

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 Pistolis](#), was an active duty U.S. marine when he marched at the first Unite the Right rally. Pistolis 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](#)