrossed in this; we all thought we would be witnessing history as the United States elected their first female President. We never really entertained the idea that the Republican nominee would have any success. We did not understand.

After Donald Trump was elected President of the United States, I think there was a general shock among my peers as it dawned on us that this event would define, at the very least, the next four years of our university educations. This was a disruption; we had anticipated that Hillary Clinton would win, that the tide of progressivism would keep rolling on. Of course, most of my peers and I, as Canadians, but also as (for the most part) progressive young people, had never expected that there could ever be a serious backlash to the progressive policies most of us thought were common sense and took for granted. We did not understand how much of a disconnect there was between our experiences and that of so many other people throughout North America. What really drove this home for me was the news reports that began to emerge in mid-August 2017, with images of hundreds of White men in polo shirts and khaki pants

marching with tiki torches through the University of Virginia campus. Soon, videos from the evening of August 11 started to appear online of the marchers chanting White Nationalist slogans such as, “you will not replace us,” “Jews will not replace us,” “blood and soil,” “hail victory,” and “White lives matter.”¹

The following day, these “alt-right” demonstrators gathered again for the “Unite the Right” rally and faced off with counter protesters. Videos from the rally showed members of alt-right groups, wielding homemade riot shields, and bearing Confederate battle flags, charge a line of counter protesters who were blocking their path to the formerly named Lee Park, where the city was planning to remove an equine statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee.² After violence broke out at the rally, it was declared an unlawful assembly. Riot police prepared to remove people from the scene once it became clear that people on both sides were unwilling to back down.³ Later that afternoon tragedy struck when one of the alt-right demonstrators, Alex Fields Jr., drove his car into a group of counter protesters, killing 32-year old Heather D. Heyer

¹ Matt Pearce, “Chanting ‘blood and soil!’ white nationalists with torches march on University of Virginia,” *Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 11, 2017, <https://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-white-virginia-rally-20170811-story.html>; Formerly available on YouTube this video of White Nationalist clearly shouting “You will not replace us” and one saying “Hail Victory” has since been taken down but is available on Wikipedia, “Hail Victory” is the English translation of the German Nazi slogan “Sieg Heil”: “YOU WILL NOT REPLACE US (#Charlottesville #UnitetheRight”, *Wikipedia*, August 14, 2017, video, 0:19, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:YOU_WILL_NOT_REPLACE_US_\(-Charlottesville_-UniteTheRight\).webm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:YOU_WILL_NOT_REPLACE_US_(-Charlottesville_-UniteTheRight).webm).

² “Altercations at Charlottesville Rally,” *Voice of America*, August 12, 2017, video, 1:32, <https://www.voanews.com/a/charlottesville-rally-altercations/3983042.html/>.

³ Doug Stanglin and Gabe Cavallaro, “1 dead, 19 injured as car hits crowd after a ‘Unite the Right’ rally in Charlottesville; driver in custody,” *USA Today*, Aug. 12, 2017, <https://web.archive.org/web/20170813114417/https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2017/08/12/charlottesville-va-braces-alt-right-rally-thousands-robert-e-lee-statue/561833001/>.

and injuring several others.⁴ In response to the violence, President Donald Trump called for national unity and said that “there were very fine people, on both sides.”⁵

These shocking events remained with me in the following years as I pursued my bachelor’s degree and ultimately inspired me to undertake this thesis. While this work seeks to explain the rise of the alt-right and is invested in understanding how a radical far-right shift in American politics came about, explain the election of Donald Trump is not the central focus here. Rather, this thesis will show that the ideas that inspired the alt-right originated in the post-Civil Rights era White Nationalist movement, and its most extreme, revolutionary, racist, and fascist elements. This thesis is also interested in understanding *who* aligns themselves with these movements and more importantly who joins radical right-wing groups and *why*. To better understand who joins these movements, this thesis will use a gendered lens to suggest that this movement is a manifestation of a crisis of masculinity for White men in the late twentieth century. This thesis asserts that the concepts of gender and race are intrinsically linked, and that racial anxieties are often fueled by gendered fears. Furthermore, this thesis will show that the core beliefs of the White Nationalist ideology are inherently gendered because for much of the history of the United States, gender and race have been two of the most important factors for determining one’s place in society. These groups believe and push the narrative that there is an orchestrated conspiracy to destroy and replace the White race in the United States through immigration policies and race mixing, but also through the subtle destruction of traditional

⁴ Joe Heim, Ellie Silverman, T. Rees Shapiro, and Emma Brown, “One dead as car strikes crowds amid protests of white nationalists gathering in Charlottesville; two police die in helicopter crash,” *The Washington Post*, August 13, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/fights-in-advance-of-saturday-protest-in-charlottesville/2017/08/12/155fb636-7f13-11e7-83c7-5bd5460f0d7e_story.html

⁵ Angie Drobnic Holan, “In Context: Donald Trump’s ‘very fine people on both sides’ remarks (transcript),” *PolitiFact*, April 26, 2019, <https://www.politifact.com/article/2019/apr/26/context-trumps-very-fine-people-both-sides-remarks/>; “Trump: Hate and Division Must Stop Now”, *NBC News*, August 12, 2017, video, 2:29, <https://www.nbcnews.com/video/president-trump-calls-for-unity-following-charlottesville-protests-1023348291612>

gender roles, and family dynamics. Many in this movement perceive the emergence and success of other social movements in the postwar period like the Civil Rights movement, women's movement, and Queer movements as direct attacks against the White race, broadly, and against cisgender, heterosexual, White men more directly. Members of these groups believe that they are at war and so make use of violent rhetoric, racist propaganda, and appeals to White manhood to spread their ideology, incite violence, and recruit members. This is not to say that gender and masculinity are the *cause* of this movement; it is simply one of a myriad of factors, and the one that I have chosen to focus my analysis on. The men who join these movements have diverse grievances ranging from the political to the economical, but the uniting factor, as highlighted by Michael Kimmel, is that for the most part, they are *men*.⁶

As this work will show, aggrieved White men have used violent organizations to enforce White supremacy since before the founding of the United States. Slavery was a part of the very first constitution drafted in New England.⁷ The early Puritan settlers based their understanding of race on Aristotelian Climate Theory, the idea that the Greeks (and the White inheritors of the “West”), who occupied the intermediate climate of the Mediterranean were the “masters” and thus had the right to enslave people from more extreme climates.⁸ The Puritans also believed that Black people were the descendants of Noah's son, Ham, who had been cursed by Noah to have black skin and to endure enslavement by the other races.⁹ American slavers depended on White racial solidarity to keep enslaved Black people subjugated and would organize slave patrols and posses to keep enslaved people in line and chase down those who fled. In the wake of the

⁶ Michael Kimmel, *Healing from Hate: How Young Men Get into –And Out of–Violent Extremism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018), 9.

⁷ Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (New York: Nation Books, 2016), 18.

⁸ Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning*, 17.

⁹ Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning*, 21.

American Civil War, the KKK, the very first racist terrorist group, would form as a way for disaffected White Southerners to terrorize emancipated Black people and reaffirm their masculinity in the wake of their defeat to the North. The KKK would be remembered by White Southerners as a group of righteous Southern men, who stood up in defence of their homeland in the face of Northern Federal tyranny. This nostalgia on the part of White people for the Klan and the idealized myth of Southern chivalry that this group came to represent would result in their reemergence in the 1920s. This was when the KKK experienced its highest levels of popularity, growing to boast a membership in the millions.¹⁰ In this way, White supremacy remained entrenched in American culture until the end of the Second World War, when the rigours of war time demanded a partial freeze of the rigid policies of racial segregation in the military and Homefront factories. After the war, Black Americans all over the country began to collectively organize in defense of their civil rights despite massive resistance from many White Americans.¹¹

The ideas that animate the White Nationalist movement are deeply rooted in this context of America's historical racial hierarchies and White supremacist systems. The contemporary White supremacist movement first emerged from the radical right in the last half of the twentieth century as a reaction to the Black Nationalist movement of the 1960s and the successes of the Civil Rights movement.¹² As the name suggests, White Nationalism is an ideology based on the desire to establish White ethno-states. In the United States, many White Nationalist groups preach (literally and figuratively) that the United States was founded as, and is supposed to be, a

¹⁰ Discussed further in Chapter One.

¹¹ Discussed further in Chapter Two.

¹² Daniel Geary, Camilla Schofield, and Jennifer Sutton, *Global white nationalism* (Manchester University Press, 2020), 3.

patriarchal, all-White nation.¹³ Throughout this thesis there will be references to the ways that White Nationalists perceive the world, including their views on race, and gender but also on their place in the world and the place of others. It will become clear through an examination of the primary sources that White Nationalists hold their Whiteness, and their masculinity in high regard, and that they are quick to react to supposed threats to either.

After Donald Trump's victory in 2016, White Nationalists met at a conference for the National Policy Institute and it was there that Richard B. Spencer, the group's president and director, gave a speech noting, "America was until this past generation a white country designed for ourselves and our posterity. It is our creation, it is our inheritance, and it belongs to us."¹⁴ This is something that White Nationalists believe they have lost and want to bring back. Essentially, there are two ways that White Nationalists see an all-White nation emerging in the continental United States: either by "peaceful ethnic cleansing," through the reinstatement of racial segregation, and the deportation of People of Colour, or through the creation of a White nation built from the ashes of a fallen United States of America, generally after the culmination of an apocalyptic race war.¹⁵ The reason why White Nationalists believe this will happen, or that this needs to happen, is that they see the progress made by the Civil Rights movement, women's movements, and Queer movements as well as increased levels of immigration as a direct attack on the place and privilege of (male) White people. Ideas like this are making their way into the

¹³ This applies to other "Western" nations as well: white nationalism has also emerged in Europe and Canada and it is often considered a transnational movement. This paper is focused on this movement in the context of the United States. Geary, et al, *Global White Nationalism*, 4-5; Leonard Zeskind, *Blood and Politics: The History of the White Nationalist Movement from the Margins to the Mainstream* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009), xvi-xvii.

¹⁴ Richard B. Spencer in, "'Hail Trump!': White Nationalists Salute the President-Elect," by Daniel Lombroso and Yoni Appelbaum, *The Atlantic*, November 21, 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/11/richard-spencer-speech-npi/508379/>.

¹⁵ Michael H. Gavin, *The New White Nationalism in Politics and Higher Education: The Nostalgia Spectrum* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2021), 20; Greg Johnson, "Restoring White Homelands," *Counter-Currents.com*, June 24, 2014, <https://counter-currents.com/2014/06/the-slow-cleanse/>.

mainstream: in 2022, *Fox News* host Tucker Carlson essentially endorsed this “great replacement” theory and claimed that it was a political strategy to alter the electorate, exclaiming: “eventually there will be no more native-born Americans.”¹⁶

Briefly, while the primary focus of this paper is the history of the White Nationalist movement in the context of the United States, it is important to understand that this is an international movement and a major reason why it is so successful is owing to ongoing international cooperation between White Nationalist actors. As I will discuss later on in this thesis, the Internet has become an important tool in the White Nationalist’s arsenal and has been since the 1990s. The Internet allows White Nationalists to communicate across borders and share ideas, but the sharing of White Nationalist ideas was taking place well before the Internet. Ideas such as the “great replacement” theory, or “White genocide” are not new and have cropped up throughout history in different places. Early examples of this idea sharing can be seen in Adolf Hitler’s admiration of *The Passing of the Great Race*, a 1916 book by American lawyer, Madison Grant.¹⁷ This idea would later emerge again in France in Jean Raspail’s 1973 novel, *The Camp of the Saints*, and in 2011 with Renaud Camus’s *The Great Replacement*. These ideas and the works that inspired them have been translated and imported to the United States by White Nationalists and anti-Immigration activists who fear that the influx of immigrants will destroy the United States.¹⁸

¹⁶ Tucker Carlson, “The great replacement is an electoral strategy: Tucker Carlson reacts to illegal migration changing the electorate in the US,” *Fox News*, July 19, 2022, <https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/tucker-carlson-great-replacement-electoral-strategy>.

¹⁷ Steve Rose, “A deadly ideology: how the ‘great replacement theory’ went mainstream,” *The Guardian*, June 8, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/08/a-deadly-ideology-how-the-great-replacement-theory-went-mainstream>.

¹⁸ Rose, “A deadly ideology: how the ‘great replacement theory’ went mainstream,” *The Guardian*, June 8, 2022.

This fear of (racial, gendered, or non-heterosexual) “others” or “outgroup hostility” has been identified by political scientists Richard C. Fording and Sanford F. Schram as an essential aspect of Donald Trump’s electoral success and a major reason for the mainstreaming of overt racism in American politics.¹⁹ The White Nationalist movement is also reliant on, and a manifestation of, White in-group favoritism, which, as Ashley Jardina has shown, is as effective as outgroup hostility for mobilizing White people politically. In Jardina’s view, this was why the Trump campaign was so successful; it appealed to two different groups of White people, those who were susceptible to Trump’s xenophobic rhetoric (outgroup hostility) and those who saw Trump as an in-group candidate. Especially after Barack Obama’s eight-year term, Jardina suspects that many were eager to return to some semblance of the old racial status-quo.²⁰ While these ideas were attributed to elections in these contexts, this thesis is interested in illuminating how ideas of in-group solidarity and out-group hostility influence interest in the White Nationalist ideology. White Nationalist groups have often made use of both appeals in their attempts to recruit new members and this will be evident in the primary sources that this thesis analyzes.

Next, this thesis also advances the idea of a “crisis of masculinity.” While often taken as something of a trope within the study of men and masculinities, this idea is still a useful and interesting framework for understanding the actions of historical actors, as noted by gender historian Gail Bederman.²¹ The idea was derived from social historian Joe L. Dubbert’s influential paper, “Progressivism and the Masculinity Crisis,” which argued that men began to

¹⁹ Richard C. Fording and Sanford S. Schram, *Hard White: The Mainstreaming of Racism in American Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2020), 20-21.

²⁰ Ashley Jardina, “In-Group Love and Out-Group Hate: White Racial Attitudes in Contemporary U.S. Elections,” *Polit Behav* 43, (2021):1541, 1555-1556, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-020-09600-x>.

²¹ Gail Bederman. “Why Study Masculinity Anyway? Perspectives from the Old Days” *Culture, Society and Masculinities* 3, no. 1 (2011): 17-18, <https://doi.org/10.3149/CSM.0301.13>.

feel a general unease during the Progressive Era. This was owing to changes to the way men were labouring in a rapidly urbanizing and industrializing society, as well as changes to traditional gender norms with increasing numbers of women in the workplace and the fight for women's suffrage.²² Men were starting to feel that there were fewer opportunities for fulfilling and "manly" work in this rapidly changing society and this manifested in the election of a hypermasculine candidate to the American presidency, Theodore Roosevelt. Dubbert argued that Roosevelt's particular brand of rugged, boisterous, and unapologetic masculinity was seen as restorative of a (White) American manhood that appeared to be in decline.²³ Dubbert's assessment of the election of Theodore Roosevelt bears some resemblance to the election of Donald Trump in 2016,²⁴ and I believe that the contemporary crisis of masculinity can be attributed to many of the same anxieties that Dubbert argues were being experienced by American men at the beginning of the twentieth century.

This thesis seeks to understand how the White Nationalist movement makes use of, and is influenced by, the concept of masculinity. I use the word "concept" because masculinity is not a stable thing; rather it is a constructed idea that is often in motion and ever changing. Indeed, as others have done, it might be more accurate to call the "idea of what it means to be a man," "masculinities," as at any given time and between any number of people there are various and diverse ways of performing masculinity.²⁵ The study of masculinity is itself a relatively new

²² Joe L. Dubbert, "Progressivism and the Masculinity Crisis," *Psychoanalytic Review* 61, no. 3 (Fall, 1974): 447, <https://login.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/progressivism-masculinity-crisis/docview/1310157153/se-2>.

²³ Dubbert, "Progressivism and the Masculinity Crisis", 450.

²⁴ Merely in circumstance, I do not wish to equate Donald Trump with Theodore Roosevelt.

²⁵ Gail Bederman, "Why Study Masculinity Anyway? Perspectives From the Old Days," 24; James W. Messerschmidt, *Hegemonic Masculinity: Formulation, Reformulation, and Amplification* (Blue Ridge Summit: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Incorporated, 2018), 47.

subject of feminist or gender studies and emerged in the late twentieth-century.²⁶ This thesis will be heeding Gail Bederman's call to use masculinity as a heuristic device, meaning that it will be used as a tool that allows us to understand an abstract idea. By exploring how masculinity is performed or discussed in a certain place or time we can gain a better understanding of why people acted as they did in that historical moment.²⁷

While most gender scholars since the turn of the twenty first century would agree that there are numerous and diverse ways to perform masculinities, sociologists R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt maintain that not all masculinities are created equal. Enter the concept of "hegemonic masculinity" which is the idea that of all the disparate masculinities which might exist in a society, there is usually an overarching "normative," "ideal," or "acceptable" masculinity.²⁸ According to Messerschmidt, Connell originally formulated hegemonic masculinity as one that establishes or promotes gender inequality, both between women and men but also between masculinities.²⁹ This is a useful tool because it allows us to gain a better understanding of how an idea of a hegemonic masculinity would form an in-group. Those who perform the same masculinity would form a group and are more susceptible to out-group hatred and in-group solidarity. This thesis relies upon the idea that the traditional American masculinity is perceived as being "at risk." This type of masculinity can be understood as White, patriarchal, middle or upper class, conservative, and dominant over femininity but also over nonhegemonic masculinities like Black masculinities, Queer masculinities, or even White cosmopolitan

²⁶ Gail Bederman, "Why Study Masculinity Anyway? Perspectives from the Old Days," 14; As Bederman has highlighted, "masculinity" the English word is not even very old; its first usages appearing around 1850: Gail Bederman. *Manliness & Civilisation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 17-19.

²⁷ Bederman, "Why Study Masculinity Anyway?" 15.

²⁸ R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender & Society* 19, no. 6 (2005): 832, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243205278639>.

²⁹ James. W. Messerschmidt, "The Saliency of 'Hegemonic Masculinity'," *Men and Masculinities*, 22(1), (2019): 85, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X18805555>.

masculinities. However, this hegemonic masculinity is not usually equated with radical revolutionary violence, yet the White Nationalists examined in this thesis are fundamentally revolutionary and violent. Thus, this radical identity that many White Nationalists perform can be seen as a “protest masculinity,” which is a compensatory, or “hypermasculinity,” which Messerschmidt contends often emerge in reaction to societal factors, and a perceived lack of political or economical power.³⁰ This thesis will demonstrate that rather than a lack of power, this White Nationalist protest masculinity has emerged in response to *perceived* losses to power and the fear of emasculation.

Examining this fear of emasculation is central to this thesis. A core tenet of the revolutionary White Nationalism that has emerged since the 1970s and which I believe is fundamentally linked to this fear of emasculation is the movement’s fervent antisemitism, which when paired with a postwar American conservative skepticism of big government and federal overreach creates a toxic combination. Many of the White Nationalist ideologues whose works are analyzed in this thesis promote the conspiracy theory of the Zionist Occupied Government (ZOG): meaning that they believe that powerful Jewish people (or agents in their employ) control the federal government and the media. They also believe that nearly all of the progressive movements that they perceive as threatening to “Western” (White) culture, are organized by this secretive Jewish cabal, and are intended to destroy traditional (White) American society. In this context, the anti-Black racism, homophobia, and anti-feminist views of many hardcore White Nationalists can almost be seen as secondary to their antisemitism. That is, their racism, misogyny and homophobia run so deep that many of them cannot fathom how else these “others” could have gained so much influence without the help of some other force. In most cases, Jewish

³⁰ Messerschmidt, “The Salience of ‘Hegemonic Masculinity,’” 1.

people and the ZOG conspiracy are seen as orchestrating the rise of these “anti-White” movements. In Chapter Three for example, we will examine how White Nationalists depict Black people as the servants, or foot soldiers of the ZOG in their publications and literature. This thesis maintains that this fervent antisemitism, racism, misogyny, and homophobia, represent, in part a deeply gendered fear of being controlled and emasculated by racial or cultural “others.” In many ways, this is almost the inverse of the emasculation thesis of Frantz Fanon.

The emasculation thesis was an idea that Fanon used to describe the experience of Black men in imperialist White society and comes from his work, *Peau noire, masques blancs* (*Black Skin, White Masks*). Fanon argued that within the context of colonisation and imperialism, Black men were enslaved, emasculated, and dehumanized.³¹ I maintain that the ideologues of the White Nationalist movement fundamentally understand this idea in their own perverse way. They see themselves as superior and see People of Colour as “less than.” But they also see their privileged position in society as precarious, and that is why they are so anxious to defend White privilege and Western culture. I argue that their fear is that if White supremacy were to “fail,” there would be nothing to stop racial and cultural others from controlling, dominating, and emasculating White men. As we will see throughout this thesis, White Nationalists often discuss the dangers of cultural decline and the need to fight against “alien” (often read as Jewish) influences in order to preserve White manhood and White culture.

Since this paper deals with the cross-roads of race and gender it should be considered an intersectional paper. These are two concepts that are deeply intertwined and inextricably linked. Throughout this paper the ideas of race and gender cannot be separated, when discussing racist viewpoints, the gender lens is always operating in the background. To those within the White

³¹ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (London: Grove Press, 1967), 10.

Nationalist movement, any issues that may deal with race, such as the Civil Rights movement or the ongoing fight for Black liberation are seen as attacks on the place and privilege of White men. Attempts at “affirmative action” or policies designed to promote equality between the races, or sexes are seen as attempts to steal power from White men and subject them to being controlled by “others.” A major theme of this thesis is that race and gender have been two of the most important factors for determining one’s place throughout American history and in that sense this paper is intersectional, because it examines how these two concepts interact and how these two concepts combine to produce White Nationalism’s toxic views.

Recently, there has been an increase in historical works analyzing the rise of the White Nationalist movement, and the history of racism in the United States.³² This makes sense, as these issues have become incredibly important in our own historical moment, with the reemergence of White Nationalism and a renewed effort to protect Black Indigenous People of Colour (BIPOC) rights as seen in the Black Lives Matter movement. However, what has been lacking in recent scholarship is an analysis of this movement through a gendered lens since the first major compilation of works that analyzed White supremacist movements through a gendered lens, *Home-Grown Hate: Gender and Organized Racism* edited by Abby Ferber (2003) which was published twenty years ago.³³ I aim to build upon this twenty-year-old work by using recent scholarship. This thesis also seeks to build on other works that have analyzed this

³² Daniel Geary, Camilla Schofield, and Jennifer Sutton, *Global white nationalism* (Manchester University Press, 2020); Elaine Frantz Parsons, *Ku-Klux: The Birth of the Klan during Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015); Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (New York: Nation Books, 2016); Khary Oronde Polk, *Contagions of Empire: Scientific Racism, Sexuality, and Black Military Workers Abroad, 1898-1948* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020); William Robert Billups, “Martyred Women and White Power since the Civil Rights era: From Kathy Ainsworth to Vicki Weaver,” *Journal of American History*, Volume 109, Issue 4, (2023), Pages 804–827, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/jaad002>.

³³ Abby L. Ferber, ed, *Home-Grown Hate: Gender and Organized Racism* (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2003).

movement such as, Leonard Zeskind's *Blood and Politics: The History of the White Nationalist Movement from the Margins to the Mainstream* (2009) and Kathleen Belew's *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America* (2019). Neither of these works make use of gender analysis, and Belew specifically does not take her analysis beyond the 1990s.³⁴ By taking up a gendered lens to focus on the White Nationalist movement, I hope to contribute a deeper understanding of how ideas about gender and masculinity influence this movement.

As I mentioned briefly already, my analysis of gender, and masculinity specifically, in this work is informed by the work of other feminist scholars and gender historians that took an interest in masculinity as gender in the late-twentieth century, such as Dubbert, and Bederman. This work will also make use of the work of sociological "men's studies" scholars such as Connell, Messerschmidt, Michael Kimmel,³⁵ and most recently, Joshua M. Roose, Michael Flood, Alan Greig, Mark Alfano, and Simon Copland's, *Masculinity and Violent Extremism*, which covers the sociological reasons men join violent groups in great detail but does not offer an examination of such groups' histories, and, curiously, says very little about antisemitism.³⁶ Thus, I believe that my analysis of White Nationalist antisemitism being linked to a fear of emasculation and gender stress is a new addition to this scholarship as well. This thesis will also use recent work by some psychologists who have examined men and their involvement in hate

³⁴ Kathleen Belew, *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018).

³⁵ Michael S Kimmel, *Angry White Men: American Masculinity at the End of an Era* (New York: Nation Books, 2017); Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, Fourth edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

³⁶ Joshua M. Roose, Michael Flood, Alan Greig, Mark Alfano, and Simon Copland, *Masculinity and Violent Extremism* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 151.

groups,³⁷ Dubbert believed that historians ought to use psychological studies to inform their analysis and I have attempted to do so,³⁸ though I do not rely on this too heavily.

In order to analyze White Nationalist understandings of masculinity and the ways that they make use of appeals to this White “protest masculinity” in the post-Civil Rights era this thesis relies upon White Nationalist publications such as newspapers, manifestos, propaganda, and novels. This thesis also relies upon news reports from the periods being analyzed as well as FBI documents made available through the Freedom of Information Act, as the FBI played a significant role in the monitoring and dismantling of some of these groups. The radical racist publications of these groups have been compiled in various online archives; this thesis relied upon the Gale Political Extremism and Radicalism collection and the *Internet Archive*. This was one of the only places I found that included many of the publications from the neo-Nazi group, the National Alliance, such as *The Turner Diaries* (1978), and *The Best of Attack! And National Vanguard Tabloid* (1984), as well as the newspaper from the group White Aryan Resistance, *WAR* (~1983-1999). I also relied on the *Internet Archive* to access other periodicals that were unavailable elsewhere, like *Soldier of Fortune* (1975-2016), and *Resistance Records* (1993-2011~), magazines.

Many of these publications feature writings from the ideological leaders of the movement, and this thesis traces this (pseudo) intellectual history in Chapters Three and Four.

³⁷ Amy Cohn and Amos Zeichner, "Effects of Masculine Identity and Gender Role Stress on Aggression in Men," *Psychology of Men & Masculinities* 7, no. 4 (10, 2006): 179-190, <https://doi.org/10.1037/1524-9220.7.4.179>; Peter Glick, Mariah Wilkerson, & Marshall Cuffe, "Masculine Identity, Ambivalent Sexism, and Attitudes Toward Gender Subtypes," *Social Psychology* 46, no. 4 (08, 2015): 210-217, <https://doi.org/10.1027/1864-9335/a000228>; Randy Blazak, "White Boys to Terrorist Men: Target Recruitment of Nazi Skinheads," *The American Behavioral Scientist* 44, no. 6 (02, 2001): 982-1000, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027640121956629>; Tsachi Ein-Dor, and Gilad Hirschberger, "Sore Losers: On Perceptions of Defeat and Displaced Retaliation," *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 4, no. 3 (May 1, 2013): 355–61, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550612457957>.

³⁸ Dubbert, "Progressivism and the Masculinity Crisis," 443.

Many of the leaders of the White Nationalist movement fancy themselves as intellectuals, and indeed, many of them are highly educated. Many of them tell similar stories of how they came to join the movement; as Raphael S. Ezekiel highlights, they talk about how at one point in their lives they were lost and did not understand the world around them, that is, until they “discovered” what many of them might call “racial realities.”³⁹ Essentially, the men who become leaders of these movements take on the role of pseudo, or “armchair” intellectuals. They “do their own research” usually depending on long-debunked racist tracts and misunderstandings of philosophy. Then they rewrite those ideas into “new” and “updated” racist works that include different buzz words for their followers to consume. In this way many of the ideas that animate this movement have remained constant since even before the 1970s, since many of these leaders make the fallacy of assuming that because something is old and aligns with their biases it must be right. In his interviews with racist leaders, Ezekiel found that many of them exhibit the same traits. They are motivated by power and seek to exert control over their followers, for whom they have little respect. They only have respect for those who hold power, friend or foe.⁴⁰ But despite the flaws in their ideas and how problematic they are, understanding these ideas is important, because people believe in them, and they are having real political impacts. In this light, this thesis is also contributing to intellectual history, by examining these White Nationalist intellectuals, and the history of their racist ideas.

