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# The Terrifying Convergence: A Legacy of the U.S Far-Right's Leaderless Resistance in the Twentieth Century

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**The Terrifying Convergence:  
A Legacy of the U.S Far-Right's Leaderless Resistance in the Twentieth Century**

An honors thesis presented to the  
Department of History,  
University at Albany, State University of New York  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for graduation with Honors in History

Ryan Szpicek

Research Mentor: Richard Fogarty, Ph.D.  
Research Advisor: Christopher Pastore, Ph.D.

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## Abstract

A former Klansman and Aryan Nations ambassador named Louis Beam argued that right-wing activists would need to go to war with the U.S. federal government to preserve their culture. He updated an organizational theory known as “leaderless resistance” to prepare the right-wing militants for war. His version of leaderless resistance called for a decentralized communication network that allowed right-wing activists to exchange knowledge about engaging in independent violence. Aryan Nations brought leaderless resistance theory to life through their Aryan Liberty Network, which debuted in 1984 and enabled previously isolated right-wing groups in the United States to communicate with one another. This early network sparked the emergence of the 1990s Patriot Movement, which, in turn, developed its own online platforms in the early 2000s. As the Movement gained momentum during the presidency of Barack Obama (2009-2017), it produced new websites like *Stormfront*, *The Daily Stormer*, and *8chan*, which became part of the largest network of far-right websites in the world. As this paper will argue, Beam’s decentralized model for right-wing activism and his efforts to utilize the internet’s powerful (and anonymous) communication capabilities had the effect of unifying what had been far-right communities with very different agendas into a more coherent movement that found common ground in their shared opposition to the U.S. government.

## **Acknowledgements**

Thank you Doctors Pastore and Fogarty for your endless guidance and challenging me to reach for greatness that I did not immediately see at every turn as I never imagined myself as an honors student. This work is dedicated to my loving grandparents Allen and Edith Brafman who ensured I grew up with the eternal love of an extended family. This piece is also dedicated to the grandfather I never met named Abram Szpicek whose memory as a Holocaust survivor I chased and found abroad motivated me to complete this thesis.

Finally, thanks Mom, Dad, Tina, and my soulmate Fatima Syed for your unending love and support in this particularly difficult year.

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## Introduction

In 1983 Louis Beam recognized that Aryan Nation's goal to be the center of the white race worldwide would make them and other right-wing groups targets of the United States government. Beam sought a solution that would allow right-wing activists to organize in ways that would prevent authorities from tracking them. He built his plan on an organizational theory known as "leaderless resistance," which called for small activist cells motivated by a common cause to act independently.<sup>1</sup> Recognizing that "leaderless resistance" was developed initially to combat communists, Beam modified the theory to cast the federal government as the enemy. Also recognizing that right-wing activists could be prosecuted easily because many groups followed chains of centralized command, Beam envisioned a decentralized communication system that could allow for the free exchange of xenophobic, anti-Semitic, Racist, and anti-government sentiments. These very different groups of right-wing activists could be united through a decentralized network of communication that motivated them to commit independent violent actions. Beam believed the architecture for leaderless resistance was emerging in the internet, so he convinced leaders of the Aryan Nation and closely related groups that leaderless resistance was worthwhile in a secret meeting at the 1983 Aryan Nations World Congress in Hayden Lake, Idaho.<sup>2</sup> In attendance was Robert Jay Matthews, who formed The Silent Brotherhood or "The Order" with the primary goal of raising funds for Louis Beam who would

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<sup>1</sup> Louis Beam, "Leaderless Resistance," *The Seditonist*, accessed November 25, 2020, <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~satran/Ford%2006/Wk%202-1%20Terrorism%20Networks%20leaderless-resistance.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Kathleen Belew, *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 104-105.

setup this decentralized internet communication platform in efforts to win a war against the U.S. federal government.<sup>3</sup>

Historians are aware of the Order's escapades, origins, and well-entrenched connections to a wider milieu of white supremacist organizations. Investigative journalists James Coates, Kevin Flynn, and Gary Gerhardt were among the first to show the Order as a homegrown domestic terrorist group with an objective that would be met by following instructions outlined in the anti-government novel, *The Turner Diaries* (1978).<sup>4</sup> Later, scholars Evelyn A. Schlatter and Leonard Zeskind further argued it was necessary to normalize the existence of the extreme right's dark presence and impact on American history.<sup>5</sup> The wider exploration of the right-wing continued through investigative journalists and scholars Kenneth Stern, Andrew Gumbel, Roger Charles, Betty Dobratz, and more who clarified the origins of the white supremacist and militia movements that formed the early Patriot Movement.<sup>6</sup> Lou Michael, Dan Herbeck, and Mark Hamm also showed the emergence of Timothy McVeigh and the rippling effect his actions forced upon the new far right and America as a whole.<sup>7</sup> More recent scholarship from D.J. Mulloy and David Niewert explored the emergence of the contemporary alt-right and began exploring the internet's impact on the circulation and growth of the revived Patriot Movement.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Zeskind, *Blood and Politics: The History of the White Nationalist Movement from the Margins to the Mainstream*, (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Kevin Flynn & Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America's Racist Underground*, (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1989), 140.

<sup>5</sup> Evelyn A. Schlatter, "Aryan Cowboys: White Supremacists and the Search for a New Frontier," (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2000), 334.; Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, (Farrar Straus Giroux, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> Stern, *A Force Upon the Plain*, (Simon & Schuster: New York, 1996); Andrew Gumbel and Rodger G. Charles, *Oklahoma City: What the Investigation Missed--and Why It Still Matters* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 2013); Betty A. Dobratz and Stephanie Shanks-Meile, "White Power, White Pride!" *The White Separatist Movement in the United States* (New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan).

<sup>7</sup> Lou Michael and Dan Herbeck, *American Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City Bombing* (HarperCollins Publishers: New York, 1995), 121.

<sup>8</sup> David Niewert, *Alt-America: The Rise of the Radical Right in the Age of Trump* (London: Verso, 2017), 3; D.J. Mulloy, *Enemies of the State: The Radical Right in America from FDR to Trump* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018).

Kathleen Belew offered the most detailed view of the past forty years of scholarship on the far right by describing the emergence of the Patriot Movement in the 1990s. She and several others placed greater importance on leaderless resistance and the secret meeting between Louis Beam, Robert Jay Matthews, Richard Butler, and James Ellison.<sup>9</sup>

The efforts of the Silent Brotherhood, Aryan Nations, and other closely linked groups enabled these white supremacists to successfully build the Aryan Nations “Liberty Net,” which debuted in 1984.<sup>10</sup> This bulletin board platform enabled members to read posts and exchange messages that allowed previously isolated right-wing groups in the U.S to find common ground. However, the cost of bringing the “Liberty Net” to life was high. The Order was dissolved by the FBI who also raided and dismantled the Covenant, Sword, and Arm of the Lord militia group.<sup>11</sup> As federal authorities sorted through the Order’s leftover paperwork, they gained enough evidence to charge the Aryan Nations leadership and Silent Brotherhood members in a federal sedition trial on February 16, 1988.<sup>12</sup> Louis Beam, Robert Miles, Richard Butler, and other movement leaders convinced the trial’s jury that they were innocent since the Order’s use of leaderless resistance produced a nearly invisible chain of command.<sup>13</sup> While the senior membership of the movement avoided prison time, other right-wing groups were damaged in substantive ways. But they rebounded in 1990s following the death of Randy Weaver’s family at

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<sup>9</sup> Zeskind, *Blood and Politics*, (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2009), 165; Kathleen Belew, *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 104-105.

<sup>10</sup> “Computers and the American Patriot,” simson.net, Louis Beam Jr., accessed December 6, 2020, [https://simson.net/ref/leaderless/1984.inter-klan\\_newsletter.pdf](https://simson.net/ref/leaderless/1984.inter-klan_newsletter.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Kevin Flynn & Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America’s Racist Underground*, (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers), 394.

<sup>12</sup> Katherine Bishop, “Conspiracy Trial of 14 White Supremacists Begins,” *New York Times*, February 18, 1988, <https://www.nytimes.com/1988/02/18/us/conspiracy-trial-of-14-white-supremacists-begins.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Zeskind, *Blood and Politics: The History of the White Nationalist Movement from the Margins to the Mainstream*, (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2009), 100.



Ruby Ridge and the slaughter of the Branch Davidian cult near Waco, Texas.<sup>14</sup> These incidents unified the white supremacy and militia movements into the Patriot Movement.<sup>15</sup> Animated by these events and inspired by *The Turner Diaries* as well as James Cotes's book about The Silent Brotherhood, Timothy McVeigh bombed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in 1995.<sup>16</sup> McVeigh's actions seemed in keeping with Beam's vision for right-wing activism against the U.S. government, but the shocking violence with which he had acted and the public backlash that followed sent the Patriot Movement into hiding well into the 2000s.<sup>17</sup>

This paper will explore the emergence of the far-right following this period of quiet through websites like *Stormfront*, *The Daily Stormer*, *4chan*, *8chan*, and others. Tracking the activities and chat boards within these websites offers a distinct view of the personalities and underpinnings of the Patriot Movement. This ecosystem of hate catalyzed a later generation of extremists, including, among others, Dylann Roof, Brenton Tarrant, and Patrick Crusius who committed acts of terror that inspired still more right-wing activism. Beam advanced his idea of leaderless resistance in 1984, animating the convergence of far-right hate groups through the 1990s and early 2000s. As this paper will argue, Beam's decentralized model for right-wing activism and his efforts to utilize the internet's powerful (and anonymous) communication capabilities had the effect of unifying what had been far-right communities with very different

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<sup>14</sup> New York Times, "Another Federal Fiasco," *The New York Times*, July 12, 1993, <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/07/12/opinion/another-federal-fiasco.html>; Pierre Thomas, "WACO PROBE FAULTS ATF IN CULT RAID," *The Washington Post*, September 30, 1993, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1993/09/30/waco-probe-faults-atf-in-cult-raid/3bac3282-43e7-4f39-91ef-3e14be1f24d0/>.

<sup>15</sup> Stern, *A Force Upon the Plain*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 36.

<sup>16</sup> Mark S. Hamm, *Apocalypse in Oklahoma: Waco and Ruby Ridge Revenged*, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1997), 175.

<sup>17</sup> Jo Thomas, "Behind a Book that Inspired McVeigh," *The New York Times*, June 9, 2001, <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/06/09/us/behind-a-book-that-inspired-mcveigh.html>

agendas into a more coherent movement that found common ground in their shared opposition to the U.S. government.

### **The Emergence of Louis Beam's Leaderless Resistance**

Richard Butler, founder of white supremacist group Aryan Nations, hosted the July 1983 World Aryan Congress in his Hayden Lake, Idaho compound that he touted as, “the international headquarters of the White race.”<sup>18</sup> This was more of an aspiration to reach as attendees that drove down Rimrock Road passed the “ARYAN NATIONS” sign Butler placed there in June of 1973.<sup>19</sup> Guests who drove to the compound noticed how large the property was and how the foliage immersed them in an impressive remoteness. This event was part summer picnic and part church service. Butler's modest house was surrounded by flowers and guarded by armed men stationed in a watchtower.<sup>20</sup> Richard Butler's Church of Jesus Christ Christian bordered the house and was decorated with stained-glass windows with the Aryan Nations white supremacist logo. Attendees could attend paramilitary trainings, networking events, hear from attendees on the platform outside the church, or simply mingle with one another. Though another heavily guarded room lay within this compound where James Ellison of the Covenant, Sword, and Arm of the Lord militia group, Aryan Nations ambassador Louis Beam, Richard Butler, and staunch activist Robert Jay Matthews plotted what Ellison called the, “War in '84.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Kathleen Belew, *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016), 105; Schlatter, *Aryan Cowboys: White Supremacists and the Search for a New Frontier 1970-2000*, (University of Texas Press, 2006), 66.

<sup>19</sup> Kevin Flynn & Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America's Racist Underground*, (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1989), 55.

<sup>20</sup> Schlatter, *Aryan Cowboys: White Supremacists and the Search for a New Frontier 1970-2000*, (University of Texas Press, 2006), 66.

<sup>21</sup> Kevin Flynn & Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America's Racist Underground*, (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1989), 16.

The white supremacists and anti-Semites Ellison, Butler, Beam, and Matthews wondered how to go to war against the United States government in this secret meeting in the Aryan Nations compound. Louis Beam proposed an answer heavily informed by his life experience and a theory he updated. Beam served eighteen months in the Vietnam War as a helicopter gunner and joined a Texas chapter of the United Klans of America when he came home in 1969.<sup>22</sup> Once he heard David Duke's ideas, he joined the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in 1976 and became a state leader of the Texas chapter that same year.<sup>23</sup> As a Klan member, Beam visited the Aryan Nations compound for the first time in 1981. In return for Beam's visit, Richard Butler of Aryan Nations attended a Klan rally in Galveston Bay where he designated Beam an "ambassador at large" for his group.<sup>24</sup> Beam then moved to the Aryan Nations compound in Idaho where he cemented his relationship with Butler. Beam noticed anticipated that any war that Aryan Nations other white supremacist groups conducted would be hindered by their formal organizational structures.<sup>25</sup> These formal organizational structures made it easier for authorities to track these groups' movements and permanently stop their activism. Beam further theorized that any war that right-wing groups tried to commit against what they believed to be a "Zionist Occupied Government" would have to be conducted with decentralized communication systems. Beam brought this white supremacist and anti-Semitic interpretation of the U.S government as the ZOG to leaderless resistance theory.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> "Louis Beam," Southern Poverty Law Center, Accessed February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/louis-beam>: Zeskind, Blood and Politics, (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2009), 89.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> "Louis Beam," Southern Poverty Law Center, Accessed February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/louis-beam>.

