

# **No Longer Alone: Lone Wolves, Wolf Packs and Made for Web TV Specials**

**Jeffrey Kaplan**

**Doctoral School on Safety and Security Sciences, Óbudai University, Budapest, Hungary**

**Visiting Fellow, Danube Institute, Budapest, Hungary**

"No Longer Alone: Lone Wolves, Wolf Packs and Made for Web TV Specials." In Barbara Perry, Jeff Gruenewald and Ryan Scrivens, eds., *Right-Wing Extremism in Canada and the United States* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, forthcoming 2022).

## **Abstract**

When Texas Klansman Louis Beam wrote his seminal screed "Leaderless Resistance" in *The Seditonist* in 1992, he also wrote a lesser known companion piece advising 'Patriots' on how to use a computer or, failing that, offering instructions on setting up a telephone bulletin board for tech-challenged adherents. Beam was tactically prescient, but it took Bill Gates and Windows 95 to make his lone wolf dream a reality. The transnational radical right adopted Beam's strategy by necessity given their inability to form secure organizational capabilities. This article will follow the evolution of the right wing lone wolf from such early avatars as Joseph Paul Franklin in the 1960s through the social media driven killings in Christchurch, New Zealand in 2019. The article will argue that the lone wolf tactic has not only gone viral for the radical right, but of greater importance, that the technological, social and political changes that have impacted mainstream

society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has changed the way the lone wolf tactic is employed and understood by contemporary lone wolves on the radical right.

### **Key Words**

Lone wolf, leaderless resistance, skinheads, Christian Identity, Ku Klux Klan, Odinism, Oklahoma City bombing, Christchurch, Ted Kaczynski, Anders Behring Breivik, Brenton Tarrant, Joseph Paul Franklin

### **A Note on Terminology**

There is some controversy over the term ‘lone wolf’ which goes beyond academic definitional disputes. Many argue that the term glorifies terrorists rather than describes a terrorist act. The term ‘lone actor’ is therefore used in law enforcement and is becoming increasingly prevalent in academic writings as well. Lone actor as a term of art is fine, but the argument that the term ‘lone wolves’ gives the attacker too much credit for cunning and guile is misguided. That their attacks succeed is proof enough that they do not lack either cunning or guile. Thus, while the next section seeks to unpack the terminology, this chapter uses the term lone wolf rather than lone actor.

Similarly, the terms radical right, extreme right and far right too often tend to be used almost interchangeably. Radical right is much favored by American observers to denote the sector of the right-wing who seek to act outside the norms of the law and the democratic system.

In Europe, where the parliamentary system offers an opening in electoral politics for right-wing extremists, far or extreme right is preferred. This chapter focuses entirely on a form of terrorist action that is best described by the term radical right.

## Academic Definitions

The academic literature of lone wolf terrorism by 2021 has become voluminous, so much so that a full accounting would require a monograph to be comprehensive. This section therefore focuses only on several key contributions. It began with my own “Leaderless Resistance” which appeared in 1997 and perhaps marked the first use of the term ‘lone wolf’ in the terrorism literature.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the most influential monograph on the topic followed in 2004 with Marc Sageman’s *Understanding Terror Networks*, which focused on Islamist terrorism.<sup>2</sup> Its redolent catch phrase “a bunch of guys” caught the journalistic imagination. Several important monographs followed including Ramon Spaaij’s *Understanding Lone Wolf Terrorism*. (2011),<sup>3</sup> George Michael’s *Lone Wolf Terror and the Rise of Leaderless Resistance* (2012),<sup>4</sup> Peter Phillips’ *In Pursuit Of The Lone Wolf Terrorist* (2013),<sup>5</sup> Jeffrey D. Simon’s *Lone Wolf Terrorism*

---

<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey Kaplan, "Leaderless Resistance," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 9, no. 3 (1997): 80-95. Cf. Keith Ludwick, "Book Review: The Alphabet Bomber: A Lone Wolf Ahead Of His Time," *CBRNE Central*, April 16, 2019, <https://cbrnecentral.com/book-review-the-alphabet-bomber-a-lone-wolf-ahead-of-his-time/18566/>.

<sup>2</sup> Marc Sageman, *Understanding terror networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). Cf. Marc Sageman, *Leaderless jihad: terror networks in the twenty-first century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Ramon Spaaij, *Understanding Lone Wolf Terrorism: Global Patterns, Motivations and Prevention*, Springer Briefs in Criminology, (Dordrecht Springer, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> George Michael, *Lone Wolf Terror and the Rise of Leaderless Resistance* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> Peter J. Phillips, *In pursuit of the lone wolf terrorist: investigative economics and new horizons for the economic analysis of terrorism* (Hauppauge, New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2013).

(2013) and his case study *The Alphabet Bomber* (2019).<sup>6</sup> Add to this the anthology Jeffrey Kaplan, Heléna Lööw and Leena Malkki, *Lone Wolf and Autonomous Cell Terrorism* (2015)<sup>7</sup> and an avalanche of articles too numerous to mention, but wonderfully listed in Greta E. Marlatt's "Lone Wolf Terrorism – A Brief Bibliography" (2019).<sup>8</sup> Each summarized the findings to date, offered various case studies and each contributed to our understanding of the lone wolf phenomenon.

With so much to choose from and so little space, this section will focus primarily on the work of Raffaello Pantucci, Burt Schurman, Ramón Spaaij, Mark S. Hamm, Jeff Gruenwald and his co-authors and Paul Gill et. al.