Researching such topics presents an ethical dilemma, because I do not wish to provide another platform through which these ideas could be spread. However, I also believe it is important to raise awareness of these ideas in order to better combat them and because many of

³⁹ Raphael S. Ezekiel, "An Ethnographer Looks at Neo-Nazi and Klan Groups: The Racist Mind Revisited," *The American Behavioral Scientist* 46, no. 1 (09, 2002): 56.

⁴⁰ Ezekiel, "An Ethnographer Looks at Neo-Nazi and Klan Groups: The Racist Mind Revisited," 57, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764202046001005>.

these ideas are making their way into the mainstream political discourse. Many of the collections I accessed through the *Internet Archive* did not appear to have been compiled for the benefit of researchers, but rather for the proliferation of the works of racist ideologues. It is important to stress that much of the material that is presented and analyzed in this thesis is deeply racist, violent, and offensive. I do not endorse any of the views expressed by any of the White Nationalist thinkers presented in this thesis; my goal here is to develop a better understanding of where these ideas came from, why they have been so influential, and how did they start to become mainstream?

This thesis is organized into four chapters that tell the story of White Nationalism and White Nationalist groups in chronological order. Chapter One focuses on the earliest and most well-known White Nationalist terrorist group, the Ku Klux Klan. While the origins of the Klan go back to the nineteenth century, the influence of this early White supremacist group can still be seen today and indeed, there might not have been a White Nationalist movement without the original Reconstruction Era Klan. Analyzing the early history of the Klan is also revealing because it demonstrates how old many of the ideas that the White Nationalist movement relies upon are. By spending time discussing the Klan, and the origins of the myth of the “Lost Cause” of the Confederacy, it is revealed that racism and out-group hatred among radical White people is deeply ingrained within American culture. This chapter also shows how the KKK has become a mainstream American cultural icon. The original Klan also made appeals to White manhood and engaged in deeply gendered terrorism against Southern Black people and their allies. This chapter also traces the history of the Klan into the post-World War Two era, after its reemergence in the 1920s, setting up our discussion of the ways that the backlash to the Civil Rights movement ignited overtly racist resistance movements to de-segregation.

As mentioned above, Chapter Two discusses the White backlash to Black Americans' efforts to resist segregation. Black American participation in the Second World War and their continued fight on the home front for equal rights coupled with global anti-imperialist sentiments and the fight against communism created an environment where White resistance to Civil Rights took on a conspiratorial bent. Many conservative Americans saw communist influence in the rise of the Civil Rights movement, and many others saw the doom of White America and the end of their way of life. Much of this anxiety was deeply gendered and based on racist beliefs. For example, many White parents feared that their daughters would be unsafe attending school with Black boys, or that having children of different races attending school together would lead to "miscegenation" or "race-mixing."⁴¹ As I will discuss, the idea of racial purity is closely related to gendered fears, since race is and has been considered to be hereditary. In the racist mind, allowing men of another race to reproduce with "their women" has been perceived as a masculine failing to control sexual access to "their women." Out of this political climate emerged George Wallace, who capitalized on these gendered White fears to catapult himself to political success. Wallace worked closely with White interest groups such as the White Citizens Councils and was endorsed by groups such as the KKK. His overt and dog whistle racist approach to politics and his image as an opponent of big government made him very successful. He ran for president as an independent in 1968, winning five states but ultimately losing to Richard Nixon. While Wallace's campaign invigorated a mainstream racist movement it did not have the success that many in the racist right were hoping for. This led many to conclude that mainstream politics was not the answer and that a more radical approach was needed to protect White

⁴¹ Renee C. Romano, *Race Mixing: Black-White Marriage in Postwar America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003), 168.

supremacy. Remnants of the Wallace political machine were co-opted by racist neo-Nazi elements led by Dr. William Pierce, a former physics professor turned White revolutionary.

Chapter Three focuses on the works of William Pierce; most importantly his infamous racist novel, *The Turner Diaries*, notable for being the work that inspired both the White terrorist group the Order, and the Oklahoma City bomber, Timothy McVeigh. The book is an important source for understanding White Nationalist ideas about masculinity, as it promotes a militant White masculinity that is defined by racism and violence. More than just a novel, this book is an ideological guide and an important recruiting tool for revolutionary White Nationalist groups. The book relies on creating and demonstrating how to perform the protest masculinity this movement relies upon. Beyond this literary analysis, this chapter also details how the movement began to grow throughout the 1970s, as some White Americans became disaffected with their government in the wake of the Civil Rights movement of the 60s and the failure of George Wallace's campaign. This period also saw the emergence of a small, yet persistent and prolific White Nationalist propaganda network geared at attracting young White men.

Chapter Four focuses on the success of racist youth outreach and the impact that this emergent racist culture had on the mainstreaming of White Nationalist ideas. The late-80s and the 1990s saw the emergence of the racist skinhead movement, a radical youth movement that became infamous for violent hate crimes around the United States. This period also saw a new group, Thomas Metzger's White Aryan Resistance (WAR), rise to prominence due to its attempts to organize the nascent racist skinhead movement into the "shock troops" of the White revolution. Part of the skinhead outreach that Metzger organized was the promotion of a racist skinhead music scene, and the creation of new age racist media such as a cable access television show and a website to promote WAR and the White Power music label *Resistance*. This chapter

concludes with the bankruptcy of Metzger's WAR and the death of William Pierce. However, this chapter brings this thesis into its conclusion by discussing how this youth movement and the emergence of the Internet as a more accessible tool for information sharing resulted in the re-emergence of hardcore White Nationalism in the early twenty-first century.

Chapter 1

Gender, Race, and the KKK

This chapter will focus on the historical context of race in the United States and how racist sentiments are informed by gendered fears. Race and gender have been closely tied to power and privilege throughout American history and are often understood in terms of “otherness.” As I have briefly discussed already, this thesis will often look at “others” in order to gain a better understanding of our subject. By analyzing what the White Nationalist movement opposes, we can gain insights into who they are and what they believe in. As such, examining America’s history of race and the enslavement of Black people is vital to understanding why White supremacy continues to have such a strong hold on American society. This section will show that the institution of slavery and the justification for its existence maintained and grew White supremacist ideas, especially as they were related to the power and privilege of White men who through these systems of oppression held power over men of other races and women of all races. The abolishment of slavery and Black resistance to continued oppression, coupled with the unwillingness of White people to relinquish their power and authority, led to racialized violence as White people attempted to defend the system of White supremacy.

There is some scholarly debate on whether a belief in a racial hierarchy led to the entrenchment of slavery in American society or if it was the other way around.¹ In his examination of colonial Virginia, Alden T. Vaughn postulates that the most likely explanation is that English colonists’ pre-existing notions of their own superiority coupled with their need for labour eventually led to the implementation of an explicitly racist chattel slave-system.² Where

¹ Alden T. Vaughn, *The Roots of American Racism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 159.

² Vaughn, *The Roots of American Racism*, 153.

before the colonies had depended upon White indentured servants to fulfill their labour needs, it soon became apparent to the colonial elites that something else was needed.³ Black enslavement, which was already happening, became more common and systems were implemented to keep the system going. By law, Black servitude was permanent, where White indentured servitude was not; Black people were also not allowed to own arms, which made it far easier for White planters to exert control over them through force. Something particularly nefarious was a law that was passed in 1662 that made it so that any children born of a White father and an enslaved Black mother would inherit their mother's enslaved status, this fostered a system of gendered control, where rape was used as an oppressive tactic to control enslaved Black populations. This same law charged a fine to any White person found guilty of having sex with any Black person, enslaved or not, to discourage race-mixing. As Teri A. McMurty-Chubb has shown, this effectively made slavery hereditary and led to even more separation between the races. However, a fine would only discourage those who could not pay it. White Planters and overseers would often abuse their power and authority over enslaved women, regardless of the consequences.⁴

These laws, and the hereditary nature of enslavement led to the growth of the enslaved population through the natural processes of human existence and the importation of more enslaved laborers. In order to prevent rebellion, colonial elites began to foster ideals of White racial solidarity and cohesion to protect their place in the social hierarchy. Whiteness became synonymous with freedom, power, and privilege, while Blackness became synonymous with

³ Edmund S. Morgan attributes this switch to Nathaniel Bacon's Rebellion (1676-1677). Bacon had roused an army of former servants in a crusade against the Indigenous people of Virginia and subverted colonial authority. Morgan contends that this led the Virginian elites to switch to Black enslavement as the main labour source in the agrarian colonies. Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1975); Vaughn, *The Roots of American Racism*, 153.

⁴ Teri A McMurtry-Chubb, "All of Us Overseers: Race Unequals in the Legal Academy," *Creighton Law Review* 56, no. 2 (2023): 213, <https://search-ebscohost-com.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=162123424&site=ehost-live>.

captivity and powerlessness. Power and freedom were characteristics of masculinity and by way of this oppressive system manhood became something only White men could possess or exhibit. This stark contrast demanded justification and so the need for cheap labour and the enslavement of Black people compounded pre-conceived ideas of Black inferiority and White superiority, eventually leading to the formation of a racist ideology that stripped away the humanity, and indeed, the manhood, of Black people in America.⁵ Just as Fanon argued, under this system Black people, and Black men in particular were forced into a position of utter powerlessness and emasculation.⁶

As the colonies developed and grew, and White men affirmed their manhood by amassing fortunes, building communities, and subjugating Black men and women, they required more labour and more land. The triangular transatlantic trade was incredibly lucrative; ships arriving in the Americas would trade enslaved Black people for goods produced by other enslaved Black people, and these goods were sold in Europe for money, which was used to purchase more captured human beings, and then, as Ibram X. Kendi demonstrates, they would start all over again, generating a “triple stimulus.”⁷ Thus, the cycle of needing slave labour and justifying its existence through systemic racism continued. By the same token, their need for land due to the influx of immigrants into the colonial territories and the desire to push westward into more fertile territories amplified anti-Indigenous sentiments. These racist systems and ideologies had become so entrenched in North American society that by the time the Declaration of Independence was signed there was no hypocrisy in the line “that all men are created equal;” People of Colour were not men, they were barely even considered human.

⁵ Vaughn, *The Roots of American Racism*, 153.

⁶ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 10.

⁷ Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning*, 81.

This brief foray into the early history of the American colonies is intended to demonstrate how deeply rooted ideas of White racial superiority are in the United States. Even before the nation's founding these ideas were central to the colonial experience. After 1776, slavery was further encoded into the American way of life when the three fifths clause (Article I, Section 2), the international slave trade clause (Article I, Section 9), and the fugitive slave clause (Article IV, Section 2) were added to the Constitution. However, these clauses were cleverly written so as to not explicitly mention "slavery." This led to intense debates between abolitionists and pro-slavery advocates in the antebellum United States, as both sides argued that the Constitution was either an inherently pro-slavery or an anti-slavery document.⁸ In any case, the fact is that slavery and the belief in a racial hierarchy compounded racist sentiments in the United States, to the point where slavery had to be justified using pseudo-scientific and flawed religious, or philosophical explanations.⁹

Indeed, the issue was so central to some portions of American society that it was, as Alexander H. Stephens, Vice-President of the Confederacy, said, "the immediate cause of the late rupture and present revolution" which led to the outbreak of the American Civil War.¹⁰ In his infamous "Cornerstone Speech" Stephens discussed how Thomas Jefferson and the Founding Fathers had viewed slavery as "evil" and "in violation of the laws of nature" a part of American culture that in time would pass away. He continued to argue that:

Those ideas, however, were fundamentally wrong. They rested upon the assumption of the equality of the races. This was an error. [...]

⁸ Michael F. Conlin, *The Constitutional Origins of the American Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 17-26.

⁹ For an examination of the use of Genesis 9 and the "Curse of Ham" myth for the justification for Black African enslavement see: David M. Whitford. *The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era: The Bible and Justifications for Slavery* (London: Routledge, 2009).

¹⁰ Alexander H. Stephens, "Cornerstone Speech," Savannah, Georgia, March 21, 1861. <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/primary-sources/cornerstone-speech>.

Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea; its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery subordination to the superior race is his natural and normal condition.

Despite what many neo-Confederates believe, the Civil War was in-fact primarily about race and the institution of slavery, as evidenced by the quotation above. Though Stephens would later go on to claim that his words had been misunderstood, and that this was not the real reason the war had been fought.¹¹ The fact that Black Americans had been involved in the Northern forces that defeated the South, and that the Black votes were essential for the election of Radical Republicans made them seem responsible, in a way, for the humiliating Southern defeat in the Civil War.¹² A defeat that subsequently needed to be explained by myths of Confederate Exceptionalism and the Lost Cause, which inspired groups that espoused early examples of the same type of White Nationalist and White supremacist beliefs that have become so mainstream in the early twenty-first century.¹³

The earliest and most recognizable White supremacist movement in the United States is the Ku Klux Klan (KKK, or the Klan). The history of this movement and the factors that led to its emergence in the post-Civil War South deserve examination. As we shall see, this early movement mobilised for many of the same reasons as the contemporary White Nationalist movement. In the wake of the Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation, White southerners experienced a collective fear and anxiety over the potential loss of power, privilege, and freedom that the liberation of former enslaved people would bring to their society. They feared that if Black communities became organized and politically active, they could overturn the racial status-

¹¹ Keith S. Hébert, *Cornerstone of the Confederacy: Alexander Stephens and the Speech that Defined the Lost Cause* (Knoxville: University of Texas Press, 2021), 67.

¹² George M. Frederickson, *Racism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 106.

¹³ For more on how Confederate Exceptionalism has developed see: Nicole Maurantonio, *Confederate Exceptionalism: Civil War Myth and Memory in the Twenty-First Century* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2019), 3.

quo.¹⁴ Of course, at this time, White people in the South still owned a majority of the land; in addition to being better educated, more connected and politically experienced than Southern Black people.¹⁵ As Elaine Frantz Parsons explains, in hindsight, it would seem that the pillars of White power in the South were stable and their advantages over the Black population were enough that they need not have feared such a loss of status. But there was no way for White southerners to know this at the time. In the wake of their defeat and in the face of such a great unknown, their collective anxiety manifested in outbursts of racial violence, eventually leading to the formation of what Parsons has called the deadliest “domestic terrorist movement in the history of the United States.”¹⁶

In the wake of the Civil War, the Federal government instituted a system of “Reconstruction” in the Southern United States. This program of economic rehabilitation sought to bring the South out of its agrarian past and into the modern world, as well as assist emancipated Black folks with getting a start in free society. However, Reconstruction was incredibly unpopular with many White Southerners. The Reconstruction Acts dissolved civilian government in the South, imposed military rule in five districts, suspended the state constitutions of former Confederate states and attempted to grant Black people equality, suffrage, and representation in government.¹⁷ In short, they completely overturned the racial hierarchy in the South and relied upon the use of strong government powers and the military to implement these

¹⁴ Elaine Frantz Parsons, *Ku-Klux: The Birth of the Klan during Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 1.

¹⁵ Parsons, *Ku-Klux*, 1.

¹⁶ Parsons, *Ku-Klux*, 1-6.

¹⁷ Daniel Byman, “White Supremacy, Terrorism, and the Failure of Reconstruction in the United States,” *International Security* 46, no. 1 (2021): 18, https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00410.

changes. White Southerners' resistance to this endeavour was nearly instant and incredibly violent, with much of their ire focused on their recently emancipated Black neighbors.

In order to suppress Black communities and Black political power groups, White men would often target those members of Black communities who appeared to be doing well: successful croppers, landowners, or community activists. They even targeted White allies of the Black community in order to undermine Black advancement. Anyone who appeared to break or was accused of breaking the expected norms of the racial status quo were targeted as well, especially those suspected or accused of committing sexual transgressions.¹⁸ It did not matter that Black people were free; as Kidada Williams highlights, most White Southerners did not accept them as such and many “were determined to prove that ending slavery [...] threatened white people’s survival.”¹⁹ The end of slavery meant that there were now millions of other free people, enslaved no longer, who White lower-class Southerners had to compete against for land, business, and power. While they felt threatened by this new reality White Southerners also expected Black people to remain deferential to White authority and keep to the established norms.²⁰

An important question to raise here is, what were these norms? What were Black people doing that was so threatening to White southerners? The answer is painfully simple: they were simply trying to live out their lives and exist as free individuals. Perhaps the most threatening thing to White men at this time was Black men performing in the masculine role of the patriarch, either in their communities or in their families. Before emancipation, Black men had no way of

¹⁸ Parsons, *Ku-Klux*, 3; Kidada Williams, *They Left Great Marks on Me: African American Testimonies of Racial Violence from Emancipation to World War I* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 1-3.

¹⁹ Williams, *They Left Great Marks on Me*, 17.

²⁰ Williams, *They Left Great Marks on Me*, 21.

acting as the provider for their families. They were under the control of the slavers the same as all other enslaved people. Acting in any other capacity would be a breach of the expected norms, and so under the system of slavery Black men were emasculated, having no control over their own lives or the lives of their families. Once slavery ended and Black people were free, many of them did their best to adopt the hegemonic familial and community dynamics of their time, such as the father being the head of the household and main provider.²¹ Emancipation also allowed Black men to participate in and lead their communities.²² As Williams explains, this was not something emancipated Black people in America had ever been able to do before, but emancipation and Reconstruction granted Black men control over their lives.²³ In other words, they had for the first time the right to perform traditional gender roles, which at this time would have been the roles of patriarch, provider and protector. Black men who had previously been enslaved would not have had the same opportunities to provide for their families and their communities the same way as White fathers, or indeed, previously emancipated, or free Black people. Emancipation meant that Black men finally had the right to stand up for and protect their families and communities from White oppression. Many White Southerners perceived this as a direct threat against their place in the racial hierarchy; they did not want Black people to be able to defend themselves. They wanted the racial status-quo to be maintained. For centuries White men had been able to control, rape, and kill Black people with impunity. Even though Black people were now free, White southerners still felt that they were superior to Black people and therefore had the right to continue to lord over them even in the post-slavery era.²⁴ The combination of this perceived threat and the expectation that the racial status quo would be

²¹ Williams, *They Left Great Marks on Me*, 22.

²² Williams, *They Left Great Marks on Me*, 22.

²³ Williams, *They Left Great Marks on Me*, 22.

²⁴ Williams, *They Left Great Marks on Me*, 23.

maintained led to many White people reacting violently when Black people and their allies resisted, or when it appeared that Black people were acting outside of the expected norms.

Post-emancipation, the forms that racial violence took in the South were continuations of the personal and collective White-on-Black violence that had existed during slavery, but as Parsons highlights, White people were turning more and more to collective violence against Black communities and individual Black people. Having lost the Civil War, and facing a new and unknown situation where it seemed that their position of authority and privilege in Southern society was at risk, many White men turned to collective violence to attempt to exert their supposed racial superiority. Parsons has highlighted how, thanks to the war, people in the South had a lot of experience with deadly violence skills. Ex-Confederate soldiers would have been very familiar with collective violence strategies and guerilla warfare, making them effective and organized ambushers and raiders. Additionally, more and more southerners owned guns after the war, and gun-related homicides increased drastically.²⁵ Night attacks, resembling the night rides and slave patrols of the antebellum period by groups of White men against Black people and their White allies, became common.

Many of these attacks were punctuated by carnivalesque performance and often resembled the traditional charivari, a European folk tradition involving night time visits to peoples' homes, usually to humiliate them for their transgressions or to "welcome" a newlywed couple to the community.²⁶ During these events people from the community, usually men,

²⁵ Parsons, *Ku-Klux*, 4; for more on how Guerilla fighters participated in the Civil War see: Daniel E. Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict: The Decisive Role of Guerillas in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

²⁶ For an interesting look into how this tradition is remembered and persists in Canada see: Pauline Greenhill, "Welcoming the Newlyweds: Charivari, Shivaree, Serenade, Banjo, and Saluting in Nova Scotia, 1917-c. 1975," *Acadiensis* 38, no. 1 (2009): 52–74, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41501726>; Parsons, *Ku-Klux*, 5.

sometimes costumed, would surround the target's home, and make a raucous noise, usually by banging pots and pans or firing guns. This was a way for the community to collectively signal their displeasure, or again, to benevolently embarrass a newlywed couple. In the Reconstruction era South this tradition evolved into something far more sinister when groups of White men used night time "visits" to terrorize and attack their Black neighbours. This was a way for these White men to reaffirm their position in the masculine hierarchy, a position that appeared more fragile with the emancipation of Black people. By using violence to punish and terrorize those who appeared to be upsetting the racial status quo they could send a powerful message to the Black community, that they were still under the domination of White society. After all, if Southern White men did not have authority over these men who they had emasculated for so long and believed to be inferior, what did that make them? How could they be equals? Much like the Puritan settlers of British North America, White men in the South defined their idea of manhood by what they were not. They were not enslaved, they were free; they were not unmanly, they had manhood because they held power and authority; and most importantly, they were not Black. The emancipation of Black people made this delicate position imbalanced and so in 1868 when a mysterious group of costumed guerillas began attacking Southern Black people, the Ku Klux movement became very enticing to aggrieved Southern White men.

So why did these men turn to violence in response to this societal shift? One explanation could be psychological: psychologists have found that men who are experiencing "gender role stress" often exhibit heightened aggression and violent tendencies as a means to reaffirm their masculinity.²⁷ In the case of White Southern men during Reconstruction, their manhood and

²⁷ Amy Cohn and Amos Zeichner, "Effects of Masculine Identity and Gender Role Stress on Aggression in Men," *Psychology of Men & Masculinities* 7, no. 4 (10, 2006): 188, <https://doi.org/10.1037/1524-9220.7.4.179>.

masculine identity were defined by their position above Black people in the social hierarchy. With that position undermined by Emancipation, as well as the fact that they had lost the war against the North, it is clear to see why these men would have been suffering from gender role stress, or a crisis of masculine identity, and were thus more prone to violent behaviour as a means of reaffirming their threatened manhood. Indeed, other studies have shown that within masculine groups, outgroup derogation is usually defensive, and results from the emergence of a threat or competition.²⁸ Thus, the emergence of the KKK, one of the earliest and most well-known White domestic terrorist groups in the United States can be understood as a result of a gender crisis.

Eventually, federal intervention brought about the end of the Reconstruction era Klan. In May 1870 Congress passed the first Enforcement Act, which made interfering and infringing upon the rights of others to vote or conspiring to infringe upon those rights a federal offense. This act also made it an offense to “go in disguise upon the public highway, or upon the premises of another with intent to violate” their constitutional rights and privileges.²⁹ Two more “Force Acts” were passed in February and April of 1871; these put the federal government in charge of monitoring polling places and allowed the president to use the armed forces, and to suspend the writ of habeas corpus to enforce these acts.³⁰ The U.S. senate also began an investigation into the KKK and its violent activities, followed by an investigation by a Joint Select Committee. These

²⁸ Peter Glick, Wilkerson, Mariah, & Cuffe, Marshall, “Masculine Identity, Ambivalent Sexism, and Attitudes Toward Gender Subtypes,” *Social Psychology* 46, no. 4 (08, 2015): 212, <https://doi.org/10.1027/1864-9335/a000228>.

²⁹ U.S. Congress, Senate, *An Act to enforce the Right of Citizens of the United States to vote in the several States of this Union, and for other Purposes*, 41st Congress, 2nd sess., 1870.

³⁰ United States Senate, “The Enforcement Acts of 1870 and 1871,” <https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/EnforcementActs.htm>.

investigations and the Force Acts led to the mass arrest of Klan members and the decline of the Reconstruction era Klan.³¹

However, as Parsons has shown, by that time much of the Klan's work had been done. From 1868-1872 they had been successful in disrupting Reconstruction, by attacking Black leaders, Black communities, and White Republicans. The types of violence that the Klan orchestrated also demonstrate how gendered this violence was. They had lynched, shot, and terrorized hundreds of people, intimidated voters, and driven people from their homes. These attacks against Black political power, such as killing Black community leaders and threatening voters, denied Black men their rights and undermined Black power, authority, and freedom. Moreover, the Klan had also waged a war of sexual violence; Klan attacks often involved Klansmen exposing, sexually harassing, assaulting, and raping Black women and girls. While sexual attacks and targeted gendered violence directly affected the individual women who were attacked, these types of attacks also indirectly affected the masculine members of the community by demonstrating, as Parsons said, that Black men in the South were unable to defend those under their protection from such attacks and that White men were still able to exert their control over Black people.³² These types of attacks were aimed at destroying Black communities and reinforcing White racial supremacy in the South. Southern Black communities would not recover from the KKK's campaign of terror, despite the movement's decline. The everyday violence of Emancipation continued, and the political power of Black communities was severely weakened. Southern Democrats made great strides in the 1876 elections, bringing the brief period of

³¹ David Cunningham, *Klansville, U.S.A. the Rise and Fall of the Civil Rights-Era Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 21.

³² I am by no means attempting to downplay the impact that this type of violence has on individual victims. This point is merely intended to highlight the additional negative impacts that this type of violence can have on not only the victim but the victim's family as well. Parsons, *Ku-Klux*, 303.

Reconstruction to an end. Their domination of Southern politics allowed them to usher in the era of Jim Crow, or legal segregation.³³ These laws and the period of legal racism that accompanied them were incredibly effective at racially dividing the people of the South and of the United States as a whole, further cementing the power and control of White men for the next century. Under Jim Crow, White supremacy was upheld through controlling immigration, implementing a system of second-class citizenship based on race and the banning of race-mixing. As a system of oppression, it was so successful that it would later serve as the model for the race laws enacted by Hitler's National-Socialists in mid-twentieth century Germany.³⁴

Despite being quelled, the memory of the Klan lived on in the minds of White Southerners. A tinge of romanticism surrounded people's memories of the Klan; many remembered it not as a violent group of vigilantes but as heroic defenders of the Southern way of life.³⁵ Cunningham highlights how Southern newspapers often published nostalgic articles about the Klan, one such instance being a re-printing of the diary of Randolph Shotwell in the *Charlotte Daily Observer*. Shotwell had been a captain of the Klan who was imprisoned in the North for six years for his involvement in a Klan raid in North Carolina. The re-printing is prefaced with an apology for the KKK, which states that the violence that besmirched the Klan's good name was "committed by unworthy new recruits or by men in no way connected to the order, but who found its name a convenient shield."³⁶ Shotwell claimed that the Klan was the "legitimate offspring" of the Freedmen's Bureau and the radical legislation of Reconstruction. In his telling, the state legislature, made up of and elected by "negroes and carpetbaggers" was so

³³ Cunningham, *Klansville U.S.A.*, 22.

³⁴ James Q. Whitman, *Hitler's American Model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Race Law* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 138.

³⁵ Cunningham, *Klansville U.S.A.*, 23.

³⁶ *Charlotte Daily Observer*, August 6, 1899.

corrupt that the people had no choice but to take the law into their own hands.³⁷ Thus, the Klan (and related societies) emerged, and their members swore oaths:

To oppose and denounce the Radical party in all its corruption, and ever to maintain that intelligent white men should govern the United States.

To mutually assist each other when in distress.

To take all lone females, widows and their households under our especial protection.

The final clause bound the neophyte to secrecy and obedience, and imprecated death upon the head of the traitor.³⁸

These oaths reveal what it was that the Reconstruction era Klansmen feared. They feared political domination by an outside group, whether that be carpetbagging Northerners or Black Southerners, and so they swore to oppose them. Of course, by doing so they denied enfranchisement to Black people and Republicans. They also feared for their safety and depended upon a community for protection. As we have seen, this was something else that they denied to Black communities, as successful Black communities and Black community leaders were often made the targets of Klan violence. Next, they swore to defend women, but as we have seen Klansmen often used sexual violence against Black women. Klansmen expected violence from the emancipated Black population, revenge perhaps for the wrongs that had been done to them under slavery? Rather than try to resolve these issues before they began, they reacted pre-emptively. Additionally, the desire for revenge led to displaced aggression. At the time of the Klan's emergence, the South had just lost a war to the North, and Southern White men felt the need to act aggressively in order to repair a sense of lost-identity or status. Psychological studies have shown that if people cannot exact revenge directly on those who harmed them, they sometimes target their aggressors' "accomplices."³⁹ Black southerners may not have been

³⁷ *Charlotte Daily Observer*, August 6, 1899.