<sup>25</sup> Chester L. Quarles, *The Ku Klux Klan and Related American Racialist and Antisemitic Organizations: A History and Analysis*, (McFarland & Company: California, 1999), 95-98: Louis Beam, "Leaderless Resistance," *The Seditious*, Accessed November 25, 2020, <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~satran/Ford%2006/Wk%202-1%20Terrorism%20Networks%20leaderless-resistance.pdf>.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

Anti-communist Colonial Amoss first discussed leaderless resistance theory in 1962 when he imagined “phantom cells” of people who could commit violent activism against communists with no central command alongside similarly designed cells.<sup>27</sup> Beam changed the enemy within leaderless resistance theory because he inferred the ZOG would be the new enemy of his time.<sup>28</sup> Beam preemptively responded to this perceived ZOG threat to formal membership in right-wing groups through his additions to leaderless resistance theory, which advocated for the same cell structure Amoss discussed—but with a twist. Beam wanted individuals whom he considered to be “patriots” of the same culture reacting to content, rather than orders, so these “patriots” could independently educate themselves on how to commit violent activism against the ZOG.<sup>29</sup> To sell his new version of leaderless resistance to the “patriots” he wanted to recruit new members using the “Sons of Liberty” from the American Revolution as examples of his theory in action. Beam claimed their system of communication resembled the one he sought to promote.<sup>30</sup> Beam knew the disjointed ideological and physical nature of right-wing groups needed an expansive decentralized communication network to bring them together and thought the emerging world wide web would be the best platform for dozens of hate groups to unify through a common culture of leaderless resistance.<sup>31</sup> Beam most likely sold his leaderless resistance theory to Ellison and Butler in the 1983 Aryan Nations Congress secret meeting as their seniority among their groups would ensure its implementation. From there, they all tasked

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Kathleen Belew, *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 106.

Robert Jay Matthews to fund the creation of this world wide web platform that would seed the unification of right-wing groups across the United States.<sup>32</sup>

Matthews's first step to developing the communications platform came when he and his wife Debbie hosted eight friends of his and their families for a dinner. After the men finished eating, Matthews led Ken Loff, David Lane, Richie Kemp, Bill Soderquist, Dan Bauer, Denver Parmenter, Bruce Pierce, and Randy Duey on a twenty-five-foot path to the barracks on his property.<sup>33</sup> They settled into the first floor with a fully stoked wood stove and blackboard where Matthews told them he intended to form a group where their actions as kinsmen would do the talking to achieve a common goal.<sup>34</sup> They needed to iron out how to procure funds, conduct recruitment, and generate money "for financing right-wing causes."<sup>35</sup> No one disagreed despite some uneasiness. Before going further, Matthews needed them all to take "an oath that you will remain true to this cause" and become blood brothers. He requested Parmenter's daughter, Kristian, to sit in the middle of them all to witness their actions that would be done for their children and the economic survival of the white race. When she could not come, Matthews asked Loff to get his daughter, Jaime Anne. Once Anne was retrieved and sat on the blanket, the men loomed over candles in a circle and repeated an oath that bound them all to a sacred duty to deliver their people from the Jews and bring total victory to the Aryan race without fear of foe or death. If one were to die, the rest would take care of his family. If one were to be jailed, the group would do their utmost to get him out. If one were hurt by an enemy, the rest would put that enemy to death. This oath also required the utmost secrecy and loyalty to "the Order" or the

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<sup>32</sup> Louis Beam, "Leaderless Resistance," *The Seditiousist*, Accessed November 25, 2020, <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~satran/Ford%2006/Wk%202-1%20Terrorism%20Networks%20leaderless-resistance.pdf>.

<sup>33</sup> Kevin Flynn & Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America's Racist Underground*, (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1989), 97.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

Silent Brotherhood, and any who violate this covenant would be cursed as “a coward and oath breaker.”<sup>36</sup> All the men completed this oath that finally declared a “full state of war” against the Jews that ruled the ZOG and those who fronted for them. Thus, the size of the Order meant operations would happen through a leaderless resistance of small cells independently working towards their common goal of war against the federal government. They voted counterfeiting as neo-Nazi William Pierce’s *The Turner Diaries* described would be the best acceptable way to raise money per their Christian Identity beliefs, until they realized robbery would be more lucrative.<sup>37</sup>

The Silent Brotherhood or the Order was a domestic terrorist group founded by Matthews, a few close friends of his, and fellow Aryan Nations activists whose first robbery towards a realized right-wing leaderless resistance was of a pornography store on October 28th, 1983.<sup>38</sup> Two months later Matthews upped the ante and independently held up a Seattle Citibank with a handgun on December 20. The teller gave Matthews \$25,900 and smartly slipped into Matthew’s bag a pink dye pack as he left the scene. While Matthews was running, the dye pack exploded with such force it knocked him to the ground, which left most of the bills unusable. Matthews escaped and made his way to Metaline Falls, Washington, where David Lane and he cleaned up some of the bounty with Zip Strip.<sup>39</sup> This was the Order’s last failed experience because Yarborough and David Tate who ran Richard Butler’s press and security respectively assisted the group. Yarborough took the Order members to observe him as he showed them how to properly rob an armed car and they robbed \$43,000 from a Continental Armored Transport

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<sup>36</sup> Kevin Flynn & Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America’s Racist Underground*, (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1989), 98.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid: Andrew MacDonald, “The Turner Diaries,” Internet Archive, Accessed December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, <https://archive.org/details/TurnerDiaries/mode/2up>.

<sup>38</sup> Kevin Flynn & Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America’s Racist Underground*, (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1989), 103-104.

<sup>39</sup> Coates, *Armed and Dangerous: the rise of the survivalist right*, (Hill and Wang: New York, 1987) 60.

Service.<sup>40</sup> Amazed with this early success, the Order brainstormed who their first assassination victim would be based on a points decimal system they developed. FBI agents, federal judges, Jewish people, Black people, and others were all assigned a decimal value. Numerous prominent names were discussed like Baron Elie de Rothschild, Henry Kissinger, David Rockefeller, and others who were added to a list they would use later. The first list of targets consisted of Norman Lear, Morris Dees who co-founded the Southern Poverty Law Center, and Denver radio host Alan Berg. Alan Berg made a name for himself through his very unfiltered radio show where he openly called upon anti-Semitic people to express their views, logic, and more, so he could show his listeners these people existed.<sup>41</sup> A few months prior to their brainstorming, David Lane worked as an ad-salesman of *The Primrose and Cattleman's Gazette*, a survivalist right newspaper. Lane and his publisher Roderick Elliot debated Berg after he called out the newspaper by name for its anti-Semitic publications.<sup>42</sup> After their debate, advertisers cut support for the *Gazette*, leaving Lane jobless. He blamed the “Jewsmedia” for running him out of Denver a few weeks before the 1983 Aryan Nations World Congress that called for a war against what he saw as the very same Jews who took his job away.<sup>43</sup> The Order’s turn to assassinations gave a perfect window for Lane to drive the car that would permanently end Berg’s radio show transgressions, though this act would also put the group on law enforcement’s radar.

On the night of June 18, 1983, Berg had been followed home by Silent Brotherhood member Zillah Craig who signaled to fellow members Lane, Pierce, Scutari, and Matthews setup near the street’s curb that it was time to assassinate Berg. They watched Berg pull in, Pierce

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Stephan Singular, “Alan Berg: Talked to Death,” *Rolling Stone*, January 31, 1985, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/alan-berg-talked-to-death-71920/>.

<sup>42</sup> Coates, *Armed and Dangerous: the rise of the survivalist right*, (Hill and Wang: New York, 1987) 66.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid: Kevin Flynn & Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America's Racist Underground*, (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1989), 180.

emerged from the car, and faced Berg's direction with his silenced MAC-10. Berg opened his car door in his driveway and smoked a cigarette as Pierce unloaded his weapon and each bullet hit Berg like jackhammers, which killed him instantly.<sup>44</sup> The Order's first hit was a success, and they continued their usual counterfeiting operations to raise more money for right-wing causes and the architecture for Beam's leaderless resistance theory. Days later on June 27<sup>th</sup>, former-Klansman Thomas Martinez passed out counterfeit bills as Martinez tasked him to do it in New Jersey or Philadelphia's black neighborhoods to cause havoc as prescribed in *The Turner Diaries* and *The Franklin Letters*.<sup>45</sup> Martinez ignored David Lane's advice and passed \$1500 worth of counterfeit in Kensington, Pennsylvania, for small items like newspapers and packs of gum—though he stretched his luck too far when he bought a fifty-cent lottery ticket at a Beerland Package Store.<sup>46</sup> The owner recognized the bill was fake after counting his daily receipts and told his clerk Carol Achuff to be on guard the next day. The next day, Martinez, high from his success and filled with bravado, made a crucial mistake and visited Beerland to start his day of earnings there with the same fifty-cent lottery ticket purchase. Carol Achuff recognized him this time and called the police. Martinez panicked, drove away from Beerland and arranged for another Order member to pick up the bag of counterfeit cash, which they then destroyed. Martinez, in an attempt to make up for his mistake, went back to Beerland with a real ten-dollar bill and told the owner he ran because he got scared and did not realize the bill was fake.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Coates, *Armed and Dangerous: the rise of the survivalist right*, (Hill and Wang: New York, 1987) 60; Kevin Flynn & Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America's Racist Underground*, (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1989), 205-206.

<sup>45</sup> Coates, *Armed and Dangerous: the rise of the survivalist right*, (Hill and Wang: New York, 1987), 70.

<sup>46</sup> Kevin Flynn & Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America's Racist Underground*, (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1989), 222-224.

<sup>47</sup> Kevin Flynn & Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America's Racist Underground*, (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1989), 223.



Martinez's blunder put him in the sights of the secret service, who acted quickly once they received word of his counterfeit operation.

The Beerland shop owner told Order member Martinez it did not matter because he called the police after Martinez gave him fake money and Martinez left before he was given the Secret Service agent's contact card. Martinez used his code name "Lone Wolf" to instead call David Lane code named "Spider" who called him a "fucking idiot" since he did not go to Jersey like their procedures called for.<sup>48</sup> Martinez broke and said he would be through with the Order's work after this incident. He would not get the chance to quit, as police and treasury agents picked him up from his house later that day, brought him to a federal building in the area, then asked him where he got the phony money. Martinez told them, "Are you crazy? Do you think I want to die?"<sup>49</sup> Police then realized he was part of something bigger and released him on a personal recognizance bond the next day. Despite this release, Martinez went to the FBI that same day to sell Matthews out in exchange for the protected federal witness program. Also on that same day, Martinez phoned and begged Order member Ken Loff for \$1,600, but Matthews came on the line and refused his request. "I know you're in a bad spot now, buddy, but try to sit tight.... We've got something big coming down soon, and after that we'll have plenty of money to get you an attorney." The mistake Martinez made led him to become an informant for federal authorities against The Silent Brotherhood, which gave powerful leverage for law enforcement to help them gradually dismember Matthew's group. However, law enforcement was not fast enough to catch

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<sup>48</sup> Kevin Flynn & Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America's Racist Underground*, (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1989), 224.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid: Kevin Flynn & Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America's Racist Underground*, (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1989), 308. Matthews knew Martinez never formally took the Order's oath but he hoped Martinez would rather reach out to him for help instead of going to prison.

Matthews who used all the group's reserve money to rob a Brink's armored truck, the proceeds from which helped build Louis Beam's leaderless resistance platform.

The heist earned the Order a staggering \$3.6 million.<sup>50</sup> The money was put to a number of uses as it was channeled through the group's Mountain Man Supply Company front. The money went into army rations, three-wheel motorcycles, hundreds of guns with thousands of rounds of ammunition, numerous noise stress analysis machines, and many more supplies. The most important purchases were Apple computers that Beam used to connect dozens of right-wing organizations for the first time.<sup>51</sup> "Imagine, if you can, a single computer to which all leaders and strategists of the patriotic movement are connected ... that every patriot is able ... to reap the benefit of all accumulative knowledge and wisdom of the leaders.... We hereby announce Aryan Nation Liberty Net."<sup>52</sup> This network was developed within Richard Butler's Aryan Nations and announced in a 1984 issue of the "Inter-Klan Newsletter and Survival Alert," a long-running newsletter publication at the time.<sup>53</sup> This twenty-four hour privately owned bulletin-board system allowed private messages between members to happen with announcements posted and made available for anyone to read. This network directly brought leaderless resistance into the culture of the United States right-wing as it allowed any groups within the network to more directly communicate and share ideas.<sup>54</sup> "At this very moment, key personnel and key leaders across the

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<sup>50</sup> Kevin Flynn & Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America's Racist Underground*, (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1989), 238-239; Coates, *Armed and Dangerous: the rise of the survivalist right*, (Hill and Wang: New York, 1987), 72.

<sup>51</sup> Kathleen Belew, *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 120-122.

<sup>52</sup> "Computers and the American Patriot," *simson.net*, Louis Beam Jr., accessed December 6, 2020, [https://simson.net/ref/leaderless/1984.inter-klan\\_newsletter.pdf](https://simson.net/ref/leaderless/1984.inter-klan_newsletter.pdf).

