

AMERICAN HATRED: WILD WEST MYTHS, COLOR-CODED RHETORIC, AND  
THE SHAPING OF THE ARYAN NATIONS

by

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the way the Aryan Nations from Northern Idaho used the Wild West mythology of independent cowboys and color-coded rhetoric popularized by Conservative politicians to form a unique white separatist group that has influenced current racist groups.

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## INTRODUCTION:

*“The Aryan Remnant: Can they again possess will, determination, loyalty and honor to become a sovereign people unto their Father and God? The love of race lives!”*

Calling Our Nation newsletter<sup>1</sup>

Just days after Donald Trump’s 2016 presidential election, news outlets began publishing stories on the alt-right regularly as Richard Spencer, the leader of the alt-right, was filmed leading Nazi salutes and shouting, “Hail Trump, hail our people, hail victory!” to a room full of all-White men.<sup>2</sup> Trump’s election was a shock to many Americans as he received 57% of the White vote.<sup>3</sup> A man who was outwardly racist, misogynistic, and found support from multiple Ku Klux Klan branches had made his way into the White House. As a student of history fascinated by radical hate groups, I sought to find ways of explaining our new leadership that inspired a seemingly new resurgence

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<sup>1</sup> *Calling Our Nation* Newsletter, No. 68, 1992, MSS 139-2, Box 144, Larry LaRocco Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Boise State University.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this thesis, I will be using the capitalized form of “White” and “Black.” I specifically capitalize “White” in reference to White supremacy, White separatist groups, and White men. There is debate on whether to capitalize both or either “White” or “Black.” People often capitalize “Black” but not “White” because Black people describe themselves as being “Black” while White people do not think in those terms. In this thesis, I am writing about men who do distinctly think of themselves as “White” as a culture and an identity. Using the capitalized form of both words also adds importance to the descriptors, as they were important to these men and organizations. For more on the debate, please refer to:

Merrill Perlman, “Black and white: why capitalization matters,” *Columbia Journalism Review* June 23, 2015.

Taylor Hosking, “The Rise of the Alt-Right,” *The Atlantic* (<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/12/alt-right/549242/>) December 28, 2017.

Daniel Lombroso and Yoni Appelbaum, “Hail Trump!: White Nationalists Salute the President-Elect,” *The Atlantic* (<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/11/richard-spencer-speech-npi/508379/>) November 21, 2016.

<sup>3</sup> “Election 2016: Exit Polls,” *CNN* (<https://www.cnn.com/election/2016/results/exit-polls>) November 23, 2016.

of white supremacy groups. His abrasive politically calculated language reminded me of the dog-whistle rhetoric meant to attract White voters used by conservative politicians like George Wallace, Barry Goldwater, Pat Buchanan, and Ronald Reagan. Even his campaign slogan of “Make America Great Again” was recycled from Reagan’s, positioning Trump alongside the Republican candidate who purposely used coded, racist language to pit Whites against people of color.<sup>4</sup> Once again, Americans were witnessing a Presidential candidate who, in a less coded way, was using the same type of racist rhetoric in speeches in order to draw an even deeper line in the sand with Republicans and Democrats standing on either side. As Trump continued his Presidential campaign and articles appeared more frequently about organizations tied to the alt-right, my attention shifted.<sup>5</sup> The search term, “alt right” jumped in popularity by almost fifty percent November 20, 2018, just twelve days after he was elected President.<sup>6</sup> Trump was becoming more heavily tied to a resurgence of White supremacist groups like the alt-right, which had come out of the internet shadows and into the streets, rallying and marching under the idea of White supremacy, influenced by the new President-elect who

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<sup>4</sup> Ronald Reagan used “Let’s Make America Great Again,” in his 1980 Presidential Campaign. This idea of bringing America back to a more suitable time has been a reoccurring theme within the Republican party and people on the right politically, in general.