³⁸ *Charlotte Daily Observer*, August 6, 1899.

³⁹ Tsachi Ein-Dor and Gilad Hirschberger, "Sore Losers: On Perceptions of Defeat and Displaced Retaliation," *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 4, no. 3 (2013): 356, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550612457957>.

explicit accomplices of the Union forces, but to the vanquished Confederates, they appeared to have gained the most from their loss. Therefore, the KKK is an example of a vengeful retaliation by injured Southern White men, desperate to regain masculine status in the gendered-racial hierarchy. Evidently, many in the South believed that the KKK had succeeded in restoring Southern manhood and the Klan was remembered fondly as positive force: a patriotic group that had no choice but to do unfortunate things to defend the Southern way of life.

It was also at this time that Thomas F. Dixon's novels became immensely popular. Dixon was from North Carolina; his mother's family had owned a large plantation and his uncle had been an officer in the Confederate army as well as a Grand Titan in the Reconstruction era Klan. His work capitalized on this Klan nostalgia and pushed the myth of the Lost Cause. Dixon's novels were set in the time of Reconstruction and depict it as irredeemably corrupt and dangerous for the "innocent" (White) people of the South. In his imagined South, the KKK emerge as the heroes of White civilisation, the only thing standing between White innocents and uncivilised and violent Black men. As Diane Roberts has shown, Dixon was responsible for the proliferation of many of the most harmful stereotypes about Black people particularly that of the "Black Beast", who is "constantly inflamed with the desire to rape white women."⁴⁰

This nostalgia and romanticism would eventually lead to the rejuvenation of the Klan in the early twentieth-century. On November 25, 1915, Joseph Simmons led a group of thirty-three would-be Klansmen up Stone Mountain in Georgia and burned a cross, the first instance of KKK members doing such an act.⁴¹ Simmons was a former minister, salesman, and "professional

⁴⁰ Diane Roberts, "The Great Granddaddy of White Nationalism," *Southern Cultures* 25, no. 3 (Fall, 2019), <https://www.southerncultures.org/article/the-great-granddaddy-of-white-nationalism/>.

⁴¹ Cunningham, *Klansville U.S.A.*, 24.

fraternal organizer.”⁴² His new KKK was inspired by the romanticized nostalgia for the original KKK as well as the popularity of D.W. Griffith’s film *Birth of a Nation*, which was based on the novels, *The Leopard’s Spots* and *The Clansmen* by Thomas Dixon. With the help of professional marketers Edward Clarke and Elizabeth Tyler, Simmons’ new KKK began to grow. It espoused many of the same beliefs as the original Klan, with White supremacy remaining a cornerstone of the organisation. But, to keep up with the times and appeal to a wider audience (of white Americans), such as those from Northern Urban centers, the new KKK expanded beyond anti-Black racism, adopting antisemitism, anti-Catholicism, and anti-immigration as well.

It was around this time that antisemitic conspiracies entered the American discourse. Henry Ford was one proponent of these conspiracies, and published many of them in his newspaper, the *Dearborn Independent*. Many of these conspiracies were inspired by *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which was a fictitious, and antisemitic tract created in czarist Russia.⁴³ The *Protocols*, outlined a vast conspiracy by Jews to control the world, using their servants, the Freemasons, and by sowing political discontent and conflict, and economic hardship and oppression. The conspiracy would culminate in the establishment of a monolithic and tyrannical world government, ruled by a Jewish King, where all of the worlds’ people would work and die in service to the World-State.⁴⁴

These reprintings of the *Protocols* were collected in a book titled, *The International Jew: The Worlds Foremost Problem*, which was published by Ford. This book forms the basis of many of the antisemitic conspiracies that have appeared in White supremacist rhetoric. Examples of

⁴² Felix Harcourt, *Ku Klux Kulture: America and the Klan in the 1920s*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 2.

⁴³ Leonard Zeskind, *Christian Identity: A Theological Justification for Racist And Anti-Semitic Violence* (Center for Democratic Renewal, 1986), 8.

⁴⁴ Michael Hagemester, *The Perennial Conspiracy Theory: Reflections on the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (London: Routledge, 2021), 3.

these conspiracies include Communism being a Jewish conspiracy and that the Jews were responsible for the Russian Revolution, Jews controlling finance Capitalism and the banks, and that Jews are responsible for the death of Jesus Christ and are the children of Satan.⁴⁵ This book was widely circulated at the height of the Klan's power; the Klan also distributed it themselves through the mail.⁴⁶ Obviously, threats of "One-Worldism," "world-state tyranny," "economic domination," and "satanic, anti-Christian conspiracies," were very influential in the staunchly capitalist, individualistic, and protestant-Christian, United States. These threats to individualism seemed to also threaten White male power and control. White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) people living in the United States would not have viewed Jewish people as White, or as equals. Consider how even non-Protestant, White European immigrants such as the Irish, Italians, or Eastern European's were often mistreated by the majority WASP population for example. The American concept of manhood was based on individualism, Capitalism, and the "Protestant work-ethic," as well as the myth of the self-made man and that men needed to be the breadwinner in their families.⁴⁷ It was thought that White American men made their own way, they did not need and in fact, would not accept, controlling figures lording over them, however benevolent. They feared these conspiracies theories because they threatened a loss of power and control. Perhaps they feared this loss of status so much because they saw how those who they lorded over, such as Black and Indigenous people, women, and immigrants were treated.⁴⁸

In the September 6, 1921, edition of the *Evening World* newspaper a small advertisement reported that mobs of people in Klan regalia were enforcing their ideas of morality by having women "stripped and maltreated" and having men "whipped and tarred and feathered because

⁴⁵ Leonard Zeskind, *Christian Identity*, 8.

⁴⁶ Leonard Zeskind, *Christian Identity*, 8.

⁴⁷ Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 14, 17.

⁴⁸ Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 29-31.

these mobs objected to their private conduct.”⁴⁹ This advertisement was meant to promote the *New York World*’s twenty issue exposé of the revived Klan, which promised to inform readers of all of the Klan’s secrets. This newspaper exposé was intended to criticize the burgeoning movement and its violent tendencies, but the outcome could not have been expected. Eighteen other newspapers also ran the story and Congress launched its own investigation into the group but did not act against them. The story proved to be better advertising than Simmons, Clarke and Tyler could have hoped for. Klan membership numbered approximately 85,000 in 1921, but by 1925 it was closer to 4 million.⁵⁰

The Klan’s “second wave” would eventually die out, but not completely. The final blow came in 1944 when the Internal Revenue Service required them to pay close to one million dollars in back taxes.⁵¹ The popularity of the Klan and its tenets further demonstrate how entrenched racism, xenophobia, and religious intolerance are in American society. But despite these setbacks the Klan was able to remain active throughout the 1940s and the post-war years as members of the original organization formed their own movements, rehashing the rituals and imagery of the movement’s past. Some chapters were more successful than others, depending on local conditions and the charisma of their leaders. Cunningham discusses some notable chapters of the post-World War Two KKK, such as Samuel Green’s Association of Georgia Klans and his successor, Thomas L. Hamilton’s South Carolina chapter, which was particularly violent and volatile. His Klansmen attacked rural residents of Columbus County, usually for suspected moral transgressions. They also focused much of their attention on Black residents, especially those accused of being in interracial partnerships. Hamilton was eventually arrested in 1952 and his

⁴⁹ *Evening World*, September 6, 1921, 14.

⁵⁰ Cunningham, *Klansville U.S.A.*, 24; Harcourt, *Ku Klux Kulture*, 3-4.

⁵¹ Cunningham, *Klansville U.S.A.*, 26.

branch of the Klan decayed. Like a hydra, new heads of new chapters arose, but never to the same popularity of the Klan at its height in 1925.⁵²

With that being said, it is important to note that the presence of a Klan related group or the lack thereof is not a good indicator of White supremacist sentiments. This essay has suggested that groups enacting racialized violence most often appear at moments of crisis; meaning that they are reactive. In the wake of World War II, Klan membership was down, the movement had been dismantled but also, in many places, the White supremacist status-quo appeared to be stable. After all, if there were no threats to white supremacy there would be no need for groups such as the KKK to defend it. If threats to the status-quo did arise, this does not necessarily mean that organized racist groups would spring up. People who are not affiliated with hate groups were and are just as capable of committing racial violence as those who are affiliated with hate groups. As we saw previously with the violence during Reconstruction, many incidents of White-on-Black violence took place before the Klan was founded; the emergence of the Klan merely added a sense of organization to the violent chaos.⁵³ In the inter-war years and right after World War II, segregation was the law of the land in the Jim Crow South. Under this system there were many places in the South where White people could go about their business without having to interact with Black people in any meaningful way. As Robert Cassanello has highlighted, Black people were pushed out of the “white public view” in the South. They were shut away behind what W.E.B. Du Bois called “the veil” and rendered “invisible.”⁵⁴ With Black people being absent from daily public life in the South it was easy for Southern conservatives to enter into a manufactured and idyllic world where the White supremacist status-quo was safe

⁵² Cunningham, *Klansville U.S.A.*, 27-31.

⁵³ Parsons, *Ku-Klux*, 6.

⁵⁴ Robert Cassanello, *To Render Invisible: Jim Crow and Public Life in New South Jacksonville* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013), 2.

because of segregation. As long as the races remained separate and un-equal, there was no need for militant White supremacist groups.

After World War II, however, things began to change. The scale and nature of the war required total commitment by the nation. People flocked to urban centers for war work. As young men volunteered for service overseas the demand for labour in the factories of the United States skyrocketed. At the same time, the South experienced massive industrialization and urbanization. New advancements in agricultural technology meant farm labourers were in lower demand, so many Black Southerners moved to cities, both in and out of the South, to do factory work. Close to one million Black people, some six-hundred-thousand of them women, took up war work. A million more Black men joined the military, though they still faced segregation and exclusion. Black men in the United States military were forced into supportive, non-combat roles, continuing a historical trend of denying Black men the right to arm themselves and perform violence, while championing White men for doing the same thing. Khary Oronde Polk has highlighted how Black men throughout American history have been denied the “right to wage war”; he argues that this was a right that was reserved for White men, “rendering the right to kill effectively white.”⁵⁵ For example, in the navy Black men could only serve as messmen and they were excluded outright from the air force. It would take the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) threatening to march on Washington, to convince President Franklin D. Roosevelt to enact Executive Order 8802 in June 1941, which created the Committee on Fair Employment Practise, the first presidential civil rights order since 1875. By

⁵⁵ Similarly, this idea is linked to the fear surrounding Black men protecting themselves and their families in the Reconstruction Era. This is another reason why groups like the KKK emerged, as a means of denying Black men their rights to bear arms and defend themselves, their right to kill. Khary Oronde Polk, *Contagions of Empire: Scientific Racism, Sexuality, and Black Military Workers Abroad, 1898-1948* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 20.

this point the air force had already begun training Black pilots and not long after the navy and the marines allowed Black men to join segregated combat units.⁵⁶

The military had long been a bastion of White masculinity and many White people, particularly in the South were loath to see Black men wearing the uniforms that they believed only White men should be honored with. Most of the bases where military training took place were in the South and so nearly 80 per cent of Black soldiers, Northern and Southern, trained in the land of Jim Crow. This made people in the communities near these bases very anxious, if not outright terrified. White on Black violence escalated, especially when Black northerners failed to respect Jim Crow.⁵⁷ Abuses by the military police in Fayetteville, North Carolina led to a shootout between Black servicemen and White MPs in 1941. Similar incidents took place at other Southern bases and cities, and in the following year the violence only got worse.⁵⁸ One of the worst incidents was the January 10, 1942, Lee Street Riot in Alexandria, where thirty Black servicemen were injured.⁵⁹ In these instances, the idyllic world of Jim Crow segregation came under threat; the influx of Black soldiers to the South created racial and gendered anxiety. In the imagination of some Southern conservatives, there could be nothing more terrifying than armed Black men, stationed, and learning violence skills, near their homes.⁶⁰ They feared how this could impact the fragile power dynamics they held so dear. Indeed, maybe they feared that Black soldiers, emboldened by the masculine mantle they had donned as service men, might abuse their

⁵⁶ Mark Newman, *The Civil Rights Movement* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2004), 34-35.

⁵⁷ Newman, *The Civil Rights Movement*, 38.

⁵⁸ Newman, *The Civil Rights Movement*, 38.

⁵⁹ There were four military bases near Alexandria, and Louisiana was the site of some of the largest and most famous training maneuvers of the war. White and Black soldiers would go into Alexandria on "Liberty" weekends. In Williams Simpson's article, he interviewed eye-witnesses, years later, many of whom claimed that soldiers were killed at the Lee Street Riot, though no official reports exist that confirm this suggesting it has been covered up. William M. Simpson, "A Tale Untold? The Alexandria, Louisiana, Lee Street Riot," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 35, no. 2 (1994): 141, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4233092>.

⁶⁰ Simpson, "A Tale Untold? The Alexandria, Louisiana, Lee Street Riot," 135.

power (weapons, training, organization) to terrorize their communities. Just as the Klan and other defeated Confederates had abused their power to terrorize Black communities. White officers took measures to disarm off-duty Black soldiers to better control their Black subordinates. Many White officers in command of Black regiments were also terrified that their soldiers would associate with White women while stationed in Europe. Black soldiers were believed to be more vulnerable to venereal diseases, something the military attempted to fight nearly as hard as they did the axis powers. Jason Sokol highlights one instance where a commanding officer had issued an order that no Black soldiers were allowed to associate with French civilians. One White MP who found a soldier, Allen Leftridge, disobeying this order shot the man in the back, killing him.⁶¹

Before long, segregation within the military proved unrealistic; and necessity required Black and White soldiers to fight side by side. In some cases, fighting alongside Black Americans influenced White soldiers' opinions of them for the better. For the most part however, White Southern soldiers resented sharing living quarters with Black soldiers and did not see any reason why their subordinate place in American society should change after the war. Indeed, many White southerners felt that they were fighting "to defend, not overturn, racial customs."⁶² By the war's end, many Southern White soldiers expected to return to the world they had left, but the South had undergone significant changes due to rapid urbanization and industrialisation. Many Black soldiers returned with a newfound sense of their own masculine power, inspired perhaps by their confidence with violence skills, organization, discipline, and status. Many of them had also developed a lack of deference for White authority, having fought side-by-side with

⁶¹ Black men were believed to be sexually excessive and were the focus of "race-specific" media on the dangers of venereal disease. Polk, *Contagions of Empire*, 174-182; Jason Sokol, *There Goes my Everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights, 1945-1975* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 24.

⁶² Sokol, *There Goes my Everything*, 19-23.

and indeed *defeating* White soldiers. Also, shifting demographics made it difficult for the government to ignore the plight of Black people any longer. Black migration to urban centers significantly altered the makeup of America's urban electorate. The treatment of Black people in America was also making international headlines and causing the United States embarrassment, something they wanted to avoid as the ideological struggle against communism began heating up.⁶³ However, many Americans, particularly those in the South, already wary of societal changes, were also very susceptible to anti-communist fears. Rather than be embarrassed by foreign accusations of racism, many Southerners suspected, perhaps due to these foreign criticisms, that the push for civil rights was in fact a communist plot. As such, the Civil Rights movement floundered in the South, in the immediate post-war years, as accusations of communist sympathies undercut the gains made by organizations like the NAACP during the war.⁶⁴

White backlash to Civil Rights initiatives was incredibly strong, particularly when White people perceived that changes to the racial status quo would impact their family, however indirectly. Historians often point to the landmark 1954 case, *Brown v. Board of Education* as one of the many inciting moments of the Civil Rights movement and the White backlash. Among those historians is Michael J. Klarman, who highlights *Brown's* impact but as a more *indirect*

⁶³ Following World War Two President Truman initiated the Truman Doctrine to combat the "Domino Effect" of communism. American leaders feared that once communism began to spread there would be no stopping the red wave. They opted for a policy of containment, to stem the tide; this was done by providing aid to allies, initiated with aid to the Greek government in 1947. This was followed by the Marshall Plan in 1948. However, American leaders understood that they would also need to win over the hearts and minds of the nations that had not yet cast their lot. The psychological war and propaganda were essential to this process and leaders like Truman seemed to grasp this. While Truman's civil rights initiatives are the subject of some criticism (some argue he did it to secure Black people's votes), his Committee on Civil Rights and his desegregation of the military with executive order 9981 were unprecedented and a step in the right direction. Dennis Merrill, "The Truman Doctrine: containing communism and modernity," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (2006): 27+. *Gale Academic OneFile*, 31-32; Jeffrey L. Littlejohn, and Charles H Ford. "Truman and Civil Rights," In *A Companion to Harry S. Truman*, 287–302, (Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 295-298.

⁶⁴ Sokol, *There Goes my Everything*, 37-42; Newman, *The Civil Rights Movement*, 33.

cause for the nascent movement. Klarman argues that while *Brown* was influential, its true impact was that it caused a reaction in (mostly) Southern White people and underscored their need to ramp up resistance to civil rights legislation.⁶⁵ This shift toward “massive resistance” to de-segregation manifested in response to White Southerners’ fears that integrating schools (and society) would fundamentally alter their way of life. So pervasive was this feeling that in 1956, one hundred and one members of congress signed the “Southern Manifesto.”⁶⁶ In this manifesto, Southern members of the house declared that they would “resist forced integration by any lawful means.”⁶⁷ These politicians, represented by Mr. Walter F. George of Georgia, decried the *Brown* decision, deeming it unconstitutional, and insisting that the Supreme Court’s decision threatened Americans’ “habits, traditions, and way of life” as well as “the system of public education in some States.”⁶⁸ They also argued that *Brown* was “destroying the amicable relations between the white and Negro races that have been created through 90 years of patient effort by the good people of both races,” through the separate and unequal system of Jim Crow that these politicians desired to protect.⁶⁹

Ten days after the passage after *Brown*, a Congressman from Brookhaven, Mississippi, Thomas P. Brady, delivered what would be known as the “Black Monday” speech at the Greenwood Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution. Brady opened the speech with

⁶⁵ Michael J. Klarman, “Brown, Racial Change, and the Civil Rights Movement,” *Virginia Law Review* 80, no. 1 (1994): 85, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1073592>.

⁶⁶ Sokol, *There Goes My Everything*, 114; Elizabeth Gillespie McRae, *Mothers of Massive Resistance: White Women and the Politics of White Supremacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 2.

⁶⁷ “The Southern Manifesto” From *Congressional Record*, 84th Congress Second Session. Vol. 102, part 4 (March 12, 1956). Washington, D.C.: Governmental Printing Office, 1956. 4459-4460. Accessed from https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKewi3tNSap6P_AhWZl4kEHe_m8BIcQFnoECBQQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Ffaculty.washington.edu%2Fjoyann%2FSTEPspring2007%2FSouthern_Manifesto.doc&usg=AOvVaw0Apu3tjpkLHWnHkw78SYKz, 3.

⁶⁸ “The Southern Manifesto” From *Congressional Record*, 84th Congress Second Session. Vol. 102, part 4 (March 12, 1956), 2.

⁶⁹ “The Southern Manifesto” From *Congressional Record*, 84th Congress Second Session. Vol. 102, part 4 (March 12, 1956), 2.

pseudo-scientific and ahistorical musings on the origins of the races of man. In this introduction he related many ideas from James Denson Sayer's *Can the White Race Survive* (1926), which posits that there were initially three distinct types of man that developed in three geographically distinct regions, Africa, Asia, and Europe. Of these three races, Sayer and Brady argue, all achieved civilized advancement except for the African race which led a bestial, cannibalistic existence until they were "saved," by being enslaved by the other races.⁷⁰ Brady sought to convince the American people that the *Brown* decision was a communist plot to destroy (White) America and Southern Society. Indeed, one of the measures he proposed in his speech to combat communism was to meet with Black leaders in the South and make amends for any injustices against them; "let us never forget" he said, "that the Southern negro is not responsible for, and has played no part in, the 'Black Monday' decision. [...] It should be remembered that a majority of the negro race in the South has the highest sense of loyalty and devotion to the white men, who are their friends and benefactors." But he goes on to say that if communistic policies like *Brown* continued to be passed by the leftist Supreme Court, then Southern men would have no choice but to declare "cold war" and an economic boycott against Black labour. His intention was that this would (further) impoverish Southern Black people and force them to flee North, thus preserving the White South. Brady assured his audience that the majority of Southern Black folk did not even want integration, they just wanted the rights that had been denied to them.⁷¹

This Chapter has shown that since the first White settlement in North America, White men have exerted control over their own society, and the racial "others" that were brought into it. For so many years, White supremacy had been the uncontested norm in the United States and resistance to this long-established norm had always been met with violence. This is because the

⁷⁰ Thomas P. Brady, *Black Monday* (Winona, Mississippi: Association of Citizens' Councils, 1945), 1-11.

⁷¹ Brady, *Black Monday*, 70-71, 84-85.

White men who have often been at the top of the social hierarchy covet this position and see threats to their power and privilege in any deviation from the racial status-quo. The movements that emerge to defend White supremacy, like the KKK and the other movements that will be examined in this thesis do so to protect White male privilege and power, when it appears to be under threat.

Chapter 2

The Wallace Campaign and the Fight for Segregation

This chapter will continue to examine how attitudes and anxieties surrounding race, and the politics of White supremacy were highly gendered and began to shift during the Civil Rights era. The late-60s saw the rise of one of America's most infamous politicians, George C. Wallace, whose fiery anti-communism, and passionate defence of segregation excited many within the racist right, KKK, and American Nazi movements. However, his political defeat by Richard Nixon would convince the men who would become the leaders of the White Nationalist movement to abandon mainstream politics and start advocating for political violence.

In the wake of World War II, a new geo-political threat emerged to threaten the global equilibrium. Communism was perceived by many in the United States to be the antithesis of their capitalist and democratic way of life. But more than that, communism, with its promises of equality, appeared to threaten White supremacy and American dominance on the global stage. Meanwhile, on the Homefront, many Americans were trying to return to some semblance of normalcy after the years of war. However, many Black Americans who returned from the conflict soon realized that there was a new struggle brewing within the United States. Despite the advances made by Black people and the great sacrifices many of them had made for their country during the war, many White people were unwilling to change the way they treated Black Americans. White supremacy was still pervasive and Black resistance to White supremacy was becoming more organized. Throughout the nation, anti-segregationist groups rallied to abolish Jim Crow and supporters of White supremacy banded together once again to uphold the colour line. For some in the United States, this was a true crisis. The movement for Civil Rights

represented the ultimate fear of hardcore White supremacists and it was not something that they were going to sit idly by and ignore.

This Chapter will examine the White backlash, and massive resistance to de-segregation. In this period many politicians, like Congressman Brady, made it their goal to resist Civil Rights and defend legal segregation. This period represents the last major attempt by mainstream politicians to defend White supremacy, the most infamous example being George Wallace of Alabama, who made resistance to integration a key part of his political platform. Eventually, the Civil Rights movement would prevail and the failure of racist political figures like Wallace would convince a new generation of racist activists that only violent revolutionary politics would be enough to defend White supremacy in the United States.

After the *Brown* decision and after Congressman Brady released his little book, *Black Monday*, White Citizens' Councils (WCCs) were established to defend segregation.¹ They saw segregation as their "way of life" and believed it regulated "the daily activities of tens of millions of American citizens, black and white, in a well known pattern of familiar and satisfactory conduct."² These groups mostly attracted middle- and upper-class White individuals, and grew rapidly, to nearly 80,000 members in 1956. Members of the WCCs prided themselves on being (what they saw as) a step above the lower-class KKK. However, their similarities to the Invisible Empire did not go unnoticed, and the WCCs were sometimes called the "Uptown Klan."³ While

¹ Anthony Okechukwu Azuwike, "Civil Rights or Civil Wrongs?: A Historical Analysis of the South's Response to Judicial Social Change and the Role of the White Citizens' Council," *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, (published online ahead of print 2023): 9-10, doi: <https://doi-org.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/10.1163/15718115-bja10118>.

² Robert B. Patterson, "The Citizens' Council: a history: an address: by Robert B. Patterson, Secretary, the Citizens' Councils of America, Executive Secretary, Association of Citizens' Councils of Mississippi, to the Annual Leadership Conference of the Citizens' Councils of America, Jackson, Mississippi, October 26, 1963," *Gale Primary Sources*, Walter Goldwater Radical Pamphlet Collection (1800-1999), 1.

³ Okechukwu Azuwike, "Civil Rights or Civil Wrongs?" 11.

these groups were not *as* violent as groups like the KKK, they fiercely fought against integration in other ways, mostly politically and economically. Using tactics like denying jobs, mortgages, or tenancies to Black people who they suspected were in favor of desegregation or who attempted to register to vote.⁴ Unsurprisingly, this movement was also fiercely anti-communist. Many members of the WCCs, including Congressman Brady, perceived the rise of Civil Rights, and indeed, the passage of the *Brown* decision as a communist plot to give Black men access to White women.⁵ They made it their mission to oppose what they perceived to be communist influence in their communities, particularly in the form of outside groups like the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) making “Inroads” with local Black populations.⁶ As many generations of White Americans before them, the segregationists of the early Civil Rights era feared that Black people would use political power to wrest control away from White people, and subsequently exert their own oppressive whims on the White populace. In many cases, these fears were gendered or sexual, many racist White people believed that given the chance, Black men would abuse any power given to them to take advantage of and rape White women.

Klarman discusses three reasons for this aggressive resistance to de-segregation; firstly, the *Brown* decision made race a pivotal issue in the lives of lower-class Southern White folks. School and residential integration would have a direct impact on their lives; they could lose their White neighborhoods and their children would be “forced” to attend school with Black children. Class became a secondary issue to lower-class White people in the face of such drastic societal change.⁷ Successful politicians like “Big” Jim Folsom, who before had been able to woo Black

⁴ Okechukwu Azuwike, “Civil Rights or Civil Wrongs?” 12.

⁵ Okechukwu Azuwike, “Civil Rights or Civil Wrongs?” 10.

⁶ Okechukwu Azuwike, “Civil Rights or Civil Wrongs?” 4.

⁷ Klarman, “Brown, Racial Change, and the Civil Rights Movement,” 102.

and White voters with his folksy rural populism failed to gain ground in the post-*Brown* South because he refused to take a racial hard-line and denounce the Supreme Courts decision.⁸ The second reason Klarman argues that *Brown* pushed the South further right was that it invigorated Black belt White people who suddenly realized that their White supremacist way of life was at risk. This also led to heightened White unity. White people in the rural areas of the Southern states held significant political power, often enough to counter more liberal urban centers. Black belt White people pushed other, including potentially more moderate White people (such as those from states or counties with lower Black populations) to join them in the fight against integration. For example, in Arkansas, Governor Orval Faubus was pressured by Georgia Governor Marvin Griffin to do more to protect segregation.⁹ Finally, Klarman argues that many would-be Southern moderates felt compelled to resist federally mandated integration because of the culture of opposition to federal overreach that had been instilled in the Southern United States since the Reconstruction era. The belief in the importance of “states rights” was still paramount in the Southern imagination and the *Brown* decision sat squarely on the cross roads of resistance against government overreach in defence of individualism and the desire to defend White supremacy. This resistance to federal control was so strong, President Eisenhower had to send the 101st Airborne to Little Rock in 1957 and nationalize the Arkansas National Guard to stop Governor Faubus from using state forces to stop integration. Governor Faubus’ resistance to President Eisenhower’s military intervention made him a hero in the South.¹⁰

If nothing else, the most immediate impact of *Brown* was that it turned the schools of the United States into political battlegrounds. On Sunday October 5, 1956, Clinton Highschool in

⁸ Klarman, “Brown, Racial Change, and the Civil Rights Movement,” 104.

⁹ Klarman, “Brown, Racial Change, and the Civil Rights Movement,” 109.

¹⁰ Klarman, “Brown, Racial Change, and the Civil Rights Movement,” 110.