Perhaps the most useful place to begin is Raffaello Pantucci, "A Typology of Lone Wolves: Preliminary Analysis of Lone Islamist Terrorists" whose findings are relevant to the study of far right lone wolves. Pantucci correctly notes that lone wolf attacks are seldom carried out solely by a true loner with no outside assistance whatever. Instead, he offers a four part typology based on a detailed analysis of a variety of lone wolf operations. These are the Loner, Lone Wolf, Lone Wolf Pack, and Lone Attacker.<sup>9</sup>

The true loner—an actor who acts completely in isolation—is rare and exists in a definitional gray area. Joseph Paul Franklin is a case in point. Was he a lone wolf terrorist, a serial killer, or simply an individual so deranged that he was expelled from the American Nazi

---

<sup>6</sup> Jeffrey D. Simon, *Lone wolf terrorism : understanding the growing threat* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2016). Jeffrey D. Simon, *The Alphabet Bomber: a lone wolf terrorist ahead of his time* (Lincoln: Potomac Books, an imprint of the University of Nebraska Press, 2019).

<sup>7</sup> Jeffrey Kaplan, Heléna Lööw, and Leena Malkki, *Lone Wolf and Autonomous Cell Terrorism* (London: Routledge, January, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> Greta E Marlatt, *Lone Wolf Terrorism-A Brief Bibliography*, *Department of Homeland Security Digital Library* (Washington, DC, 2019), <https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/24281>.

<sup>9</sup> Raffaello Pantucci, *A typology of lone wolves: Preliminary analysis of lone Islamist terrorists*, ICSR (March 2011), [https://www.academia.edu/download/24801864/1302002992icsrpaper\\_atypologyoflonewolves\\_pantucci.pdf](https://www.academia.edu/download/24801864/1302002992icsrpaper_atypologyoflonewolves_pantucci.pdf).

Party for behavior too bizarre even for their decidedly peculiar standards? Or all of the above?

One might argue that the true loner has gone the way of the 8-track tape in the age of social media. As even a cursory examination of groups like the painfully frustrated and utterly isolated Incels (Involuntary Celibates) demonstrates, no one is too weird to be without compatriots thanks to the internet.<sup>10</sup>

The lone wolf in Pantucci's telling is perhaps the most common. The lone wolf does act alone but is nurtured by a supportive milieu. It was also the modus operandi of the pro-life rescue movement where anyone contemplating the use of lethal force would cease all contact with the movement and act alone.<sup>11</sup>

The lone wolf may and probably does have help along the way and is backed by a supportive milieu, but in the end acts alone. The wolf pack is similar but involves a small relatively autonomous group who Pantucci believes still constitutes a lone wolf pack. This is a point made by many others, most notably Christopher Hewitt who defines a terrorist group as having four or more members while those having fewer still may be classified as lone wolves.<sup>12</sup> Paul Gill does not go this far, but notes that individual actors and isolated dyads (two members) would qualify.<sup>13</sup> This form of lone wolf action might better be termed autonomous cell structure

---

<sup>10</sup> Elle Reevel, "This is What the Life of an Incel Looks Like," *Vice News*, August 2, 2018, [https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/7xqw3g/this-is-what-the-life-of-an-incele-looks-like](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/7xqw3g/this-is-what-the-life-of-an-incele-looks-like). One memorable character in the chat room, upon being informed that a woman was virtually present, promptly removed his pants and defecated on camera; an act that all in the room had seen him do before. The article notes that, like four others who had been regulars in the chat room, this individual later died by apparent suicide, as did four others in the group. His behavior did not affect his standing in the group. By contrast, when ANP member Dan Burros, who like Franklin was expelled from the ANP, strangled the group's dog, lovingly named Gas Chamber, he was summarily banished from both barracks and group. Times and sensibilities have changed...

<sup>11</sup> Jeffrey Kaplan, "Absolute Rescue: Absolutism, Defensive Action and the Resort to Force," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 7, no. 3 (Autumn 1995): 128-63.

<sup>12</sup> Christopher Hewitt, *Understanding Terrorism in America: From the Klan to al Qaeda* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>13</sup> Ramón Spaaij and Mark S Hamm, "Key issues and research agendas in lone wolf terrorism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38, no. 3 (2015): 169.

and classified at best as a lone wolf style operation. However, it has the utility of bringing actions like the Oklahoma City bombing perpetrated by Timothy McVeigh with the help of Terry Nichols and many similar cases into the lone wolf category.

The lone attacker is an increasingly common feature of Islamist attacks but is still quite rare in the radical right where organizational structures are far less developed. The lone attacker according to Pantucci acts alone, but is nonetheless tied to, and to a degree controlled, by an organization.<sup>14</sup> In the present day, Atomwaffen, an American-based National Socialist group, has perpetrated violence of this type, although at the cost of having members imprisoned and the group driven largely out of business by government pressure.<sup>15</sup>

Pantucci's typology, while of some heuristic utility, leads to the obvious question of whether a wolf pack constitutes lone wolf terrorism at all? While I have argued elsewhere that it does not and that this form of violence would better be analyzed as autonomous cells rather than lone wolf violence, Bart Schuurman and others argue that the wolf pack, like the very concept of lone wolf terrorism itself, has outlived its usefulness to academics and law enforcement alike:

We... avoid the oxymoron of "lone wolf packs." Regardless of how small such dyads, triads, or small cells may be, as soon as two or more people interact with one another with the aim of

---

<sup>14</sup> Pantucci, *A typology of lone wolves: Preliminary analysis of lone Islamist terrorists*.