Karen Tumulty, “How Donald Trump came up with ‘Make America Great Again,’” *The Washington Post*, January 18, 2017, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/how-donald-trump-came-up-with-make-america-great-again/2017/01/17/fb6acf5e-dbf7-11e6-ad42-f3375f271c9c\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.9009e14ae347](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/how-donald-trump-came-up-with-make-america-great-again/2017/01/17/fb6acf5e-dbf7-11e6-ad42-f3375f271c9c_story.html?utm_term=.9009e14ae347).

<sup>5</sup> I will not be covering the alt-right extensively in this thesis. While they are extremely important and need to be covered, I will be focusing on the influencers or the groups that came before them. For more on the alt-right, please refer to:

George Hawley, “Making Sense of the Alt-Right,” (New York: Columbia University Press, September 19, 2017); Angela Nagle, “Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from 4Chan And Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-Right,” (United Kingdom: John Hunt Publishing Ltd., June 7, 2017); David Neiwert, “Alt-America: The Rise of the Radical Right in the Age of Trump,” (Brooklyn: Verso Books, October 17, 2017).

<sup>6</sup> Google Trends, “Alt Right,” <https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=2016-01-01%202018-04-29&q=alt%20right>.



seemed to have their (White) interests at heart. Their internet websites and discussion boards were full of praise for Trump as White men and women, saw Trump as the beginning of a new era, an era that would reflect Spencer's worldview. America was going to be taken back into the White man's hands because, "America, at the end of the day, belongs to white men. Our bones are in the ground. We own it. At the end of the day America can't exist without us. We defined it. This country does belong to White people, culturally, politically, socially, everything."<sup>7</sup> I noticed that the hopes and dreams of groups such as the alt-right were also recycled. Spencer was quoted in various news articles after Trump's election as explaining that the alt-right's ideal was to create a new, separate ethno-state for White Europeans.<sup>8</sup>

As a student, I had researched and written papers on the Aryan Nations from northern Idaho, and the new alt-right rhetoric sounded heavily influenced by them. The Aryan Nations left an unfortunate stain on Idaho's history and makes Idahoans cringe when they hear the name. In an Aryan Nations' newsletter from 1985 they proclaim, "the very name 'Aryan Nations' sends chills up the crooked spines of the anti-Christ Jews."<sup>9</sup> Memories of marches in Coeur d'Alene, the increase in federal government intervention related to the Ruby Ridge incident and scathing national news attention painting Idahoans as racists still linger along with Idaho's damaged reputation and national image. The federal government's surveillance of the Aryan Nations combined with national news attention surrounding their actions, painted Idaho as a racist haven that people, especially

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<sup>7</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center, "Richard Bertrand Spencer," <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/richard-bertrand-spencer-0>.

<sup>8</sup> Lombroso and Appelbaum, "Hail Trump!": White Nationalists Salute the President-Elect."

<sup>9</sup> "Greetings Aryan Nationalists, Hail His Victory!," news release, November 18, 1985., MC 131, Box 26, Folder 1, James Aho Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Idaho State University.

non-whites and Jews, should avoid. As I dug deeper into the pamphlets, letters, and miscellaneous ephemera from the Aryan Nations housed in the James Aho collection at Idaho State University and in the archives at Boise State University and the University of Idaho, I realized that this group, a media favorite but little explored by scholars, could help shed light on understanding the current alt-right and the racist right in general. The Aryan Nations shaped their own identity on the mythical Wild West cowboy whose destiny was to create and protect a White American homeland. They coupled this with the coded racist rhetoric as popularized by conservative politicians, moving them further into the mainstream political realm. They were encouraged by these American aspects, feeling as if their actions were righteous and essential, creating a distinct White separatist organization. They combined a romanticized Wild West identity and color-coded rhetoric to help portray themselves as all-American patriots when interviewed by the media. They saw themselves as true American cowboys, fighting for their plot of land, just as their ancestors had before them. They also saw their beliefs and political ideologies reflected within Conservative politicians' campaign speeches. While they tried to make their façade more mainstream, the Aryan Nations were also extremists who blatantly voiced their anti-Semitic views. Their highly publicized use of violence to achieve goals of White separatism became their downfall. At their core, the Aryan Nations believed in the potential for America to become a so-called Christian nation once again, that races of people naturally wanted to be separate, and that the government was too large and invasive. These mainstream, widely held ideals appear throughout American history. By 1977, the Aryan Nations had settled into their mountainous home, embraced the secluded whiteness of Idaho and fused aspects of the old Christian-led Ku Klux Klan with newer,