Clinton, Tennessee was bombed with dynamite in the early morning. The high school had been integrated that September, with a dozen Black students joining roughly eight-hundred White students. According to the *New York Times*, there had been no trouble in Clinton, until KKK member, segregationist, and fascist, John Kasper arrived and began rousing up groups of hecklers to harass the Black students.¹¹ Kasper was an associate and disciple of the American poet turned axis propagandist, Ezra Pound. In 1958, Kasper made it onto the FBI's radar and seemed to be connected to other school bombings in Tennessee.¹² He was also the author of the racist, segregationist pamphlet, "Virginians on Guard!" which had been partly written and edited by Pound, and which encouraged people to join the WCCs. It called for the destruction of the "communist-led NAACP" and "race-[mongrelisers]," and featured a reworked Virginia constitution for a segregated Virginia. It concluded with a number of newspaper clippings linking crime to integration and a call to action for White people which read:

FIGHT! There's no place to run. Our homes ruined by red-NAACP schemes for white-race destruction. Schools laid waste. Streets unsafe. Demand Commissioner McLaughlin relieve the oppressed white minority In DC or GET OUT! Jail the NAACP leaders. There's no choice. You must join or face loss of Identity as a White. Destroy the race-mixers! Save the WHITE!¹³

While the Clinton bombing was shocking, it was not the only violent incident to emerge from the immediate post-*Brown* decision. Violence erupted around the South as White segregationists descended on schools to keep Black students out. In some places White people preferred to

¹¹ Wilma Dykeman and James Stokely, "Clinton, Tennessee: A Town on Trial: There Anti-Integration Violence Erupted. but the Blasts that Wrecked its High School Shocked its Citizens and may have Strengthened the Cause of the Moderates," Clinton, Tenn.: A Town on Trial." *New York Times* (1923-), Oct 26, 1958; Kasper was an associate of the American poet turned Axis school propagandist, Ezra Pound. In 1958, Kasper made it onto the FBI's radar and seemed to be connected to other school bombings in Tennessee but was never charged.

¹² Alec Marsh, *Ezra Pound* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011), 193-194, 197; "Kasper, John-HQ-1," in "John Kasper," by Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Internet Archive*, pg. 12 of 157, <https://archive.org/details/JohnKasper/Kasper%2C%20John-HQ-1/page/n11/mode/2up>.

¹³ John Kasper, "Virginians on Guard!", 1956, in "FOIA: Kasper, John-HQ-EBF18," *Internet Archive*, pg. 32 of 26, https://archive.org/details/foia_Kasper_John-HQ-EBF18/mode/2up; Marsh, *Ezra Pound*, 198.

completely shut down their education systems rather than accept integration. Jason Sokol highlights Prince Edward County, in Virginia's Black Belt; even before their school board was ordered to desegregate, they ceased funding their public schools. They were acting on the will of the local White population, which represented about half of Prince Edward County's 16,000 people. In 1956, 4,216 of the nearly 6,000 White adults signed a petition to close integrated schools and chose to find alternative methods to educate their children.¹⁴

This was the hold that White supremacy and Jim Crow had on Southern White people: they would risk their own children's education in order to protect their "way of life." In many places this fight was being led by White women who believed that it would be detrimental to their children's education to share classrooms with Black children. These fears were fueled by many of the old myths that made the works of Thomas Dixon so powerful in the White imagination: they feared what would happen if their daughters attended school with sexually rapacious Black boys. Many still believed these ideas, and thought that interracial couples were sinful, and an affront to God's will, because God had made the races separate.¹⁵ White women supported the more male-dominated Citizens' Councils and started their own groups such as the Women's Emergency Committee, Women for Constitutional Government, and Save our Schools, to name a few.¹⁶ Elizabeth McRae shows how for many of these mothers, upholding White supremacy and teaching their children about the importance of segregation was more important than their education. These women also used their children as political actors, teaching them conspiracy theories about White victimhood at the hands of Black people and Federal overreach.

¹⁴ Sokol, *There Goes My Everything*, 119-120.

¹⁵ Romano, *Race Mixing*, 45.

¹⁶ For a more detailed history of these women's groups see: McRae, *Mothers of Massive Resistance*. This book's final chapter deals with how White women responded to *Brown* and the ways they organized to protect segregation. Elizabeth Gillespie McRae, *Mothers of Massive Resistance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 185-216.

They also brought their children with them to harass their more moderate neighbours who were still sending their children to school, teaching their children to bully the children of those families.¹⁷

Beyond harassing Black students and moderate White people, many Southern White mothers at this time also became concerned about the things that were being taught to their children in schools. White mothers wanted to ensure that their kids were receiving proper American educations, that is, educations that enshrined White supremacy, and traditional patriarchal family values, and eschewed mention of anything they deemed un-American, such as tolerance for other races and other such communist ideas.¹⁸ It was their objective to bring conservative ideas to the youth of the South and groups organized to censor textbooks in their children's schools. One organization that took up the censorship crusade was the Daughters of the American Revolution. They compiled a list of textbooks that they deemed un-American, which included books that were pro-United Nations, or condoned one-worldliness, and books by Black authors, NAACP members, liberals, left-wingers and integrationists.¹⁹ Their fear was that if their children grew up absorbing these new ideas, rather than their traditional conservative ideas on the family, race, global affairs, religion and national politics, that it would mean they had failed as mothers and that the federal government had succeeded in penetrating into their domestic sphere, to poison the minds of their children.²⁰ Indeed, they even feared that American traditions like Christmas were in jeopardy! In one issue of the *Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine*, the group's national chairman, Mary Barclay, wrote an article about

¹⁷ McRae, *Mothers of Massive Resistance*, 189, 196.

¹⁸ McRae, *Mothers of Massive Resistance*, 198.

¹⁹ McRae, *Mothers of Massive Resistance*, 198-200.

²⁰ McRae, *Mothers of Massive Resistance*, 202.

defending the traditions of Christmas in American schools from “socialists” and “One Worlders,” she wrote:

This is a gift we can all work to give to ourselves. If we resist the infiltration and the collectivists, the alien agitators, the One Worlders with a fraction of the persistence these groups are using daily to destroy us, the permanency of our Christian traditions would be assured.²¹

Even in the face of this massive resistance, integration proceeded, and segregation was slowly dismantled; indeed, many Southerners believed that it was “inevitable.”²² Sokol highlights how students at the University of Georgia were heavily divided over the admission of Charlayne Hunter and Hamilton Holmes to the school. Students in Professor Thomas Brahana’s Math 254 class were asked to write essays on the matter instead of taking a maths exam; apparently Brahana sensed they were all too distracted by current events to focus on math.²³ Many of the students admitted that while they opposed integration, they valued their education more and were against closing the school or denying the Black students’ entry to the university through violence. Two days after Hunter and Holmes had been registered, White students riled up by a basketball loss to their rival Georgia Tech as well as integration, rioted and laid siege to Holmes’ dormitory.²⁴ The opinions of Brahana’s students reflected similar attitudes of other people in the South when it came to such displays of racial violence: it frightened them, and they were against it.²⁵ Likewise, as Klarman’s *Backlash Thesis* argues, violent and overtly racist resistance to integration in the South disappointed, shocked, and outraged moderate and liberal Southerners, and more importantly, a majority of Northern White people.²⁶ As Northern White

²¹ Mary Barclay, “National Defence,” in *Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine*, vol. 91, 12, (1957), *Internet Archive*, https://archive.org/details/sim_american-spirit_1957-12_91_12/page/1318/mode/2up.

²² Sokol, *There Goes My Everything*, 152.

²³ Sokol, *There Goes My Everything*, 152.

²⁴ Sokol, *There Goes My Everything*, 151.

²⁵ Sokol, *There Goes My Everything*, 156.

²⁶ Klarman, “Brown, Racial Change, and the Civil Rights Movement,” 141.

people became aware of the violence being perpetrated against Black people in the South, by civilians as well as by state forces, they decided, much like the students in Professor Brahana's math class, that even if they did not fully agree with integration they were certainly against violence. Klarman posits that in the short-term, *Brown* led to a significant shift to the political right in the South, but this shift and the violence that accompanied it led to more national support for civil rights.²⁷

However, this support was not total and there were still significant portions of the population that feared the changes civil rights would bring, especially the loss of White privilege. Enter George Wallace, Alabama native, law school graduate and Air Force veteran. Wallace succeeded in getting elected to the Alabama state legislature in 1946 and served as a state judge. A converted supporter of the widely liked populist politician "Big" Jim Folsom, Wallace's political career took a turn after the passage of *Brown*. He realized, like many other Southern politicians had, that going soft on the "race issue" would not get him any votes.²⁸ In 1962 his campaign for the governorship of Alabama was a resounding success; in his inauguration speech on January 14, 1963, he infamously said:

Today, I have stood, where once Jefferson Davis stood [...] this Cradle of the Confederacy [...] this very Heart of the Great Anglo-Saxon Southland, that today we sound the drum of freedom as have our generations of forebears before us done, time and time again down through history. Let us rise to the call of freedom – loving blood that is in us and send out answer to the tyranny that clanks its chains upon the South. In the name of the greatest people that have ever trod this earth, I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny ... and I say ... segregation now ... segregation tomorrow ... segregation forever.²⁹

²⁷ Klarman, "Brown, Racial Change, and the Civil Rights Movement," 149-150.

²⁸ Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), 109.

²⁹ George C. Wallace, "The Inaugural Address of Governor George C. Wallace," Montgomery, Alabama, January 14, 1963, 2.

His speech was rife with anti-internationalist, and White supremacist rhetoric; the above quotation is merely the most well-known part of this speech. He goes on to push the ideas of White decline and White victimhood by saying:

As the national racism of Hitler's Germany persecuted a national minority to the whim of a national majority ... so the international racism of the liberals seek [sic] to persecute the international white minority to the whim of the international colored majority ... so that we are footballed about according to the favor of the Afro-Asian bloc. But the Belgian survivors of the Congo cannot present their case to a war crimes commission ... nor the Portuguese of Angola ... nor the survivors of Castro ... nor the citizens of Oxford, Mississippi.³⁰

Wallace's inauguration speech played upon the insecurities and fears of his White constituents, particularly their apprehension of bureaucratic government overreach and control. The allusion to Hitler and Nazi Germany here were very purposeful, he knew his constituents would associate this imagery with tyranny and equate the Nazi oppression of Jewish people in Germany with their own perceived oppression. In this same speech he proclaimed, "the heel of tyranny does not fit the neck of an upright man."³¹ Wallace pandered to the fears of White Alabamians, and especially White men, the same men who were members of the WCCs, whose meetings Wallace frequently attended and spoke at.³² Wallace made segregation and racism the cornerstone of his political career and it worked better than he could have dreamed. In the summer of 1963, when the University of Alabama was ordered by federal district court to desegregate and admit Vivian Malone and James Hood, Wallace traveled to the campus and swore that he would "stand in the schoolhouse door" to block the students from registering. His efforts failed but were perceived as a valiant act of resistance in the face of federal government overreach, and not just in Alabama. Wallace realized that his stand and his politics were gaining him a lot of attention, thousands of

³⁰ Wallace, "The Inaugural Address of Governor George C. Wallace," 6.

³¹ George C. Wallace, "Hear me out!" (New York: Droke House, 1968), *Internet Archive*, 150.

³² Carter, *The Politics of Rage*, " 85.

Americans from all over the country began writing him and commending his actions.³³ The feedback led him to proclaim “They all hate black people, all of them. They’re all afraid, all of them [...] Great God! That’s it! They’re all Southern! The whole United States is Southern!”³⁴

In 1968 George Wallace ran for president, as the leader of the American Independent Party. His campaign relied upon dog-whistle allusions to racial unrest through law-and-order rhetoric as well as a boisterous masculine performance. This was done through his outspoken and dramatic displays of resistance to de-segregation, and the tough rhetoric he used in his speeches and interviews. He presented himself as someone who was in control, who would not let the federal government boss him about and he encouraged his followers to act the same way.³⁵ In a 1964 speech at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana he said that government “force” accomplished nothing except to make “you a government-fearing folk instead of a God-fearing people.”³⁶ This sort of performance was reassuring to White Americans who had watched worriedly, as the status-quo seemed to shift about them. While the South had felt the changes brought about by the *Brown* decision most heavily, many White Americans in the North were concerned about how these progressive policies would affect their lives, as well. In the late-60s America appeared to be in a moment of crisis. The war in Vietnam seemed un-ending and there was racial unrest throughout the nation.³⁷ The most striking example of which might be the five-day long Watts Rebellion in August 1965, where 34 people were killed, 3,952 people

³³ Maarten Zwiers, “The Whistles of George Wallace: Gender and Emotions in the 1968 Presidential Campaign,” *European Journal of American Studies*, 14, no. 1 (2019): 4, <https://doi.org/10.4000/ejas.14454>.

³⁴ George C. Wallace, in Dan T. Carter, *From George Wallace to Newt Gingrich: Race in the Conservative Counterrevolution, 1963-1994* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996); 4-6, Quoted in, Matthew Dallek, “The Wallace Legacy,” *Reviews in American History*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (1998): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1353/rah.1998.0022>.

³⁵ Zwiers, “The Whistles of George Wallace,” 7.

³⁶ George C. Wallace, “Hear me out!” 64.

³⁷ Zwiers, “The Whistles of George Wallace,” 5-6.

were arrested and \$40 million in damages was caused by people enraged over police brutality.³⁸ In the face of this, many White Americans found Wallace's brand of tough leadership, a reputation he had built up with his Stand in the Schoolhouse Door and pro-police rhetoric, very comforting. He also made it clear that he did not think President Johnson, or the Supreme Court were doing enough to prevent crime or protect Americans, calling President Johnson's aides, "intellectual morons." He said, "they've been taken over by the intellectual morons. You can see what's happened: murder, rape, assault; and the criminals just laughing while the police are crying for help."³⁹

Outside the world of conventional politics, Wallace's campaign attracted the attention of America's far-right activists. His campaign appeared to be an opportunity for them to capitalize on his success by reaching wider audiences. Wallace's campaign for the presidency would ultimately fail but his campaign proved fertile ground for the nascent White Nationalist movement. One group that supported Wallace's campaign was Liberty Lobby, a Washington D.C. based extreme-right wing pressure group which purported itself to be a "pressure group for patriotism – the only lobby registered with Congress which is wholly dedicated to the advancement of governmental policies based on our constitution and conservative principles."⁴⁰ In reality, Liberty Lobby was owned and operated by Willis Allison Carto, a prominent neo-Nazi who had been working behind the scenes in the radical conservative movement for many years.⁴¹

³⁸ Joshua Bloom, and Waldo E. Martin. *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 29-30; Zwiers, "The Whistles of George Wallace," 7.

³⁹ George C. Wallace, "Hear me out!" 79.

⁴⁰ Leonard Zeskind, *Blood and Politics: The History of the White Nationalist Movement from the Margins to the Mainstream* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2009), 13; "Liberty Lobby, FBI report" October 7, 1966, in "Liberty Lobby-Willis Carto HQ 62-106941," *Internet Archive*, 84-85.
<https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n289/mode/2up>.

⁴¹ According to Leonard Zeskind, Carto claimed to have started Liberty Lobby in 1955, this is also the date given in the FBI files on Liberty Lobby. Zeskind highlights how Carto initially published the periodical *Right*, in 1955 and came up with Liberty Lobby that year, though the project did not get off the ground until 1957. Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 4.

Indeed, many White supremacist and anti-communist groups supported the George Wallace campaign: these groups included paramilitary organizations like the Klan and the Minutemen but also more “respectable” groups like the John Birch Society, and of course the WCCs discussed previously.⁴² They were very excited by Wallace’s candidacy, and even though he had distanced himself from racist groups such as the Klan,⁴³ a lot of the things he was saying seemed to align with their own visions of a White supremacist America. Wallace himself even said, “[he’d] rather be a Fascist than a Communist. At least a Fascist believes in God!”⁴⁴

In order to build off the successes of the Alabamian politician, Carto started a group called Youth For Wallace (YFW), which was meant to attract young conservative White people (under 29 years of age) who supported Wallace for president. According to Leonard Zeskind there was a significant demographic of young Americans who opposed the anti-war movement, but also the government, the war, and the Black civil rights movement. Conservative groups existed but most of these were pro-war; Carto’s group appealed to those elusive youths who did not feel welcome in any of those other movements, and it proved quite popular. Eventually, there were fifteen-thousand members on the YFW mailing list, and the group worked to distribute literature and organize on campuses.⁴⁵

Few people knew that Liberty Lobby had started YFW, and even fewer knew who Willis Carto was, or that his Liberty Lobby was essentially a Nazi pressure organization. Zeskind highlights how Carto worked hard to keep his identity and his politics a secret, he wrote under

⁴² Carto had been a member of the John Birch Society and had worked in their offices in Belmont, Massachusetts. Zeskind reports that many people suspected Carto had stolen copies of the John Birch Societies mailing list in order to kick-start Liberty Lobby in 1960. Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 4-5, 14.

⁴³ On the subject of the Klan Wallace had to say, “I am not a Klansman and haven’t attended any Klan rallies,”: George C. Wallace, “Hear me out!” 86.

⁴⁴ George C. Wallace, “Hear me out!” 53.

⁴⁵ Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 14.

several pseudonyms in various publications which he either owned or edited and usually sent representatives to events that he was invited to.⁴⁶ One notable exception to this trend is the introduction that he wrote in his printing houses' edition of *Imperium* by Francis Parker Yockey.⁴⁷ Yockey was an American Nazi-sympathizer; a student of law, he had worked at the war crimes tribunal in Wiesbaden where he wrote reports that were sympathetic to the war criminals.⁴⁸ In 1947 he moved to Ireland and began writing his magnum opus, a veritable tome inspired by the works of Oswald Spengler, the same philosopher who had inspired Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.⁴⁹ Yockey's book argued that civilisations are like living organisms, they are born, they can grow and thrive, but if they are not maintained or if they become corrupted they will die. He was concerned with the decay of "the West" and "Western Civilisation" he believed that there was a battle being waged between "Culture Creators" and "Culture Distorters."⁵⁰ Obviously, the "West" and White people are Culture Creators, and other people who bring outside influences are "Culture Distorters." Of course, in Yockey's approximation the very worst culture distorters in the West were the "Jewish Church-State-Nation-People-Race" who after "eight hundred years, of robbery, hatred, massacre, and persecution on both sides had [developed] [...] traditions of hatred of the West even stronger than the old Western hatred of the Jew."⁵¹ Carto believed that Yockey was a prodigious genius, he disagreed with some of Yockey's minor points, but overall agreed that the only way to preserve the West was through racial purity and the elimination of

⁴⁶ Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 11, 13, 14.

⁴⁷ Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 10.

⁴⁸ W. A. Carto, "Introduction", in *Imperium*, by Francis Parker Yockey (Sausalito, California: Noontide Press, 1962), xi.

⁴⁹ Joseph Trento and Joseph Spear, "How Nazi Nut Power Has Invaded Capital Hill," *True Magazine*, November 1969. Found in "Liberty Lobby-Willis Carto HQ 62-106941", *Internet Archive*, 292. <https://archive.org/details/LibertyLobbyWillisCartoHQ62106941/page/n289/mode/2up>.

⁵⁰ Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 9.

⁵¹ Francis Parker Yockey, *Imperium: The Philosophy of History and Politics* (Sausalito, California: Noontide Press, 1962), 387-388.

“alien” influences.⁵² Carto kept his Yockeyism and Liberty Lobby separate, publishing most of his Yockeyite ideas in a periodical he owned called *Western Destiny* under one of his pseudonyms, E. L. Anderson, P.H.D.⁵³ But what does this have to do with YFW? In the wake of President Richard Nixon’s Victory over Governor Wallace and the Democrat Hubert Humphrey, Carto wanted to make his youth group into something new. So, in November 1968, the National Youth Alliance (NYA) was founded at the Army and Navy Club in Washington D.C.⁵⁴

The NYA dispensed with the failed dog-whistle racism and simple segregationist ideas of the Wallace campaign in favour of more overtly racist, Yockeyite, Nazism complete with themes of anti-Semitism and racial purity.⁵⁵ This did not sit well with the more mainstream conservative elements of the former YFW group; and a major split took place on January 25, 1969, at Conley’s Motel near Monroeville, Pennsylvania. It was reported in the column, “Washington Merry-Go-Round” by journalists Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson who had been reporting on Carto and Liberty Lobby since 1966.⁵⁶ On April 21, 1969 they reported “George Wallace, the ex-governor of Alabama and ex-candidate for President, doesn’t know it, but his former youth organization has turned into a budding Hitler youth movement.”⁵⁷ Reporting four months after

⁵² Carto, “Introduction” in *Imperium*, x; Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 10. Carto and Yockey actually met in June 1960, Yockey had been arrested for passport fraud and was being held in the San Francisco Jail, they spoke through the visitation screens, Carto reports he asked Yockey “I want to help you. What Can I do?” Yockey apparently replied, “Wait, and do as your conscience tells you.” Carto attended Yockey’s hearings and on June 17 heard the news that Yockey had committed suicide in his cell by ingesting cyanide. Carto, “Introduction” in *Imperium*, xiv-xv.

⁵³ Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 11.

⁵⁴ Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 15.

⁵⁵ “Do You Want...” NYA Advertisement Publication, 1969, 4. *The Hall-Hoag Collection of Dissenting and Extremist Printed Propaganda*, John Hay Library, Brown University, accessed through *Gale Primary Sources: Political Extremism and Radicalism*. <https://go-gale-com.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/ps/internalResource?p=PLEX&u=otta77973&v=2.1&it=r&id=GALE%7CBSMOST704968438>.

⁵⁶ Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson, “Liberty Lobby Working Furiously for Right-Wing Cause; Its Secret Files Reveal Conspiracy against Jews and Negroes; Willis Carto’s Correspondents are Lurid Lot” in “The Washington Merry-Go-Round,” October 26, 1966, <http://hdl.handle.net/1961/2041-52940>.

⁵⁷ Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson, “Liberty Lobby Luftwaffe Bombs National Youth Alliance; George Wallace’s Young Leaders Swept Out In Neo-Nazi Blitz; Couldn’t Buck Willis Carto’s Money and Power Washington” in “The Washington Merry-Go-Round,” April 21, 1969, <http://hdl.handle.net/1961/2041-54047>.

the NYA takeover, Pearson and Anderson did not have the full story; they believed that Carto had acquired NYA by financially strong-arming them, when in reality he had founded it under one of his front groups, Action Associates.⁵⁸ This information came from ex-YFW members who had been blindsided by the sudden hard-far-right turn in their conservative movement. Many of these former members left after the January meeting, where Carto spoke on the importance of *Imperium* and his encounter with Yockey in prison. The after-party, which was thrown at a supporter's home, had decorations that were Nazi themed, guests wore swastika jewelry, and even sung Nazi anthems.⁵⁹ The YFW crowd had not suspected that their group was owned by the likes of Carto and found that they could not compete with his influence. They believed that it was because they could not compete with Carto financially but in truth they had really never been in control.

Carto's hold on the NYA would not last forever; it did not take long for a new contender to enter the ring and challenge Carto for control of the organization, enter Dr. William Luther Pierce. Born in Atlanta in 1933, he died in 2002 and was known as the "leading ideologue of America's neo-Nazi movement."⁶⁰ Pierce's ideas and his works are essential to understanding the rise of the White Nationalist movement in the United States. He was raised by his mother; his father having died in a car crash when he was eight.⁶¹ He attended the California Institute of Technology, and later attended the University of Colorado at Boulder to receive his doctorate in

⁵⁸ "Action Associates" is a Yockeyism, in his "Foreword" Yockey wrote, "This Book is different from other books. First of all, it is only in *form* a book at all. In reality, it is a part of the *life of action*". By naming his front organization "Action Associates" Carto was referencing Yockey's call to action in defence of Western civilisation in *Imperium*. The internal bulletin of the NYA was also called *ACTION*. "Do You Want..." NYA Advertisement Publication, 1969; Pearson and Anderson, "Washington Merry-Go-Round," April 21, 1969; Yockey, "Foreword," in *Imperium*, xlv.

⁵⁹ Pearson and Anderson, "Washington Merry-Go-Round," April 21, 1969; Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 15-16.

⁶⁰ Christopher Reed, "William Pierce; Obituary," *Guardian*, Thursday, July 25, 2002, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2002/jul/25/guardianobituaries.booksobituaries1>.

⁶¹ Leonard Zeskind highlights that not only did Pierce grow up fatherless, but his mother also had a strained relationship with her Jewish step-father, seeds of her son's future antisemitism? Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 17.

physics. In Pierce's own words, up until that point, he had been an "ideological virgin" so absorbed in, first, science fiction, and then real science that he had no time for politics or ideology. But, in 1963, after he had time to "settle in" he "noticed" "for the first time [in his] adult life" that there was something going on in the United States, people were split over "the race question" and Pierce was not sure on which side he ought to stand.⁶²

To find an answer Pierce began to conduct his own research into the matter; he was not sure about segregation and was as off put by television broadcasts of "overweight housewives, their hair in curlers and their puffy faces distorted with hate, screaming obscenities at small Black children" as most other Americans. But he also was not convinced by the liberal television reporters who he believed were obviously biased towards the Civil Rights movement. Another thing that he claimed intrigued him about the whole affair, was that at Oregon State and in the media, the "shrillest and pushiest of those demanding 'equality now' for Blacks, [...] were not Blacks but members of another minority group," which brought the "Jewish question" to his mind for the first time. In search of answers, he joined the John Birch Society, who tried to tell him that the Civil Rights movement was a communist plot to overthrow the country. Pierce tried to ask how the Jewish question played into that but said:

I quickly found out that the two topics on which I wanted an intelligent discussion [sic] — race and the Jews — were precisely the two topics Birch Society members were forbidden to discuss, on pain of expulsion. When I persisted in my questions, I was given a pamphlet which explained that anyone who raised these questions at a Birch Society meeting was almost certainly a "neutralizer" — a communist agent whose role was to "neutralize" the Birch Society by distracting it from its anti-communist mission with questions about race and the Jews.⁶³

⁶² William L. Pierce, "The Radicalization of An American," in *The Best of Attack! And National Vanguard Tabloid National Alliance*, 1984, edited by Kevin Alfred Storm, in *Internet Archive*, 131. <https://archive.org/details/KevinAlfredStromTheBestOfAttackAndNationalVanguardTabloidNationalAlliance1984/page/n129/mode/2up>.

⁶³ Pierce, "The Radicalization of An American," 131.

Thus, to find his answers Pierce turned to the library and began reading history; he wrote that it became clear to him, as it had become clear to Spengler, Hitler, Yockey, and Carto, that history has a “biological basis” and that “the course which the history of any one human group follows is influenced by many factors, but the most important and basic of these factors is the specific racial character of that group.”⁶⁴ So, Pierce decided that liberalism was not the way; to him it appeared that liberalism was effeminate, and that liberals were on the path of self-destruction. He concluded that racial purity was the only means to secure a future for White people and the liberals advocating for integration were putting White people on the path to racial destruction. So, he turned to conservatism, which he viewed as self-preserving, but found that, like the Birchers and the liberals, conservatives were also lacking the thing he needed and was searching for. Many conservatives were racists, he admitted, but the problem with conservatism was that it was “futile” and conservatives themselves were “useless:” they were too concerned with returning to something to ever think of creating something new. He determined that it was his life’s mission to save the “gene pool” of the White race and the only way to do that would be radical action and revolutionary change.⁶⁵

Pierce began visiting the Arlington, Virginia headquarters of the American Nazi Party (ANP), led by George Lincoln Rockwell. Pierce had decided that National Socialism was the ideology that best represented his interests, but he was not ecstatic about the Rockwell group’s brownshirt uniforms and swastika armbands, which struck him as more show-boating than real politics.⁶⁶ Pierce began editing a publication for the ANP called *National Socialist World* in 1966, and formally joined the group in 1967 after it had become the National Socialist White

⁶⁴ Pierce, “The Radicalization of An American,” 132.

⁶⁵ Pierce, “The Radicalization of An American,” 132.

⁶⁶ Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 19.