<sup>15</sup> A. C. Thompson, Ali Winston, and Jake Hanrahan "Inside Atomwaffen As It Celebrates a Member for Allegedly Killing a Gay Jewish College Student," *Pro Publica*, February 3, 2018, <https://www.propublica.org/article/atomwaffen-division-inside-white-hate-group>. Rachel Weiner and Matt Zaptosky, "Five arrested, accused of targeting journalists as part of neo-Nazi Atomwaffen group," *Washington Post*, February 26, 2020, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/propublica-named-him-as-an-atomwaffen-leader-feds-say-he-struck-back/2020/02/26/c9548ac4-57e5-11ea-ab68-101ecfec2532\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/propublica-named-him-as-an-atomwaffen-leader-feds-say-he-struck-back/2020/02/26/c9548ac4-57e5-11ea-ab68-101ecfec2532_story.html).

committing a terrorist attack, small-group dynamics come into play. Peer pressure, leader–follower interactions, group polarization, and other social–psychological processes by definition rule out including even the smallest “packs” under the heading of lone-actor terrorism.<sup>16</sup>

Schuurman’s criticisms are sound but represents a minority view in the field at present.

A complicating definitional factor in the study of radical right wing lone wolf terrorism is the often fuzzy boundaries between criminal violence and lone wolf violence. Criminal violence, spree killings and acts perpetrated by the mentally ill greatly complicate the definitional boundaries of lone wolf terrorism. In this respect, the work of Jeff Gruenwald and his co-authors, writing from a primarily criminology perspective, is particularly useful. Their “Distinguishing ‘Loner’ Attacks from Other Domestic Extremist Violence” focuses on homicide incidents while bringing in mental illness as a key variable. Gruenwald et. al., offer a useful variable set to examine both behavioral and tactical factors in lone wolf terrorism.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, an unavoidable weakness of open source studies of lone wolf terrorism is that by definition they are incomplete, lacking closed source data that is generally zealously guarded by law enforcement and government agencies. Paul Gill et. al addresses this issue with "What Do Closed Source Data Tell Us About Lone Actor Terrorist Behavior? A Research Note." The

---

<sup>16</sup> Bart Schuurman et al., "End of the lone wolf: The typology that should not have been," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 42, no. 8 (2019): 771-2.

<sup>17</sup> Jeff Gruenwald, Steven Chermak, and Joshua D Freilich, "Distinguishing “loner” attacks from other domestic extremist violence: A comparison of far-right homicide incident and offender characteristics," *Criminology & Public Policy* 12, no. 1 (2013): 65-91. Cf. Brent L Smith et al., "The emergence of lone wolf terrorism: Patterns of behavior and implications for intervention," *Sociology of Crime, Law and Deviance* 20 (September 2015): 89-110.

article focuses on the UK and encompasses both Islamist and radical right actors as they evolve from radicalization to action.<sup>18</sup>

In recent years, there have been fewer works on lone wolf violence than a decade ago. But new research continues to emerge in a field that is still very much contested.<sup>19</sup>

## **The Euro-American Radical Right**

It all began as an almost existential act of despair. The 1980s began with much optimism for the milieu of the radical right. Christian Identity was booming in the US, where Bible-based hermeneutics were integral to everyday life.<sup>20</sup> Explicit National Socialism in the US hit its dubious high point in the US in the 1960s under the charismatic leadership of the Commander, George Lincoln Rockwell, whose American Nazi Party made headlines and launched Rockwell as a media celebrity, interviewed by *Roots* author Alex Haley in the pages of *Playboy* and invited to be heckled as a paid lecturer at universities throughout the country.<sup>21</sup> By the 1980s, the National Socialist (NS) faithful were scattered in a number of what Roger Griffin aptly called ‘grouplets’ under a menagerie of minifuehers throughout the country.<sup>22</sup> Odinism, the racist version of Ásatrú whose worship of the Norse/Germanic pantheon was exploding among the

---

<sup>18</sup> Paul Gill et al., "What Do Closed Source Data Tell Us About Lone Actor Terrorist Behavior? A Research Note," *Terrorism & Political Violence* (2019), <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09546553.2019.1668781>.

<sup>19</sup> Jonathan Kenyon, Christopher Baker-Beall, and Jens Binder, "Lone-actor terrorism—a systematic literature review," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2021): 1-24.

<sup>20</sup> Michael Barkun, *Religion and the racist right: the origins of the Christian Identity movement*, Rev. ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

<sup>21</sup> Frederick J. Simonelli, *American fuehrer: George Lincoln Rockwell and the American Nazi Party* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999). From the Commander himself: George Lincoln Rockwell, *In hoc signo vinces* (Arlington, Va.: World Union of Free Enterprise National Socialists, 1960), [https://archive.org/stream/LincolnRockwellGeorge/LincolnRockwellGeorge-InHocSignoVinces\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/LincolnRockwellGeorge/LincolnRockwellGeorge-InHocSignoVinces_djvu.txt).

<sup>22</sup> Roger Griffin, "From slime mould to rhizome: an introduction to the groupuscular right," *Patterns of Prejudice* 37, no. 1 (2003): 27-50.



youth, especially in the Biker and prison worlds.<sup>23</sup> Skinhead groups, along with their music and dress were rather thin on the ground in the US.<sup>24</sup> And the milieu of the radical right in America was rich with single issue constituencies—farmers losing their land in the Farm Crisis, those holding that US currency and the taxation system were fraudulent, Holocaust Deniers insisting it didn't happen (but should have), End Time Overcomers establishing rural enclaves to survive the coming apocalypse, and many more.<sup>25</sup>

The European scene in these years differed from that in the United States, although linkages were being formed that would bear fruit in the 1990s and transform the movement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>26</sup> European movements varied in each country but did share a set of common characteristics. They were far more secular than their American counterparts, and publicly or privately, were more explicitly NS oriented. The Skinhead subculture was far stronger in Europe, where Ian Stewart's Skrewdriver inspired a number of others, especially in Germany and

---

<sup>23</sup> Mattias Gardell, *Gods of the blood: the pagan revival and White separatism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003). For an insider introduction, see Else Christensen, "Odinism—Religion of Relevance," *The Odinist* 82 (1984). On the Ásatrú/Odinist divide, Jeffrey Kaplan, *Radical religion in America: millenarian movements from the far right to the children of Noah* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1997), ch. 3.