Western-style, anti-federal government militia and later, skinhead White supremacy elements. They blended the romantic ideals of the Western man that Pacific Northwesterners still held dear with popular conservative rhetoric to appeal to their neighbors. Though popular media and many academics have often underplayed or dismissed their influence as radical and fringe, or too violent or overtly racist to be influential or relevant to today's racist right, their core worldview and rhetorical style mirrored that of conservative politicians and Western Americans effectively enough to create a new model for how the radical right could be operated, influencing these groups to adopt a more 21<sup>st</sup> century mainstream façade. After the Aryan Nations were bankrupted by the court system in 2000, most Idahoans counted that as a victory, and rightfully so. But in doing so, many also closed the door on the Aryan Nations discussion. I intend to pry the door back open. The Aryan Nations created a compelling model for newer racist right groups like the alt-right to follow. They created a new organizational outline that further legitimized racism by quoting scripture and Founding Fathers' documents, rhetorically placing themselves on the "right side" of history. To understand the rise of the alt-right and their worldview, we must understand the worldview of their Aryan Nations' precursors.

This thesis asserts that the romanticized vision of the history of the Wild West and the color-coded language of the Southern Strategy came together within the Aryan Nations, creating a unique White separatist group that became well-rounded academically, placing college educated men in front of the camera and wholly American in spirit, in a way that embraced traditional Southern values outside of the South. To

illustrate this, the thesis is divided into three chapters: the History and Worldview of the Aryan Nations, the Wild West Mythos, and the Southern Strategy.

The first chapter will describe the history of the Aryan Nations and how their particular worldview reflected the Western American legacy of violence and anti-federal government action and the color-coded racist rhetorical style of American politicians. The Aryan Nations were exceptionally violent, seeing their compound as their inherited land. Because of this, journalists and authors often overlook the Aryan Nations' more mainstream appeals to focus instead on the dirty details of how they were *different* than us. This put them in a box that has been be easily "othered" and distanced from the rest of us – as if they never represented us and had no place within the accepted American structure.<sup>10</sup> The problem is that the Aryan Nations were both extreme *and* inherently American. Their ideas and actions were fringe while simultaneously resonating deeply with the long-running Western identity of freedom from big government, self-sustainability, and noble civilizing settlers' tied to the land. In their worldview, they were red-blooded pioneers who fought for their piece of land, just as their White ancestors had. The violent aspects of the Aryan Nations were, to them, just part of the package of being a Western man. The Aryan Nations were fueled by the myth of the Wild West, which was a cornerstone of their appeal to ranchers, farmers, and loggers in Idaho and the Greater Northwest.

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<sup>10</sup> In order to not "other" the Aryan Nations, I will use the term, "racist right" mainly to describe the Aryan Nations and groups like it. While they might be on the "far" right side of the political spectrum, they specifically represent the racist part of the right side of the political aisle. Their adherence to blatant racist and racial ideals separates them from mainstream politicians but they should not only be considered "far right."