People's Party (NSWPP). He remained a member after Rockwell's assassination and began guiding one of the several groups that broke off from the NSWPP. An FBI memorandum from February 1969 detailed an automated recorded telephone message Pierce had created to spread the NSWPP's agenda in Los Angeles. The recorded messages called for the incitement of a race war, as a cure to the disease of "democratic liberalism." In the message Pierce declared: "Wake up America. Let's get this liberal poison out of our systems before it's too late. [...] there is only one effective way to take care of the rampaging blacks on our campuses and in our cities and that is to kill them." The message directed those interested to contact the NSWPP in Virginia for more information on their "White Power" movement.⁶⁷ Their objective was to tap into White fear over the emergence of the Black Panther Party for Self Defence and other "Black Power" organizations which were rapidly growing in California, especially after the Watts Rebellion of 1965.⁶⁸

Eventually, Pierce concluded that the NSWPP was not for him; he left the NSWPP in 1970 and then published a document he called "Prospectus for a National Front" which called for a re-organization of the far-right movement. He had observed that their "enemies" the Jewish-led anti-war demonstrators, civil rights activists, feminists, and other "communist" inspired groups were so successful because they did not "insist that everyone [...] must swear allegiance to Mao Tse-tung and carry a Communist Party card, or some other unnecessary foolishness." Even though these were all separate movements, they were all mobilized, in this view, toward the same goal, destroying White America.⁶⁹ It is unclear whether Pierce knew about Liberty Lobby and the

⁶⁷ "PIERCE, William L. – Los Angeles 100-73026," *Internet Archive*, 20.

⁶⁸ "FOIA: Pierce, William L. -HQ-1", *Internet Archive*, 138. https://archive.org/details/foia_Pierce_William_L.-HQ-1/page/n137/mode/2up.

⁶⁹ William L. Pierce, "Prospectus for a National Front," <https://counter-currents.com/2011/01/prospectus-for-a-national-front/#comments>.

fact that Willis Carto was already well on the way to assembling the sort of “National Front” Pierce was discussing. Perhaps Pierce had read the articles by Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson from 1969 and decided to seek out Carto and the NYA for himself. What ever it was that led him there, by October 9, 1970, Pierce was working as an editor of NYA’s publications, *Attack!* and *Action* under the pseudonym Luther Williams. On October 14, 1970, the NYA was incorporated in Virginia with Pierce as the registered agent.⁷⁰ Pierce and some colleagues had organized a takeover of NYA and Carto was not pleased; they went back and forth exposing each other’s pseudonyms and the details of one another’s involvement in various right-wing groups in the pages of their respective publications, *Attack!* for Pierce and *Statecraft* for Carto. The conflict resulted in Pierce retaining control of NYA, but Carto’s attacks had severely damaged the youth movement’s financial situation. Zeskind highlights that it was at this moment that both of their movements began to plateau. Carto’s many aliases and ventures had been exposed and he got embroiled in a long legal battle against the conservative magazine *National Review*. Pierce had begun attempting to organize students on university campuses, but it was slow going and he found that the students at the nation’s universities were often opposed to his ideas.⁷¹ Meanwhile, Klarman’s conservative backlash had transpired, the nation’s less radical and anxious White men seemed content with President Nixon and the Republican Party’s new emphasis on law and order. Why agitate then? The status-quo seemed to have been maintained without too much fuss. But while the rest of American seemed more or less content with the way things had evened out, Pierce and other White Nationalist leaders believed that their struggle would never end until an all-White nation was created. They believed that the entire American system was working against them, operating under a Jewish led conspiracy bent on the destruction of the White race

⁷⁰ “FOIA: Pierce, William L. -HQ-1,” *Internet Archive*, 144.

⁷¹ Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 24-25.

and the emasculation of White men. The only way Pierce saw to maintain White control was through revolutionary violence but his efforts to mobilize White youth had failed. In response, he renamed his organization, and incorporated the National Alliance on February 26, 1974. Business was still slow, so in order to better relate his ideas to the public, and we must assume, pass the time, Pierce began writing a novel, the importance and popularity of which he likely could never have guessed.⁷²

⁷² Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 26.

Chapter 3

Angry men to Aryan Revolutionaries

This chapter will focus primarily on analyzing William Pierce's most infamous work, the *Turner Diaries*. This book is one of the most influential and most widely circulated racist works in contemporary history and it is considered a foundational text of the White Nationalist movement.¹ It is most well-known for inspiring the White supremacist terrorist group The Order, as well as the Oklahoma City bomber, Timothy McVeigh, who sold the book at gun shows and was known to keep a copy with him at all times. His April 19, 1995, attack on the Alfred P. Murrah building was practically identical to a scene from the book, even using the same type of bomb and the same method of delivery.²

This section will demonstrate that in the *Turner Diaries*, Pierce was promoting a form of militant masculinity based on extreme violence, traditional gender roles, and race consciousness. The book does this by demonizing "others" against whom readers can identify, thereby affirming their own identity as superior men.³ This book also serves to highlight their deeply gendered fear of being emasculated and controlled by racialized others. Following this analysis, this chapter will discuss how this book reinvigorated the White supremacist movement in the United States and the trajectory of the movement in the late-70s and early-80s.

¹ "William Pierce," *Southern Poverty Law Center*, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/william-pierce>.

² "Oklahoma City Bombing," *FBI.gov, History, Famous Cases & Criminals*, <https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/oklahoma-city-bombing>; John Kifner, "Oklahoma Blast: A Tale in 2 Books?: Signs that Plot was Modeled on a Novel and a Non Fiction Work," *New York Times*, August 21, 1995.

³ Charles Goehring & George N. Dionisopoulos, "Identification by Antithesis: *The Turner Diaries* as Constitutive Rhetoric," *Southern Communication Journal*, 78:5, (2013): 371, [tps://doi.org/10.1080/1041794X.2013.823456](https://doi.org/10.1080/1041794X.2013.823456).

The *Turner Diaries* first appeared in the pages of the National Alliance's tabloid *Attack!* as a monthly serial. Chapter one was published in January 1975. The book is the fictional journal of a man named Earl Turner, a White American living in the late-twentieth century. The book opens with a foreword from its fictional publishers, written a century after the events of the book, which explains that Earl Turner lived in the final years of "the Old Era," before the "Great Revolution." This millenarian revolution is the main conflict of the book; Earl Turner and his comrades are members of "the Organization" an anti-government, White supremacist, guerilla movement that is waging a war against the United States government, which they call "the System."⁴ In the novel, the System is "corrupt, inefficient, decadent" and "Israel-dominated."⁵ All of the troubles facing Turner's United States stem from cultural corruption and moral decay caused by Jewish agents, bent on the destruction of White America. The conclusion of the book sees the annihilation of Israel, the Soviet Union, and many major North American cities in a nuclear holocaust to purge the world of People of Colour, communists, and Jews. This apocalyptic event paves the way for the establishment of a utopian Aryan world.

The *Turner Diaries* should be understood, I argue, as Pierce's ideological guide for his movement. Rather than write a manifesto, like Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, or Yockey's *Imperium* (which Pierce never read),⁶ Pierce chose a more approachable, engaging, and digestible medium to promote his ideology and his goals. Pierce was likely influenced by the *John Franklin Letters*, an anonymously authored, anti-communist book that circulated amongst members of the John Birch Society in the mid-60s. Pierce believed that Revilo P. Oliver, a founder of the John Birch

⁴ Pierce would often allude to the government as the "System" throughout his other writings as well, both before and after the publication of the *Turner Diaries*, see: *The Best of Attack! And National Vanguard Tabloid National Alliance*, 1984, edited by Kevin Alfred Storm, in *Internet Archive*.

⁵ Andrew MacDonald [William Pierce], *The Turner Diaries* (New York: Barricade Books, 1996), 12, 26.

⁶ Martin Durham, "From Imperium to Internet: The National Alliance and the American Extreme Right," *Patterns of Prejudice* 36, no. 3 (July 1, 2002): 53, doi:10.1080/003132202128811484.

Society (who was kicked out for his fervent racism and anti-semitism), was the author as he had personally given Pierce a copy.⁷ Pierce had, early in his career, endeavoured to write his own manifesto on his self-taught Nazi ideology but shelved the idea when he found a dozen such works “gathering dust on library shelves, influencing no one.”⁸ However, the *John Franklin Letters* offered a different avenue for achieving this same goal. Rather than simply try to persuade the reader, the *John Franklin Letters* engaged the reader with a narrative, through which its ideological conclusions were conveyed.⁹

Part of the allure of the *John Franklin Letters* was that the reader was invited to enter the world of the book and, as the title suggests, read the personal letters of John Franklin as if they were being sent to the reader. In the narrative, John Franklin is sending letters to his uncle, and his correspondence begins in 1957 and continues until 1976. His letters detail a war of resistance against a UN backed communist takeover of the United States as it happens. Franklin tells his uncle how he has joined “The Rangers,” a guerilla group that works to subvert the communist takeover and eventually re-establish the “legal government of the United States of America.” On the Fourth of July, no less.¹⁰ The influence that this format had on Pierce and the *Turner Diaries* is evident; the two books are very similar and make use of many of the same themes including, appeals to a revolutionary and violent masculinity, racism, anti-internationalism, and wariness about gun control, to name a few. Through these themes, both of these books tap into the general

⁷ Jeffrey Kaplan, “America’s Apocalyptic Literature of the Radical Right,” *International Sociology* 33, no. 4 (July 1, 2018): 508, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580918775583>; Robert S. Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man’s Deeds: An Up-Close Portrait of White Nationalist William Pierce*, (Self Published by Robert S. Griffin, 2001), *Internet Archive*, <https://ia801007.us.archive.org/2/items/FameOfADeadMansDeedsRobertS.Griffin/Fame%20of%20a%20Dead%20Man%27s%20Deeds%20-%20Robert%20S.%20Griffin.pdf>, 166.

⁸ Pierce, “Radicalizing of an American,” 125.

⁹ Goehring and Dionisopoulos discuss how fictional narratives can often be more persuasive than explicitly persuasive texts, especially when fiction resonates with the experiences of the audience. Charles Goehring & George N. Dionisopoulos, “Identification by Antithesis: *The Turner Diaries* as Constitutive Rhetoric,” 374-376.

¹⁰ *The John Franklin Letters*, 1959, *Internet Archive*, <https://archive.org/details/the-john-franklin-letters/page/n147/mode/2up>.

fear that was permeating the United States during the Cold War with the *John Franklin Letters* focusing on fears of domination from without, and *The Turner Diaries* focusing on subversion of the status-quo and domination from within.¹¹ The two books also make use of similar formats, relying upon the deeply intimate nature of personal letters and diaries to hold reader engagement. Consider how engaging this format could be in this instance; as a John Birch Society member, already anxious about communist influence in the United States, reading letters about a successful war against communists on American soil would be very cathartic. Not only would the letters, (which are initially somewhat based on historical events, such as President Roosevelt's New Deal and the creation of the United Nations) provide its audience with something they can point at and say, "see this is what will happen if we don't stop the Reds!", they also invite the reader, who we can assume would have been mostly adult White men, to insert themselves into the story and cheer on "their" nephew John, as he wages his war against the agents of communism. Also, as Charles Goehring and George N. Dionisopoulos have discussed, the diary format in particular bestows upon its creator a certain authority.¹² Since it is simply a collection of personal thoughts and reflections, ideas do not need to be backed up with evidence, and all of the information available to the reader is seen through the eyes of the diary's creator. This provides the reader with a clear understanding of the "writer's" genuine thoughts and feelings, and readers expect that the writer truly believes what they say: why add embellishments to personal thoughts?¹³ Indeed, fellow historians must recognize this, as the letters and personal writings of historical actors are often used as primary sources for historical

¹¹ John A. Thompson, "The Geopolitical Vision: The Myth of An Outmatched USA" in, *Uncertain Empire: American History and the Idea of the Cold War*, edited by Joel Isaac and Duncan Bell (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 91.

¹² Goehring and Dionisopoulos, "Identification by Antithesis," 372-373.

¹³ Goehring and Dionisopoulos, "Identification by Antithesis," 372-373.

evidence. By including the fictional publisher's "Foreword" in the beginning of the *Turner Diaries*, Pierce sought to frame his novel as if it were a historical work, a primary source from the future. The book relies upon Turner's "experience," to present "what happened" as unassailable fact.¹⁴

The diary format not only makes the *Turner Diaries* engaging and authoritative, but also accessible. When Pierce, speaking through Turner, proselytizes his ideology and his brand of violent revolutionary masculinity the language is simple, striking, and clear. Unlike Yockey, Turner is not a philosopher, and this is not his manifesto, simply his own personal thoughts on the day-to-day life of a White revolutionary. That said, Pierce does, through Turner's voice, use the narrative to deliver hateful, revolutionary lessons to the reader.¹⁵ This is a major reason why this book is so influential within the White Nationalist movement; it essentially condenses the ideas of racist thinker's past, like Spengler, Hitler, Yockey and others, and packages it into an adventure story, not unlike a classic western. Readers can learn about race consciousness, Jewish conspiracies, guerilla strategies and revolutionary tactics all in one, short, violence-packed, tale.

Indeed, as Abby Ferber and Michael Kimmel show, this appropriation of the western genre is purposeful. The genre is foundational to American perceptions of masculinity and offers anxious White men, who fear the emasculating influence of modernity, or overcivilisation, a vision of a "tough," "rugged," and "sporting" masculinity in the vein of that cultivated by such figures as Theodore Roosevelt, the "Rough Rider."¹⁶ For many, westerns offer a vision of this pioneering manhood and adventures that are perceived to have been "lost," but in the right

¹⁴ Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (1991): 797.

¹⁵ Leonard Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 30.

¹⁶ Dubbert, "Progressivism and the Masculinity Crisis," 445-446.

circumstances, could be reclaimed.¹⁷ In westerns, the hero is usually a White man whose virility, bravery, ingenuity, and propensity for violence allow him to survive and thrive in the Wild West. Out in the fringes between the wild and White settlements, his pioneering spirit and frontier masculinity protect him from dangers and threats that would doom lesser men. In defence of White civilisation, he wages what Ferber and Kimmel called the “eternal battle between good and evil” by fighting against external threats and enemies of civilisation.¹⁸ These antagonists are often racialized, for instance Indigenous people often feature heavily as antagonists in westerns, and so do outlaws and renegades (who are also often racialized).¹⁹ Similar themes are prevalent in White supremacist writing and particularly in the *Turner Diaries*, where the main characters, especially the men who make up the cadres of the Organization’s guerilla force, represent Pierce’s ideal White warriors.

The story of Earl Turner does not take place in the Wild West, but in the narrative, the United States has descended into apocalyptic lawlessness. Turner and his comrades are forced to the fringes where they have to fight to protect White civilisation from its destruction by “alien elements.”²⁰ Rather than fighting Indigenous people, Turner’s enemies are primarily Jewish people, though Black people are also depicted as antagonists, either acting as Jewish henchmen or more simply as animalistic thugs. In this way the book perpetuates long standing racist depictions of Black people, reminiscent of Thomas Dixon’s novels, as discussed in chapter one of this thesis. For example, in chapter one of the *Turner Diaries*, we see that the System

¹⁷ Abby Ferber and Michael Kimmel, “Reading Right: The Western tradition in White Supremacist Discourse,” *Sociological Focus (Kent, Ohio)* 33, no. 2 (2000): 194, <https://doi-org.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/10.1080/00380237.2000.10571165>.

¹⁸ Ferber and Kimmel, “Reading Right,” 199.

¹⁹ Ferber and Kimmel, “Reading Right,” 200.

²⁰ Piece often refers to “Jewish influence” as “alien,” but he uses this term to refer to other racialized groups as well. MacDonald, *The Turner Diaries*, 195.

employs Black men as their foot soldiers and uses them to enforce their oppressive anti-White policies. This also reinforces the racist belief that Black masculinity is inferior to White masculinity because the reader is shown Black men being subservient to their Jewish leaders. In the racist imagination, the only way that Black men could achieve this type of power over White men would be through the machinations of their Jewish leaders. Black men are seen as physically imposing but intellectually deficient, and Jewish men are seen as physically deficient but intellectually devious. We learn that after the System repealed the Second Amendment, Turner's apartment was searched for guns by a Jewish official of the "Northern Virginia Human Relations Council" and his Black deputies.²¹ We also learn that Black neighborhoods were not searched for guns and that, in Turner's America, People of Colour are effectively above the law due to the System's radical "anti-racist" policies. Much like Dixon's imagined Reconstruction era South, this lawlessness has turned America into a hell-scape, where abuse and sexual violence are meted out on innocents almost daily.²² Racialized people are depicted as being constant threats to White people and particularly White women. In Turner's America all of the greatest fears of the segregationists have come true; White women and girls are constantly threatened by hyper-sexual Black men and boys in schools and on the streets; it is also revealed that White women and girls are being sold as sex slaves by Jewish pimps.²³ These offences against White women are presented as justification for the Organization's violence as well as a call to action for White men to defend "their" women. However, as we shall see, this duty to protect women only goes so far, and only applies to certain women.

²¹ Andrew Macdonald, "The Turner Diaries," in *Attack!* January 1975, 5. *Gale Primary Sources: Political Extremism and Radicalism*.

²² MacDonald, *The Turner Diaries*, 57.

²³ MacDonald, *The Turner Diaries*, 82, 84.

Another way that the story mimics the western genre is the way in which women, and women's role in society, are depicted in the narrative. Ferber and Kimmel highlight how in the western genre, women are depicted as men's helpmates and rarely take their own independent actions. Women in westerns are usually passive objects of male desire.²⁴ This theme can be seen in the *Turner Diaries*. In the book, Turner's unit includes a couple of women, but their roles are mostly passive and subordinate to the men. One of his earliest interactions with the character, Katherine, is to walk in on her naked in the shower, after which they have sex. Only then does Turner become interested in learning anything about Katherine. We learn that despite being a former "liberal," Katherine joined the Organization after she gained "a sense of racial identity" by reading "books on race and history and some Organization publications."²⁵ But despite her dedication to the cause we see that Katherine does not often take part in any of the group's guerilla operations, such as armed robberies, assassinations, or bombings. Her only other useful skill outside of domestic chores such as cooking and housekeeping is her (traditionally feminine) skill with makeup, which the group uses to disguise themselves.²⁶ However, she later teaches a male member of the group how to replicate her skill and gives him the majority of her tools and supplies, depriving her character of the one non-housekeeping related skill she possessed.²⁷ In one scene she accompanies Turner on a mission but only to serve as a distraction and only after she protested that "she had no intention [...] of being nothing but a cook and a housekeeper for the [unit]". Turner discusses how her "shrill" complaint almost made her sound like a "women's libber"; a note from the "publishers" explains that:

"Women's lib" was a form of mass psychosis which broke out during the last three decades of the Old Era. Women affected by it denied their femininity and

²⁴ Ferber and Kimmel, "Reading Right," 202.

²⁵ MacDonald, *The Turner Diaries*, 28-29.

²⁶ MacDonald, *The Turner Diaries*, 29.

²⁷ MacDonald, *The Turner Diaries*, 60.

insisted that they were “people”, not “women.” This aberration was promoted and encouraged by the System as a means of dividing our race against itself.²⁸

The note from the publishers also makes it clear that the idea of a feminist movement is a foreign concept to the readers of the future. Obviously, in the time after Turner’s Great Revolution, the Aryan utopia they created has rigid traditional gender relations.

Further, this shows us is that Pierce believed there was a place for women in his movement but that this place was limited, and women were expected to perform in a traditionally feminine capacity that did not threaten men’s roles within the movement. It also clearly demonstrates what Pierce thought about Feminism and the Women’s liberation movement: that it was a Jewish conspiracy to unsex women, stop them from reproducing and thus destroy the White race. In contrast to this, Pierce, through Turner, discusses how women would benefit by joining the Organization and acting in traditional gender roles. Turner remarks:

It is interesting that the Organization, which was imposed on all of us a life which is unnatural in many respects, has led to a more *natural* relationship between the sexes inside the Organization than exists outside. Although unmarried female members are theoretically “equal” to male members, in that they are subjects to the same discipline, our women are actually *cherished* and *protected* to a much larger degree than women in the general society are.²⁹

They believed that the proper role of White women in society was as helpmates, and homemakers for their White husbands and as mothers to White children. Many times, this desire to protect (read: control) women is cited as a driving factor for the male characters’ participation in the Organization. However, this inclination falls short for women who fail to live up to this ideal. Women who consort with People of Colour, for example, are seen as “sluts” who deserve death, and on the “Day of the Rope,” after the Organization takes over California, thousands of

²⁸ MacDonald, *The Turner Diaries*, 45.

²⁹ MacDonald, *The Turner Diaries*, 57. (Emphasis added).

women who were living with or married to People of Colour are hanged for the “crime of miscegenation”.³⁰

At the core of this insistence in adhering to traditional gender roles is the White supremacist obsession with the survival of the White race and the segregationists gendered fear that integration would lead to sexual relationships across racial lines. Since they believe that the best method for preserving their race is through reproduction, race-mixing is perceived by White supremacists as a very real and dangerous threat to their cause. This was all the more true after the supreme court decision of *Loving v. Virginia*, in 1967, which finally invalidated “miscegenation” laws in the United States.³¹ The importance of White reproduction is stressed in Turner’s final entry before he departs for his martyring suicide mission, he laments, “of course, I would have liked to have children by Katherine so that I could have immortality of another sort, but that is not to be.”³² Turner’s primary goal is to fulfill his masculine duty and complete his mission, but the moral of the story is clear: the second most important thing after securing the future of the White race is the expansion of the race through reproduction.³³ If Turner had lived, he could have received the reward for his labours, a woman and a family. Westerns also make use of the theme of winning the woman as a prize for the deeds of the hero. Women in westerns are often presented as the very embodiment of the civilisation that the hero is fighting to defend. The western hero either faces external threats to defend civilisation and womanhood or has to rescue women from captivity and dangerous situations. Women are not given agency and it is the hero who acts for the woman, either by protecting her from external threats, or by overcoming

³⁰ MacDonald, *The Turner Diaries*, 74-76, 160.

³¹ For more on the history of interracial marriages in the United States see: Renee C. Romano, *Race-Mixing: Black-White Marriage in Post-War America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003), 190.

³² MacDonald, *The Turner Diaries*, 204.

³³ Ferber and Kimmel, “Reading Right,” 202.

obstacles in order to reach her. For his heroic masculine deeds, the hero usually receives the woman as his prize. His work done; the hero can settle down. However, while marriage and reproduction are understood to be necessary, Ferber and Kimmel highlight that it is something which is usually left out of these adventure narratives. In White supremacist literature, the hero rarely marries the woman or settles down, as this “domestication” is perceived as emasculating.³⁴ In Pierce’s book this issue is avoided all together: Katherine dies in a shootout with System soldiers, so Turner never has to face this emasculation. He also never loses his masculine independence because his final mission, flying a nuclear weapon attached to an airplane into the Pentagon, allows him to die as a staunchly masculine hero and martyr of the “Great Revolution.”³⁵

The novel has intriguing contemporary resonations: it is strikingly similar to the contemporary phenomenon of author-insert, or self-insert fanfiction. Indeed, in many ways the character, Earl Turner is a male “Mary Sue.” The idea of a Mary Sue character derives from a piece of *Star Trek* parodic fan fiction which was published in 1973, in a fan magazine, *Menagerie*. In the story Mary Sue is the youngest Lieutenant to ever command the U.S.S Enterprise, she is highly skilled in every facet of her work and is desired by all of the male members of the crew; the story concludes with Kirk, Spock, McCoy and Scotty crying at her deathbed. Mary Sue characters are usually understood as female, author-insert characters that seem too powerful, too knowledgeable, and are too impactful in the story.³⁶ Turner’s character is

³⁴ Ferber and Kimmel, “Reading Right,” 202.

³⁵ MacDonald, *The Turner Diaries*, 204.

³⁶ Often, labeling characters as a “Mary Sue” stems from viewers internalized misogyny and hatred for strong female characters; recent examples of this would include the character Rey in *Star Wars*, or Captain Marvel in *Avengers*. My intention here is not to perpetuate stereotypes of this kind but to highlight the phenomenon of author insert Mary Sues, or author and reader insert characters which is an interesting literary phenomenon and can be seen in bestselling works such as *Twilight* and its fan-fic, turned best-seller, turned Hollywood film franchise, *Fifty Shades of Grey*. For more on this see: Effie Sapuridis, and Maria K. Alberto, “Self-Insert Fanfiction as Digital Technology of the Self” *Humanities*, 11, no. 3, 68 (2022): 3, <https://doi.org/10.3390/h11030068>.

quite similar to this trope; he has very few flaws, is admired by the men and desired by the women that he encounters in the story; he is the reason for the success of numerous Organization missions, is inducted into the Organization's leadership (called the Order) and finally, dies as a martyred hero after attending a ceremony where other members of the Order applaud him.³⁷

Author-insert characters and stories often take place in existing narrative worlds but also fantasy situations (often of the sexual nature). The *Turner Diaries* is more like the second type, a fantasy situation that Pierce believed would present the ideal conditions for his White revolution.

Additionally, Effie Sapuridis and Maria K. Alberto argue that author-insert characters often become "reader-insert" characters, meaning that these types of stories allow readers to insert themselves into the narrative to live out fantasies. Consider that, within the narrative, no physical description of Turner is given; this makes it easier for the reader to insert themselves into the narrative and engage with the fantasy.³⁸ This allows anxious men, susceptible to this message, to fantasize about being an important, hyper-masculine figure in a violent race war that ushers in the creation of an all-White world. This could be another reason why the book is so popular in the White supremacist movement: it is tailor made fiction of their violent racist fantasies.

Here I have shown that Pierce used particular literary styles and genre to make his ideologically racist work more appealing to his target audience. He created a story about his ideal revolution and then peddled the book to insecure and anxious men who could be ensnared by its themes and encouraged to join his real-life version of the Organization, the National Alliance.

This book is designed to act as a recruiting tool; it constructs an idealized version of manhood

³⁷ Turner designs the bomb used to blow up the FBI headquarters (pg. 30); modifies a mortar and then calculates the exact trajectory needed for his unit to use the weapon to strike Congress (61); as mentioned previously, he and Katherine engage in sex almost immediately after meeting (28) and later a 15 year old girl named Elsa takes a liking to him immediately as well (82-83); finally, Turner is inducted into "the Order," "the bearers of the Faith," from which leaders of the Organization are selected (73). MacDonald, *The Turner Diaries*, 28, 30, 61, 73, 82-83.

³⁸ Sapuridis and Alberto, "Self-Insert Fanfiction as Digital Technology of the Self," 4.

and then attacks all others who do not conform to this ideal. Susceptible readers in the target audience would feel compelled to belong to the in-group the novel portrayed. Simon Purdue has shown that this message is incredibly effective, as it forces the reader to choose where they stand, they can either adopt the “heroic,” violent, hyper-masculinity of the novel’s protagonists, or be one of the useless “others” that the book disparages.³⁹

This too was intentional, as Pierce believed, in a somewhat Nietzschean way, that there was only a small number of people who would be receptive to his message; this group he called the “perceptive minority,” that small number of true men, cognisant of and prepared to do the right thing.⁴⁰ The rest of America was simply not ready for his message; they were not prepared to break with the rest of the “demos” in the conformist herd.⁴¹ As he discussed in the *Turner Diaries*, “what is really precious to the average American is not his freedom, or his honor, or the future of his race, but his pay check.”⁴² And in his article, “The Radicalizing of an American,” he discussed how the average right-winger, conservative or patriot was not the type of person he needed and how they would not be receptive to his message anyway. Throughout the book, Turner disparages these “all talk and no action” type of people; at one point they go so far as to execute a “responsible conservative” in their ranks for being “fundamentally unreliable.”⁴³ Meanwhile, the other members of the Order, the Organization’s elite leadership, are seen as valiant heroes who know how to get the job done prompting Turner to say:

³⁹ Simon Purdue, “Just Like Earl: Williams Luther Pierce and the Hero Complex of Far-Right Masculinity,” *The Activist Historical Review*, June 29, 2020. https://activisthistory.com/2020/06/29/just-like-earl-william-luther-pierce-and-the-hero-complex-of-far-right-masculinity/#_ftn14.