<sup>24</sup> Skinheads were much coveted in the 1980s as potential cannon fodder for established radical right leaders. Tom Metzger's White Aryan Resistance (WAR) did the most in this area. His efforts were immortalized in the thinly disguised biopic "American History X." A Metzger influenced murder by a skinhead in Portland, Oregon, led to a civil suit against WAR by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) which proved costly to Metzger and the organization. Richard Butler gave it a shot as well by inviting skinheads to the annual Aryan Nations jamboree and cross burning, but their drunken exploits mixed poorly with the strait laced Christian Identity crowd. On Metzger and the SPLC, see Elden Rosenthal, "White Supremacy and Hatred in the Streets of Portland: The Murder of Mulugeta Seraw," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 120, no. 4 (2019): 588-605. On Butler, see Meagan Day, "Welcome to Hayden Lake, where white supremacists tried to build their homeland," *Timeline*, November 4, 2016, <https://timeline.com/white-supremacist-rural-paradise-fb62b74b29e0>. On Aryan Nations and the scene in general, James Ridgeway, *Blood in the face : the Ku Klux Klan, Aryan nations, Nazi skinheads, and the rise of a new white culture*, 1st ed. (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1990). John Pollard, "Skinhead culture: the ideologies, mythologies, religions and conspiracy theories of racist skinheads," *Patterns of Prejudice* 50, no. 4-5 (2016): 398-419.

<sup>25</sup> For an introduction to the White Supremacist Constellation of the time, see Jeffrey Kaplan, "Right wing violence in North America," *Terrorism and political violence* 7, no. 1 (1995): 44-95. For a great contemporary snapshot of the milieu, see James Ridgeway, *Blood in the face : the Ku Klux Klan, Aryan Nations, Nazi skinheads and the rise of a new white culture*, Newly rev. and updated 2nd ed. (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1995). <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0832/95043138-d.html>.

<sup>26</sup> Jeffrey Kaplan and Leonard Weinberg, *The Emergence of a Euro-American Radical Right* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1998).

Scandinavia.<sup>27</sup> Holocaust Denial and expressions of anti-Semitism were ubiquitous, despite the imposition of jail terms for speech designed to incite racial hatred. But the real energy in Europe, in sharp contrast to the US, was in the formation of parliamentary parties who were forced to mute their public expressions of racial hatred and anti-Semitism so as to be allowed to stand for election. Of these, the Sweden Democrats were typical in their evolution from a group of Hitler cultists to a political party who, driven by the fear of immigration, would by the 21<sup>st</sup> century be in position to compete for power.<sup>28</sup> Even more startling, the True Finns, a beyond the fringe right wing party in quiet Finland, underwent a facelift, a name change and under a mediagenic leadership emerged as the Finn Party, which in the 2019 elections gained 39 parliamentary seats, only one behind the ruling Social Democrats.<sup>29</sup>

By the 1990s, the European skinhead groups presented primarily a law enforcement problem. Drunken street brawls, beatings and the like presented little threat to the state. Attacks on refugee housing, which in Germany could be large scale, were met again with sufficient force to contain or put down the disturbances. Ultimately, skinhead groups, like football hooligans, fought with boots and clubs, causing injuries but seldom deaths and never threatening the state.

The American radical right by contrast had guns. Lots of them. With an amazing array of fire power, as well as gun smiths who could modify anything and make weapons to spec. The wildly idiosyncratic Christian Identity/ End Time Overcomer compound, Covenant, Sword and

---

<sup>27</sup> John M Cotter, "Sounds of hate: White power rock and roll and the neo-nazi skinhead subculture," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 11, no. 2 (1999): 111-40. Robert Futrell, Pete Simi, and Simon Gottschalk, "Understanding music in movements: The white power music scene," *The Sociological Quarterly* 47, no. 2 (2006): 275-304.

<sup>28</sup> Helene Lööw, *Country Report Sweden*, Strategies for combating right-wing extremism in Europe, (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2009), 425-59.

<sup>29</sup> David Arter, "When a pariah party exploits its demonised status: the 2019 Finnish general election," *West European Politics* 43, no. 1 (2020): 260-73.

Arm of the Lord (CSA), specialized in the trade.<sup>30</sup> Worse, an increasing number of these armed groups were becoming overtly revolutionary, at least on a rhetorical level. CSA issued a “Declaration of War” on the United States,<sup>31</sup> apparently unaware that Peter Sellers had beat them to it to far greater effect in the film “The Mouse That Roared” (1959). But it was just talk. Robert Mathews’ Brueders Schweigan (Silent Brotherhood), popularly, The Order, put words into action and undertook a series of daring armored car robberies and murders.<sup>32</sup> Imprisoned Order member David Lane continues to influence the movement through his 14 Word Press which is named for his now famous 14 Words: "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children."<sup>33</sup> The 14 Words are echoed throughout the movement today and would be a *leitmotif* in Brenton Tarrant's manifesto “The Great Replacement” which will be considered later in this chapter.