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*: Anti-Defamation League, "Computerized Networks of Hate," Internet Archive, Accessed December 1, 2020, <https://archive.org/details/ComputerizedNetworksOfHate/mode/2up>.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*.

country are buying computers and connecting themselves into this ‘on line’ patriotic brain trust.”<sup>55</sup>

The personnel that spread Beam’s seed of leaderless resistance through Apple computers and large amounts of stolen money across the nation were Robert Jay Matthews and his pregnant mistress Zillah Craig. They delivered these supplies to established leaders and rising patriots of the right-wing movement, which accomplished the Order’s primary goal.<sup>56</sup> They traveled to Cohoctah, Michigan, where Matthews gave \$30,000 to Robert Miles. Miles then wrote Matthews an introductory letter to take southwards and meet White Patriot Party Leader Glenn Miller.<sup>57</sup> On the way there, Matthews and Zillah Craig stopped in Ohio, Philadelphia, and then Arlington, Virginia where they met William Pierce, *The Turner Diaries* author and the source of their domestic terrorist groups training manual. Matthews and Zillah Craig then met up with Miller in Benson, North Carolina, where they also caught up with Order members Scutari, Barnhill, and Artie McBrearty. Barnhill and McBrearty just finished distributing \$140,000 towards more military equipment and \$10,000 to Missouri Christian Identity Leader Dan Gayman. Eventually, Klan chapters around the country began to dial into this Liberty Net including the Texas Klan by 1984, and the Aryan Brotherhood by 1986.<sup>58</sup> Federal authorities struggled to keep track of this network, which was made up for by the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith as they monitored Aryan Nation Liberty Net communications and published press releases about the network as early as January of 1985.<sup>59</sup> While the FBI could not access this network initially, they had plenty of evidence and Martinez’s insider knowledge and they surprised the Order in person.

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Kathleen Belew, *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 126.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Anti-Defamation League, “Computerized Networks of Hate,” Internet Archive, Accessed December 1, 2020, <https://archive.org/details/ComputerizedNetworksOfHate/mode/2up>.

As the FBI's informant, Thomas Martinez helped federal agents put the squeeze on The Order, shaking its foundations after authorities failed to arrest Order member Yarbrough at his home. While Yarbrough fled, the FBI reaped a treasure trove of evidence from his property that consisted of dozens of pistols and rifles, \$35,000 in cash, multiple vehicles, and a bedroom that had a peculiar staircase in its closet.<sup>60</sup> FBI agents Woffard and Anderson went up the staircase and saw a three by five portrait of Adolf Hitler set on a mantelpiece near a picture of Jesus Christ. A brown case was on the floor with a .45 caliber MAC-10 that the FBI would later learn killed Alan Berg. They also found ninety-nine sticks of Gelmax dynamite, a one and a half pound of C4 plastic explosive, and several varieties of grenades.<sup>61</sup> The agents also found even more uncomfortable information on law enforcement officers on computer print outs that revealed the leader of the local SWAT team's name, address, vehicle license numbers, photos, and dozens of other critical identification for many more officers.<sup>62</sup> Scutari got away and the raid on his house put the rest of the Order on edge, especially Martinez as he met up with Matthews and Yarborough at the Capri Motel in Portland on November 23.<sup>63</sup>

Matthews told Martinez in the Capri Motel hiding place that he would be part of an assassination team to kill anti-Klan attorney Morris Dees. This was an immense sign of trust since Martinez had never taken the Order's initiation oath. With the FBI after them, Yarborough grimly laid on the bed in anticipation of his death, which shook Martinez. Martinez secured the fate of the Order when he exited the motel room and spoke with his FBI handlers around the

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<sup>60</sup> Kevin Flynn & Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America's Racist Underground*, (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1989), 317-318.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid: Kevin Flynn & Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America's Racist Underground*, (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1989), 341.

<sup>62</sup> Kevin Flynn & Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America's Racist Underground*, (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1989), 318.

<sup>63</sup> Coates, *Armed and Dangerous: the rise of the survivalist right*, (Hill and Wang: New York, 1987), 74.

corner.<sup>64</sup> Martinez told them he was in room fourteen and identified Matthews and Yarborough in room forty-two. Once the agents heard Yarborough's name, they looked at each other with a new alertness and phoned someone. After the call, the agents told Martinez to go back into his motel room.<sup>65</sup> Martinez asked them if something would happen to Matthews because he had been told nothing would befall his friend. The agents merely retorted they would handle everything tomorrow morning. The next morning, multiple federal agents were outside the motel and Matthews took some time to scout along the high catwalk where he spotted an officer crouched in the bushes behind the parking lot. All of his senses went wild from the danger of capture and yelled towards his room for Yarbrough to run. Yarbrough tried to escape but was arrested and Matthews barely escaped to meetup with Scutari and tell him what happened. The only good next place for them to go was the safehouse on Whidbey Island across from Seattle. Martinez would never see them again because the FBI and Secret Service intervened.

The Silent Brotherhood was firmly on the run from the FBI and Secret Service and hid for about a week in Order member Sharon Merki's family's house, though she went back to the motel to learn how authorities knew Matthews and Yarborough were there. Posing as a reporter from *People Magazine*, she interviewed the motel night manager who told her the FBI only cared about who was in room forty-two, which led her to infer the authorities used Martinez as their weapon against the brotherhood. She told this to the rest of the members at the safehouse later that day to Matthew's disillusionment.<sup>66</sup> Around that same time, one of Matthew's followers phoned the FBI in Seattle and sold-out Matthews and the remaining members who were

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<sup>64</sup> Kevin Flynn & Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America's Racist Underground*, (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1989), 340.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Kevin Flynn & Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America's Racist Underground*, (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1989), 363.

surrounded by two hundred armed agents on December 7<sup>th</sup>. Duey brandished his Uzi machine gun against the agents but surrendered when he noticed they were all white men he figured he could trust. The Merki family helped stall police to burn important documents and then left, but Matthews refused to leave. When dusk fell, agents shot tear gas into the house, but that did not flush Matthews out. Finally, four agents engaged Matthews inside the house only to be fought off in a firefight. The SWAT team tried to move in, and Matthews shot into the air to keep them and the helicopter searchlight away so no one could easily spot him.<sup>67</sup> The helicopter then fired a magnesium illumination flare into the house, which unknowingly ignited ammunition, plastic explosives, and other ordnance that incinerated Matthews and the rest of the house.<sup>68</sup> By about eight in the morning, debris cooled enough to search the building's remains. Federal authorities found a blackened bathtub that had fallen from the second floor that dumped out the charred remains of Matthews with his chest cavity embedded with the Silent Brotherhood golden medallion all official members received.<sup>69</sup> The Silent Brotherhood collapsed with Matthew's death and the FBI arrested a majority of the group's members whose court cases ensured they would stay in prison.<sup>70</sup> The Silent Brotherhood's legacy does not end here though as they operated in a leaderless resistance cell-like way that enabled them to successfully establish their core goal in Louis Beam's Aryan Liberty Net which connected previously isolated right-wing groups at a deep cost to the movement that was not finished.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Coates, *Armed and Dangerous: the rise of the survivalist right*, (Hill and Wang: New York, 1987), 76.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Kevin Flynn & Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America's Racist Underground*, (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1989), 385-386; Associated Press, "13 Supremacists Are Not Guilty of Conspiracies," *New York Times*, April 8, 1988, <https://www.nytimes.com/1988/04/08/us/13-supremacists-are-not-guilty-of-conspiracies.html>.

<sup>71</sup> Louis Beam, "Leaderless Resistance," *The Seditonist*, accessed November 25, 2020, <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~satran/Ford%2006/Wk%202-1%20Terrorism%20Networks%20leaderless-resistance.pdf>.

In the Order's short lifespan as a domestic terrorist group, it accomplished the goal Robert Jay Matthews was assigned in the 1983 Aryan Nations Congress meeting. The Silent Brotherhood helped Louis Beam raise money for and distribute the computers that built Aryan Liberty Net, one of the first right-wing extremist computer networks that allowed previously dislocated hate groups to communicate and begin a long process of convergence into a coalesced far-right culture.<sup>72</sup> However, federal authorities found enough easily uncoded leftover documentation from the Silent Brotherhood to see their goal and they corroborated this information with jailed former members and corroborators that were leveraged for criminal indictments.<sup>73</sup> A new federal legal challenge came from a deal between the FBI and federal prisoner James Ellison, who was the leader of the Covenant, Sword, and Arm of the Lord (CSA) white militia group.<sup>74</sup> Ellison agreed to testify about the Silent Brotherhood's plans to kill a federal judge and FBI officer. He also gave insight into how Robert Miles, Louis Beam, and Richard Butler directed the group's actions beyond Robert Jay Matthews including plotting the, "War in '84."<sup>75</sup> Their sedition trial began on February 18, 1988 and an assistant U.S. attorney named Steven Snyder told the all-white jury the Aryan Nations World Congress meeting in Hayden Lake during 1983 led to subsequent bombings, robberies, and murders by the Order that were part of a conspiracy to establish an all-white Aryan Nation in the U.S.<sup>76</sup> Irwin Suall of the Anti-Defamation League called the trial "the most important legal challenge to the top leaders of the hate movement in memory."<sup>77</sup> Unfortunately, this legal challenge effectively ended when

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<sup>72</sup> "Computers and the American Patriot," simson.net, Louis Beam Jr., Accessed December 6, 2020, [https://simson.net/ref/leaderless/1984.inter-klan\\_newsletter.pdf](https://simson.net/ref/leaderless/1984.inter-klan_newsletter.pdf).

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Mark S. Hamm, *Apocalypse in Oklahoma: Waco and Ruby Ridge Revenged*, (Northeastern University Press, 1997), 15.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Katherine Bishop, "Conspiracy Trial of 14 White Supremacists Begins," *New York Times*, February 18, 1988, <https://www.nytimes.com/1988/02/18/us/conspiracy-trial-of-14-white-supremacists-begins.html>.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

these white supremacist leaders in the defense were able to play on Ellison as a turncoat and convinced the jury he made up the conspiracy as the key government witness.

The all-white jury could not imagine the connections between these white supremacist leaders, their groups, and the Silent Brotherhood as it operated with a leaderless resistance strategy that wouldn't have directly involved leadership in publicly visible ways.<sup>78</sup> This was further hindered by how the American public had only seen the death of the Order, whereas law enforcement had a clearer picture of the group based on leftover documentation and their deal with Ellison.<sup>79</sup> Thus, the thirteen white supremacist leaders were found not guilty of all charges to their surprise, glee, and dismay. Louis Beam and Robert Miles had extremely different reactions to this verdict. Reporters asked Robert Miles how the movement will proceed and he responded, "Who knows? What movement? What's left of it after this? We Accept the Verdict."<sup>80</sup> What Robert Miles highlighted here is how the trial put leaders of the right-wing extremist movement in a legal spotlight that could have effectively ended their war-filled ambitions as it already ended The Silent Brotherhood and CSA. Louis Beam on the other hand was ecstatic towards reporters: "I think ZOG has suffered a terrible defeat here today. I think everyone saw through the charade and saw that I was simply being punished for being a vociferous and outspoken opponent of ZOG."<sup>81</sup> The failure of this sedition trial was immense, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms tried to get newer eyes on Aryan Nations a year later through one of their informants who wanted to trap Randy Weaver.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Louis Beam, "Leaderless Resistance," *The Seditonist*, accessed November 25, 2020, <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~satran/Ford%2006/Wk%202-1%20Terrorism%20Networks%20leaderless-resistance.pdf>.

<sup>79</sup> Bill Simmons, "Defendants All Acquitted in Sediton Trial," *AP News*, April 8, 1988, <https://apnews.com/article/604c50e36bd020ac70be35445b12d059>.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Zeskind, *Blood and Politics: The History of the White Nationalist Movement from the Margins to the Mainstream*, (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2009), 302.



An undercover ATF agent bought sawed-off shotguns from Randy Weaver in an attempt to trap him so the ATF could use him to get eyes on Aryan Nations in October of 1989. The ATF charged Randy Weaver with a misdemeanor and tried to use that as leverage over him to become an informant. Randy refused to comply out of spite towards the government and did not turn himself in. His wife Vicki Weaver sent a letter to Aryan Nations that requested help for their situation and showed they saw the federal government as controlled by Jews.<sup>83</sup> Randy was peacefully arrested by ATF agents who acted like they had car trouble on January 17, 1991 and he was released on bond when the Aryan Nations security chief vouched for his good character.<sup>84</sup> When Randy failed to show up for his trial, a fugitive warrant was issued, and Vicki Weaver told authorities they would not bow to their “evil commandments.”<sup>85</sup> Randy, Vicki, their three kids, eight-month-old baby, and their twenty-four-year-old friend Kevin Harris stayed in their mountain home to evade authorities, and Aryan Nations sent people up the dirt trail of their mountain home to keep them well supplied.<sup>86</sup> Authorities knew little of the Weaver family and made up for it through command posts they established for surveillance around the Weaver estate. They listened and waited for the right time to grab Randy Weaver, a process made even more tense as the family armed themselves with guns every time they went out.<sup>87</sup>

Nineteen months of tensions erupted on August 21, 1992 when Randy Weaver, his son Sammy, and family friend Kevin Harris took the family’s yellow Labrador outside and the dog

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Betty A. Dobratz, Stephanie L. Shanks-Meile, and Danelle Hallenbeck, “What Happened on Ruby Ridge: Terrorism or Tyranny?” *Symbolic Interaction* 26, no. 2 (2003): 315-342, [https://www-jstor-org.libproxy.albany.edu/stable/10.1525/si.2003.26.2.315?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www-jstor-org.libproxy.albany.edu/stable/10.1525/si.2003.26.2.315?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents).