Chapter two explores the history of this popular Wild West mythos to illustrate how the Aryan Nations used it in their Pacific Northwest campaign, making them, in their eyes, rugged cowboy patriots armed with the truth, ready to take back their inherited land. The Wild West Mythos chapter revolves around the romantic ideas of the West that were perpetuated by popular culture and historians. Part One details these preconceived notions of the West in order to show how influential this mythical history was to militias and the racist right during the 1970s. These groups have been influenced by popular media and history textbooks that have shaped the mythic Western identity. While the West involves a complex and diverse history of Anglo-Americans and non-White citizens inhabiting the same space and creating the West as we know it,<sup>11</sup> the Aryan Nations see the West as originally a White homeland, destined by God. By exploring these myths and their origins, historians can better understand why the Aryan Nations and the racist right of the 1970s were so adamant on returning the West to its supposed former glory. The Aryan Nations, in reality, are descendants of the Anglo-American act of physically conquering the West. This is the legacy of violence and lawlessness that is popularly portrayed in film and television. America's greed and exploitation of western land and the natural resources found there led to violent means of handling the Native people who inhabited the space. The violence tied to the idea of Manifest Destiny left scorch marks across the landscape. This colonizing-style violence was largely left out of the Western academic history discussions until the 1970s. The one-sided WASP (white, Anglo-Saxon,

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<sup>11</sup> Anglo-Americans and non-white peoples fought against the federal government for plots of land, against Native peoples, and against the harsh climate and landscape of the West. They did this together and separately. For more of this history, please see;

Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987).

Protestant) dominated conquest and progress narrative of the American West has influenced American culture for generations. This led to a whitewashed misunderstanding of the complex diversity and dynamics of peoples who have inhabited the land. White Americans have often seen this one-sided history as romantic and non-problematic. Instead of referring to the movement west as a “conquering,” history books referred to it as a “pioneering” into untouched lands. The second part of Chapter Two illustrates how the Aryan Nations fed into and used these mythic ideas to further relate themselves to Idahoans. The Aryan Nations adopted and mastered this accepted history and inhabited the ideals of such stories. They clung to the history of White men who eked out a living through their sweat and blood, while fighting against the elements, the barbarous Indians,<sup>12</sup> and the ever-imposing federal government. They remove their own White history from the history of the Chinese, Japanese, and Mexicans who also moved into the space and from the Native peoples and tribes that inhabited the land long before they had. This White separatist twist on the history of the Western White male mirrored the backlash of White Americans after the post World War II Civil Rights Era. It fueled romantic ideals of the West, including a legacy of fierce independence and anti-government hostilities. Westerners also often ascribed to this history, which the Aryan Nations tapped into during their time in Idaho. They found strength and support in the West largely because of these shared mainstream beliefs, just as they did among conservative politicians during the 1970s and onward.

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<sup>12</sup> Here, I use the term “Indians” to refer to Native American or Indigenous tribes. Since the Aryan Nations’ worldview harkens back to the early Wild West mythology, they would use the archaic Christopher Columbus term “Indian” to refer to these tribes.

Edmund S. Morgan, “Columbus' Confusion About the New World,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, October 2009.

Chapter three, *The Southern Strategy*, examines how the Aryan Nations' incorporated politicians' use of color-coded language to appeal to their targeted White demographics. "Dog Whistle politics" is the strategic use of racially tinged language that is carefully crafted, coded, and directed at Whites to create hostility toward people of color for political ends.<sup>13</sup> This color-coded language was instrumental in the formation of the Aryan Nations, as it helped them broaden their supporters to home schoolers, Republican die-hards, middle class whites, and survivalists as they learned how to sharpen their rhetoric to come off as less extreme. The first section of the chapter describes and analyzes the codified racist language popularized by the Republican party in the 1970s and 1980s to win elections. This color-coded racist language was a part of the Southern Strategy employed by conservative politicians during and after the Civil Rights era to realign segments of the White voter demographic which was angry at the prospect of losing White privilege and power. The party used different tactics, language, and candidates to figure out how to strengthen their conservative tickets amid a so-called "post-racial" world. This rhetoric style was influential to the Aryan Nations as they adopted some of the language since they saw their worldview reflected in Conservative campaign speeches. Part Two of chapter three includes an analysis of letters, pamphlets, and sermons produced by the Aryan Nations to illustrate how they fed off of dog whistle politics and leveraged the campaign wishes of Republican candidates to buoy their own validity and appeal to everyday White Americans. While the White separatist group was vehemently anti-government (i.e. the "Jewish controlled government" to be exact), they used the color-coded racism of the Republican party to appeal to voters and fought for