Then came Waco in 1993. The disastrous raid on the Branch Davidian compound which resulted in the deaths of 76 men, women and children against the backdrop of a burning homes sent shock waves through the radical right, as well as new religious movement groups and a variety of others whose lives were lived beyond the mainstream.<sup>34</sup> No one however, felt as directly threatened as the radical right.

This paranoia was not without foundation. The Order had alerted the federal government that the small and politically isolated groups of the racist right were, with the right leadership,

---

<sup>30</sup> For a wonderful insider account, Kerry Noble, *Tabernacle of hate: Seduction into right-wing extremism* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011). For an overview, Jeffrey Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power: a Sourcebook on the Radical Racist Right* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2000), 71-75, 107-10.

<sup>31</sup> For the full text, Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power: a Sourcebook on the Radical Racist Right*, 522-5.

<sup>32</sup> Kevin Flynn and Gary Gerhardt, *The Silent Brotherhood: Inside America's Racist Underground* (New York: Free Press, 1989).

<sup>33</sup> George Michael, "David Lane and the fourteen words," *Totalitarian movements and political religions* 10, no. 1 (2009): 43-61.

<sup>34</sup> Catherine Wessinger, "Deaths in the Fire at the Branch Davidians' Mount Carmel: Who Bears Responsibility?," *Nova Religio* 13, no. 2 (2009): 25-60.

capable of considerable violence. With this in mind, federal authorities became much more engaged in combatting the threat. In 1985 the FBI mounted a raid on the CSA enclave, although by that time its leader James Ellison's taste for polygamy and underage girls had driven out most of the faithful. Despite a "Declaration of Non-surrender" issued in better times,<sup>35</sup> CSA quickly surrendered without firing a shot. The outcome was much worse in 1992, when a combined force of FBI agents and Federal Marshalls surrounded the cabin of Identity adherent Randy Weaver in Ruby Ridge, Idaho. Weaver's wife and 11 year old son, as well as a federal Marshall, were killed in the incident. Weaver was sent to prison, but later released with a \$3.1 million dollar settlement from the federal government.<sup>36</sup>

These cases were paradigmatic but here were many more. Tax protestor Gordon Kahl was killed in a confrontation with the FBI in North Dakota.<sup>37</sup> Civil suits initiated by Morris Dees' Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) damaged or shuttered organizations across the country, including Tom Metzger's White Aryan Resistance (WAR), several Klan groups, and

---

<sup>35</sup> Specifically, in a 1982 edition of the *CSA Journal*. For the full text, see Jeffrey Kaplan, "The Roots of Religious Violence in America," in *Misunderstanding Cults: Searching for Objectivity in a Controversial Field*, ed. Benjamin Zablocki and Thomas Robbins (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 478-509.

<sup>36</sup> The best book on the incident remains Jess Walter, *Every Knee Shall Bow: The Truth and Tragedy of Ruby Ridge and Randy Weaver Family* (New York: ReganBooks, 1995). Cf. Betty A Dobratz, Stephanie L Shanks-Meile, and Danelle Hallenbeck, "What Happened on Ruby Ridge: Terrorism or Tyranny?," *Symbolic Interaction* 26, no. 2 (2003): 315-42. Stephen Labaton, "Separatist Family Given \$3.1 Million From Government," *New York Times*, August 16, 1995, 1.

<sup>37</sup> James Corcoran, *Bitter harvest: Gordon Kahl and the Posse Comitatus: Murder in the heartland* (New York Viking, 1990).

ultimately in 2000 Aryan Nations, which was forced to close up shop altogether.<sup>38</sup> The 1995 Oklahoma City bombing was in part revenge for Waco.<sup>39</sup>

Such was the state of the milieu of the American radical right in the 1990s that, faced with relentless government pressure, outright public rejection, and the success of not only government agencies but also private watchdog organizations like the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith (ADL) at infiltrating these groups that distrust and then despair became pervasive. As a perfect metaphor of the time, I have in my collection a snapshot of three Klansmen in full regalia proudly displaying a purloined ADL banner. In truth however, one of the Klansmen was reporting to the FBI, one to the ADL, and the third would later commit suicide.

Despite an outlier or two such as John Ansonius, the Swedish 'laser man' who shot eleven immigrants between 1991-1992, killing one, Europe experienced little of the deadly violence by government and right wing extremists that became increasingly common in America in these years.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> David Montgomery, "The State of Hate," *Washington Post Magazine*, November 8, 2018, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/magazine/wp/2018/11/08/feature/is-the-southern-poverty-law-center-judging-hate-fairly/>. More recently, Dees was removed from the SPLC for corruption. In better times, Morris Dees et al., *A lawyer's journey: the Morris Dees story*, ABA biography series, (Chicago, Ill.: American Bar Association, 2001). For the more prosaic reality, Bob Moser, "The Reckoning of Morris Dees and the Southern Poverty Law Center," *The New Yorker*, March 21, 2019, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-reckoning-of-morris-dees-and-the-southern-poverty-law-center>.

<sup>39</sup> Lou Michel and Dan Herbeck, *American terrorist: Timothy McVeigh & the tragedy at Oklahoma City* (New York: Avon Books, 2002).

<sup>40</sup> Liz Fekete, "Sweden's counter-extremism model and the stigmatising of anti-racism," *Institute of Race Relations* 9 (2014): 1-15. Ansonius was sentenced to life terms in both Sweden and Germany, where he murdered a Holocaust survivor. "German court jails Sweden's 'laser man' shooter for life," *The Local*, February 21, 2018, <https://www.thelocal.com/20180221/swedens-laser-man-killer-verdict-over-frankfurt-murder>.