<sup>85</sup> Zeskind, *Blood and Politics: The History of the White Nationalist Movement from the Margins to the Mainstream*, (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2009), 303.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid: Associated Press, “1 Marshal Dead, Others Confront Fugitive in Idaho,” *The New York Times*, August 23, 1992, <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/08/23/us/1-marshal-dead-others-confront-fugitive-in-idaho.html>.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

became agitated with the scent of two federal marshalls who lurked near the cabin.<sup>88</sup> The Weavers and Harris thought the dog had tracked a wild animal and grabbed their guns. Once the dog bolted, Sammy and Harris followed it while Randy went around for a pincer maneuver.<sup>89</sup> Unbenounced to them, the dog ran into three U.S Marshalls who were surprised to see it while doing periodic check ins on the residence. One of the Marshalls fired and killed the dog. Sammy Weaver and Harris caught up with the Marshalls who were covered in camouflage and did not announce themselves. A Marshall shot Sammy in the right arm and Harris defended them both when he shot Marshall Degan.<sup>90</sup> As Sammy attempted to flee, he was shot in the back and killed by Deputy Marshall Cooper.<sup>91</sup> Randy Weaver arrived near this intersection and shot in the air so Harris and he could regroup home as the Marshalls retreated. Randy and Vicki went out shortly afterwards to gather their dead son's body and brought him into the shed they used for his birth.<sup>92</sup> The Marshalls were rescued by the Idaho State Police crisis response team and the increased police presence in this Idaho neighborhood near the Aryan Nations compound brought out two dozen protestors three miles from the cabin at the federal government's roadblock. These protestors held signs of, "Freedom of Religion" and "Your Family Could Be Next."<sup>93</sup> These protests gained steam as more people arrived at Ruby Ridge united by deep animosity towards

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<sup>88</sup> Richard Lei, "THE AWFUL TRUTH OF RUBY RIDGE," *The Washington Post*, May 19, 1996, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/style/1996/05/19/the-awful-truth-of-ruby-ridge/60e5f519-cff2-48a6-8f6b-518b08783bf2/>; Reuters, "Negotiator Arouses Hope in Idaho Standoff," *The New York Times*, August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1992, <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/08/30/us/negotiator-arouses-hope-in-idaho-standoff.html>.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Betty A. Dobratz, Stephanie L. Shanks-Meile, and Danelle Hallenbeck, "What Happened on Ruby Ridge: Terrorism or Tyranny?" *Symbolic Interaction* 26, no. 2 (2003): 315-342, [https://www-jstor-org.libproxy.albany.edu/stable/10.1525/si.2003.26.2.315?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www-jstor-org.libproxy.albany.edu/stable/10.1525/si.2003.26.2.315?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents).

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Associated Press, "1 Marshal Dead, Others Confront Fugitive in Idaho," *The New York Times*, August 23, 1992, <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/08/23/us/1-marshal-dead-others-confront-fugitive-in-idaho.html>; Reuters, "Negotiator Arouses Hope in Idaho Standoff," *The New York Times*, August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1992, <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/08/30/us/negotiator-arouses-hope-in-idaho-standoff.html>.

the police and government for their overbearing confrontation against the Weavers that Aryan Nations would ensure transcended this event.

The next day, Randy, his daughter Sara, and Harris went out to see if there was anything they could do as federal agents had not given them any directions or orders.<sup>94</sup> Randy went to visit his son's body when a Hostage Rescue Team (HRT) sharpshooter who came with the team that helped the marshalls escape the day before shot Randy in his arm.<sup>95</sup> Vicki held her 10-month-old infant daughter and the door open wide so the three could come back into the house. The HRT sniper operated with "shoot on sight" rules of engagement and likely thought he could kill Vicki and Harris in one shot.<sup>96</sup> He fired a shot that passed through Harris' shoulder, leaving him in critical condition and hit Vicki's head, which instantly killed her.<sup>97</sup> The standoff continued as the leftover Weavers and Harris refused to leave the cabin. The federal agents, national guard, and police also did not want to risk more bloodshed. This weeklong standoff brought a 100-person vigil for the Weaver family at the base of the Ruby Ridge mountain. This convergence of people consisted of unusually friendly neo-Nazis, neighbors, Aryan Nations members, and skinheads united by shared hatred of the federal government.<sup>98</sup> This standoff ended when Randy's Army Special Forces Commander, Bo Gritz, forced himself onto the hostage rescue team.<sup>99</sup> Gritz brought Harris into a hospital after his surrender on August 31<sup>st</sup> and convinced Randy Weaver to surrender the next day. Randy cried his wife and son's names as Gritz escorted him to the road

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<sup>94</sup> Betty A. Dobratz, Stephanie L. Shanks-Meile, and Danelle Hallenbeck, "What Happened on Ruby Ridge: Terrorism or Tyranny?" *Symbolic Interaction* 26, no. 2 (2003): 315-342, [https://www-jstor-org.libproxy.albany.edu/stable/10.1525/si.2003.26.2.315?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www-jstor-org.libproxy.albany.edu/stable/10.1525/si.2003.26.2.315?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents).

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid: Phillip Weiss, "Off the Grid," *The New York Times Magazine*, January 8, 1995, <https://www.nytimes.com/1995/01/08/magazine/off-the-grid.html>.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid: Timothy Egan, "White Supremacist Surrenders after 11-Day Siege," *The New York Times*, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1992, <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/09/01/us/white-supremacist-surrenders-after-11-day-siege.html>.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid: Phillip Weiss, "Off the Grid," *The New York Times Magazine*, January 8, 1995, <https://www.nytimes.com/1995/01/08/magazine/off-the-grid.html>.

where he was flown to a hospital for medical treatment. Gritz gave a Nazi salute to a cheering crowd of skinhead protestors as he saved his friend from what the Weavers, skinheads, and even people outside these extremist circles who witnessed the event saw as an overly violent government force.<sup>100</sup> The anti-government fervor from this event fueled Christian Identity Pastor Pete Peters of Aryan Nations to host an emergency event two months later in October in Estes Park, Colorado. This Estes Park meeting brought 160 far-right leaders from unusually diverse viewpoints who would have fought about their ideological differences across the country together for a coordinated revival in response to the Ruby Ridge incident.<sup>101</sup>

Aryan Nations capitalized on the anti-government sentiment generated at Ruby Ridge and expanded the net of activists involved with Louis Beam's leaderless resistance theory through the albeit small convergence of the Patriot movement. The Estes Park meeting hosted neo-Nazis, Christian Identity believers, militia movement members, anti-abortion activists, tax protestors, Ku Klux Klan members, and others with mainstream reputations to maintain.<sup>102</sup> Pastor Pete Peters described them as "men ... who in the past would normally not be caught together under the same roof."<sup>103</sup> Several movement leaders were present like William Pierce of the National Alliance, Jim Wickstrom of white militia group Posse Comitatus, and Aryan Nations ambassador Louis Beam.<sup>104</sup> Beam explained the uniqueness of this convergence to the audience, "For the first time in the 22 years that I have been in the movement, we are all

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<sup>100</sup> Timothy Egan, "White Supremacist Surrenders after 11-Day Siege," *The New York Times*, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1992, <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/09/01/us/white-supremacist-surrenders-after-11-day-siege.html>; Stern, *A Force Upon the Plain*, (Simon & Schuster: New York, 1996), 33.

<sup>101</sup> Stern, *A Force Upon the Plain: The American Militia Movement and the Politics of Hate*, (Simon & Schuster: New York, 1996), 33-36.

<sup>102</sup> Stern, *A Force Upon the Plain: The American Militia Movement and the Politics of Hate*, (Simon & Schuster: New York, 1996), 33.

<sup>103</sup> Stern, *A Force Upon the Plain: The American Militia Movement and the Politics of Hate*, (Simon & Schuster: New York, 1996), 35.

<sup>104</sup> Kathleen Belew, *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 202.

marching to the beat of the same drum! ... We are viewed by the government as the same: enemies of the state.”<sup>105</sup> He called for patriots to shed the blood of tyrants to ensure they kept their liberties, which received a standing ovation.<sup>106</sup> A decade earlier, the Order’s goal to establish leaderless resistance had begun but was limited to far-right groups who either shared the rarer interpretation of the Zionist Occupied Government needing to be usurped or were sympathetic to that idea. The Ruby Ridge incident fueled a newly universal anti-government sentiment that coalesced a wider audience for Beam to share his leaderless resistance idea and likely Aryan Liberty Net through *Seditionist* newsletter pamphlets.<sup>107</sup> Pete Peters also established five different committees to help the coalesced Patriot movement and one of which focused on “Sacred Warfare Action Tactics” that promoted the use of leaderless resistance in an overtly militarized police frame. Many militias also took direct advice from *The Turner Diaries* on how to run a paramilitary organization.<sup>108</sup> The Estes Park meeting produced new federal federal concern for the emergence of the Patriot movement’s far-right extremist culture.

The newly emerged Patriot movement of the far-right in Estes Park was further jumpstarted by the ATF when they raided the Branch Davidian cult’s compound to arrest its leader, David Koresh on illegal firearms charges on February 28, 1993.<sup>109</sup> The ATF informed hospitals to be ready for an influx of patients and workers at hospitals. They told the local media that “something big” was planned. The ATF agents in charge of the raid breached protocol and did not write a raid plan for the Branch Davidian compound until less than a week before their

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, Kathleen Belew, *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 205.

<sup>109</sup> Stern, *A Force Upon the Plain: The American Militia Movement and the Politics of Hate*, (Simon & Schuster: New York, 1996), 59.

operation.<sup>110</sup> As reporters came to the town near the compound to cover a potential story, one got lost and asked postal carrier David Jones for directions to the big event. Jones happened to be Koresh's brother-in-law and was able to put the ATF's raid picture together in time to tell Koresh the danger he faced. Koresh told him, "Neither the ATF nor the National Guard will ever get me."<sup>111</sup> An ATF informant within the Branch Davidian compound learned Koresh knew and relayed that to the ATF. But the agents in charge decided to conduct the raid anyway without a new plan to counter Koresh's preparedness, which quickly led to a standoff.<sup>112</sup> The FBI hostage rescue team supported the ATF as the showdown turned into a fifty-one-day standoff. It ended when the tear gas FBI shot into the building ignited from gas within the compound to a blaze that killed eighty people inside.<sup>113</sup> The raid was reported in its full unplanned horror afterwards by many news websites and no distinct answer has emerged about whether the cult or law enforcement were solely responsible for the deadly fire. This failed raid still drowned the ATF in scrutiny and galvanized the militia and white supremacist groups of the Patriot movement into a very uneven fury.

The far-right's convergence into the Patriot movement did not mean everyone within it evenly wanted revenge against the ATF or federal government and the ideological divide between white supremacy and revolutionary militia thought started to show. Anti-Semite Eustace Mullins commented, "The Waco Church Holocaust ... was an atrocity which surpasses the worst

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<sup>110</sup> Pierre Thomas, "WACO PROBE FAULTS ATF IN CULT RAID," *The Washington Post*, September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1993. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1993/09/30/waco-probe-faults-atf-in-cult-raid/3bac3282-43e7-4f39-91ef-3e14be1f24d0/>.

<sup>111</sup> Stern, *A Force Upon the Plain: The American Militia Movement and the Politics of Hate*, (Simon & Schuster: New York, 1996), 60.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> Pierre Thomas, "WACO PROBE FAULTS ATF IN CULT RAID," *The Washington Post*, September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1993. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1993/09/30/waco-probe-faults-atf-in-cult-raid/3bac3282-43e7-4f39-91ef-3e14be1f24d0/>; Muriel Pearson, Spencer Wilking, Lauren Effron, "Survivors of 1993 Waco siege describe what happened in fire that ended the 51-day standoff," *ABC News*, January 3, 2018, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/survivors-1993-waco-siege-describe-happened-fire-ended/story?id=52034435>.

accusations made against the Nazis in Germany.”<sup>114</sup> Tom Lane, a sixty-six-year-old Korean War veteran and a member of the Florida militia noted, “Waco awakened the whole [movement].... That put the fear of God into us.”<sup>115</sup> Indianapolis attorney Linda Thompson started her own conspiracy theory group called the American Justice Federation which published videotapes called *Waco: The Big Lie* and *Waco II: The Big Lie Continues*. These films became cult classics to the Patriot movement since it claimed the federal government deliberately destroyed the Branch Davidian compound.<sup>116</sup> Some militia members dedicated April 19<sup>th</sup> to be Militia day and many others regarded this date with religious importance in memorial of the people killed at Waco. One militia member even called it the movement’s Boston Massacre with the ATF in the role of the redcoats.<sup>117</sup> The eighty deaths Waco wrought was felt even more by Timothy McVeigh, who thought the ATF was out of control before he visited the area just outside Waco when the Branch Davidian compound was sieged. Linda Thompson’s videos confirmed his worst fears of an out-of-control agency that needed violent retribution, which he had the fury to conduct alone, but ultimately could not do without help.<sup>118</sup>

McVeigh’s constant companion that fueled his fury against the federal government in 1993 was the fictitious white supremacist novel *The Turner Diaries* and he first bought it in 1989 while still an infantryman at Fort Riley. McVeigh’s roommate saw his obsession with it as he offered it to other soldiers, who told him to keep it hidden as McVeigh could have gotten into

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Stern, *A Force Upon the Plain: The American Militia Movement and the Politics of Hate*, (Simon & Schuster: New York, 1996) 63.