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<sup>13</sup> Ian Haney Lopez, *Dog Whistle Politics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

many of the same causes. While the Aryan Nations' worldview seemed extreme to Idahoans who wrote into local newspapers, rhetorically they adhered to much of what the Republican party and Idahoans believed in: small government, limited to no federal intervention, the right of American citizens to pursue the American dream, American jobs to stay in America, America founded as a Christian nation, the right of life (in cases of abortion laws), and much more. The term "Americans" as used in conjunction with dog whistle politics meant White Americans, especially to Conservative politicians and voters. The Aryan Nations adopted a similar color-coded language when being interviewed by local and national news outlets and when addressing Idahoans. While they targeted Idahoans, seeking approval or at least an ambivalence toward their presence, their main targeted audience was other families throughout the nation who were fed up of the overbearing federal government and the multiculturally diverse major cities like Los Angeles, California. They stressed their commitment and concern for the working-class man and his family. However, their newsletters, including *Calling Our Nation*, sent out to their followers, were far more racially tinged and conspiratorially-minded than their speeches aimed at broader audiences. Their outward façade was largely influenced by and crafted using rhetoric and narratives planned and perfected by Conservative politicians. White Westerners, Republicans, and the Aryan Nations have more in common than we would like to admit. As the conclusion will reiterate, the Aryan Nations saw and billed themselves as part of the American dream and its defenders, becoming America's most mainstream non-Southern racist right group which has influenced the current generation of White separatists, White supremacists, and Jewish conspiracy believers.



## HISTORIOGRAPHY:

My thesis addresses the Wild West mythos and the way that the history of the West has been historically interpreted. “Old Western History,” prior to the 1970s, was typically written as Anglo-centric, ignoring the inherent diversity that was present throughout this landscape’s past. My thesis highlights how this historical writing style influenced politicians, Western Americans, and White separatist groups in their justification for driving out immigrants from the area and/or being violently anti-federal government. Before the 1970s, historians mainly wrote about the West in a romanticized fashion, detailing the day to day hardships of White men on the frontier, hacking their way through untouched territory to advance progress and civilization. Tales of Indian conflicts were told through the eyes of White men, framed by their interests, placing White Americans on the right and moral side of history. Historical interpretations sparked by Frederick Jackson Turner’s *The Frontier in American History* in 1893, which advanced the famous, Turner thesis, treated the West as a “frontier” that White men heroically conquered and shaped, creating a new society, free from the constraints of the rest of the nation.<sup>14</sup> Turner’s frontier thesis was ethnocentric, racist, and nationalistic. His thesis propelled the theory that America was deemed exceptional due to the westward

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<sup>14</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner presented to the American Historical Association in Chicago in 1893, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History.”

Stanley Corkin, *Cowboys as Cold Warriors: The Western and U.S. History*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), 7.

*Does the Frontier Experience Make America Exceptional?*, ed. Richard W. Etulain, (Boston, New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999).

expansion. Turner asserted that the physical act of conquering and expanding into the West, was the single greatest defining moment for the United States. It launched a historiographic trend of American exceptionalism rhetoric and imagery that the Aryan Nations, Hollywood, and politicians largely embraced and normalized. White men were the leading stars of every story, self-congratulating builders of the West, responsible for making the West great and civilized. Historians must acknowledge how influential histories like the Turner frontier thesis was and remains. The ideas of the romanticized West are still upheld and beloved by Westerners (citizens of the West, popular media, and Western historians) which have affected the way the media talks about White separatist groups like the Aryan Nations.