This was the atmosphere in which Texas Klansman Louis Beam wrote “Leaderless Resistance.”<sup>41</sup> Beam credits “Leaderless Resistance.” Beam argues:

As honest men who have banded together into groups or associations of a political or religious nature are falsely labeled "domestic terrorists" or "cultists" and suppressed, it will become necessary to consider other methods of organization — or as the case may very well call for: non-organization.<sup>42</sup>

Membership in those groups tolerated by the government Beam argues, comes at a cost, given the poor leadership and thorough penetration by informants. Thus:

It is sure that, for the most part, this struggle is rapidly becoming a matter of individual action, each of its participants making a private decision in the quietness of his heart to resist: to resist by any means necessary.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> Louis Beam, "Leaderless Resistance," *The Seditonist*, no. 12 (February 1992). The text can be found in Kaplan, *Encyclopedia of White Power: a Sourcebook on the Radical Racist Right*, 503-11. And online at <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~satran/Ford%2006/Wk%202-1%20Terrorism%20Networks%20leaderless-resistance.pdf>.

<sup>42</sup> Beam, "Leaderless Resistance."

<sup>43</sup> Beam, "Leaderless Resistance."

Beam's analysis of the state of the movement was accurate enough, but he was hardly the first to note the effectiveness of the lone wolf approach to terrorism. As noted earlier, Joseph Paul Franklin, an expelled member of George Lincoln Rockwell's original American Nazi Party, is the avatar of the racist lone wolf killer. Over the course of two decades, Franklin acted as a true lone wolf in that he truly acted utterly alone. His victims ranged from interracial couples jogging in Seattle to such high profile figures as civil rights lawyer and Clinton Administration adviser Vernon Jordan and *Hustler Magazine* publisher Larry Flynt, whose pornographic portrayals of interracial sex offended Franklin's sensibilities.<sup>44</sup> Franklin was executed for his crimes in 2013.<sup>45</sup>

Franklin in reality was an inefficient killer—Jordan and Flynt among others survived—and a worse terrorist as he never credited his crimes to the cause. Police and the public perceived his violence as purely local and criminal in nature. This allowed him to move throughout the country and enhanced his longevity as an active shooter, but his impact on the movement or the nation was at best posthumous. But that impact is very real thanks to William Pierce's fictionalization of Franklin's career in his novel *Hunter*; a book which began a wave of similar apocalyptic fiction in the radical right.<sup>46</sup>

In sum, as the leaderless resistance concept morphed into the lone wolf phenomenon in the waning years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, what began as a tactic of desperation and despair became, in

---

<sup>44</sup> Mel Ayton, *Dark soul of the South : the life and crimes of racist killer Joseph Paul Franklin* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2011).

<sup>45</sup> Lateef Mungin, "Serial killer Joseph Franklin executed after hours of delay," *CNN*, November 21, 2013, <https://www.cnn.com/2013/11/20/justice/missouri-franklin-execution/index.html>.

<sup>46</sup> Andrew (William Pierce) MacDonald, *Hunter* (Hillsboro, WV: National Vanguard Books, 1989). On the literary genre, Jeffrey Kaplan, "America's apocalyptic literature of the radical right," *International sociology* 33, no. 4 (2018): 503-22.

the words of President Obama, the most potent terrorist threat facing the United States since 9/11.<sup>47</sup>

Despite these rare successes, lone wolf attacks in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were largely ineffectual and resulted mainly in the incarceration of the putative lone wolves. No better example might be offered than that of the Joseph Tomassi led National Socialist liberation Front (NSLF) in the 1960s. Tomassi was a visionary strategist with a way with words. His slogan “Pray for victory and not an end to slaughter” perfectly summed up the millenarian dreams of the NS faithful. It was Tomassi who argued that the movement’s dream of the American public one day becoming a revolutionary majority was just that: a dream. Instead, he argued, the future belonged to the few who were bold and committed enough to “get their hands dirty” and take up arms themselves. Two NSLF leaders, David Rust and Karl Hand, did just that and wound up with long prison terms. James Mason, who today is the *éminence grise* of the NS oriented terror groups in America, avoided that fate and wrote their story in the pages of *Siege!*, the NSLF journal later published as a book.<sup>48</sup>

Lone wolf attacks gained primacy by the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, not only from the radical right, but from Islamists, Jewish extremists in Israel such as Yigal Amir who assassinated Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin in 1995,<sup>49</sup> and many others around the world. And therein lies a tale...

---

<sup>47</sup> "Obama says "lone wolf terrorist" biggest U.S. threat," *Reuters*, August 17, 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-obama-security/obama-says-lone-wolf-terrorist-biggest-u-s-threat-idUSTRE77F6XI20110816>.

<sup>48</sup> Jeffrey Kaplan, "Real Paranoids Have Real Enemies: The Genesis of the ZOG Discourse in the American National Socialist Subculture," in *Millennialism, Persecution and Violence*, ed. Catherine Wessinger (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 299-322. For a more concise discussion, Michael, *Lone Wolf Terror and the Rise of Leaderless Resistance*, 42-3. Cf. James Mason, *Siege!* (Denver, CO: Storm Books, 1992).

<sup>49</sup> Ehud Sprinzak, *Brother against brother: violence and extremism in Israeli politics from Altalena to the Rabin assassination* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1999).



