

The fake-news kingpin of Brazil | Columbia Journalism Review

By Paula Ramón

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In 2014, Allan dos Santos, a former seminarian from Rio de Janeiro, started a blog. He had given up his religious vocation and discovered a new career path in blogging while traveling the United States. He chose its name, *Terça Livre* (or Free Tuesday), as an attempt to rebrand the initials of liberation theology, a form of Catholicism prevalent in Latin America that emphasizes the religious imperative to liberate the oppressed.

Dos Santos initially published a video every Tuesday, in a sort of unscripted talk show in which he attacked opponents—left-wing politicians and traditional media—and expressed ultra-conservative views against a supposed cultural threat seeking to destroy families. He saw global conspiracies in everything. Part of his inspiration came from *Church Militant*, a subscription-based blog with positions against social-welfare programs, immigration, and abortion.

He sought to emulate Olavo de Carvalho, a former astrologist, newspaper columnist, and self-described philosopher who, with increasingly far-right positions, came to be known as “Jair Bolsonaro’s guru.” Though he’s based in Virginia, through his use of social networks, Carvalho has captivated many young people dissatisfied with the Brazilian political system.

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