⁴⁰ George, Michael, “The Revolutionary Model of Dr William L. Pierce,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 15, no. 3 (October 1, 2003): 63, doi:10.1080/09546550312331293137.

⁴¹ For more on how Nietzschean thinking influences the radical right see: Stephen L. Newman, “Nietzsche as Muse to the Extreme Right,” in *Nietzsche and the Politics of Reaction: Essays on Liberalism, Socialism, and Aristocratic Radicalism*, ed. Matthew McManus (Palgrave MacMillan Cham, 2023), 61-62.

⁴² MacDonald, *The Turner Diaries*, 101.

⁴³ MacDonald, *The Turner Diaries*, 51-53.

These were no soft-bellied conservative businessmen assembled for some Masonic mumbo-jumbo; no loudmouthed, beery red-necks, letting off a little ritualized steam [...]; no pious, frightened churchgoers whining for the guidance or protection of an anthropomorphic deity. These were *real men*, *White men*, men who were now *one* with me in spirit and consciousness as well as in blood.⁴⁴

With messages of this type, Pierce hoped to instill in his readers a sense that if they supported his ideologies than that meant that they were better than and stood apart from their fellow Americans. He wanted to attract “independent thinkers,” educated and skilled people with means that he could use to help him build a foundation upon which his revolution could stand. This is why much of his focus went into endeavours like his tabloids, publishing house, books, and later in the 1990s his radio program, American Dissident Voices and record label, Resistance Records. He wanted to establish his own information infrastructure to counter the mass media, which he, of course, believed was controlled by Jewish interests’ groups, bent on the destruction of the White race.⁴⁵ Thus the characters in the novel, Turner, and the other members of his unit, represent the types of people Pierce wanted to have join his cause. He decided that he needed dedicated and skilled men and women who were willing and able to shove off the yoke of American society and destroy it. He believed that this was the only way that they would be able to bring about a world in which the White race could survive.⁴⁶

Finally, one of the most important things that this book reveals is what Pierce and his movement fear, and that is to be emasculated through political domination by racialized others. In this apocalyptic, millenarian, fantasy, their worst fear has been realized: Jewish people control their country and White men cower in fear as men of other races dominate their lives. It is a fear as old as the dawning of racism in the United States and North America. In Pierce’s novel, *White*

⁴⁴ MacDonald, *The Turner Diaries*, 203.

⁴⁵ Michael, “The Revolutionary Model of Dr. William L. Pierce,” 67-68.

⁴⁶ Pierce, “The Radicalization of An American,” in *The Best of Attack! And National Vanguard Tabloid National Alliance*, 1984, edited by Kevin Alfred Storm, in *Internet Archive*, 132.

people are as oppressed as minority communities are in reality, but rather than see this as, perhaps, a reason why such oppression should cease, it is instead perceived as the final reason for the incitement of a racial holy war for the preservation of the White race. Pierce knew that these sorts of appeals to the insecurities of White men would be very effective; after all, they were the same strategies successfully used by fascist and imperialist ideologues in the past. Portraying Western civilisation as being in crisis and calling *men* to its defence has been an effective recruiting strategy throughout history and especially in extremist groups.⁴⁷

So, how did the publication of a book have such a profound impact on the reemergence of an active, militant, White supremacist movement in the United States? Much of it has to do with its accessibility, as mentioned previously, and the ways that it was advertised. Members of the National Alliance, and others such as Timothy McVeigh, would attend gun shows and advertise the book as being anti-gun control, which was a highly successful endeavour.⁴⁸ Other White supremacist groups, no doubt recognizing the potential power and appeal of the book, bought bulk orders to sell from their own catalogues of literature.⁴⁹ The book was also advertised in magazines that were not directly affiliated with the White supremacist movement, like *Soldier of Fortune* magazine. This was a glossy, full-colour magazine that advertised weapons and mercenary contracts, founded by former U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Robert K. Brown.⁵⁰ Brown was also a funder of Paladin Press, which would publish an edition of the *Turner Diaries* in 1996. Paladin Press was founded in 1970 by Brown and a man named Peder Lund. Brown split from the business in 1975 to start *Soldier of Fortune* magazine, which ran advertisements

⁴⁷ “Chapter 2: Literature and Policy Review and Analysis” in Roose, Joshua M., Michael Flood, Alan Greig, Mark Alfano, and Simon Copland. *Masculinity and Violent Extremism* (Springer International Publishing, 2022), 33.

⁴⁸ Durham, “From Imperium to Internet,” 56; Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 31.

⁴⁹ Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 31.

⁵⁰ “A Brief History,” Paladin Press.com, *Internet Archive*, Wayback Machine; “Now Available from Paladin Press,” advertisement, *Soldier of Fortune*, Fall 1976; “Robert K. Brown,” *Internet Archive*, Wayback Machine.

for Paladin press. The publishing house sold handbooks on such topics as exotic weapons, knife fighting, making fake IDs, survival, computer security and hacking and “Revenge and Humor.”⁵¹ While this magazine was not explicitly White supremacist, I would say that it was White supremacist adjacent, as it did advertise mercenary contracts to support the “white minority regime” in Rhodesia and it was willing to advertise for the National Alliance’s book.⁵² The advertisement was tailored to the audience of *Soldier of Fortune* by highlighting the anti-gun-control angle of the book and the “ingenuity and boldness” of the fictional guerillas. It detailed how “Earl Turner and his fellow patriots [...] are forced underground when the U.S. government bans the private possession of firearms and stages the mass Gun Raids to round up suspected gun owners,” it further appeals to its audience of “professional adventurers” by extolling Andrew Macdonald’s (Pierce’s, non-existent) career as a “nuclear physicist and an expert in improvised munitions, terrorist gadgets, and military/ industrial sabotage.”⁵³ Obviously, Pierce believed that these professional mercenary types (or those who idealized that lifestyle) would be interested to read, if nothing else, his “expert” and detailed descriptions of guerilla tactics and equipment.

After its publication, this effective advertising campaign made the *Turner Diaries* into a major success (for a White supremacist book), generating a lot of revenue and new members for the National Alliance. It was able to garner a mass appeal both in the United States and abroad, reportedly selling more than 350,000 copies by 1999.⁵⁴ Its impact was soon felt by the general

⁵¹ “A Brief History,” Paladin Press.com, *Internet Archive*, Wayback Machine; “Now Available from Paladin Press,” advertisement, *Soldier of Fortune*, Fall 1976; “Robert K. Brown,” *Internet Archive*, Wayback Machine.

⁵² “More Rhodesian Recruiting...” *Soldier of Fortune*, Fall 1976; in a letter to the editor there is a note that seems to indicate *Soldier of Fortune* readers and White supremacists are often one and the same: “They are interested [...] not so much in the adventurous type as in a person who is concerned with the future of Rhodesia (which makes a helluva [sic] lot of sense to me),” “Sell out Rhodesia...” *Soldier of Fortune*, Fall 1976.

⁵³ “*Soldier of Fortune Magazine*,” *Internet Archive*, July 1979, 84.

<https://archive.org/details/soldieroffortunemagazine/Soldier%20of%20Fortune%20%5B1979%2707%5D/page/n85/mode/2up?q=Turner+Diaries>.

⁵⁴ Durham, “From Imperium to Internet,” 57.

public. In December 1984, Robert Mathews, the leader of a group calling itself “Brüder Schweigen,” the Silent Brotherhood, burned to death after a thirty-six-hour standoff with the FBI. Agents had fired flares into the house Mathew was using as cover, and the house quickly went up in flames as ammunition stored inside was ignited. Mathews and two other founding members of this new group were former members of the National Alliance and had worked closely with Pierce, as well as other revolutionary White supremacists like Louis Beam and Richard G. Butler. After the shootout, the FBI found a briefcase which contained a “Declaration of War,” against the U.S. Government in the name of the “Aryan Resistance Movement.” An informer told the *Washington Post* that the group’s “Bible” was the *Turner Diaries*, and they used the book as a guide in their various acts of terrorism.⁵⁵ In light of this discovery, the press began to call them “The Order” after the elite, clandestine leadership of Turner’s Organization.

An examination of their crimes suggests that they were in fact using the book as a strategic guide for their operations, which is, I maintain, exactly what Pierce wanted when he wrote it. Many of the terrorist actions they undertook resemble or were directly inspired by the strategies used by Turner and his unit in the novel. This is not surprising, given that the leaders of the Order were mentored by Pierce and Beam, two of the most influential White supremacists of the era. Born in 1946, Louis R. Beam Jr. is a Vietnam veteran, Klansman and Yockeyite, and he joined the KKK after returning from the war because of the “current political and social conditions and a desire to taste the blood of [his] enemy,” those being “culture distorters” (Jews), “anti-American” liberals, race traitors and the “tyrannical” Federal Government of the United

⁵⁵ Laura Parker, “U.S. Alleges Overthrow Plot: White Supremacists Linked to Scheme to Take Over Government,” *Washington Post*, Dec. 12, 1984, found in, “White Supremacist Groups Part 1 of 2,” “The Order,” *FBI Vault*, 4-5.

States.⁵⁶ Beam's major contribution to the White Nationalist literature at this time was his *Essays by a Klansman*, which called for immediate revolutionary action:

Delaying this battle can only bring submission and slavery. Our chains are even now clanking in Washington. A war between good and evil is inevitable, so let it come now while we still possess [sic] an ability to fight.⁵⁷

In this way Beam differed from Pierce, who believed that the movement needed an established central leadership before the revolution could be successful. Beam also differed from Pierce in that he was a proponent of “leaderless resistance” and believed that a more traditional, top-down, “pyramid scheme” style of organization was useless and dangerous because it was easy to infiltrate. Instead, Beam advocated for White revolutionaries to follow the “phantom cell” system of organization developed by anti-communist Colonel Ulius Louis Amoss. In this system various cells would act independently of one another and may not even be aware of other cells working toward the same common goal; in this way, if one cell was infiltrated, it would not mean that entire structure was compromised.⁵⁸

With such men as their ideological and strategic mentors, Robert Mathews and the Order embarked upon their terrorist crime spree, which spanned from October 1983 to April 1985.⁵⁹ The group was involved in multiple armored truck robberies and bank heists, as well as counterfeiting. They were able to raise over \$4 million dollars for their movement through these acts, and it is suspected that some of that money was wired to the National Alliance.⁶⁰ Both theft

⁵⁶ Louis Beam, *Essays of a Klansman* (Hayden Lake: AKIA Productions, 1983), *Internet Archive*, Vi, 23.

⁵⁷ Louis Beam, *Essays of a Klansman*, 26.

⁵⁸ Louis Beam, “Leaderless Resistance,” *Inter-Klan Newsletter and Survival Alert*, Spring/Summer 1983, *Internet Archive*, 12.

⁵⁹ Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 97.

⁶⁰ T.R. Reid, “‘Neo-Nazis’ Inspire White Supremacists: Wave of Crime, Terrorism Tied to Novel” *Washington Post*, Dec. 26, 1984, found in, “White Supremacist Groups Part 1 of 2,” “The Order,” *FBI Vault*, 27; Brad Whitsel, “Aryan visions for the future in the West Virginia Mountains,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Volume 7-4, (1995): 121, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546559508427321>.

and counterfeiting are endorsed as legitimate revolutionary tactics to defeat the System by Pierce in the *Turner Diaries*.⁶¹ The murder of those who spoke out against the Organization was also something that Pierce endorsed, particularly against Jewish people.⁶² Beam endorsed actions such as this as well, even going so far as to include a “point system” in his *Essays of a Klansman* to help his adherents determine if potential targets were important enough to kill. There are nine stages to his ranking system, with “Leaders of [the] International Satanic anti-Christ Conspiracy for the control of the world” being worth one full point and “Street people,” or, those who receive the benefits of “Civil Rights Policy/ Law” being worth one/ one thousandth of a point.⁶³ In June 1984, members of the Order gunned down Alan Berg, a Jewish radio talk-show host who was very out-spoken against White supremacist groups.⁶⁴ They also planned to carry out an assassination of Oregon Senator Robert Packwood.⁶⁵ At this time, it seemed to the FBI, the American press, and the courts, that the Order was attempting to bring about the events of the *Turner Diaries*.⁶⁶ Pierce’s work, it seems, had found its target audience and they were making effective use of the strategies used by Turner and his comrades in the fictional work.

Strikingly, none of the press reporting from the time mentions Pierce beyond his capacity as the author of the group’s “Bible.” The Order is mostly depicted as being associated with the Church of Jesus Christ Christian and its auxiliary group, Aryan Nations. This was a Christian

⁶¹ Turner and his unit engage in petty theft and robbery on a number of occasions, targeting Jewish businesses as well as liquor stores. MacDonald, *The Turner Diaries*, 9-11, 104.

⁶² A Jewish spokesman for the Chicago Jewish Community is murdered with a hatchet for calling the Organization a “gang of racist bigots.” MacDonald, *The Turner Diaries*, 16-17.

⁶³ In Beam’s estimation, gaining a full point would make one an “Aryan Warrior,” whereas gaining 1/1000 of a point would only make one “Cannon Fodder.” Louis Beam, *Essays of a Klansman*, (pdf page) 32.

⁶⁴ Mary Thornton and T.R. Reid, “Aryan Group, Jail Gangs Linked: FBI Reports on White Supremacist Organization,” *Washington Post*, Dec. 18, 1984, found in, “White Supremacist Groups Part 1 of 2,” “The Order,” *FBI Vault*, 16.

⁶⁵ McDougal, “Threatened Senator Addresses Broadcasters,” *Times Staff Writer*, January 8, 1985, in, “White Supremacist Groups Part 1 of 2,” “The Order,” *FBI Vault*, 35.

⁶⁶ “Armed neo-Nazi sect ready for revolution” *Roanoke Times and World News*, Roanoke, Virginia. January 27, 1985, found in, “White Supremacist Groups Part 2 of 2,” “The Order,” *FBI Vault*, 6.

Identity movement group that was founded by Richard G. Butler in 1970, in Couer d'Alene, Idaho. Butler and his followers rejected that Jesus was of Jewish descent, and believed that White Aryans, not Jews, were the true descendants of the original tribes of Israel, the Abrahamic god's "Chosen People."⁶⁷ Butler's Idaho compound was the site of numerous sessions of the "National Aryan Congress," where Klan, neo-Nazi, and Christian Identity groups would convene to share ideas, get to know one another, burn crosses, and throw Hitler salutes.⁶⁸ All of these groups were united in their belief that White America was dying and that it was because of a Satanic-Jewish conspiracy, as informed by antisemitic conspiracy theories rooted in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.⁶⁹

The Order is one of the most infamous and successful revolutionary cells that the White Nationalist movement has ever spawned, and their reign of terror might have continued had they not made some decisive mistakes. Mistake number one happened when Mathews left a handgun at the site of an armored truck robbery. Mistake number two was inducting a former National Alliance comrade, Tom Martinez, into the movement. Martinez was responsible for passing along counterfeit bills but made the mistake of using some of the fake bills too close to home. He was tracked down by the authorities and became an informant.⁷⁰ Not long after this, Mathews burned to death on Whidbey Island, Washington after a manhunt and firefight with the FBI. Soon the remainder of the Order's members were hunted down and arrested. The final few would-be "revolutionaries" were rounded up on April 19, 1985, at the compound of the paramilitary,

⁶⁷ Reid, "'Neo-Nazis' Inspire White Supremacists: Wave of Crime, Terrorism Tied to Novel," 27.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 28; Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 70.

⁶⁹ Discussed here in Chapter One, 36.

⁷⁰ Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 99.

Christian Identity group, Covenant, the Sword and the Arm of the Lord (CSA) in Missouri, without bloodshed. This brought an end to both the Order and the CSA.⁷¹

The outcome of all of this was that, just like Earl Turner in the book, the members of the Order, and especially Robert Mathews, were remembered as heroes and became martyrs of the movement. According to Leonard Zeskind, several White Nationalist groups celebrate the day of Mathew's death, December 8, as "Martyr's Day," and commemorate it with events such as camping trips on Whidbey Island, where Mathews burned to death.⁷² Pierce wrote an editorial in *National Vanguard* (formerly, *Attack!*), where he lauded Mathew's sacrifice. Pierce wrote, in highly gendered language:

He took up arms against the enemies of his race, knowing that he had virtually no chance of defeating them, or even of surviving [...]. How can America's soft, feminized, materialistic masses have any idea of the thinking of a man who made a deliberate choice to die, when he might have lived – to die fearlessly and defiantly – solely so that his death could set an example for other fearless and defiant fighters who could follow him in the years and decades to come?⁷³

While the real-life Order failed to achieve the same revolutionary success as its fictional counterpart, it did succeed in bringing public attention to the White Nationalist movement; and as the saying goes, all press is good press.

Though, not every White Nationalist thought that the Order's campaign was inspiring: many of the more mainstream White Nationalists like Willis Carto, or the charismatic former Knights of the Ku Klux Klan leader, David Duke, thought that the Order's campaign had been a fiasco. They believed that the best way to secure a White future was through political, not

⁷¹ Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 100.

⁷² Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 102.

⁷³ William Pierce, "Editorial," *National Vanguard*, 103, January- February 1985, 3.

revolutionary, action.⁷⁴ However, while they continued to campaign politically for White power, a movement of disaffected White youth was rising to prominence. Many of them found the Order's campaign of terror inspirational, and their grasp of new media outlets like the nascent Internet, and their interest in White Power music, fueled the growth of the White Nationalist movement throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s.

⁷⁴ Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 106.

Chapter 4

Scared Kids to Nazi Skinheads

This chapter will focus on how the ideologies espoused by the White Nationalist movement moved from the fringes to the mainstream from the late-80s up until the early 2000s. During this period, the Internet became a major instrument for the dispersion of racist content. This new vessel for information sharing radically altered the ways in which White Nationalist groups could facilitate communication between their members, coordinate between groups, and spread their ideologies within the movement and beyond. This period represents an important moment, where technology and White youth began to bring ideas from this movement and weave them into the American mainstream. White Nationalist groups and actors used the Internet to reach out and make themselves attractive, to young White men who felt like they were unable to get ahead in an American society that they perceived was working harder for “other” people. The White Nationalist movement continued to use literature, with a focus on magazines, papers, and comics, but in this period, music, and the new power of the Internet emerged as mediums for these groups to reach a new audience of young White folks. Of all of these mediums, the Internet would emerge as the most powerful and the most important. As we shall see, the Internet became, and to this day remains, a place where White Nationalist messages can be spread quickly and effectively to a worldwide audience.

The late twentieth-century saw the emergence of a new sub-culture of American youth who used violent extremism to vent their frustration and to find belonging; most notably, presenting as Nazi skinheads. As scholars Kevin Borgeson and Robin Valeri have shown, skinhead history is complicated and nuanced; while Nazi skinheads by no means represent the entire skinhead movement, they are certainly the most recognizable, or most often portrayed type

of skinheads due to their shocking appearance, violence, machoism, racism, and antisemitism.¹ Racist skinhead involvement in the White Nationalist movement during the final years of the twentieth century demonstrates the impact that the racist right had in popularizing White Nationalism through new mediums and technologies to reach out to disaffected White youth during the Reagan years and beyond.

The skinhead movement began in England among working class youths in the 60s. For them, it was a movement that celebrated their working-class heritage and was a way for them to build solidarity with other working-class folk. It was also a movement about defying societal standards and class structures: skinheads would listen to loud music, use profane language, get lots of tattoos, and participate in violent activities, as well as dress in the provocative skinhead style. To them, this demonstrated their pride in where they came from and their disregard for the established order.² The movement came to the United States through the punk movement; much like in England it was attractive to a generation of youths who felt that they could not put their faith in the United States government or align themselves with the rest of American society. Instead, these youths aligned themselves with the skinhead subculture, they shaved their heads, got tattoos and piercings, wore Doc Martens, jeans, and bomber jackets. Borgenson and Valeri have shown that many skins were drawn in because the movement made them feel “wanted,” a sentiment they obviously did not feel from wider society.³

The skinhead movement in the United States also encouraged an ethos of group solidarity; nearly all types of skins from the racist to the anti-racist skins and the gay skins to the

¹ Kevin Borgenson and Robin Valeri, “Examining Differences in Skinhead Ideology and Culture Through An Analysis of Skinhead Websites,” *Michigan Sociological Review* 19, Fall, (2005): 45, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40969104>.

² Borgenson and Valeri, *Skinhead History, Identity, and Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 4-5.

³ Borgenson and Valeri, *Skinhead History, Identity, and Culture*, 6.

traditional skins believe that violence for the sake of defending their lifestyle and other skins (of their type) is justified.⁴ Neo-Nazi skins in both the United States and England took the skinhead belief of pride in one's heritage to denote pride in one's race. So, for the racist skinheads, violence in the defence of racial purity became justifiable. Because of the violence and machoism inherent in the movement it is very patriarchal and promotes a toxic "protest" masculinity.⁵ Borgenson and Valeri explain that even some gay skins have contempt for behaviour that might be seen as "effeminate," a paradoxical combination of internalized homophobia and outward misogyny⁶

Racist skinheads came onto the FBI's radar in 1987 while the bureau was investigating the leader of White Aryan Resistance (WAR), Tom Metzger. Metzger was an army veteran and worked as a TV repairman, he had been involved in numerous other racist groups before forming WAR in 1982. He had been a Bircher, had joined the Minutemen, and he had joined David Duke's Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (KKKK), where he made a name for himself, and rose to the rank of Grand Dragon, leading the Klan's "Border Watch" initiative. He eventually left Duke's KKKK after a falling out over Duke's reluctance to participate in racist violence. He went on to start his own California Knights of the KKK. Throughout this time, Metzger also served as a Christian Identity minister; he really had his fingers in almost every slice of the proverbial White nationalist pie.⁷ In 1980 he attempted to run for the U.S. Senate in California on a pro-White platform; he almost succeeded but was disavowed by the Democratic Party.⁸ After

⁴ Borgenson and Valeri, *Skinhead History, Identity, and Culture*, 8.

⁵ There are, of course, some female skins, but the vast majority are male and a majority of skins, male and female present a more masculine identity and style. Borgenson and Valeri, *Skinhead History, Identity, and Culture*, 67.

⁶ Borgenson and Valeri, *Skinhead History, Identity, and Culture*, 8.

⁷ Amy Cooter, "Neo-Nazi Nationalism," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 11, no. 3 (2011): 368, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1754-9469.2011.01126.x>.

⁸ Kyle Burke, "'It's a white fight and we've got to win it': culture, violence, and the transatlantic far right since the 1970s," in Geary, Daniel, Camilla Schofield, and Jennifer Sutton. Eds. *Global white nationalism: From apartheid to*

years of trying to find a movement that worked for him and after failing to succeed in electoral politics, Metzger decided that the only way he could combat the degeneration of White culture and eliminate the people he saw as his enemies was to break with the KKK and get away from politics in order to establish his own revolutionary vanguardist group. He hoped that his movement would bring about a race war, and that this conflict would result in the destruction of the federal government as well as “eliminate the Jews and blacks.”⁹ Like William Pierce’s National Alliance, Metzger’s WAR mostly interacted with followers and the public through its publication, *White Aryan Resistance*, which was very similar in style and content to Pierce’s *National Vanguard*. Metzger also hosted his own local access cable TV show called “Race and Reason.” Like Pierce (and most other White Nationalists), Metzger believed that the media was controlled by Jewish elites and so he endeavoured to create his own counter media. The main difference between the two neo-Nazi groups was that while Pierce wanted to appeal to more “elite” individuals, Metzger’s movement was geared towards the White working class. Pierce, though he would later change his tack, was not interested in forming an alliance with disaffected youth. Metzger on the other hand, welcomed the racist skinheads into his movement and encouraged them to recruit and educate other White youth about WAR and the anti-White conspiracies he believed were plaguing the United States.¹⁰ Metzger thought that the skinheads were a very promising movement, and that they demonstrated how White American youth were

Trump (Manchester University Press, 2020), 265; “Tom Metzger,” *Southern Poverty Law Center*, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/tom-metzger>.

⁹ Amy Cooter, “Neo-Nazi Nationalism,” 368; “White Aryan Resistance, Also Known as White American Resistance (WAR) Domestic Security – Terrorism,” found in, “White Aryan Resistance,” *FBI Vault*, 30.

¹⁰ “Untitled Letter to the Acting Director of the FBI,” found in, “White Aryan Resistance,” *FBI Vault*, 64.

truly fed up with the system. He believed that they would be excellent “shock troops” in the White revolution.¹¹

One of the main ways that Metzger sought to make his movement attractive to racist skinheads was through the promotion of hardcore White Power music. As mentioned previously, the skinhead movement was very focused around music, having emerged from the punk movement, which was an underground music scene that was popular in the late-70s.¹² The skinhead movement was a reactionary alternative to punk, after it became too mainstream and “fashionable” for more hardcore adherents.¹³ Hardcore music and the skinheads rose to prominence from 1980-1986. As Borgenson and Valeri highlight, hardcore music particularly appealed to disaffected White youth, experiencing what they thought was anti-White discrimination in the post-Civil Rights era.¹⁴ These authors interviewed numerous skinheads for their book *Skinhead History, Identity, and Culture*; one skin that was quoted said:

All that affirmative action bullshit—and the feminists—ruined the working class. People started to discriminate against whites. It’s because of that that society is so screwed up. Way back it used to be that you got a job or into school because of your merit. Now it depends on whether you are a fucking minority, women or a Jew.¹⁵

The hard, fast, and angry themes of the music in the hardcore scene appealed to these youths who felt like they were being left behind by society. It did not take long for skinhead music groups to start mixing racist ideologies into their music and to start forming explicitly racist bands, and thus a new medium from which disaffected youth could learn about racism and White

¹¹ “Thomas Metzger,” *Southern Poverty Law Center*, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/tom-metzger>.

¹² David Pearson, *Rebel Music in the Triumphant Empire: Punk Rock in the 1990s United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 6.

¹³ Randy Blazak, “White Boys to Terrorist Men: Target Recruitment of Nazi Skinheads,” *The American Behavioral Scientist (Beverly Hills)* 44, no. 6 (2001): 985; Borgenson and Valeri, *Skinhead History, Identity, and Culture*, 10.

¹⁴ Blazak, “White Boys to Terrorist Men,” 985; Borgenson and Valeri, *Skinhead History, Identity, and Culture*, 10.

¹⁵ Unknown Skinhead, quoted in Borgenson and Valeri, *Skinhead History, Identity, and Culture*, 10.

supremacy emerged. For example, one group from Minnesota called “Centurion” released a song called “This Planet is Ours” which had the following lyrics:

This Planet is Ours! We have the right...

This Planet is Ours! We have the might...

This Planet is ours! We will fight...

This Planet is Ours! Until the whole world’s White!¹⁶

Capitalizing on this emergent sub-culture, Metzger displayed ads for racist bands in his newspaper *WAR*. He would also report on concerts and events in the White Power music scene abroad, like the “White Noise” festival hosted by National Front aligned skinheads in the United Kingdom.¹⁷ He would go a step further and organize his own hate music festival in Oklahoma in 1988. It was called “Aryan Fest”, and it was the first hate-music festival in the United States. According to *WAR*, over one-hundred racists gathered to hear music, as well as speeches by movement leaders about “the plight of white workers across the country,” and high praise for “Robert Mathews, and many others who are now imprisoned.”¹⁸

Beyond making the content of his paper appeal to skinheads, he also chose content that lionized them and the impact he believed they would have within the revolutionary racist movement. An article titled “Return of the Warrior” which Metzger republished from a London, England based paper *Heritage and Destiny*, stated:

The skinhead cult is a cult of tribal assertiveness. Like all armies it presents a nihilistic image to its opponents, who will inevitably shrink in horror. Others will recognize that ancient barbaric qualities are just what our effete, over-civilized and

¹⁶ “Centurion: This White Power Band From Wisconsin Promises to Change the Scene Forever,” *Resistance*, issue 1, (Spring 1994), *Internet Archive*, 14, https://archive.org/details/resistance_01/mode/2up.

¹⁷ “British White Power Rock,” *WAR* ‘87, Vol. 6, No. 3, 1987 *Internet Archive*, 2, <https://archive.org/details/war-v-6-n-3/mode/2up?view=theater>.