## No Longer Alone: Lone Wolves as Streaming TV Stars

When “Leaderless Resistance” first appeared in 1997, Windows 95 was in the process of making the internet accessible to greater and greater numbers of people, but it had yet to have a significant impact on the American radical right. That would come soon enough, but even the prescient Klansman Louis Beam could hardly envision what the 21<sup>st</sup> century’s online world would bring. Schuurman, et. al., were certainly on the right track, although their focus on global Islamist groups and terrorism in Europe does not accurately reflect what would develop on the radical right. In this area, they note the importance of Anders Breivik whose 2011 killing rampage in Norway and yet conflate his actions with those of Ted Kaczynski, the Unabomber, who was active for over two decades in the US.<sup>50</sup>

Anders Breivik and Ted Kaczynski are fundamentally different. Kaczynski was a true loner, operating out of a one room shack in the wilderness. He lived in such isolation that he was only discovered when, by chance, his brother recognized his handwriting and dropped a dime to the FBI.<sup>51</sup> The Unabomber was a creature of the pre-internet 1960s. Kaczynski’s neo-luddite belief system was so idiosyncratic that it was shared by only a few scattered adherents with whom he had no contact whatever. Breivik by contrast was a child of the internet age and an obsessive consumer of numerous anti-immigration web sites a la *The Gates of Vienna* and racist chat rooms. His voluminous manifesto is a cut and paste pastiche of the writings of many others, assembled together in a package that would embarrass a college freshman who has yet to learn

---

<sup>50</sup> Schuurman et al., "End of the lone wolf: The typology that should not have been," 774.

<sup>51</sup> See in particular the Feral House publication Theodore J Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery: The Collected Writings of Theodore J. Kaczynski, Aka "The Unabomber"* (San Francisco: Feral House, 2010). Cf. Lis W. Wiehl and Lisa Pulitzer, *Hunting the Unabomber: the FBI, Ted Kaczynski, and the capture of America's most notorious domestic terrorist* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2020).

the meaning of the term ‘plagiarism’. Kaczynski was a true lone wolf, while Breivik, who acted alone, was a creature of a supportive online milieu which nurtured both his fantasies and his sense of mission. Arguably, without that community of true believers, Breivik would not have acted, and perhaps not adopted the belief system that led to his violence in the first place.

It is the ubiquity of online comradeship that truly distinguishes the 1997 conception of leaderless resistance from the 21<sup>st</sup> century actions of lone wolves. But it is more as well. Breivik was nurtured by a large supportive milieu, but in the end his actions took place in angry isolation. Today’s lone wolves take their community with them, allowing an audience by the magic of streaming media to vicariously partake in the carnage, and thus to be encouraged to take a similar star turn themselves. In most cases, pictures are supported and amplified by words in the form of manifestos, which the next at killer will quote in his (so far, there is a dearth of hers in the radical right) own post-action screed.

One more key element distinguishes lone wolf attacks today from those that went before; the globalization of what is somewhat misleadingly termed ‘white nationalism’. The idea of a global white tribe is hardly novel—it was heard in the 1950s and beyond in southern Africa and it was taken up to a limited degree by the racist right from the 1970s on. Anyone doing fieldwork among these groups however, would be informed in no uncertain terms in Germany, Scandinavia, Great Britain and North America that White in their conception was limited to the race they identified as Aryan, and most certainly did not include the Spanish, Italian and Portuguese skinheads who declared their allegiance to the racist right. This was summed up in the traditional British observation that “Wogdom begins in Calais.”

Moreover, the primacy of race in those years was aggregated with nationalism. The fight for the race in the eyes of the faithful had to be engaged as a fight for national power. Theirs was

after all a world of nation states. The EU, then the European Economic Community (EEC) which existed from 1957 to 1993, was derided in conservative mainstream discourse as those ‘crazy Euroboys’ and denounced as Jewish plot by the radical right. In the American radical right, with the sole exception of the always Germanophile National Socialists, all forms of internationalism were anathema.

The lone wolf attacks which are streamed as they happen by the perpetrator by contrast have a global audience. Whether the attack is in New Zealand, the United States, Germany or points between, nationalist sentiment is replaced by a broad conception of the white race as transnational and endangered everywhere.

Live streamed attacks have occurred in the US, Germany and New Zealand in recent years, but the paradigmatic attack was that of Brenton Tarrant, who on 15 March 2019, attacked a mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand, killing 51 Muslims and injuring 49 others.<sup>52</sup> He livestreamed the event, and his manifesto, “The Great Replacement”; a term that has become a kind of holy writ in the movement. Although few viewed the live feed, the event quickly generated no less than 722,295 Tweets, commenting pro and con on the action.<sup>53</sup> The video feed was quickly stuffed down the online memory hole by providers, leaving it to float hand to hand among the faithful. But the manifesto circulates freely, including through such academic channels as Academia.edu.<sup>54</sup> It is well worth an examination as its influence on the lone wolf attacks to follow is immeasurable.

---

<sup>52</sup> For articles on various post-Christchurch attacks in Europe and the US, see *CTC Sentinel*, vol 12, no. 11, (December 2019), <https://ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/CTC-SENTINEL-112019.pdf>.

<sup>53</sup> Hanif Fakhurroja et al., "Crisis Communication on Twitter: A Social Network Analysis of Christchurch Terrorist Attack in 2019" (paper presented at the 2019 International Conference on ICT for Smart Society (ICISS), 2019), <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/8969839/>.

<sup>54</sup> [https://www.academia.edu/38978739/The\\_Great\\_Replacement](https://www.academia.edu/38978739/The_Great_Replacement).

In stark contrast to Breivik’s massive manifesto, “The Great Replacement” opens with an academicese subtitle “Toward a New Society,” and a pinwheel chart that well illustrates the bricolage of beliefs commonly held in the far right.