<sup>116</sup> Stern, *A Force Upon the Plain: The American Militia Movement and the Politics of Hate*, (Simon & Schuster: New York, 1996), 64.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid: Kifner, John, “THE GUN NETWORK: McVeigh’s World -- A special report.; Bomb Suspect Felt at Home Riding the Gun-Show Circuit”, *New York Times*, July 5, 1995, <https://www.nytimes.com/1995/07/05/us/gun-network-mcveigh-s-world-special-report-bomb-suspect-felt-home-riding-gun.html?pagewanted=all>; Mark S. Hamm, *Apocalypse in Oklahoma: Waco and Ruby Ridge Revenged*, (Northeastern University Press, 1997), 181.

trouble.<sup>119</sup> McVeigh no longer needed to hide his obsession with *The Turner Diaries* as he sold it at gun shows he visited across the country.<sup>120</sup> While these gun shows were part of the vast Aryan Nations Liberty network that connected white supremacist and militia groups of the Patriot movement across the nation, information often came to the gun shows through untraceable word of mouth.<sup>121</sup> The Estes Park emergency meeting circulated the idea of leaderless resistance to the militia movement and shaped their use of a decentralized style of communication that merely needed members in these groups to decide when to act. McVeigh was a participant within these networks and his anger about Waco was enabled by *The Turner Diaries* since it offered him instructions on how to make ammonium nitrate fertilizer bombs.<sup>122</sup> McVeigh was also inspired by James Coates's book which recounted the Silent Brotherhood's time as a domestic terrorist group.<sup>123</sup> McVeigh's motivations for revenge were based on his reaction to white supremacist literature and more reflected the process Louis Beam wanted to achieve on a wider scale in his leaderless resistance theory.<sup>124</sup> McVeigh needed help to build a bigger bomb than the one in the book and found a natural partner in farmer Terry Nichols who paid McVeigh for seasonal work and regularly used ammonium nitrate fertilizer.<sup>125</sup> McVeigh sent a letter to another friend named Mike Fortier whom he went through a free firearms self-defense course with and asked him to join them as they planned to hit a federal building with a truck bomb that "declared war against

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<sup>119</sup> Mark S. Hamm, *Apocalypse in Oklahoma: Ruby Ridge and Waco Revenged*, (Northeastern University Press, 1997), 144-145.

<sup>120</sup> Kifner, John, "THE GUN NETWORK: McVeigh's World -- A special report.; Bomb Suspect Felt at Home Riding the Gun-Show Circuit", *New York Times*, July 5, 1995, <https://www.nytimes.com/1995/07/05/us/gun-network-mcveigh-s-world-special-report-bomb-suspect-felt-home-riding-gun.html?pagewanted=all>.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Andrew MacDonald, "The Turner Diaries," Internet Archive, Accessed December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, <https://archive.org/details/TurnerDiaries/mode/2up>.

<sup>123</sup> Lou Michael and Dan Herbeck, *American Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City Bombing* (HarperCollins Publishers: New York, 1995), 121.

<sup>124</sup> Louis Beam, "Leaderless Resistance," *The Seditonist*, accessed November 25, 2020, <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~satran/Ford%2006/Wk%202-1%20Terrorism%20Networks%20leaderless-resistance.pdf>.

<sup>125</sup> Mark S. Hamm, *Apocalypse in Oklahoma: Waco and Ruby Ridge Revenged*, (Northeastern University Press, 1997), 172.



the federal government.”<sup>126</sup> Fortier refused the offer because he did not agree with McVeigh’s reason of retaliation against the federal government for their actions against the Branch Davidians in Waco. McVeigh was only able to get Fortier to sell the guns Nichols robbed from Arkansas gun dealer Roger Moore.<sup>127</sup> McVeigh tried unsuccessfully on multiple occasions to get Fortier to take a bigger plot in the bombing and he absolutely refused to each time.<sup>128</sup> One of the last places McVeigh reached for allies and advice was from National Alliance, a core group to the development of the Patriot movement that had a hand in the Order’s war against the federal government and the development of Aryan Nations Liberty Net decades earlier.

McVeigh tried to contact the National Alliance group that William Pierce chaired as he hoped they would give him ideas about where to find a safe haven after he conducted his bombing and got no response from them.<sup>129</sup> McVeigh left three messages on National Alliance representative Richard Coffman’s answering machine saying he was “Tim Tuttle” and made a deliberately vague “serious request for a safe haven.”<sup>130</sup> This request went unanswered and McVeigh had only one partner left in Nichols, who would not go through with the entire plan. Nichols’ role was done after he helped McVeigh load barrels of nitromethane onto a Ryder truck McVeigh rented, which completed the car bomb.<sup>131</sup> The next morning on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1995, McVeigh made a last-minute decision to conduct his bombing at nine o’clock instead of eleven o’clock which lent McVeigh another desired goal. He would get the immense body count he wanted as the truck bomb would kill a lot of ATF, Drug Enforcement Agency, Secret Service

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Lou Michael and Dan Herbeck, *American Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City Bombing*, (HarperCollins Publishers: New York, 1995), 200-201.

<sup>129</sup> Lou Michael and Dan Herbeck, *American Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City Bombing*, (HarperCollins Publishers: New York, 1995), 205.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid

<sup>131</sup> Lou Michael and Dan Herbeck, *American Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City Bombing*, (HarperCollins Publishers: New York, 1995), 218-220.

agents, and perhaps civilians.<sup>132</sup> McVeigh parked the Ryder truck bomb on the north side of the Murrah building, set it to explode, walked away, then jogged away and perhaps a half-dozen people saw him.<sup>133</sup> The bomb roared when it ripped apart the building, and the force of the explosion took McVeigh an inch off the ground before he got into his getaway car and drove away.<sup>134</sup> McVeigh planned for his bombing to happen on the anniversary of Waco and the 220<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Lexington and Concord. To McVeigh, this revenge inspired by *The Turner Diaries* was the modern fight of a patriot against a tyrannical government in the spirits of the American Revolution.<sup>135</sup> His attempt at war was enabled by sympathizers Nichols and Fortier who were anti-government enough to help set his revenge in motion. McVeigh added to the legacy of the Order and the far-right's leaderless resistance through revenge filled narratives that coalesced throughout the Patriot movement to such an extent that it forced an internal movement debate on whether McVeigh's actions were correct.

William Pierce reacted to McVeigh's actions with excitement, but downplayed his book's connection to him to ensure negative press did not reach him the way it reached the wider militia movement.<sup>136</sup> When interviewed by *The Oklahoman*, Pierce stated the "government is meddling in people's lives, trying to control everything. And I see more and more reaction to that developing.... I predict that there will be more of this sort of this domestic terrorist activity."<sup>137</sup>

McVeigh's lawyer Steve Jones prior to the trial reached out to Pierce for legal advice and Pierce

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<sup>132</sup> Lou Michael and Dan Herbeck, *American Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City Bombing*, (HarperCollins Publishers: New York, 1995), 223-224.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Lou Michael and Dan Herbeck, *American Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City Bombing*, (HarperCollins Publishers: New York, 1995), 230-231.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Griffin, "The Fame of a Dead Man's Deeds: An Up-Close Portrait of White Nationalist William Pierce," Accessed March 14, 2021, <https://www.evolution.com/library/fame-of-a-dead-mans-deeds.pdf>.

<sup>137</sup> Associated Press, "Author Says His Militant Novel Did Not Inspire Bombing," *The Oklahoman*, May 7, 1996, <https://www.oklahoman.com/article/2540414/author-says-his-militant-novel-did-not-inspire-bombing>.

accurately inferred how the federal government could prosecute McVeigh, which formed part of the lawyer's defense.<sup>138</sup> Pierce's silent support of McVeigh also continued in 2001 when he remarked about how similar he was to Robert Jay Matthews in character and how "if it were part of a war, then a bombing of the Oklahoma City sort is morally justified.... If McVeigh was throwing a single punch to send a message, then its moral justification is debatable."<sup>139</sup> While Pierce hid his truth for years, Daniel Levitas of the Kansas City Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights observed this event "has been, from the moment the dust settled in Oklahoma City, a public relations disaster for the militia movement."<sup>140</sup> The militia groups within the Patriot movement did not endorse McVeigh's actions because they did not consider themselves threatened by the events of Ruby Ridge in the same way McVeigh did.<sup>141</sup> Norman E. Olson, commander of a Michigan militia told reporters McVeigh "was a soldier in a war against the government.... He is a war criminal and must be executed. Justice demands it."<sup>142</sup> Paul T. Phillips, of a Florida militia similarly stated McVeigh did not represent the militia movement and "should be executed without being allowed to be a martyr...A lot of people placing their support behind McVeigh are these hate groups and that's not what we do."<sup>143</sup> More militia leaders offered similar condemnation that reflected the differences of the converged Patriot movement cultures. White supremacists invited extreme acts of domestic terrorism to make progress against

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<sup>138</sup> Griffin, "The Fame of a Dead Man's Deeds: An Up-Close Portrait of White Nationalist William Pierce," Accessed March 14, 2021, <https://www.evolution.com/library/fame-of-a-dead-mans-deeds.pdf>.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Sandy Banisky and Joe Nawrozki, "McVeigh sentence finds support among militias Execution could make him a political martyr for a few extremists," *The Baltimore Sun*, June 15, 1997, <https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/bs-xpm-1997-06-15-1997166037-story.html>. The staunch lack of support for McVeigh among militia members is clearer considering his perspective was a unique fusion of white supremacist and revolutionary militia ideology that was not well received even by his co-conspirators. The President of the Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights that Daniel Levitas was part of is Leonard Zeskind.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

the enemy ZOG, whereas militia groups held an aversion to revenge unless provoked.<sup>144</sup> These tensions divided the Patriot movement, and the American public's main backlash went towards the militia movement since it was viewed as the inspiration for McVeigh's actions. This immense public backlash plummeted militia membership, which shrank the number of Patriot Movement groups from 858 in 1996 to 194 by 2000.<sup>145</sup> Uncoordinated attacks by militia leaders, their members, and white supremacists also helped collapse Patriot Movement groups as many were arrested in the final years of the 1990s.<sup>146</sup> Though some prominent white supremacists read the nation's appetite for their ideals after McVeigh's actions and turned to the more technologically available internet as a way to unite. Just as Aryan Nations Liberty Net coalesced a once disjointed movement into a single network during the late 1980s, white supremacist Don Black began a new era for the Patriot Movement in 1995 when he published the *Stormfront* white supremacist website.

### **The Patriot Movement's Leaderless Resistance**

The earliest web-based archives of the *Stormfront* website began on December 30<sup>th</sup> of 1996, and one of the published posts discussed the "History of the White Race" by a user named Odin who said "it is not far fetched to say that the 21st century will see the final disappearance of the White Race from this globe.... Who will rescue the West? I do not know. All I can do is help

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<sup>144</sup> Lou Michel and Dan Herbeck, "How Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh changed the fringe right," *The Buffalo News*, August 3, 2020, [https://buffalonews.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/how-oklahoma-city-bomber-timothy-mcveigh-changed-the-fringe-right/article\\_35958e7b-7e95-50d7-bb60-58473cebf002.html](https://buffalonews.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/how-oklahoma-city-bomber-timothy-mcveigh-changed-the-fringe-right/article_35958e7b-7e95-50d7-bb60-58473cebf002.html).

<sup>145</sup> Jo Thomas, "Behind a Book that Inspired McVeigh," *The New York Times*, June 9, 2001, <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/06/09/us/behind-a-book-that-inspired-mcveigh.html>.

<sup>146</sup> "The Second Wave: Return of the Militias," Southern Poverty Law Center, Accessed March 17, 2021, [https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/d6\\_legacy\\_files/downloads/The\\_Second\\_Wave.pdf](https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/d6_legacy_files/downloads/The_Second_Wave.pdf).

to sound the clarion call, and hope that the call will not go unanswered.”<sup>147</sup> It’s difficult to verify who the user Odin was. But he or she espoused the white race’s supposed modern-day decline, which became a narrative that has only received more attention overtime across different Patriot movement websites. The lack of immense censorship on *Stormfront* enabled its membership to grow from 11,000 in 2002 to 133,000 in 2008, and to 300,000 members in 2015.<sup>148</sup> *Stormfront* was not the only website that became a home for hate speech and far-right extremism. A National Alliance activist named Alex Linder developed the website Vanguard News Network (VNN) in 2000 which served as National Alliance’s web-based platform until Linder rather successfully split from the group due to a disagreement with its leaders.<sup>149</sup> VNN became a popular outlet for neo-Nazis and skinheads by 2003 as they criticized National Alliance for their lack of activism and *Stormfront* for downplaying Nazi imagery, though some websites such as *4chan* became a home for neo-Nazis, white supremacists, and many more inadvertently. In 2003, fifteen-year-old Christopher Poole created *4chan* out of his bedroom for anyone to post anything about the medium of anime and manga. However, he designed the website to allow anyone to make comments without a requirement to register their email address, which led many commentors to post anonymously. This led 4chan to hold the original audience of anime and manga fans alongside a platform of anonymous chat boards utilized by neo-Nazis, white supremacists, gay pride critics, and more. These unintended consequences circumvented the sites creators’ intentions and led admins to contain the racist content through creating the politically

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<sup>147</sup> Don Black, “Stormfront,” Internet Archive, Accessed March 19, 2021, <https://web.archive.org/web/19961230152643/http://www.stormfront.org:80/>; Odin, “The History of the White Race,” Internet Archive, Accessed March 19, 2021, [https://web.archive.org/web/19961127155323/http://www2.stormfront.org/hist\\_wht.html](https://web.archive.org/web/19961127155323/http://www2.stormfront.org/hist_wht.html).