¹⁸ “Aryan Festival ‘88”, *WAR* ‘88, Vol. 7 No. 4, 1988, 1, *Internet Archive*, <https://archive.org/details/war-v-7-n-4/mode/2up?view=theater>.

self-abasing society needs in order to revitalize it and steel it for the coming struggle for survival.

North America is a sick society in crisis. The skinhead revolt is a natural and inevitable development: it is the return of the warrior.¹⁹

These appeals to the racist skinhead's masculine virtue and vitality were meant to encourage them to participate in violence on behalf of the White Nationalist cause. Metzger wanted to make skinheads feel like their efforts were the only thing that could save White America from its perceived destruction. Unfortunately for Metzger, this very tactic is what would lead to his downfall.

In Portland, Oregon, a historically majority White city, around midnight on November 12, 1988, three racist skinheads from a group that called itself East Side White Pride (ESWP) attacked and killed Mulugeta Seraw, an Ethiopian immigrant, father, and student. The skinheads had been approached by an associate of Metzger's, Dave Mazzella, three weeks prior. Mazzella had gone to Portland to reach out to and organize the local racist skinheads. Mazzella was vice president to John Metzger, Tom Metzger's son, and president of WAR's youth wing, the Aryan Youth Movement. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), after hearing about the murder, Tom Metzger said that the ESWP skinheads did their "civic duty" when they killed Seraw.²⁰ At this time, the Pacific Northwest was becoming a hotbed for racist activity with multiple racist groups, foremost among them Aryan Nations, believing it would be an ideal place

¹⁹ "Return of the Warrior," *Heritage and Destiny*, London, 1981, reprinted in *WAR*, Vol. 7 No. 6, 1988, 9, <https://archive.org/details/war-v-7-n-6/page/8/mode/2up>.

²⁰ Elden Rosenthal, "White Supremacy and Hatred in the Streets of Portland: The Murder of Mulugeta Seraw," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 120, Issue 4, Winter (2019): 1, <https://doi.org/10.5403/oregonhistq.120.4.0588>; "Tom Metzger," *Southern Poverty Law Center*, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/tom-metzger>.

to establish a White ethno-state.²¹ The skinheads involved were apprehended and plead guilty to the charges of murder and aiding and abetting murder; before long the SPLC and the NAACP sponsored a lawsuit against the Metzgers and WAR on behalf of Seraw's family. Their charge was that Tom Metzger and his organization had intentionally incited these youth to violence by attempting to mobilize them as foot soldiers in a White uprising.²² Tom Metzger acted as his own defence and attempted to argue that the charges were a violation of his First Amendment rights. But as Elden Rosenthal, a co-counsel for the prosecution explained, the First Amendment does not protect speech that incites and prepares a group for violent action.²³ After a two-week trial, Metzger, his son, and their organization, were found to be liable for the murder of Mulugeta Seraw and were forced to pay \$12.5 million in compensatory damages, \$5 million of which Tom Metzger had to pay himself. He owed monthly payments to Seraw's family for twenty years. This case financially ruined Metzger and significantly reduced the influence of his movement; however, he still operated his organization's phone hotline and kept producing the *WAR* newspaper.²⁴

Though Metzger's WAR lost some of its influence, the racist skinheads that it had brought into the fold of White Nationalism continued to move throughout the movement and the country, sometimes attaching themselves to more mainstream White Nationalist groups like Aryan Nations.²⁵ The reason why this movement was so popular was that it provided a

²¹ Matt Novak, "Oregon Was Founded as a Racist Utopia," *Gizmodo*, January 21, 2015, <https://gizmodo.com/oregon-was-founded-as-a-racist-utopia-1539567040>; Rosenthal, "White Supremacy and Hatred in the Streets of Portland," 1.

²² Blazak, "White Boys to Terrorist men," 985; Rosenthal, "White Supremacy and Hatred in the Streets of Portland," 3.

²³ Blazak, "White Boys to Terrorist men," 985; Rosenthal, "White Supremacy and Hatred in the Streets of Portland," 3.

²⁴ Rosenthal, "White Supremacy and Hatred in the Streets of Portland," 4; "Tom Metzger", *Southern Poverty Law Center*, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/tom-metzger>.

²⁵ Borgenson and Valeri, *Skinhead History, Identity, and Culture*, 28.

community and an outlet for frustrated young men who could not cope, or believed that there was something wrong, with late-twenty-first century society. Borgenson and Valeri demonstrate that the leading reason so many young men became racist skinheads was that they felt that they (White male youth) were being left behind while others (People of Colour, women, Queer folks) got all of the benefits in society.²⁶ Becoming a skinhead made them feel like they had power, and they were in control because people started to fear them.²⁷ People who became racist skinheads also tended to lean towards cultural conservatism.²⁸ Many skinheads in interviews would allude to the “good old days” when things were better, as opposed to the “now” where things were confusing and disordered. Racist skins in particular were nostalgic for a time where gender roles and sexuality were binary and heteronormative, for example, when it was clear that (White) men held power over their wives (and women in general, as well as racial others). The fight for equality by others made them anxious, because it appeared to represent a shift in the power dynamics of society.²⁹ The racist skinhead movement was also aggressively homophobic, especially against gay men who they thought acted in an effeminate manner.³⁰ Former neo-Nazi skin, and member of Aryan Nations, Floyd Cochran told reporter Tom Flint in an interview that that homophobia was a uniting factor for the racist right and religious right. Discussing these connections, Cochran provided an insight into racists perceptions of the Church and the political climate in the mid-90s:

The religious right and the racist right are saying the same thing in different words. [...] It is acceptable to attack Gays and the racists understand that. [...] I could go out there on the street corner and if I made anti-Black remarks or anti-Jewish remarks, people in the community would attack me physically, [...]. But if [I] made anti-Gay remarks no one

²⁶ Blazak, “White Boys to Terrorist men,” 988.

²⁷ Borgenson and Valeri, *Skinhead History, Identity, and Culture*, 23.

²⁸ Borgenson and Valeri, *Skinhead History, Identity, and Culture*, 25.

²⁹ Corey Robin, *The Reactionary Mind Conservatism from Edmund Burke to Sarah Palin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 9.

³⁰ Borgenson and Valeri, *Skinhead History, Identity, and Culture*, 25.

would say a word. [...] The racists are standing back and waiting. They don't have to do anything because the Christians and politicians are doing it for them.³¹

Many male skinheads also sought to control the way women participated in their movement, most often by dictating their fashion and hairstyles. Many skins also did not think that female skins should participate in violence and that female skins should ask male skins to protect them.³² Many skins also used racism and anti-semitism to explain why they joined the movement and what they thought was wrong with the United States.³³ They thought that they had to be tough and violent in order to protect themselves and White women from aggressive Black men. They also felt that they needed to band together in order to resist Jewish control of the government, in defence of White power and control. They perceived that this sort of power was slipping away from White men, and generally being awarded to others, particularly Jews, who they perceived as being powerful, intelligent and rich.³⁴ Racist skinheads would have viewed the factors that pushed them toward the skinhead movement such as marginalization from society, poverty, insecurity, loneliness, and more, as proof or indicators of the conspiratorial forces working against them and White people more broadly.³⁵

Not only were these central reasons for many people to join skinhead groups, but they were also the sorts of ideas neo-Nazi skinheads used to radicalize other people into joining hate movements. As Randy Blazak explained, in the 1990s the number of active hate groups in the United States appeared to be on the decline, yet hate crimes were becoming more frequent. Blazak postulates that part of this trend may be that after the 1990 Hate Crimes Statistics Act,

³¹ Floyd Cochran, in "Talk about Gays," by Tom Flint, GLC 104 Box 4 Hate Violence II, in the Harvey Milk Archives-Scott Smith Collection, San Francisco Public Library.

³² Borgenson and Valeri, *Skinhead History, Identity, and Culture*, 31.

³³ Borgenson and Valeri, *Skinhead History, Identity, and Culture*, 31.

³⁴ Cooter, "Neo-Nazi Nationalism," 377.

³⁵ Borgenson and Valeri, *Skinhead History, Identity, and Culture*, 31-32.

law enforcement agencies became better at identifying and reporting hate crimes.³⁶ Though, as Ely Aaronson has shown, implementing legal parameters to prosecute hate offenders is only part of a solution, and a part that leaves something to be desired. At the end of the day, legislation like this only serves to grow the carceral state, which negatively impacts everyone. Legal reforms do not solve the root issues that cause people to turn to hate crime in the first place.³⁷ Better parameters for prosecuting hate crimes also do not explain why the number of hate crimes would be going up while the number of hate groups stayed low. But as we have seen, not all skinheads were part of White Nationalist hate groups; many of them were just misguided youths, influenced by racist media, performing violent crimes on their own. That is why Metzger was so interested in reaching out to them, to organize the energy that was already there. This racist action may also have been a manifestation of Beam's strategy of "leaderless resistance," orchestrated with the help of digital interactions and information.

Beyond magazines and racist newspapers, the late 80s and 90s saw the emergence of a new form of communication and information sharing, the Internet. White Nationalists began making use of the Internet very early, and it became an important tool in their arsenal of recruitment. Rather than having to rely on the postal service, or subscribers handing off their copies of magazines, the Internet allowed White Nationalists to communicate with each other with the click of a button. The use of the internet by White Nationalist groups first began in the mid-80s when reports emerged that a "high tech" bulletin board called Aryan Nation Liberty Net could be accessed for \$5 by "anyone with a computer." The leader of Aryan Nations, Richard Butler, claimed that the network was restricted, and its contents, which included a list of

³⁶ Blazak, "White Boys to Terrorist Men," 982.

³⁷ Ely Aaronson, *Slave Abuse to Hate Crime: The Criminalization of Racial Violence in American History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 199-200.

“enemies of the Aryan race” could only be accessed by members who had been provided the access code. These “enemies” included communist organizations, high profile Jewish people and “race traitors.” Of course, he claimed that this list was merely to keep people in the movement informed and was not a “hit list.”³⁸ However, these claims appear highly dubious especially since these reports emerged during the wave of coverage on the Order, who were responsible for the murder of Alan Berg. These reports also revealed that Louis Beam, who had worked as a computer consultant, was responsible for setting up the Aryan Nations computer network.³⁹ Beam had, as discussed in chapter three of this thesis, created a ‘points system’ for determining whether alleged enemies of the White Nationalist movement were worth considering as targets for assassination. In this context it seems clear that the intention of the computer network was to facilitate Beam’s preferred revolutionary strategy, “leaderless resistance.” If disparate cells could refer to an online list where the leadership posted targets and directives, then that would be an effective solution to the lack of a central leadership structure in the leaderless resistance model.⁴⁰

However, as we have already seen, the Order’s terroristic crime spree did not bring about the apocalyptic revolution that they had envisioned and was perceived by many in the movement to have been a catastrophe. The Order’s failure had highlighted the interconnectedness of the movements disparate groups and drew the attention of federal authorities. What followed was a crackdown on the vanguardist groups by the FBI and President Ronald Reagan’s Attorney General Edwin Meese. This string of arrests and prosecutions eventually led to the capture and

³⁸ “High-Tech Hatred” *Newsweek*, December 24, 1984, found in, “White Supremacist Groups Part 1 of 2,” “The Order,” *FBI Vault*, 15; “Leader Claims Neo-Nazis Have Computer Network,” *The Los Angeles Times*, December 17, 1984, found in, “White Supremacist Groups Part 1 of 2,” “The Order,” *FBI Vault*, 19.

³⁹ “Aryan Group, Jail Gangs Linked: FBI Reports on White-Supremacist Organization,” *Washington Post*, December 18, 1984, found in, “White Supremacist Groups Part 1 of 2,” “The Order,” *FBI Vault*, 16; “Computer Network Links Rightist Groups and Offers ‘Enemy’ List,” *New York Times*, February 15, 1985, found in, “White Supremacist Groups Part 2 of 2,” “The Order,” *FBI Vault*, 15.

⁴⁰ Louis Beam, “Leaderless Resistance,” *The Seditonist*, 12, February 1992, Final Edition, *Internet Archive*, 4, https://archive.org/details/Leaderless_Resistance_The_Seditonist/mode/2up.

indictment, on various charges from racketeering to sedition, of Louis Beam, Robert Miles, Richard Butler, William Potter Gale, founder of the Posse Comitatus, James Ellison of the CSA, Glen Miller, former leader of the White Patriot Party and many other rank and file members of the Order, the CSA, the Arizona Patriots and other vanguardist groups.⁴¹ However, in the end, the prosecution failed to convince the jury that the defendants were guilty of sedition. Strikingly, Beam's leaderless resistance seemed to have worked as intended in this instance as the prosecution found it exceedingly difficult to explain to the jury exactly how Beam and his fellow defendants had "led" the Order.⁴² The leaders were found "not guilty" but the rank-and-file members, many of whom were already serving prison sentences, were carted back to jail. Notably, one of these foot soldiers, who would end up dying in prison, was David Lane, the man who coined the White Nationalist slogan, the "14 Words": "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for White children."⁴³

Lane and his legacy and influence also deserve some discussion in this chapter, as his 14 Words are an important idea within White Nationalism and their popularity and influence can be attributed to the information sharing power of the Internet. As Sara Kamali highlights, the 14 Words are a battle cry that effectively portray exactly what it is that the White Nationalist movement believes they stand against, White genocide and the destruction of White civilisation.⁴⁴ Lane believed that "the White race cannot share Gods, religion, technology, food, women, territory or anything of value with another race," and this belief is what prompted him to coin this credo and create a new religion for his movement.⁴⁵ This motto is also intrinsically

⁴¹ Leonard Zeskind. *Blood and Politics*, 145-147.

⁴² Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 148.

⁴³ Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 169.

⁴⁴ Sara Kamali, *Homegrown Hate: Why White Nationalists and Militant Islamists Are Waging War against the United States* (University of California Press, 2021), 42.

⁴⁵ David Lane, *Revolution by number: 14* (St. Maries, Idaho: 14 Word Press), iii.

linked to gender, and the virility of White men, as it calls on White men to do two things, protect and procreate White offspring for the survival of the White race. As Kamali notes, the 14 Words make it clear that White women hold a central place in this movement, and their place is to serve as “vessels of reproduction” in the securing of this White future.⁴⁶ This is another example of why White nationalists oppose feminism, as discussed previously, they saw it as a conspiracy to unsex women and halt the reproduction of White off-spring. The White nationalist’s goals are dependent upon the domination and control of women. Lane’s career started out like many other White Nationalists: he had moved from radical conservative movements like the John Birch Society to more extreme groups like the KKK and Christian Identity, before winding up in the Order. After his arrest, he took on a new role as an ideologue of the movement, coining the 14 Words and concocting his own version of Odinism, militant-Wotanism.⁴⁷ The impact this neo-Pagan faith had on the White Nationalist and skinhead movements cannot be understated. Tom Metzger’s *WAR* newspaper is thickly populated with Norse iconography and images of Aryan Viking warriors. Each issue of *WAR* also features a list of jailed White Nationalists and information to reach them by post, so subscribers could correspond with them. David Lane’s name was always on the list.

A relevant aside, Odinism is a religion based on ancient Norse myths and legends. Similar to other polytheistic religions there are numerous gods and goddesses that each permeate the living world according to their own domain. The main deific figure in this theology is of course, Odin, the All-Father, whose domain encompasses the sun, moon, and stars but also the hills, plains, and human beings. Lane took inspiration from Odinism to create this new theology

⁴⁶ Kamali, *Homegrown Hate*, 42.

⁴⁷ Kamali, *Homegrown Hate*, 58.

for White nationalists. Wotanists believe that their faith is a religion made solely for White Anglo-Saxons, and that White people are made in the image of the Norse gods. Kamali explains that this racialized aspect of Wotanism makes it very appealing to White nationalists, because it is linked to their “heritage” and also encourages tribal affiliation to the group. Lane purposefully fashioned the religion to encourage these ideas of blood (heritage) and soil (tribe) as Kamali outlined.⁴⁸ “Blood and soil” was of course a German Nazi slogan and is now a popular battle cry and chant at White nationalist demonstrations, such as at the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017. It should be noted that not all Odinists are White nationalists, but Wotanism is by its very nature a White nationalist and White supremacist theology. This religion also glorifies violence and in particular, glorious death in battle. Since this is the only way to reach Valhalla, the golden hall of the gods, where fallen warriors drink and prepare for Ragnarok, the apocalyptic final battle that will usher in a new world. In this way it is clear how Wotanism appeals to masculine ideals and identity. It is not a religion that preaches peace and tolerance, in fact it is quite the opposite. It is an attractive faith for White nationalists because it venerates Whiteness and provides a religious justification for violence, that justification being the essence of the 14 Words.⁴⁹

Writing from prison Lane was able to do more for the White nationalist cause than he ever could have if he had remained a free revolutionary. He became an important ideologue of the White power movement and of White Nationalism by using the Internet to publish his writings. Despite being in prison, he married a woman name Katja Maddox, who had some computer skills and the know-how to run an online news letter.⁵⁰ They published Lane’s works

⁴⁸ Kamali, *Homegrown Hate*, 58.

⁴⁹ Kamali, *Homegrown Hate*, 62.

⁵⁰ George Michael, “David Lane and the Fourteen Words,” *Totalitarian Movements and political religions*, Vol. 10 (1), (2009): 50, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14690760903067986>.

through 14 Words Press and called their newsletter *Focus Fourteen*. Lane wanted his 14 Words to be “the most sacred, well-known and motivating complex of words in the history of earth.” He believed that “they are the only issue for any sane White person on this planet today.”⁵¹ Lane’s situation, and his story were compelling to would-be White power adherents. He was seen as a prisoner of war, held by the enemy because of how dangerous he was. In this way, despite the failure of the Order from behind his prison walls he was still able to become a major influence in the emergent White Nationalist movement. When he died in 2007, White Nationalists around the globe held a “Global Day of Remembrance”, marked with eulogies and demonstrations in his honour.⁵²

We have already seen numerous examples like that of David Lane; martyrs and personalities within this movement who harp on the same ideas and push the same ideologies. Even William Pierce created his own religion, Cosmotheism. People like Lane or Robert Mathews, who are seen as victims of the alleged anti-White conspiracies serve as idols in this movement, almost as much, or more so than the leaders of the movement themselves do. Men, and in rare cases women, like these serve as inspiration to new generations of White Nationalists, people whose deeds they believe ought to be emulated and honored. Wives and widows of the martyred and imprisoned White Nationalists play an integral role in these processes of commemoration and remembrance. William Robert Billups has shown how these women, especially the wives and partners of Mathews and Lane gained “celebrity status” in the White

⁵¹ Lane, *Revolution by number: 14*, iv.

⁵² Michael, “David Lane and the Fourteen Words,” 56.

Nationalist movement in the 80s and 90s, mostly because of their husband's deeds, but also because of the support and the children they provided for their men.⁵³

Indeed, women martyrs also play an important role and in some cases their impact could be more evocative than the martyrdom of their male counterparts. Robert Billups has shown that women who have died for the White Nationalist or White supremacist cause have been used as incredibly effective rallying symbols. Two such women were Kathy Ainsworth and Vicki Weaver. Ainsworth was killed in 1967; she was shot in the back as she was attempting to deliver a bomb to assassinate Meyer Davidson, a Jewish community leader who was denouncing the KKK's attacks on Black churches and Jewish temples in Meridian, Mississippi.⁵⁴ Weaver was killed at Ruby Ridge, Idaho in a stand-off between White separatists and FBI officers on August 22, 1992. Weaver died with her infant daughter in her arms and became a symbol of White innocence and womanly virtue being threatened by the "Jewish controlled" tyrannical government.⁵⁵ Robert Billups also highlights how much of this commemoration takes place in digital spaces, particularly on White Nationalist forums and instant message boards like *Stormfront*, and it is on the internet, in spaces like this, where people are most likely to encounter and interact with racist content.⁵⁶ Unlike in the past, where subscribers of racist groups' mailing lists had to wait to receive their publications, and would have to travel or leave their homes to find others with whom to discuss their beliefs, the Internet allowed people to consume this content and discuss it with others instantly, and without having to leave their homes.

⁵³ William Robert Billups, "Martyred Women and White Power since the Civil Rights era: From Kathy Ainsworth to Vicki Weaver," *Journal of American History*, Volume 109, Issue 4, March (2023): 823, <https://doi-org.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/10.1093/jahist/jaad002>.

⁵⁴ Robert Billups, "Martyred Women and White Power since the Civil Rights era," 812.

⁵⁵ Robert Billups, "Martyred Women and White Power since the Civil Rights era," 824.

⁵⁶ Robert Billups, "Martyred Women and White Power since the Civil Rights era," 826-827.

A study conducted by Tiana Gaudette, Ryan Scrivens and Vivek Venkatesh found that the Internet played a very important role in the racist skinhead movement of the 90s and early 2000s. They interviewed ten former racist skinheads from Canada⁵⁷ who shared their experiences from their time in the movement. Of the ten people interviewed, four of them were first exposed to violent racist groups on the internet, usually by being directed to a group's website by someone else in cyberspace. For many of these interviewees, the exposure happened through their interest in hardcore music leading them to White power music videos and discussion forums.⁵⁸ As we have already discussed, actors within White Nationalist and violent racist movements, such as Tom Metzger, had realized the potential of racist music as a recruiting tool in the late 80s. The Internet made it easier than ever to distribute White power music and entice people to join extremist groups. As one participant said:

The messaging in the music was so important, right? You could learn more about ideology from the music. Like you'd listen to one band that might be hate core, which is one genre in the [white power] music where they'd talk about like . . . extreme shit like just . . . you know, beating up immigrants on site, or even single-issue stuff. They would talk about burning down native reservations or just really extreme stuff. And you could listen to that if you were in a real pissed off mood. Or if you were in a party mood, you could listen to another group that's talking about brotherhood and . . . you know, everyone getting together and . . . you know, that kind of thing. So, there was something for every mood you were in I found.⁵⁹

The Internet made it easier than ever for White nationalists and racist skinheads to reach out to potential recruits. Even for the participants in the study who first encountered and joined the movement outside of digital spaces, the Internet was still an important tool for coordinating,

⁵⁷ Despite not being the focus of this thesis, I have already discussed how this movement is international, and thanks to the power of the Internet this is truer than ever before. The experience of racist skinheads in Canada would be very similar to that of racist skinheads in the United States.

⁵⁸ Tiana Gaudette, Ryan Scrivens and Vivek Venkatesh, "The Role of the Internet in Facilitating Violent Extremism: Insights from Former Right-Wing Extremists," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 34, no. 7 (2022): 1344-1345, doi:10.1080/09546553.2020.1784147.

⁵⁹ Study Participant 2 quoted in, Gaudette, Scrivens, Venkatesh, "The Role of the Internet in Facilitating Violent Extremism," 1345.

communicating, and reaching out to potential new members. Once they became interested in the movement, they could learn more about it online and discuss ideology and movement history with other members. Indeed, another quote from a participant shows how powerful the Internet was as a tool for radicalising youth and how simple communication on the web could be more influential than even White Nationalist newspapers:

I would learn as much as I could from people [in the violent extremist movement], especially those who had been involved for longer. Because when I started [to get involved in violent extremism] from the beginning, I didn't know anything, you know? At the beginning, you start learning, you start learning all this [extreme right] lingo. You're like, "what's fourteen words? Oh right! Well who is that guy in the movement?" He goes, "well, he started this group called The Order." And you go, "well, what's The Order?" He goes, "well, they're a group who robbed banks and they were like white revolutionaries!" and I'm like, "well, that's so cool!" I'm like, "where can I learn more about that?" He's like, "well, read this book. And then there's a movie, and then you can learn about it and this other [extreme right] guy too." And then I find out that the guy from The Order is in jail and I can reach him and I can write to them!⁶⁰

The Internet made it easy for people to access ideologically racist information, and more experienced group members were often willing to educate new members and answer their questions. This not only fueled their radicalization by exposing them to racist information, but it also made them feel welcome in the community and that they were a part of something, which was a feeling that many of the study participants admit they had trouble finding before joining the racist skinhead movement.⁶¹

Blazak discusses how the feelings that lead disaffected youth to join racist skinhead gangs can be understood through anomie and strain theory. Essentially, the idea is that White youth were experiencing anomie because they felt like they were owed something which they were not receiving. Blazak explains that the thing that is lacking could be anything, from not

⁶⁰ Study Participant 1 quoted in, Gaudette, Scrivens, Venkatesh, "The Role of the Internet in Facilitating Violent Extremism," 1347.

⁶¹ Gaudette, Scrivens, Venkatesh, "The Role of the Internet in Facilitating Violent Extremism," 1347.

being able to make friends, or find a sexual partner, to not being able to find work and make money.⁶² Here I would like to remind the reader how we discussed that many skinheads often leaned towards cultural conservatism and yearned for “the good old days” when working class people allegedly did not have to worry. Or, for racist skinheads, a time when there were no race issues because the races were segregated, and immigration was constrained. These are of course, idealized, and mythologized pasts that never truly existed, but racist recruiters push these myths to enrage and radicalize White youth. An article in *Resistance* magazine, the prime White power music magazine for racist skinheads, from 1994 promulgated the idea that White people in the United States were losing their rights and privileges:

With the twentieth century rapidly nearing a close, we are faced with a frightening and very real prospect: the total demise of the White Race [...]. We have [...] sat idly by and watched in horror as our enemies have overturned the graves of our ancestors and mocked our claim to the birthright that was handed down to us through the blood they spilled.⁶³

By arguing that White people have lost something and that they have a plan to get it back, violent racists were trying to present themselves as the solution to the sense of anomie being experienced by White youth. They felt discriminated against and perceived that everyone but them was getting ahead in society.

By the mid-90s the skinhead movement was only getting bigger, and the leaders of the White Nationalist world began to see what Metzger had realized in 1988, that this movement had potential for mass youth appeal. The record label *Resistance Records* and its accompanying glossy magazine, *Resistance*, began publishing in 1994 and were so successful in large part due to their ability to advertise through the Internet. They started selling records and magazine

⁶² Blazak, “White Boys to Terrorist Men,” 987-988.

⁶³ “A People without Vision: A People Doomed to Perish,” *Resistance*, Issue 2, Summer 1994, *Internet Archive*, 27, https://archive.org/details/resistance_1994_2000-2002/mode/2up.

subscriptions over the Internet in 1995.⁶⁴ Not long after Metzger's loss of status in the skinhead movement because of his legal troubles, Willis Carto of Liberty Lobby and William Pierce of the National Alliance sought to purchase the company. Carto's acquisition did not go as smoothly as he would have liked and before long Pierce was able to swoop in and buy up two-thirds of the company's stock.⁶⁵ Pierce was a well-known figure in the movement, he had written the *Turner Diaries*, and everyone knew that the book had inspired the Order. By this time, it was also well known that Pierce and his book had inspired Timothy McVeigh with the plan to bomb the Oklahoma federal building in 1992, as payback for the Waco and Ruby Ridge incidents at the beginning of the decade. *Resistance* magazine was full of advertisements for the National Alliance even before Pierce acquired it. One advertisement featured a photo of a young blond girl with the headline "What did you do during the Revolution, Daddy?" obviously making a gendered appeal to White men to act as protectors of their race and offspring, this ad was accompanied by a quote from Robert Mathews, "The fate of every last White man, woman, and child on this planet lies squarely on the shoulders of us here today. Out of all of the Racialist organizations in the Nation, the Alliance — and only the Alliance — has the potential to bring us to victory."⁶⁶

Not all skinheads or *Resistance Records* subscribers immediately rushed to join the National Alliance, and indeed Pierce and the man he put in charge of *Resistance*, Erich Gliebe, did not want them to. Pierce was still intent on creating an elite group of racist intellectuals and leaders, not a rabble of racist street fighters. While he appreciated the impact *Resistance* could have as an ideological tool, he still did not believe that the tattooed, hard drinking, White power

⁶⁴ Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 451.

⁶⁵ Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 451.