The Aryan Nations saw themselves reflected in the popularized Western history. They saw the history of conquest and violence through textbooks and Western films as their duty. They were simply inhabiting the Western spirit of conquering evil and injustice like the Western heroes portrayed on film. Patricia Limerick explains in *Something in the Soil*, “the desire for a telling of Western history in which good guys are easily distinguished from bad guys is deep and persistent. Mythmakers have shaped thinking all over the planet; residents of other nations, as well as many Americans, want the Old West to be the place in the past where we go to escape complexity. Black hats should mark the heads of villains, and white hats the heads of heroes, and yet the moral reality of Westerners makes gray hats the appropriate headgear.”<sup>15</sup> The Aryan Nations as

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<sup>15</sup> Patricia Limerick is of the “New Western History” school of thought. “New Western History,” which isn’t “new” anymore (the first writings in this genre are over 30 years old) is the action of Western historians writing new or revised histories of the West. As explained by Patricia Nelson Limerick, author of *Legacy of Conquest* and *Something in the Soil*, the “New Western History,” which she helped launch in the 1970s, focused on the reevaluating and retelling of the complex history of the West. This “New Western History” highlights how the older Anglo-centric histories were inconsistent with true Western history.

written about in news headlines have been the “bad guys,” not representative of Western ideals. In my analysis, this is not the case. While they certainly encouraged “bad guy” behavior, they saw “bad guy” behavior (this being their anti-government violence, stockpiling of weapons, and fighting for their land) as normal and expected of Western men as portrayed in film and Wild West stories. In order to achieve their God-given birth right to the Pacific Northwest, the Aryan Nations adopted Western sensibilities of fighting for what was inherently theirs. In their worldview, they were absolutely representative of Western ideals and the true “good guys.” Reflected in popular stories of famous cowboys or within academic teachings of brave pioneering men are the Aryan Nations men sacrificing everything to shape the West into a new world as destined for them by God. A key aspect of the Aryan Nations’ identity is infused with the Turner Thesis, which makes their behavior normal and truly patriotic. Through their values of freedom, limited government, and a right to own property they represent qualities that White Western men admire. In this way, the Aryan Nations are very “American” in the mythic identity that politicians and popular culture embrace.

While there are a handful of books that mention the Aryan Nations, there is still room to interpret their worldview. Many of these pieces focus on White supremacist groups and/or militias from the same decade as the Aryan Nations, most of which were published either during or right after the Aryan Nations’ rise in notoriety across the nation. Some of these include Morris Dees’ *Gathering Storm: America’s Militia Threat* from 1996, Kenneth S. Stern’s *A Force Upon the Plain: The American Militia Movement and the Politics of Hate* from 1996, and David A. Neiwert’s *In God’s Country: The*

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Patricia Nelson Limerick, *Something in the Soil: Legacies and Reckonings in the New West*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2001), 21.

*Patriot Movement and the Pacific Northwest* from 1999.<sup>16</sup> These works detail anti-government militias and White supremacist or separatist groups that were extremely violent and active during this time and spread terror through America. Through Morris Dees' work with the Southern Poverty Law Center, he collected data surrounding the growing hate crimes committed by militias like The Order, the Militia of Montana, and the Posse Comitatus.<sup>17</sup> The study of these groups is important for understanding and contextualizing newer anti-government groups like the alt-right, Identity Evropa,<sup>18</sup> Atomwaffen,<sup>19</sup> and Pacific Northwest groups like American Redoubt<sup>20</sup> and Northwest Front.<sup>21</sup> These works provide necessary background for these groups because they were

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<sup>16</sup> Morris Dees, *Gathering Storm: America's Militia Threat*, (New York: HarperCollins, 1996).; Kenneth Saul Stern, *A Force Upon the Plain: The American Militia Movement and the Politics of Hate*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).; David A. Neiwert, *In God's Country: The Patriot Movement and the Pacific Northwest*, (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1999).

<sup>17</sup> The Order is the violent off-shoot group of the Aryan Nations. They counterfeited money, robbed banks, killed people of color, and were responsible for the bombings in Coeur d'Alene.

Dees, *Gathering Storm: America's Militia Threat*.

<sup>18</sup> Identity Evropa seeks to preserve White American culture and promote the binding white European identity. They have been particularly active on college campuses, distributing flyers. They have been present in most of the racist right marches and events since the election of President Trump. They are similar to the Aryan Nations, proud of their White European heritage and fear of multiculturalism. They have replaced the famous "14 words," with "You will not replace us."