Foremost among his beliefs is the threat of immigration. But where racist movements commonly fear miscegenation, Tarrant’s concern is more practical—the low White birth rate as opposed to the much higher fertility rates among immigrant families.

This crisis of mass immigration and sub-replacement fertility is an assault on the European people that, if not combated, will ultimately result in the complete racial and cultural replacement of the European people.<sup>55</sup>

Thus:

This is ethnic replacement.

This is cultural replacement.

This is racial replacement.

This is **WHITE GENOCIDE**.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> “The Great Replacement.” Educators reading this will be pleased that Tarrant sources his demographic fears, but may blanche at the sole use of *Wikipedia* for the purpose.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

What follows is a mock interview in which the author poses the kind of questions to himself that an impartial journalist might ask. A very brief bio is followed by a justification for the action he is about to undertake. The text is written on multiple levels, accessible to a mainstream audience but chock full of terms, witty asides and in-jokes that would be understood only by the movement *cognoscenti*. For example, Tarrant describes his means of livelihood as some marginal Bitcoin investments and a side job as a “kabob removalist,” which is a reference common on 4 chan and 8 chan chat rooms to the killing of Bosnian Muslims in the Yugoslavian Civil War of the 1990s.<sup>57</sup>

Radicalization leading to taking up arms is a gradual process, but in many years of fieldwork with radical movements of many stripes, there is one commonality—a triggering event that forces an individual to decide to take action is always a factor; that passive belief, hope and fervent prayer is no longer enough. For Tarrant it was the death of a young girl in Stockholm, Ebba Akerlund, who was killed by accident when struck by a car driven by a fleeing Islamist terrorist.<sup>58</sup> He concludes that the final push was his tour through France in which he observed the rundown appearance of French towns with large refugee populations.

That very little of Tarrant’s justification of his actions centers on New Zealand is important. The international character of the 21<sup>st</sup> century race movements is striking. In stark

---

<sup>57</sup> For a brief dictionary of these terms, see Tess Owen, "Decoding the racist memes the alleged New Zealand shooter used to communicate," *Vice News*, March 15, 2019, [https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/vbwn9a/decoding-the-racist-memes-the-new-zealand-shooter-used-to-communicate](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/vbwn9a/decoding-the-racist-memes-the-new-zealand-shooter-used-to-communicate).

<sup>58</sup> "Stockholm quietly remembers victims of terror attack," *The Local*, April 8, 2019, <https://www.thelocal.se/20190408/stockholm-quietly-marks-two-year-anniversary-of-terror-attack>. The death is a touchstone for the far right as well. See the unauthorized Facebook page titled “Refugees Not Welcome” with a picture of both the little girl and her grave. <https://www.facebook.com/1004579652932069/posts/1871595482897144/>.

contrast to the racist screeds of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jews are hardly mentioned in the document. In fact, Tarrant is at pains to dissociate himself from Anti-Semitism.

This awareness of movement sensibilities—born of his immersion in the hothouse of chat rooms and social media—is reflected in a section in which he poses to himself hostile questions which he assumes will flow like a river in internal discussions. Similarly, detractors are also anticipated, but this soon morphs into the realm of fantasy and childish dreams with the comic book fantasy he is a kind of Joe Ledger, a fictional rogue American Special Forces operative. The American mythos of all this clear, with peaceful and still largely pastoral New Zealand rating nary a mention. “The Great Replacement” ends with a reprise of the beginning with another poem, "Invictus" by William Ernest Henley.

Tarrant closes the manifesto with the slogan “Europa Rises” and a pastiche of photographs which beautifully illustrates Tarrant’s dreams. There are idealized pastoral images of White country life, hunting scenes, a little girl with her mother, a baby with her mother, and of course American soldiers on patrol in what appears to be the mountains of Afghanistan.

### **In Sum:**

Contra Schuurman, et. al., the term lone wolf still has heuristic and law enforcement value, but the conception, like everything else in the age of the internet and global social media, has evolved. True lone wolves a la Franklin and Kaczynski, are virtually extinct. There was a simpler time in which popular media was largely closed to the radical right, save for a few late night talk shows such as that of the late, lamented Joe Pyne who in the 1960s who gave airtime to oddballs and wingnuts of every description while lampooning their ideas with an acidic dry

wit.<sup>59</sup> *Playboy* magazine also gained a kind of intellectual currency to balance its exploitation of the commercial currency of the female nude by providing in-depth interviews with such cultural outcasts as George Lincoln Rockwell and Malcolm X among others.

By the 1980s, movement figures had even less access to the mainstream media, save through giving ‘shock jock’ personalities the opportunity to ridicule and humiliate them. The targets of this verbal abuse were however more sensitive than before, as Denver radio shock jock Alan Berg would discover when one of the movement figures he ridiculed on air was none other than David Lane, who with other Order members shot him to death in 1984.<sup>60</sup>

Today, the kind of isolation which allowed Franklin and Kaczynski to operate for such extended periods of time is nonexistent. There are no true loners among lone wolves today. Each is shaped and nurtured by the supportive milieu of chat rooms and social media. Yet when they decide to go operational, they act alone, giving the term ‘lone wolf’ continued utility.

---

<sup>59</sup> Kevin Cook, "Joe Pyne Was America's First Shock Jock," *Smithsonian Magazine*, June 2017, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/joe-pyne-first-shock-jock-180963237/>.

<sup>60</sup> Stephen Singular, *Talked to Death: the life and murder of Alan Berg* (New York: Berkley, 1989).