<sup>148</sup> David Niewert, *Alt-America: The Rise of the Radical Right in the Age of Trump*, (London: Verso, 2017), 227-228; Southern Poverty Law Center, “Alex Linder,” Accessed March 19, 2021, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/alex-linder>.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

incorrect or “/pol” thread.<sup>150</sup> Through the emergence of VNN and *4chan* as platforms for the Patriot movement, *Stormfront* had direct and inadvertent competition to host the common culture of hate that was impressively not limited by anonymity as Louis Beam once inferred it would be.<sup>151</sup> These new internet platforms enabled their users anonymity through usernames of their choice and their common culture of racism, anti-government sentiment, misogyny, and more kept them together just as Louis Beam’s leaderless resistance strategy hoped to accomplish.<sup>152</sup> Two nationwide events perceived as cataclysmic for Patriot movement website users soon showed these websites offered the far-right a leaderless resistance as they drove a need for independent activism.

The Patriot movement used internet websites like *Stormfront*, VNN, *4chan*, and others developed a reactionary culture and network that was jolted to life by al-Qaeda’s attack on the World Trade Center in 2001 and the election of Barack Obama to Presidency in 2008.<sup>153</sup> The Posse Comitatus group’s website placed blame for al-Qaeda’s actions on the ZOG for its support of Israel and stated Middle Eastern people “have been beaten and persecuted by this evil race of vipers [Jews] for several generations as the world has turned a deaf ear to their suffering.”<sup>154</sup> The offline Patriot movement was not united in seeing America as the ZOG, and militia groups volunteered to aid the government against the threat of radical Islamic terrorism.<sup>155</sup> In comparison, online Patriot movement websites teemed with newly minted conspiracies about

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<sup>150</sup> Rob Arthur, “The Man Who Helped Turn 4chan Into the Internet's Racist Engine,” VICE, November 2, 2020, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/m7aap8/the-man-who-helped-turn-4chan-into-the-internets-racist-engine>.

<sup>151</sup> Louis Beam, “Leaderless Resistance,” *The Seditonist*, accessed November 25, 2020, <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~sattran/Ford%2006/Wk%202-1%20Terrorism%20Networks%20leaderless-resistance.pdf>.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> Martin Durham, “The American far right and 9/11,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 15, 2, (June 2010): 96-111, <https://www-tandfonline-com.libproxy.albany.edu/doi/pdf/10.1080/09546550312331293057>.

<sup>154</sup> “Sheriff’s Posse Comitatus,” Accessed April 23, 2021, <https://web.archive.org/web/20010923023950/http://posse-comitatus.org:80/>.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*: Martin Durham, “The American far right and 9/11,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 15, 2, (June 2010): 96-111, <https://www-tandfonline-com.libproxy.albany.edu/doi/pdf/10.1080/09546550312331293057>.

how 9/11 was a plot by the new world order and the U.S government to take away freedoms in the name of security.<sup>156</sup> While 9/11 jolted to life these online groups and the websites they used, the election of former President Barack Obama in 2008 provided a flashpoint for these online hate groups. On election night in 2008, former Klan leader David Duke stated, “I believe tonight is a night of tragedy and sadness for our people.... [T]he country is not recognizable any more.”<sup>157</sup> A commentator on the Traditional Christian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan considered election night to be “the darkest day in American history since the end of the Civil War. They might as well have put Bin Laden in the White House.”<sup>158</sup> Greg Johnson wrote in far-right hate journal *The Occidental Quarterly*, “An Obama presidency ... will only intensify racial polarization and stimulate greater white racial consciousness and self-assertiveness. More of the sleepers will waken.”<sup>159</sup> Other intense reactions came in the form of “birthers” who pushed the conspiracy that the President’s birth certificate was forged, and he was not a U.S citizen.<sup>160</sup> Donald Trump was briefly a “birther” when he exclaimed the election as “a total sham and a travesty. We are not a democracy!”<sup>161</sup> Hate fueled sentiments against the United States first Black president escalated uncontrolled across the internet and hundreds of new and already established Patriot movement groups feverously gained membership that brought the meager 149 Patriot movement groups in 2008 to 1,274 patriot groups emerging by 2011.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center, “In Their Words: Hating Barack Obama,” SPLC, November 7, 2012, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2015/their-words-hating-barack-obama>.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> David Niewert, *Alt-America: The Rise of the Radical Right in the Age of Trump*, (London: Verso, 2017), 3.

<sup>161</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center, “FOR THE RADICAL RIGHT, OBAMA VICTORY BRINGS FURY AND FEAR,” SPLC, November 7, 2012, <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2012/11/07/radical-right-obama-victory-brings-fury-and-fear>.

<sup>162</sup> Mark Potok, “The Patriot Movement Explodes,” SPLC, March 1, 2012, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2012/patriot-movement-explodes>.

Hundreds of new patriot groups emerged in 2009 and a group called The Oath Keepers got an immense membership boost in the wake of President Obama's election.<sup>163</sup> The Oath Keepers was founded in March of 2009 by Nevada Lawyer Stewart Rhodes and he reacted to Barack Obama's election on his personal blog. "The greatest threats to our liberty do not come from without ... but from within.... Our would-be slave masters are greatly underestimating the resolve and military capability of the people."<sup>164</sup> The anxiety Rhodes felt was mirrored by his neighborhood and laid bare in a blog post. Rhodes had a call with Colonial Hapgood of the Iowa National Guard about their military exercise from April second to fifth that was a house-to-house search exercise to prepare the guard for Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>165</sup> Colonial Hapgood told Rhodes these tactics would not be used domestically in their phone call. Rhodes responded to him that revealed anxieties. "Americans, especially gun owners, were extremely concerned because of the current political climate ... and the use of a scenario of searching for a gun dealer seems aimed at gun owners—and in particular we are concerned because of who is now in power."<sup>166</sup> Colonial Hapgood kept politics out of the rest of the conversation as he assured Rhodes the National Guard would follow the oaths they took to become officers.<sup>167</sup> Rhodes cited this conversation as an important reason for the Oath Keepers and online archives show he had thought on the creation of this group for some time as their website was established on July 4, 2009, long before

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Mike Gliglio, "A Pro-Trump Militant Group Has Recruited Thousands of Police, Soldiers, and Veterans An *Atlantic* investigation reveals who they are and what they might do on Election Day," *The Atlantic*, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/11/right-wing-militias-civil-war/616473/>.

<sup>165</sup> "Dirt Rhodes Scholar," Stewart Rhodes, Accessed April 1, 2020, <https://web.archive.org/web/20100416085705/http://stewart-rhodes.blogspot.com/>

<sup>166</sup> "My Phone Call With Col. Hapgood of the Iowa National Guard About Training for House to House Search for a "Weapons Dealer," Dirt Rhodes Scholar, Accessed April 1, 2020, <https://web.archive.org/web/20101020233604/http://stewart-rhodes.blogspot.com/2009/02/my-phone-call-with-col-hapgood-of-iowa.html>.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.



this call with Colonial Hapgood.<sup>168</sup> The Oath Keepers goal according to their website is to dissuade people with law enforcement and military backgrounds from following hypothetical orders to disarm people, blockade American cities, suppress American protestors, force Americans into concentration camps, and more.<sup>169</sup> These ideas echo a unique mix of constitution-inspired guidelines driven by conspiratorial, anti-government, and revolutionary fervor that many of Rhode's target audience unfortunately agreed with. The Oath Keeper's first National Convention was held from October twenty fourth to twenty fifth of 2009 and while only 100 people reportedly attended this event, the group grew to be the largest anti-government extremist group and a cornerstone of the Patriot movement in the U.S by the Southern Poverty law Center in 2015.<sup>170</sup> Rhodes utilized the internet as a decentralized platform for his newly coalesced group of people united in a common far-right culture, which is what Louis Beam's leaderless resistance theory described as possible.<sup>171</sup> The Oath Keeper's anti-government and racist sentiments were not the only far-right ideas that became popular in 2008 as several Republican United States government representatives offered statements that reflected worse sentiments shortly after President Obama's election.

The cultural convergence enabled by internet platforms that ensured the Patriot movement's growth online also had an output through mainstream political representatives and Fox news personalities. Texas Governor Rick Perry brought up the idea of secession months

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<sup>168</sup>ADL, "Oath Keepers and Three %ers Part of Growing Anti-Government Movement," Anti-Defamation League, Accessed April 4, 2021, <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/oath-keepers-and-three-ers-part-of-growing-anti-government-movement>; Oath Keepers, "Declaration of Orders We Will Not Obey," Accessed May 1, 2021, <https://oathkeepers.org/declaration-of-orders-we-will-not-obey/>.

<sup>169</sup> ADL, "The Oath Keepers: Anti-Government Extremists Recruiting Military and Police," Accessed April 16, 2021, <https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/combating-hate/The-Oath-Keepers-ADL-Report.pdf>.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Louis Beam, "Leaderless Resistance," The Seditonist, Accessed November 25, 2020, <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~satran/Ford%2006/Wk%202-1%20Terrorism%20Networks%20leaderless-resistance.pdf>.

after Obama's inauguration. Fox news host Glenn Beck called the former president a fascist, Nazi, Marxist, and re-promoted militia conspiracy theories from the 1990s.<sup>172</sup> South Carolina Republican Jeff Duncan discussed undocumented immigrants at Greenville Furman University on October 31 as "kind of like having a house ... and allowing any kind of vagrant, or animal ... to come in." Tennessee Republican Rick Womick attended an anti-Muslim conference near Nashville a month later on November 11 and said, "We cannot have Muslims in our military because we cannot trust them." Florida Republican representative Allen West reacted to polls a month later on December 15 that showed public dissatisfaction with the Republican party: "If Joseph Goebbels was around, he'd be very proud of the Democrat Party." These political representatives and news hosts shared the vitriol of racism, islamophobia, xenophobia, and more to a broader audience that the online Patriot movement would not have reached even as its network of hate websites grew to a converged worldwide pinnacle.

The network of Patriot movement websites could only be tracked in a limited way in 2013, but the links between these websites showed 134 organizations linked to each other 173 different ways which signaled the United States had the most extensive network of far-right websites in the world.<sup>173</sup> The only other extreme right community that came close to matching the United States was the England-based network of 129 organizations with 460 links between websites.<sup>174</sup> Caiani and Parenti noted the United States-based Patriot movement websites consisted of Christian Identity organizations, Ku Klux Klan groups, white nationalists, and

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<sup>172</sup> "The Second Wave: Return of the Militias," Southern Poverty Law Center, Accessed March 17, 2021, [https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/d6\\_legacy\\_files/downloads/The\\_Second\\_Wave.pdf](https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/d6_legacy_files/downloads/The_Second_Wave.pdf).

<sup>173</sup> Manuela Caiani and Linda Parenti, *European and American Extreme Right Groups and the Internet*, (Vermont: Routledge, 2013), <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.libproxy.albany.edu/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook/bmx1YmtfXzUwNDMzNV9fQU41?sid=f2587386-6490-4561-96b5-73780cc9a7ba@sessionmgr101&vid=4&format=EB&rid=1>.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

militia groups.<sup>175</sup> These website connections did not represent formal agreements of organizational partnership between groups, but different hyperlinked connections between websites can be accessed by anonymous or registered users. The most troublesome aspect of this is any user who visited one hate website could potentially visit dozens of others through any hyperlink of information based on what ideology they were interested in.<sup>176</sup> While leaderless resistance was the goal of the Aryan Liberty Net, the Order, and a goal of Aryan Nations, archives offered no indication that it was embraced by the website designers behind *Stormfront*, *4chan*, and others. Yet, no other right-wing theory clarified the chaotic and unprecedented nature of this Patriot movement network of coalesced ideas the way Beam's leaderless resistance theory does. Therefore, rather than viewing the size and engagement of the websites the Patriot movement developed as the product of a deliberate built-in design to accomplish leaderless resistance, we should view these websites through whether their effects accomplish what Louis Beam's leaderless resistance theory envisioned and modeled as possible.<sup>177</sup> In this way, we connect the recent growth of the online Patriot movement to the deeper past of far-right activism that has clearly reemerged and developed a newer generation of activists and extremists.

The influence of readily available far-right websites brought about the emergence of new activists and extremists like Andrew Anglin in ways that Beam's leaderless resistance theory can help make sense of. Anglin began his journey to neo-Nazism with: "all that Communist Jewish stuff", moved to Alex Jones conspiracy theories, enjoyed Ted Kaczynski's view of the apocalypse, and then *4chan* aided his transition into Hitler worship.<sup>178</sup> Through this journey, he

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Louis Beam, "Leaderless Resistance," *The Seditonist*, accessed November 25, 2020, <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~satran/Ford%2006/Wk%202-1%20Terrorism%20Networks%20leaderless-resistance.pdf>.

<sup>178</sup> "Eye of the Stormer," Keegan Hanks, Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed March 25, 2021, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2017/eye-stormer>.

