

News

From Memes to Infowars: How 75 Fascist Activists Were “Red-Pilled” | bellingcat

By Robert Evans

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Robert Evans takes a deep dive into the concept of “red-pilling”, the process by which consumption of right-wing media content changes one’s political and social views.

The vast majority of domestic terror attacks in the U.S. are carried out by white supremacist organizations. Atomwaffen, a neo-Nazi death squad with five killings to their name, is probably the deadliest fascist group to have arisen since 2016. One member of Atomwaffen, Vasillios Pistoris, was an active duty U.S. marine when he marched at the first Unite the Right rally. Pistoris also posted regularly on a series of fascist and white supremacist Discord servers, prior to and after joining Atomwaffen.

The media collective Unicorn Riot has archived hundreds of thousands of posts from these Discord servers. Their database includes dozens of conversations where fascists discuss how they were converted to their extremist beliefs. In an effort to understand that process, Bellingcat collected “red-pilling” stories from seventy-five fascist activists. The analysis is below, details on the activists we studied can be found here.

What is red-pilling?

An online community develops its own lingo over time. Among fascist activists “red-pilling” means converting someone to fascist, racist and anti-Semitic beliefs. The term originates with “The Matrix,” a popular 1999 film. The protagonist is offered the choice between a red pill, which will open his eyes to the reality of a machine-dominated world, and a blue pill, which will return him to ignorance and safety. The definition of “red pill,” as used by fascists, is rather elastic. Films and songs are described as “red pill” if they reinforce a far-right worldview. At least one poster referred to amphetamines as red-pilled.

There appears to be no agreed-upon standard for when a human being is red-pilled. Most fascist activists agree that acknowledgement of the Jewish Question, or JQ, is critical. This means believing that Jewish people are at the center of a vast global conspiracy. The end goal of this conspiracy is usually described as “white genocide”, but there are numerous variations.

[...]

The “normie” to fascist pipeline

President Donald Trump is seen as having red-pilled many Americans. A number of fascist activists credit his candidacy as the start of their awakening. This conversation between users Buddy Hobbs and ecce_lux is a useful breakdown of how that looks.

<https://discordleaks.unicornriot.ninja/discord/view/761140?q=redpilled#msg>

“The great meme war” is a reference to time this user spent on 4chan and possibly 8chan, creating far-right memes in order to red-pill other people during the election. The whole exchange paints a picture of a man who was initially ensnared by candidate Trump’s rhetoric and then driven towards far-right media and, eventually, extremist communities on 4chan. There his commitment to fascist ideology crystalized.

Source: [From Memes to Infowars: How 75 Fascist Activists Were “Red-Pilled” | bellingcat](#)