"Identity Evropa," 2018, <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/profiles/identity-evropa>.

<sup>19</sup> The Atomwaffen Division formed in 2015 and are heavily influenced by The Order. They use the terror cell organizational tool made famous by Louis Beam and The Order. While they are mainly active online, posting racist content on their online forum, a member of the group has been arrested for the murder of a gay and Jewish college student in February of 2018.

A.C. Thompson, Ali Winston, and Jake Hanrahan, "Inside Atomwaffen as it Celebrates a Member for Allegedly Killing a Gay Jewish College Student," *ProPublica* February 23, 2018.; Southern Poverty Law Center, "Atomwaffen Division," <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/atomwaffen-division>.

<sup>20</sup> The "American Redoubt" movement is particularly popular in the Pacific Northwest among survivalists and "preppers." These men and women are currently fleeing to less populated red states like Idaho, just like Richard Butler did and encouraged of his followers. The Redoubt movement has moved Northern Idaho politics more right, turning areas more Republican than before. To read about the influence Redoubters are having on North Idaho please refer to:

Betsy Z. Russell, "Redoubt movement helps push North Idaho politics to extreme right," *The Spokesman-Review* (<http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2016/may/15/redoubt-movement-helps-push-north-idaho-politics-t/#/0>) May 15, 2016.

For current updates on the American Redoubt movement, please refer to their blog:

James Wesley Rawles, "Survival Blog," <https://survivalblog.com/>.

<sup>21</sup> The Northwest Front is a current active group in the Pacific Northwest with the motto, "we will create a White homeland in the Pacific Northwest." On their website they have a section dedicated to "The

published during the height of their activities. My thesis aims to use this valuable groundwork and look deeper into the worldview of the Aryan Nations specifically. While these authors were able to obtain a larger scope of focus on the general white supremacist and separatist movement, reporting from their proximity in time to the events, I will narrow my scope of research to focus on the Aryan Nations specifically to understand how they were shaped and molded by American ideals. This groundwork and research on the Aryan Nations will be a stepping stone to how the modern racist right gained power post-Donald Trump. As illustrated by the election of President Trump in 2016, these older white separatist groups were more important and influential than originally suspected.

Particular pieces of work that I aim to expand upon are from James Aho, a sociologist from Idaho State University who spent time in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, researching the Aryan Nations for his books, *The Politics of Righteousness* and *This Thing of Darkness*.<sup>22</sup> These works each offer comprehensive histories of the Aryan Nations on a ground level. Since Aho was on site during the Aryan Nations' most active period in northern Idaho, his accounts of the group are more journalistic.<sup>23</sup> His work lacks historical analysis due to his proximity in time to the Aryan Nations even though his sociological background does give a helpful sketch of why and how certain members

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Butler Plan: The Homeland," which explains their purpose and existence which is to create a White Homeland in Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and the Western part of Montana to protect the White race.

Northwest Front, "The Butler Plan: The Homeland," <http://northwestfront.org/about/the-butler-plan/the-butler-plan-the-homeland/>.

<sup>22</sup> James A. Aho, *The Politics of Righteousness: Idaho Christian Patriotism*, (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1990).

James A. Aho, *This Thing of Darkness: A Sociology of the Enemy*, (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1994).

<sup>23</sup> Aho attended sermons and cross lighting ceremonies on the compound property, and interviewed members including Richard Butler.

Aho, *The Politics of Righteousness*.

joined the Aryan Nations.<sup>24</sup> I blend Aho's reporting of the Aryan Nations with the larger lens of the Wild West, anti-federal government sentiment, and the changing of racist rhetoric, to better explain their worldview and why it was so uniquely American.