“realized that through this type of nationalist system, alienation could be replaced by community in a real sense.”<sup>179</sup> Anglin found a community of people that coalesced on *4chan* and Infowars that defined his identity, worldviews, and the kind of activist he wanted to be as an internet provocateur, or troll. Anglin is still the Patriot activist Louis Beam wanted to participate in leaderless resistance theory as “persons involved have the same general outlook, are acquainted with the same philosophy, and generally react to given situations in similar ways.... Those who join organizations to play “let’s pretend” or who are “groupies” will quickly be weeded out.”<sup>180</sup> On July 4, 2013 Anglin added to the extremeness of the growing Patriot movement and became part of this leaderless resistance through founding *The Daily Stormer* website with a name that paid homage to Julius Streicher’s *Der Stürmer* Nazi newspaper that attacked Jews with extreme prejudice, and Anglin’s website grew popular very quickly because it inspired a new platform for extremism to flourish.<sup>181</sup>

*The Daily Stormer* website engagement competed with *Stormfront* as of January 31<sup>st</sup> of 2015 and had many frequented users such as Dylann “AryanBlood1488” Roof who happened to post a few comments that day.<sup>182</sup> “White culture is World Culture, and by that I don’t mean that our culture is made up of ones from around the world, I mean that our culture has been adopted by everyone in the world. This makes us feel as if it isn’t special, because everyone has adopted it.”<sup>183</sup> Another comment of his on an article posted that day showed the ideological differences

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Louis Beam, “Leaderless Resistance,” *The Seditonist*, accessed November 25, 2020, <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~satran/Ford%2006/Wk%202-1%20Terrorism%20Networks%20leaderless-resistance.pdf>.

<sup>181</sup> “Eye of the Stormer,” Keegan Hanks, Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed March 25, 2021, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2017/eye-stormer>.

<sup>182</sup> Keegan Hanks, “DYLANN ROOF MAY HAVE BEEN A REGULAR COMMENTER AT NEO-NAZI WEBSITE THE DAILY STORMER,” *Southern Poverty Law Center*, June 22, 2015, <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2015/06/21/dylann-roof-may-have-been-regular-commenter-neo-nazi-website-daily-stormer>.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

that can happen between Patriot movement websites. *The Daily Stormer* declared the site would no longer post Council of Conservative Citizens articles and Roof as AryanBlood1488 commented what may have been his annoyance about the decision. “I have serious, great respect for the C of CC because they are the ones who woke me up to black on white crime in the beginning.... It was the first site I went to the day that changed my life, the day I decided to type in “black on white crime” into Google.”<sup>184</sup> It’s difficult to trace when he found that information, though we know from Roof’s manifesto the C of CC site showed pages worth of these crimes.<sup>185</sup> He was initially confused about why no United States media sites reported these crimes and was also surprised to see this was the case in Europe.<sup>186</sup> Whatever Roof found from here led him to see “the Jewish problem and other issues facing the white race ... and today I can say with confidence I am completely racially aware.”<sup>187</sup> Roof cited his independent research of “the Jewish problem,” “issues facing the white race,” and more as key to his uniquely amalgamated views as a white nationalist that he expressed more coherently in his journal that became his manifesto.<sup>188</sup>

Roof’s post on *The Daily Stormer* showed where his search history began and his journal clarified where he encountered many historical facts and fictions from that query and potentially other research that brought him down a path of extremism as Louis Beam envisioned would be possible through the internet.<sup>189</sup> Roof showed an idea of the C of CC website in his journal when he argued that white flight after the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* ruling in 1954 was

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> Dylann Roof, “Dylann Roof’s Journal,” *The Post and Courier*, December 9, 2016, [https://www.postandcourier.com/dylann-roofs-journal/pdf\\_c5f6550c-be72-11e6-b869-7bdf860326f5.html](https://www.postandcourier.com/dylann-roofs-journal/pdf_c5f6550c-be72-11e6-b869-7bdf860326f5.html).

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Dylann Roof, “Dylann Roof’s Journal,” *The Post and Courier*, December 9, 2016, [https://www.postandcourier.com/dylann-roofs-journal/pdf\\_c5f6550c-be72-11e6-b869-7bdf860326f5.html](https://www.postandcourier.com/dylann-roofs-journal/pdf_c5f6550c-be72-11e6-b869-7bdf860326f5.html).

<sup>189</sup> Louis Beam, “Leaderless Resistance,” *The Seditonist*, accessed November 25, 2020, <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~satran/Ford%2006/Wk%202-1%20Terrorism%20Networks%20leaderless-resistance.pdf>.

“pathetic.”<sup>190</sup> Roof believed that white people should have fought for segregation because it existed to protect white people from Blacks. He thought this was evident when schools fell to a lower quality once the supreme court decision was implemented.<sup>191</sup> He also noted white students who stayed to “live among niggers” were subjected to discrimination and were bullied by Black students.<sup>192</sup> Roof wanted to protect these white students and those who suffered in that same way today. He also offered his dream, and the dream of every white nationalist was to start a race war, even if they did not want to admit it.<sup>193</sup> The way Roof defined his white nationalism is unique because the coalesced Patriot movement inspired him through a variety of talking points based in historical events, anti-Semitism, racism, and more that led him to violent far-right activism against a Charleston, South Carolina church known fondly as “Mother Emanuel” on June 17th, 2015.<sup>194</sup>

Roof spent an hour in Mother Emanuel’s evening bible study with twelve African American churchgoers.<sup>195</sup> Roof disagreed with some of the group’s scripture discussions and as they prayed, he pointed his Glock .45 caliber handgun at an 87-year-old woman as her nephew tried to talk him down. Roof responded to the nephew, “No, you’ve raped our women, and you are taking over the country...I have to do what I have to do.”<sup>196</sup> Reloading his gun five times while yelling racist epithets, he killed nine people. Two survived pretending to be dead. The one

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<sup>190</sup> Dylann Roof, “Dylann Roof’s Journal,” *The Post and Courier*, December 9, 2016, [https://www.postandcourier.com/dylann-roofs-journal/pdf\\_c5f6550c-be72-11e6-b869-7bdf860326f5.html](https://www.postandcourier.com/dylann-roofs-journal/pdf_c5f6550c-be72-11e6-b869-7bdf860326f5.html).

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>194</sup> Rebecca Hersher, “Jury Finds Dylann Roof Guilty In S.C Church Shooting,” *NPR*, December 15, 2015, <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/12/15/505723552/jury-finds-dylann-roof-guilty-in-s-c-church-shooting>.

<sup>195</sup> Wayne Drash, “Inside the Bible study massacre: A mom ‘laid in her son’s blood,’” *CNN*, December 17, 2015, <https://www.cnn.com/2015/06/19/us/inside-charleston-bible-study-massacre/index.html>.

<sup>196</sup> Ray Sanchez and Ed Payne, “Charleston church shooting: Who is Dylann Roof?” *CNN*, December 16, 2016, <https://www.cnn.com/2015/06/19/us/charleston-church-shooting-suspect/index.html>.

person Dylann Roof deliberately let live was Polly Shepard to whom Roof explained “we need someone to survive, because I'm gonna shoot myself, and you'll be the only survivor.” He put his Glock to his head and fired but was out of ammo. He then yelled more inflammatory comments at the dead bodies and ran out the church’s doors by 9:11 p.m.<sup>197</sup> This shooting lasted for six minutes and Roof was apprehended by police the next morning at 10:44 a.m. at a traffic stop in Shelby, North Carolina, after being tailed by a female citizen who helped ensure his capture. In a show of power and solidarity, the reaction of the Charleston African American community was to heal and mourn. Even Roof’s victims forgave him in his court proceedings, a reaction distinctly the polar opposite of his intent to start a “race war” between African Americans and Whites.<sup>198</sup> Roof reflected on his rampage sometime afterwards and wrote “I would rather live imprisoned knowing I took action for my race than to live with the torture of sitting idle...I did what I thought would make the biggest wave. And now the fate of our race sits in the hands of my brothers who continue to live freely.”<sup>199</sup> Roof’s actions showed Anglin’s *The Daily Stormer*, the CofCC website, and many others offered a platform for self-education on what each site ideologically subscribed to among the coalesced Patriot movement. Roof saw the inflammatory content on these sites as motivation for retaliation for the survival of the white race that Louis Beam’s theory both described and can help us make sense of because there were more far-right terrorists who found inspiration through the far-right’s leaderless resistance on the internet.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Enjoli Francis and Mary Bruce, “New Police Documents Reveal Deadly Minutes Inside South Carolina Church,” *ABC News*, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/police-documents-reveal-deadly-minutes-inside-south-carolina/story?id=34836336>.

<sup>198</sup> Emily Shapiro, “Charleston Victim's Mother Tells Dylann Roof 'I Forgive You' as He's Sentenced to Death,” *ABC News*, January 11, 2017, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/charleston-victims-mother-tells-dylann-roof-forgive/story?id=44704096>; United States Attorney’s Office, “Full Dylann Roof Confession,” *The New York Times*, December 10, 2016 <https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/10000004815369/full-dylann-roof-confession.html>.

<sup>199</sup> “Dylann Roof jailhouse journal,” Jennifer Hawes, *The Post and Courier*, last modified January 6, 2017, [https://www.postandcourier.com/dylann-roof-jailhouse-journal/pdf\\_da3e19b8-d3b3-11e6-b040-03089263e67c.html](https://www.postandcourier.com/dylann-roof-jailhouse-journal/pdf_da3e19b8-d3b3-11e6-b040-03089263e67c.html).

<sup>200</sup> Louis Beam, “Leaderless Resistance,” *The Seditonist*, accessed November 25, 2020, <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~satran/Ford%2006/Wk%202-1%20Terrorism%20Networks%20leaderless-resistance.pdf>.

Another internet user named Patrick Crusius showed leaderless resistance theory can work on a global scale as he was inspired by the March 15, 2019 actions of an extreme right terrorist in New Zealand named Brenton Tarrant.<sup>201</sup> Brenton Tarrant was originally from Australia with an early life full of family troubles that led to his parents' separation. Tarrant first used *4chan* when he was fourteen and possibly its extremist content boards since he was at one point punished for anti-Semitic comments as a high school student.<sup>202</sup> Brenton also suffered immense trauma in April of 2010 when he discovered his father Rodney Tarrant's body after Rodney agreed with Brenton that he would commit suicide due to his pleural mesothelioma.<sup>203</sup> After Rodney's death brought insurance inheritance money to Brenton, he used the money to travel the world. He took three years to travel throughout Europe, Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and South America.<sup>204</sup> In this time, he was part of the Australia based United Patriots Front far right group through their Facebook page where he threatened critics of its leader Blair Cottrell with references to the fictitious day of the rope lynching event in *The Turner Diaries*.<sup>205</sup> While Tarrant sporadically used social media, he made an effort to remain a member of the United Patriot Front's Facebook page. Even when it was taken down in May of 2017, he quickly joined its offshoot Facebook group, the Lads Society.<sup>206</sup> The Lads Society was his main socialization through conversations in the groups' private chat where they at one point in 2017 discussed *Mein Kampf*. "Our greatest threat is the non-violent, high fertility, high social cohesion immigrants...."

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<sup>201</sup> "Patrick Crusius: The Inconvenient Truth," Randall Packer, Accessed September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020, <https://randallpacker.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/The-Inconvenient-Truth.pdf>.

<sup>202</sup> "Ko tō tātou kāinga tēnei Report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain on 15 March 2019," New Zealand Government, Accessed March 27, 2021, <https://christchurchattack.royalcommission.nz/assets/Report-Volumes-and-Parts/Ko-to-tatou-kainga-tenei-Volume-2.pdf>.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.



What I am saying is that we can't be a violent group, not now. But without violence I am not certain if there will be any victory possible at all.”<sup>207</sup> Tarrant also raised the possibility of violence against Muslim immigrants in New Zealand in the chat when he called them frogs in a boiling pot who could not be attacked immediately because they would escape the eventual violence that would face them. Tarrant ended his world travels in New Zealand in August of 2017 and immediately applied for a firearms license. His anger towards Muslim immigrants flared when he learned an Islamic boarding school across from the New Zealand gym he attended was once a catholic school. To Tarrant, that was evidence of the ethnic replacement in the country and around the world that he heard about through *4chan* and his Facebook group chat. Despite his anger, he saw a benefit in how these Muslim schools were segregated from other cultures in the neighborhood.<sup>208</sup> Facebook also allowed Tarrant to keep in contact with his sister and mother over its messenger application where his mother voiced concern with his shaved head and about times when he openly expressed “neo-Nazi” views.<sup>209</sup> Tarrant did not mind his mother calling him a “neo-Nazi” and only asked her to delete the message so the New Zealand government did not flag him.<sup>210</sup> Tarrant found inspiration for violent activism against the Muslim community in New Zealand on YouTube, *4chan*, *8chan*, and other websites where he found the terrorist manifesto of Fjotolf Hansen.<sup>211</sup>

Tarrant’s racism, islamophobia, and more primed him for inspiration through the manifesto of another far-right extremist named Fjotolf Hansen, known online as Anders Breivik, who committed deadly attacks in Norway in 2011 that killed seventy-seven people.<sup>212</sup> Tarrant

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<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid: DW, “European Court of Human Rights rejects appeal of Anders Breivik,” *DW*, June 21, 2018, <https://www.dw.com/en/european-court-of-human-rights-rejects-appeal-of-anders-breivik/a-44328533>.

gained his firearms license in November 16 of 2017, purchased weapons, and trained at multiple local gun ranges. On January eighth and ninth of 2018, he drove from Dunedin to as far north-east as near Hagley park in Christchurch to as far west as near Quailburn and selected the Al Noor and Linwood mosques for his attack.<sup>213</sup> He uploaded “docx” and “pdf” versions of his manifesto at 12:20 am to Zippyshare and other file share applications that sent his manifesto to multiple people and platforms of his choice. He then uploaded his manifesto to Twitter at 6:26am and later in the day at 1:40pm, he attacked Al Noor Mosque and the nearby Linwood Mosque to violently respond to what he saw as the ethnic replacement of the white race that left forty-nine dead and as many injured.<sup>214</sup> Tarrant was imprisoned by police after his terrorist attack which drew international condemnation. Twitter quickly deleted his manifesto from their platform, and in recognition of the Muslim communities trauma the New Zealand’s government banned all automatic rifles from their nation.<sup>215</sup> In all these reactions, the actions of Twitter’s moderation did not work as effectively as they had hoped. Tarrant’s manifesto gained new freedom on the decentralized platforms the internet provided as it reached a global far-right audience and two years later, Patrick Crusius found himself uniquely aligned with the ideas of ethnic replacement within Tarrant’s manifesto.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> “Ko tō tātou kāinga tēnei Report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain on 15 March 2019,” New Zealand Government, Accessed March 27, 2021, <https://christchurchattack.royalcommission.nz/assets/Report-Volumes-and-Parts/Ko-to-tatou-kainga-tenei-Volume-2.pdf>.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid: BBC News, “Christchurch shootings: 49 dead in New Zealand mosque attacks,” BBC News, March 15, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-47578798>.