⁶⁶ "National Alliance Ad, 'What did you do during the Revolution, Daddy?' *Resistance*, Issue 7, 1996, *Internet Archive*, https://archive.org/details/resistance_07/mode/2up.

music listening skinheads were the people he needed.⁶⁷ *Resistance* magazine under Pierce and Gliebe took a new approach by attempting to separate the wheat from the chaff; they still tried to appeal to the skinheads but also tried to mould them into the more clean cut and professional racist warriors Pierce desired to form his revolutionary vanguard. One article in the Fall 1999 issue of *Resistance*, encouraged skinheads to join the military as a way to learn skills that would be valuable in the revolution, and stated that “skinheads who have smeared their bodies with tattoos are going to find it rough going for about their first year in the Army,” and “While you are in the Army have zero contact with other skinheads [...]. When you are off duty, *do not* wear your nonsensical skinhead paraphernalia, go to “concerts,” or otherwise have anything to do with the local yahoos.”⁶⁸

After Pierce died on July 23rd, 2002, Gliebe took over as the head of the National Alliance, but he continued to have trouble connecting with his target audience. While the skinheads had some respect for Gliebe - he had been a boxing champion who fought under the moniker the “Aryan Barbarian” - it was clear that he had little respect for them.⁶⁹ About a month after Pierce’s death, the SPLC released a video of him and Gliebe giving speeches at the National Alliance’s secret leadership conferences. In his speech Pierce referred to members of other hate groups and skinheads as “freaks and weaklings” and “human defectives,” to which Gliebe agreed. The National Alliance soon fell apart, as skinheads boycotted *Resistance Records* and cut off much of the organization’s annual income. In this way, the leading and most successful of the White Nationalist organizations, that had provided an example to so many other

⁶⁷ Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 475.

⁶⁸ Joachim Peiper, “Planning a Skinhead Infantry”, *Resistance*, Issue 9, Fall 1999, *Internet Archive*, https://archive.org/details/resistance_wv_9/page/n9/mode/2up.

⁶⁹ Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 475.

hate groups and movement individuals, failed to maintain relevancy and appeal with young racists, and crumbled into obscurity.⁷⁰

At the turn of the twenty-first century William Pierce and Richard Butler were dead, Willis Carto and Tom Metzger were bankrupt, David Lane was in prison, and Louis Beam was being charged with molesting his daughters by his fourth ex-wife, Sheila Toohey.⁷¹ The ideological leaders of the movement for the past thirty years were no longer holding the reins. However, the ideas that they had molded and promoted globally through their publications, talk-shows, novels, and other media had influenced a new generation of racist activists. The neo-Nazi skinheads of the early 2000s would also soon lose their steam as youth culture shifted away from White power music, but they had laid the groundwork for what was to come through their savvy use of the internet to spread their beliefs and to incite violence. Even if the most influential White ideologues of the era were out of the game, all of their ideas and their creations were still available and anyone who sought it out could find it easily. The power of the Internet would keep their movement alive and spread its ideas even farther beyond what they could have imagined.

⁷⁰ “National Alliance,” *SPLC*, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/national-alliance>.

⁷¹ “Louis Beam,” *SPLC*, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/louis-beam>; “Richard Butler,” *SPLC*, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/richard-butler>; “Tom Metzger,” *SPLC*, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/tom-metzger>; Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, 535.

Conclusion

This is a very difficult topic to research and write about; having completed this work, I am struck by how similar the ideas that animated this movement in the 1970s, and before, are to the far-right talking points one might hear today on *Fox News*, or even from the mouth of the former president, Donald Trump. Moreover, researching and writing this thesis has shown me how people can so easily fall down the rabbit hole of far-right extremism. This research has also made me cognizant of an incredibly disheartening possibility, which is that once a person has given themselves over to a belief in these ideologies, almost no amount of reasoning or honest debate will be able to convince them that they are in the wrong. The reason is that these extreme right, racist ideologies are predicated on the idea that malevolent forces are working against “you.” Therefore, it must be up to the individual to extricate themselves from these movements, and to make that conscious choice. However, this presents its own challenges and difficulties, as Michael Jensen, a senior researcher at the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), has noted. Without support structures in place to assist with disengagement, people are more likely to reengage with extremist groups or succumb to mental health issues or substance abuse. To add to this difficulty, the United States has no structures in place to aid with disengagement from extremist movements.¹

Jensen’s work also found that, contrary to what people might assume about radical extremists, the average age of far-right offenders for violent crimes is 37.3 years of age. Jensen also noted that many offenders usually have a criminal history (48%), no college experience (47.1%), are unmarried (36.1%), and many are unemployed (21%). These factors make it even

¹ Michael Jensen, “The Link Between Age and Extremism,” *Generations Today*, March 15, 2023, <https://generations.asaging.org/link-between-age-and-extremism>.

more difficult for members of extremist groups to disengage from violent extremism because their involvement in the movement creates a “vicious cycle” where leaving would mean abandoning the only community that accepts them.² Moreover, the statistic surrounding age is also revealing, since someone in their late-thirties in the 2020s would have been born in the 1980s. This suggests that many of these violent offenders belong to the demographic that the White Nationalist movement was targeting with their propaganda throughout the 80s and 90s. They are the first generation of youth that were exposed to the Internet, right at the time when White Nationalists began using it as a tool for recruitment and radicalization. While not every offender would have been exposed to this ideology at such a young age, those who were are more likely also going through the aforementioned hardships, whether that was the result of an inability to reach important benchmarks in life, such as finding a romantic partner or establishing a career. These disappointments can lead to those individuals feeling aggrieved. Furthermore, if the reason why these individuals had failed to achieve these benchmarks was that they were incarcerated (and nearly half had criminal histories), then the cycle becomes even harder to break, as the stigma associated with criminal behaviour makes it even more difficult to find a job, and thus maintain a healthy lifestyle and maintain healthy relationships. What this amounts to is that these individuals find themselves trapped in this movement, which provides them with their only sense of community and belonging. All of these factors thus compound to create a situation that is very difficult to remove oneself from.³

The violent offenders of the late 2010s and early 2020s also grew up learning from a new generation of racist thinkers who rose to prominence after the first generation of White

² Michael Jensen, “The Link Between Age and Extremism.”

³ Michael Jensen, “The Link Between Age and Extremism.”

Nationalist ideologues lost their grip on the movement, one way or another. Many of these new pseudo-intellectuals and thought leaders emerged from the same White youth that had been the targets of White Nationalist propaganda since the beginning. White Nationalists in the late 90s and early twenty-first century had all of the work of their predecessors to build on and over thirty years of strategies, successful and non, to learn from.

One example of such a thinker is Greg Johnson; born in 1971; he is the founder of *Counter-Currents* webzine and the Counter-Currents publishing imprint. This is an organization dedicated to promoting “white identity politics,” and is a good example of the trend within the White Nationalist movement in the early twenty-first century of trying to make their aims appear reasonable. Their website claims that they “dismantle bad arguments for multiculturalism and globalization and promote workable, humane alternatives. [They] envision a world in which every ethnic group has a homeland of its own [...]”⁴ In this way, Johnson and other new-age White Nationalist thinkers can promote their ideology while claiming to not be racist; instead, they claim to be “pro-White.” Meanwhile, Johnson promotes a “humane” version of “ethnic cleansing” that would involve “repatriating” immigrants back to their “homelands.”⁵ Greg Johnson is a leading thinker in this new alt-right that attracted media attention in the lead up to the 2016 election and after Trump’s victory, but he is not the most widely recognized leader. That title goes to Richard B. Spencer.⁶

Richard Spencer, born 1978, emerged as the face of the Alt-right in 2016, after appearing in a video making a speech at a conference for the National Policy Institute, a White supremacist

⁴ “About,” *Counter-Currents.com*, <https://counter-currents.com/about/>.

⁵ Greg Johnson, “Restoring White Homelands,” *Counter-Currents.com*, June 24, 2014, <https://counter-currents.com/2014/06/the-slow-cleanser/>.

⁶ Mark Sedgwick, *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right: Behind the New Threat to Liberal Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 237.

think tank that he became President and Director of in 2011. In the video Spencer shouts, “Hail Trump, Hail our People, Hail Victory” to cheers and Nazi salutes from the audience.⁷ He has an MA in the Humanities, but dropped out of his PhD program in 2007 to “pursue a life of thought-crime.”⁸ Spencer, who sees himself as an intellectual, is well known for this use of the Internet to spread his message, his speaking tours on university campuses, and a series of interviews with journalists in the wake of Trump’s election win.⁹ His “Alt-Right Manifesto” which he published on August 11, 2017 is focused on winning the “hearts and minds” of White Americans through “metapolitics” which is a political strategy based on promoting ideology as a precondition for political success.¹⁰

This was something that the alt-right seemed to have a lot of success with during the election. By sharing their ideology through internet memes, many of which championed Trump and his manhood, they were able to quickly spread their ideas throughout social media. During the election memes emerged on the message board 4Chan that depicted Trump’s visage photoshopped onto Crusader knights, the Incredible Hulk, and the God Emperor of Mankind from *Warhammer 40,000*.¹¹ Obviously, these images were chosen to promote the idea that Trump was a manly candidate, who would bring power and strength to the White House. The power of this new form of information sharing came from its ability to share a message and affect an emotional response quickly. The image, or GIF based format of many memes, also made them easy to share online and easy to absorb. The meme format is also incredibly subversive, people

⁷ “Rebranding White Nationalism: Inside Richard Spencer’s Alt-Right,” *The Atlantic*, December 16, 2017, video, 11:08, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVeZ0_Lhazw.

⁸ Richard B. Spencer, quoted in Sedgwick, *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right*, 227.

⁹ Sedgwick, *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right*, 228-229; “‘We memed the alt-right into existence’: Richard Spencer Extended Interview,” *Vice News*, December 12, 2016, video, 10:13, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aN8w7IUmc1o>.

¹⁰ Sedgwick, *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right*, 235, 237.

¹¹ L.C. Way, “Trump, memes and the Alt-right: Emotion and affective criticism and praise,” *Russian Journal of Linguistics* 25, no. 3 (2021): 796, <https://doi.org/10.22363/2687-0088-2021-25-3-789-809>.

who see the image may not realize it was created by a White Nationalist, and then, thinking it is merely a funny joke, share it to their friends and family on their own social media account. Unwittingly spreading these propagandistic messages. The major impact of these memes was that they mobilized political discussion and political action amongst sections of the population that are less likely to vote: even the very idea of voting for Trump seemed like a meme all on its own. But this engagement with politics from the farthest reaches of the Internet had real impacts on the outcomes of the 2016 election.

This Internet proficiency is what makes the alt-right takeover of the White Nationalist so dangerous: the power that the Internet has to disseminate ideas faster than any medium that has come before is an incredibly dangerous tool in the arsenal of this movement. As Abby L. Ferber highlighted, far more people consume White supremacist content than actively participate in the movement and that is as true as it was in 2004 as it is now in 2023.¹² By sharing their ideology online White Nationalist groups can make their ideas appear more mainstream, simply by the amount of content they produce. People who engage with these ideas can, share them amongst online communities, make memes about them, attack others on these platforms who disagree, and they can do all this without leaving their home, or by making multiple accounts to inflate the impact. This is meaningful because scholars of White supremacist groups have found that historically, one of the biggest factors that leads to people joining racist groups is the presence of said groups. If there are no racist groups in an area, people cannot join.¹³ However, with the advent of the Internet, communities are increasingly organizing in the digital world and so potential recruits no longer need to venture forth to meet in-person with likeminded individuals.

¹² Abby L. Ferber, *Home-Grown Hate: Gender and Organized Racism* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 6.

¹³ Raphael S. Ezekiel, "An Ethnographer Looks at Neo-Nazi and Klan Groups: The Racist Mind Revisited," *The American Behavioral Scientist* 46, no. 1 (09, 2002): 58-59, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764202046001005>.

They can do it from their desktop, laptop, or smartphone with ease. This also allows people to participate anonymously; a 2014 analysis of the social media platform formerly known as Twitter showed that nearly 20% of those who followed White supremacist content creators did so with anonymous, or unidentifiable accounts. For the most part, though, this movement has grown a significant following of individuals who are unafraid to support it publicly, with nearly 55% of those who followed White supremacist material using “Identifiable” accounts, and about 2% using “highly identifiable accounts,” which likely belonged to movement leaders. This indicates that many people who participate in this community online feel a sense of “pride” in their membership and are not afraid to hide their ideology.¹⁴ This means that these ideas are being shared very efficiently and effectively, and many are willing to engage with them without fear of being identified, which indicates that these ideas have indeed made their way into the mainstream in a way that would never have been possible without the Internet.

Even with some aspects of this movement’s ideology becoming mainstream, there is still a violent, revolutionary, aspect of this movement that lies under the surface. As we discussed in Chapter Four, Gaudette, Scrivens, and Venkatesh found in their interviews with former racist skinheads that a majority of them (eight of ten) felt that the Internet had played a major role in their radicalization to racist violence.¹⁵ Only one of the participants in that study reported that they had viewed digital participation in the movement as a “waste of time” because “it’s mostly just keyboard commandos and people that don’t show up for events and just like to talk a big talk

¹⁴ Sai Teja Peddinti, Keith Ross, and Justin Cappos, ““On the Internet, Nobody Knows You’re a Dog’: a Twitter Case Study of Anonymity in Social Networks,” In *Proceedings of the Second ACM Conference on Online Social Networks*, ACM, (2014): 88, <https://doi.org/10.1145/2660460.2660467>.

¹⁵ Tiana Gaudette, Ryan Scrivens and Vivek Venkatesh, “The Role of the Internet in Facilitating Violent Extremism: Insights from Former Right-Wing Extremists,” 1344.

and not actually follow through.”¹⁶ But as we have seen throughout this thesis, the propagation of violent racist ideas and the mainstreaming of this ideology is a danger in and of itself. Especially if those who become attracted to the more “mainstream” ideas, such as the “Great Replacement Theory,” racialism, or holocaust denial go deeper into the rabbit hole. In such instances, the “keyboard commandos” or self-taught, racist “armchair intellectuals” can be just as dangerous, if not more so than the active White Nationalist group participants.

In 2021, *The Washington Post* reported that domestic terrorist incidents in the United States have risen dramatically since 2015. Their report also showed that while many of these attacks have been associated with members of groups like the KKK or the Base a “large majority” of attacks were carried out by “lone-wolf” attackers, who were unaffiliated with any groups but were active on social media and sites associated with far-right beliefs.¹⁷ One such attack, which took place in 2019 in El Paso, Texas and resulted in the deaths of 22 people was perpetrated by a 24 year old White man who uploaded a manifesto to the Internet before commencing his attack. He admitted that he had intended to kill everyone he shot at and described himself as a White Nationalist. His goal was to kill Hispanic people in order to dissuade immigrants from Latin American countries from coming to the United States.¹⁸ As this thesis was being finalized, news emerged of another attack against Black people in Jacksonville, Florida. This time, a 21-year-old White man killed three Black people in a Dollar General; he was armed with an AR-15-style weapon marked with swastikas. Before the attack, the shooter

¹⁶ Study Participant 5 quoted in, Gaudette, Scrivens and Venkatesh, “The Role of the Internet in Facilitating Violent Extremism: Insights from Former Right-Wing Extremists,” 1344.

¹⁷ Robert O’Harrow Jr., Andrew Ba Tran, and Derek Hawkins, “The rise of domestic extremism in America: Data shows a surge in homegrown incidents not seen in a quarter-century,” *The Washington Post*, April 12, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/interactive/2021/domestic-terrorism-data/>.

¹⁸ “Texas Man Pleads Guilty to 90 Federal Hate Crimes and Firearms Violations for August 2019 Mass Shooting at Walmart in El Paso, Texas,” *Justice.gov*, Office of Public Affairs: U.S. Department of Justice, February 8, 2021.

called his father and told him to go to his computer, where his father found a suicide note and racist manifestos. The Jacksonville police sought to assure the community that the shooter “acted completely alone [...] there is absolutely no evidence that the shooter is part of any large group.”¹⁹ But of course, that is entirely the point; it is clear to see how attacks of this nature correspond with revolutionary White Nationalist strategies, particularly the strategy of leaderless resistance that was championed by Louis Beam.²⁰ Just as Beam intended, adherents to this ideology are using the Internet to inform themselves about White nationalism and “racial awareness” and then carrying out violent attacks on their own initiative, without jeopardizing other individuals from the wider movement. An article posted on Richard Spencer’s *altright.com* even calls for a renewal of leaderless resistance tactics, linking readers to a copy of Louis Beam’s original essay, and congratulating readers on their “promotion within the Alt-Right,” insinuating that they are their own leaders now.²¹

While Beam was against wanton violence for the sake of violence, and instead promoted violent action that would further their cause, some elements of the revolutionary White Nationalist movement have evolved to adopt “militant accelerationism.” This is a strategy that focuses on bringing about societal collapse as quickly as possible by exploiting pre-existing social tensions, and attacking infrastructure, economic and political structures and, indeed, the environment.²² This strategy is evocative of the Organization’s strategy for dismantling the System in the *Turner Diaries*, where Earl Turner’s unit carries out attacks meant to undermine

¹⁹ Juliette Kayem, “The Jacksonville Killer Wanted Everyone to Know His Message of Hate,” *The Atlantic*, August 27, 2023, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2023/08/jacksonville-killer-wanted-everyone-know-his-message-hate/675155/>.

²⁰ See here Chapter Three, 85.

²¹ Vincent Law, “Leaderless Resistance,” *altright.com*, 2017, <https://altright.com/2017/08/31/leaderless-resistance/>.

²² Michael Loadenthal, “Feral Fascists and Deep Green Guerrillas: Infrastructural Attack and Accelerationist Terror,” *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 15, no. 1 (2022): 170, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2022.2031129>.

public trust in the federal government, ultimately sparking the race war.²³ Their intention is to bring about societal collapse in order to reconstruct society as they see fit, just as in in Pierce's novel. As Michael Loadenthal has shown, social media apps like Telegram are rife with eco-fascists and far-right radicals who promote sabotage techniques and ideas for accelerationist terrorism, usually under the guise of warning other users about the potential "dangers" of committing those acts.²⁴

Perpetrators of accelerationist violence or sabotage are often turned into martyrs and "saints" by accelerationist adherents, further promoting or "gamifying" their violent acts, with memes, challenging others to "beat their high score."²⁵ This is an incredibly dangerous and radical subset of the White Nationalist movement that I think requires a deeper examination. While Loadenthal's article is extensive, one aspect it is missing is a gender framework and I believe this should be further researched. There is likely a link between accelerationism and the crisis of masculinity. If globalism, consumer culture, and late-stage capitalism are perceived as destructive forces that are impeding the ability of common men to fend for themselves and provide for their families then, in the accelerationist view, perhaps the best outcome would be the destruction of the system and the reconstruction of a more traditional patriarchal society from the ground up. It would also be interesting to see if there are any links between accelerationists and "doomsday preppers," which is a movement that, as Michael F. Mills has shown, exploded in popularity after the 2008 election of Barack Obama and has many adherents who often lean to the political right.²⁶

²³ See my discussion of the *Turner Diaries* in Chapter Three.

²⁴ Loadenthal, "Feral Fascists and Deep Green Guerrillas," 177.

²⁵ Loadenthal, "Feral Fascists and Deep Green Guerrillas," 180.

²⁶ Michael F. Mills, "Obamageddon: Fear, the Far Right, and the Rise of "Doomsday" Prepping in Obama's America," *Journal of American Studies* 55, no. 2 (2021): 363-364, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021875819000501>.

Finally, we return to the core of this thesis's argument, which is that throughout their history, the White Nationalist or racialist far-right movements have targeted White men and made appeals to their masculine identity to radicalize them and grow their numbers. This movement relies upon fabricated victimization and the scapegoating of others in order to appeal to people who feel that society has let them down, and in many cases, it has! Just not in the way that they are being told it has. These problems are real, as Michael Kimmel explains, but they are only real when based in an old fashioned and outdated understanding of masculinity, one that is rigid and unbending and unable to adapt to the modern reality.²⁷ Society has left these men behind, because society no longer has room for these types of unadaptable men. But racialist extremists are able to push the narrative that the fault lies with someone else to further their hateful agendas, and they tell their members that by committing violent acts they can affirm their masculinity, or that it is their masculine duty as White men to "defend" their place in society, and they are fighting so hard because it appears to be a rear-guard action, if not a final stand. This thesis has shown that these gendered appeals have been an animating force in White supremacist movements since the advent of racism in America, and especially in the White Nationalist movement of the post-Civil rights era. Racist ideologues, suffering from and recognizing in others gendered anxiety about their place in the world turned to violent extremism for a solution.

As we have seen, these movements make a lot of noise, but rarely have they affected so much political activity as they did from 2016 to 2020. A major factor of their success has been the advent of the Internet and their understanding of the power of the media and its capacity for information sharing. The Internet is a place where people, and particularly young people, can access nearly anything that can be imagined. Modern social media is designed to keep people

²⁷ Kimmel, *Angry White Men* (New York: Nation Books, 2013), 9.

engaged; the algorithms that control content are designed to learn your likes and dislikes and keep you scrolling. Even while doing research for this thesis, I have witnessed how quickly the algorithm can send someone toward extremist content. After making the mistake of watching one video by a popular far-right commentator on my personal YouTube account nearly all of my recommended videos for the next week were related to that content. There needs to be education in place, to provide youth with the knowledge they need to recognize dangerous content, or there needs to be better education for parents, so that they can understand how the Internet can lead their children down these rabbit holes. Most of all, though, systems need to be created to assist people who want to leave these movements but see few alternatives. Because getting out is possible, even for those who are born into it.

In 2004, Kelvin Pierce embarked on a journey of healing. Two years after the death of his father, William Pierce, founder of the National Alliance, Kelvin Pierce was ready to start contending with the way he had been raised. In an interview with ABC News, he said that he remembered fantasizing about racist violence as a child, he “[remembered] fantasizing about going to Washington, D.C., standing on a street corner holding a machine gun, and mowing down Black people with that machine gun.” He also remembers how he was desperate to impress his father in order to receive some sort of fatherly approval, and in an attempt to do so wrote an essay for school about “the virtues of Adolf Hitler.”²⁸ According to Pierce, the first time he began to question his racist upbringing was in college, when he attended Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia. There he encountered people from all over the world, but he was still trapped in the vicious cycle and wanted his father/ ideological leader to accept him. After his father’s death,

²⁸ Interview with Kelvin Pierce, quoted in: Alex Hosenball, Evan Simon and Mike Levine, “‘My life as a hater’: The dire warning from a white power leader’s son,” *ABC News*, October 6, 2020, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/life-hater-dire-warning-white-power-leaders-son/story?id=73431332>.

Pierce sought out counselling and learned that becoming a hateful person is like becoming addicted to a drug: it seems to be an answer to your pain at first, but “you end up feeling worse in the long run.” After President Obama was elected, Pierce believed things would get better, but that all changed when Donald Trump was elected. When Pierce heard about the events in Charlottesville in 2017, he said:

Watching those people march, and carrying those torches, and singing ... that, ‘You will not replace us,’ that immediately transported [him] back to [his] childhood, and to [his] father, and to everything that [his father] believed in and everything that he was trying to accomplish.²⁹

Pierce’s is not the only example of an “heir” to the movement who decided to get out. In 2013, Derek Black, son of former KKK leader and founder of the message board Stormfront, Don Black, and godson of David Duke, publicly disavowed White Nationalism after realising he did not believe in his father and godfather’s ideology. Black was also raised within the movement; he created a children’s version of Stormfront when he was 10 years old, as a young man he made speeches at White Nationalist rallies and was a major part of the push to bring these ideas into the mainstream. Black was not crass, he never swore, or used slurs, or called for violence and revolution; instead his message was that the White Nationalist movement needed to infiltrate the Republican Party to make them “the white party.” Black was even elected to a Republican committee seat in Palm Beach County, Florida. He also hosted his own radio show, from which he helped popularize the idea of “White Genocide” in the United States.³⁰ Similarly to Pierce, things began to change for Black once he attended college. Black chose New College of Florida

²⁹ Alex Hosenball, Evan Simon and Mike Levine, “‘My life as a hater’: The dire warning from a white power leader’s son,” *ABC News*, October 6, 2020, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/life-hater-dire-warning-white-power-leaders-son/story?id=73431332>.

³⁰ Eli Saslow, “The white flight of Derek Black,” *The Washington Post*, October 15, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/the-white-flight-of-derek-black/2016/10/15/ed5f906a-8f3b-11e6-a6a3-d50061aa9fae_story.html.

to study medieval history. He realized that if he wanted to make any friends, he would need to hide his White Nationalist ideology, and over time he came to realize that all of the things he had been taught about Jewish people and People of Colour were false. He began attending Shabbat dinners hosted by a Jewish classmate and eventually started distancing himself from his family, Stormfront, and the world of White Nationalism.³¹ In an interview with PBS, Black said that the reason he was able to extricate himself from the movement was that he had left his old community and found that he was willing to listen to the people in his new one, but his thoughts about the difficulties associated with people like his parents leaving the movement echo those of Michael Jensen. Black said,

[His] parents [...] could possibly be persuaded, but not in the situation that they are in, not where their closest friends are white nationalists. Not where the cause of their life is white nationalism, not where they fear if they ever change their minds that they would be ridiculed for it.³²

In both of these cases, children raised in the White Nationalist movement were able to bring themselves out, and in both cases, it was because they received educations and had access to support systems. In Pierce's case, he was able to seek counselling, and in Black's it was his college friends who helped him find his way out. Both of these men are now doing what they can to help others disengage, because they know that the fight against hate is not over, even with former President Donald Trump out of the White House. Donald Trump's success reignited the movement, and his defeat has deflated it somewhat, but as Black points out, there were still

³¹ Eli Saslow, "The white flight of Derek Black," *The Washington Post*, October 15, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/the-white-flight-of-derek-black/2016/10/15/ed5f906a-8f3b-11e6-a6a3-d50061aa9fae_story.html.

³² Derek Black, interview by Michel Martin, "What Made Fmr. White Nationalist Derek Black Change his Mind," *PBS*, December 17, 2020, <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/amanpour-and-company/video/what-made-fmr-white-nationalist-derek-black-change-his-mind/>.

millions of Americans who “saw the most explicit white supremacy attached [to] this administration and still voted for it.”³³

As a final note, we in North America need to examine and begin to dismantle many of our conceptual understandings of what it means to be a man. As we have seen, this movement attracts individuals who are in search of community and belonging, and those who are able to escape it usually do so by finding a new community to call their own. Even more than a crisis of masculinity, America is experiencing a “crisis of connection,” as *The Economist* reports.³⁴ Survey data shows that only 27% of men have “at least six close friends,” and 15% report having no close friends at all. Young White men are particularly susceptible to this, with many claiming having too many friends makes them seem unmanly. Research shows that lonely men have poorer health and exhibit anger and violent tendencies, and these figures are especially concerning when we consider that in 2021, 69.68% of all suicide deaths were middle-aged White males.³⁵ Young men need community, friendship, and support. The best way to prevent young men from harming themselves and others is to create positive spaces for male community and to teach young men and boys to move past outdated ideas of masculinity. This could be done through after-school programs such as clubs, sports teams, or music ensembles, or community led initiatives that provide young men with these same opportunities. Kimmel argues that the people who are stuck in these movements need to be able to see alternative routes to being “successful men.”³⁶ If you take anything from this thesis it is this, love, acceptance, and

³³ Michel Martin, “What Made Fmr. White Nationalist Derek Black Change his Mind,” *PBS*, December 17, 2020, <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/amanpour-and-company/video/what-made-fmr-white-nationalist-derek-black-change-his-mind/>.

³⁴ “Oh man! Male loneliness,” *The Economist*, January 1, 2022, 22(US), *Gale Academic OneFile*.

³⁵ “Suicide Statistics,” *American Federation for Suicide Prevention*, <https://afsp.org/suicide-statistics/>; “Oh man! Male loneliness,” *The Economist*, January 1, 2022, 22(US), *Gale Academic OneFile*.

³⁶ Kimmel, *Healing from Hate: How Young Men Get into--And Out of--Violent Extremism*, 26.

community are things that we all desire and need as human beings. In order to teach this to young men this needs to begin at the earliest stages, boys need to be able to see successful, non-toxic examples of masculinity, in their schools, in the media, and throughout their lives.

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