<sup>215</sup> BBC News, “Christchurch shootings: 49 dead in New Zealand mosque attacks,” BBC News, March 15, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-47578798>; Matthew S. Schwartz, “New Zealand Passes Law Banning Most Semi-Automatic Weapons,” *NPR*, April 10, 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2019/04/10/711820023/new-zealand-passes-law-banning-most-semi-automatic-weapons>.

<sup>216</sup> “File: The Great Replacement.pdf,” WikiSpooks, accessed October 21, 2020, [https://wikispooks.com/wiki/File:The\\_Great\\_Replacement.pdf](https://wikispooks.com/wiki/File:The_Great_Replacement.pdf).

Brenton Tarrant’s manifesto is titled “The Great Replacement” where he admitted to his racism, explained why he committed his attack in great detail, and advocated for war as needed to fight the massive waves of immigration that would cause a “white genocide” that was also spoken about by a user named Odin on *Stormfront* years earlier.<sup>217</sup> Tarrant saw racism as the racial differences between people that greatly impacted how societies are shaped, which included how other races were more “fertile” than others. This was why he advocated “high fertility” immigrants should be forced out of nations to ensure the white race would never disappear.<sup>218</sup> He also used this distinction to inaccurately claim he was not Islamophobic as he only feared the religion’s replacement of white culture.<sup>219</sup> He also notably supported former United States President Donald Trump, “As a symbol of renewed white identity and common purpose? Sure. As a policy maker and leader? Dear god no.”<sup>220</sup> Perhaps another aspect of renewed identity and common purpose Tarrant urged was an investment in the “white genocide” concept since he wanted “To ensure the existence of our people and a future for white children, whilst preserving and exulting nature and the natural order.”<sup>221</sup> He thought his violent activism would achieve this through aggravating the pro and anti-gun control debate on second amendment rights in the United States far enough that another Civil War would erupt.<sup>222</sup> Tarrant gained awareness of this reaction as possible through years of *4chan*, *8chan*, YouTube, and potentially the far-right Facebook group he was in. This idea of a second amendment debate or gun rights restrictions leading to a Civil War is how the fictitious *Turner Diaries* began as the book ended with the Order winning a Civil War against “the system”. While it’s unclear whether Tarrant read the

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

book, he did inscribe the “14 Words” title onto his rifle, a clear reference to the tenets former Order member and neo-Nazi David Lane wrote while imprisoned.<sup>223</sup> Tarrant’s toxically hate filled ideas impacted Patrick Crusius enough to where he sought to take action against the Hispanic community in his native Texas.<sup>224</sup>

Crusius read Tarrant’s manifesto online and generally agreed with his ideas, which led him to target the Hispanic community in El Paso in 2019, as Crusius likely saw them to be a symptom of mass immigration that would cause “white genocide.”<sup>225</sup> Crusius posted his manifesto to *8chan* where he offered this ideological unity with Tarrant in the first line of his manifesto, emboldened by a later claim to be a defender of America because Hispanic people were “invading” Texas.<sup>226</sup> He brought a sense of urgency to this through claiming Native Americans did not take European colonizers seriously and they had been reduced to “a shadow of what was” as a result. Regardless of the inaccuracy to Crusius’ inaccurate fear mongering, it’s very likely someone on the internet who accesses this document will view the comparison as accurate.<sup>227</sup> He continued through predicting Hispanic “invaders” will worsen climate change,

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<sup>223</sup> Robert Evans, “A New Zealand mosque-shooting suspect left a trail of online clues buried under ‘s---posting,’” *Business Insider*, March 15, 2019, <https://www.businessinsider.com/new-zealand-mosque-shooting-suspect-online-clues-radicalization-2019-3>; Associated Press, “13 Supremacists Are Not Guilty of Conspiracies,” *New York Times*, April 8, 1988, <https://www.nytimes.com/1988/04/08/us/13-supremacists-are-not-guilty-of-conspiracies.html>.

<sup>224</sup> “Patrick Crusius: The Inconvenient Truth,” Randall Packer, Accessed September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020, <https://randallpacker.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/The-Inconvenient-Truth.pdf>.

<sup>225</sup> “File: The Great Replacement.pdf,” WikiSpooks, accessed October 21, 2020, [https://wikispooks.com/wiki/File:The\\_Great\\_Replacement.pdf](https://wikispooks.com/wiki/File:The_Great_Replacement.pdf); Erin Ailworth, Georgia Wells, Ian Lovett, “Lost in Life, El Paso Suspect Found a Dark World Online: Gunman who allegedly killed 22 people with an intent to attack Hispanics told investigators he came to his views on the internet,” *The Wall Street Journal*, August 8, 2019, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/lost-in-life-el-paso-suspect-found-a-dark-world-online-11565308783>;

“File: The Great Replacement.pdf,” WikiSpooks, accessed October 21, 2020, [https://wikispooks.com/wiki/File:The\\_Great\\_Replacement.pdf](https://wikispooks.com/wiki/File:The_Great_Replacement.pdf).

<sup>226</sup> “Patrick Crusius: The Inconvenient Truth,” Randall Packer, Accessed September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020, <https://randallpacker.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/The-Inconvenient-Truth.pdf>; Adam Elmahrek, Melissa Etehad, Matthew Ormseth, “Suspect in El Paso massacre ‘didn’t hold anything back’ in police interrogation,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 4, 2019, <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2019-08-03/what-we-know-about-patrick-crusius-el-paso-rampage>.

<sup>227</sup> Michael Shermer and Alex Grobman, *Denying History: Who Says the Holocaust Never Happened and Why Do They Say It? Updated and Expanded* (California: University of California Press, 2009), 251-252.

increase U.S. job automation, decrease college degree value, and increase democratic party dominance in government through a variety of factors.<sup>228</sup> He projected the expensiveness of college degrees would also push him into debt and job automation would leave him without an occupation. To add insult to injury, Hispanic people would then shift Texas to a blue state and make policy changes that bring down white people from power. His arguments were full of predictive absolutes that emphasized his last message “INACTION IS A CHOICE,” which is very formulaic of how Tarrant called for action in his manifesto through likeminded people’s invocation of their “second amendment rights.”<sup>229</sup> Beyond this, Crusius’ manifesto also spoke of former U.S President Donald Trump. Crusius noted his ideology in the manifesto pre-dated President Donald Trump and inferred “the media will probably call me a white supremacist anyway and blame Trump’s rhetoric.” While he distanced himself from the former president, he took the next sentence to agree with President Trump’s rhetoric about how the “media is infamous for fake news.”<sup>230</sup> Crusius found thematic inspiration for violent domestic terrorism in Brenton Tarrant and embodied the essence of leaderless resistance theory in his manifesto’s blatant call for likeminded activists in the Patriot movement to rise against the perceived threat of a white genocide brought on by mass immigration.<sup>231</sup>

Crusius published his manifesto earlier in the day on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019 and drove to the El Paso Walmart he chose as his target to commit a domestic terrorist attack that should be clearly understood as the modern extension of Louis Beam’s leaderless resistance theory. Patrick Crusius left his car in the Walmart parking lot at 10:40 a.m., brandished his WASR-10 style

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<sup>228</sup> “Patrick Crusius: The Inconvenient Truth,” Randall Packer, Accessed September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020, <https://randallpacker.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/The-Inconvenient-Truth.pdf>.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

civilian AK-47 rifle, and fired at people he could see. As he advanced through the parking lot to the Walmart, its manager noticed Crusius and issued a code brown to alert employees an active shooter incident would happen. In the brief time before Crusius came in, employees brought as many people to safety as they could. Despite this warning, Crusius killed twenty-three people in the Walmart including a Latina mother of three he killed with her baby still in her arms. After his rampage, Crusius went back into his car and drove away from the area until he was stopped by Texas Rangers and a motorcycle policeman where he identified himself and surrendered. While Crusius' surrender stopped him from committing further violence, it will not stop the ideas within his, Tarrant's, or Roof's manifesto from inspiring anyone with internet access and a similar worldview from finding inspiration, gathering resources, authoring a manifesto, and continuing the legacy of far-right violence that Louis Beam sought to begin and has yet to end.

## **Conclusion**

The physical surrenders of Roof, Tarrant, and Crusius did not end their assaults on the innocent people they dehumanized and sought to eradicate through what historians should understand as the far-right's leaderless resistance. When Beam imagined this theory and the Order brought it to life through the Aryan Liberty Net, it cost the right-wing movement immensely. The right-wing then coalesced against the federal government's mistakes at Ruby Ridge and the Branch Davidson complex when the white supremacy and militia movements formed the early Patriot movement. Timothy McVeigh embodied the most extreme aspects of this early movement's anger towards the federal government and several books including *The Turner Diaries* inspired him to bomb the federal Murrah Building in Oklahoma City in 1995. The United States' backlash to this was so immense that the early Patriot movement splintered

and retreated to the internet where they festered away from public view until the early 2000s. Soon, websites and message boards like *Stormfront*, *4chan*, *8chan*, *The Daily Stormer*, and countless others emerged and chambered the growth of far-right culture until it was revived in reaction to the election of President Barack Obama. This nuanced internet environment coalesced the Patriot movement like never before through a network of hate websites that was the largest in the world. Some ideas through the maelstrom of hate in these chat boards emerged through many new hate groups, mainstream Republican politicians, and activists such as Dylann Roof, Brenton Tarrant, and Patrick Crusius who were arrested. But these terrorists still represent a real ideological nightmare. Their manifestos are their legacy, which continues to circulate through the chaos of the internet waiting for someone else to clearly hear and act on their call for violence.

Another particularly disturbing aspect to these terrorists' emergence is how none of them committed their attack for the same reasons even when they held culturally similar far-right views and utilized the same platforms for inspiration. Each had an impressive variety of reasons and experiences that fueled their worldviews and rampages that evidenced the variety of ways the nightmare filled legacy of leaderless resistance may continue into the twenty-first century. When Louis Beam first wrote about the culturally binding aspect of fellow Patriots, he suggested a kind of endless war. "We are a band of brothers, native to the soil gaining strength one from another as we have rushed head long into a battle that all the weaker, timid men, say we cannot win. Perhaps ... but then again, perhaps we can. It's not over till the last freedom fighter is buried or imprisoned."<sup>232</sup> Since the ideological extremeness of the terrorist actors discussed in this paper vary significantly from Roof's white nationalist views to Tarrant's xenophobia towards Muslim

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<sup>232</sup> Louis Beam, "Leaderless Resistance," *The Seditiousist*, accessed November 25, 2020, <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~satran/Ford%2006/Wk%202-1%20Terrorism%20Networks%20leaderless-resistance.pdf>.

immigrants and Crusius' patriotism demanding he attack the Hispanic community in El Paso, each terrorist made radical arguments cloaked in vernacular. This was also evidenced by Republican senators referencing these ideas in their publicly available comments. While it may be more frightful to imagine the next nightmare of leaderless resistance, it has unfortunately already emerged.

On January 6, 2021, former President Donald Trump addressed a crowd of supporters near the U.S. capitol building and throughout his speech, amplified politically driven conspiracy theories just before this year's electoral votes were verified. He stood in a glass box speaking with thousands of his supporters to push a baseless conspiracy that the recent election was fraudulent by a variety of means. This crowd of his supporters were immensely diverse in ideology and nefarious intent. All in some way sought to uphold these conspiracy laden falsehoods that they perhaps wholeheartedly believed while President Donald Trump was in front of them. Some were members of far-right groups such as The Oath Keepers who blended into the crowd of civilians as they all walked towards the capitol building with nefarious intent. This crowd surged into the U.S capitol building to make its mark, and it is worth considering they embodied a leaderless resistance the far-right had been trying to build for decades. In the matter of a day the people who subscribed to ideas or were culturally in tune with the Patriot movement sieged the capitol building. They overwhelmed and found sympathizers in the capitol police and showed the world the sheer force of a leaderless resistance organized through social media sites such as Gab and Parler among others. The small force of Oath Keepers easily hid within the crowd of people who resonated with far-right culture and brought a day of flags that touted four more years of former president Donald Trump, the Blue Lives Matter movement, the Confederacy, and a variety of others that flew with terror in place of the American flag. This



flashpoint, its emergence, and its implications on far-right extremism in the United States must be explored by historians, or else this nation will be irreparably changed in objectively horrific ways for us all.

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