The views on American racism in this thesis reflect the work done by authors like Ian Haney Lopez and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva who have helped further research in the strategic color-coded racism of conservative politicians.<sup>25</sup> This thesis uses examples of the Aryan Nations' rhetoric to show how colorblind strategic racism fits within the landscape of the West specifically. Bonilla-Silva's book, *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*, is an extremely pertinent work for understanding the complexity of post-Jim Crow era color-blind racism influential to how the Aryan Nations saw themselves. His overarching question of, "how is it possible to have this tremendous degree of racial inequality in a country where most whites claim that race is no longer relevant?" is important in regards to understanding the complexity of racial inequality apparent in the West.<sup>26</sup> Due to a lack of popularized or mainstream history that shows the racism in the West, the Aryan Nations have largely been misinterpreted. Through the Aryan Nations' episode in Idaho,

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<sup>24</sup> An aspect of his writing, especially in *The Politics of Righteousness*, that hinders the study of the Aryan Nations is Aho's own views on California. Through his examination of Richard Butler's move from California, his language tends to blame the state for the problems that Idaho soon experienced. He talks about the Christian Identity movement and the churches and groups that adopted the view and says, "all this was part of the baggage carried into western and northern Idaho by California emigrants during the 1970s." He later ascribes a few reasons for why these leaders moved to Idaho with their ultra-racist ideals – the welcoming political climate, cheaper land, lack of federal overreach – but does not provide overarching support for this claim. He simply attributes the assumption that Idahoans were easier going about far right ideals than southern Californians were.

Aho, *The Politics of Righteousness*, 55.

<sup>25</sup> Lopez, *Dog Whistle Politics*;

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *White Supremacy and Racism in the Post-civil Rights Era*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001).; Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism Without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*, (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publisher Inc., 2003).

<sup>26</sup> Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists*, 2.

politicians and citizens claimed innocence, stressing that racism did not run deep within Idaho history. This thesis challenges that idea. The excuse of, “it’s not our fault” is a hinderance in the political, cultural, and social understandings of the Aryan Nations.

Ian Haney Lopez’s *Dog Whistle Politics* is groundbreaking work that details the color-coded racism inherent in political discourse used to generate White backlash politically in the post-Civil Rights era with success. This being the way that politicians used racially charged terms like “inner city” in their political speeches. While they are not specifically saying “Black people,” their voter base knew who they were referring to when they referenced the “inner city” or “welfare queens.” This color-coded racism influenced the Aryan Nations’ recruiting and rhetoric styles as they saw their own interests reflected in the Republican party’s campaigns. Lopez, Bonilla-Silva and many other authors have helped open a door that continued the conversation about systemic racism after the Civil Rights era.<sup>27</sup> Academics like Juan Williams who wrote the fantastically successful, *Eyes on the Prize: America’s Civil Rights Years 1954-1965*, treated the Civil Rights era as extremely successful and implied that the Civil Rights movement was a Southern only movement and that it stopped in 1965.<sup>28</sup> This trend continues in American high schools where the racism discussion ends after the Civil Rights era without much analysis of the structural and systemic racism that persists within American society. This thesis will address the post-racism movement in America

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<sup>27</sup> Michelle Alexander’s *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* illustrates some of the many ways politicians continued with policies that directly affected minority populations, like the War on Drugs, which has led to the mass incarceration of Black men and women.

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow. Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, (New York: The New Press, 2010).

<sup>28</sup> Juan Williams, *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1965*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2013).

during the 1970s through the 1990s that influenced the Aryan Nations' language and marketing strategies.

These works create a broad picture of the overlooked anti-government, white separatist movement of the 1970s through the 1990s. Using these pieces and primary sources gathered at the University of Idaho, Idaho State University, North Idaho College and Boise State University, my thesis will illustrate how the Aryan Nations became a powerful white separatist group that existed because of the conducive ideas of the Wild West mythos and the racist rhetoric of Conservative politicians, which led them to becoming the most Americanized racist right organization. The American ideals of freedom and privilege of land rights and the realigning of the Republican party to win the White voter demographic made it a conducive world for the white separatist group that has continued to fuel the roots of the alt-right today. This group must be understood, as they are us.



## CHAPTER ONE: HISTORY AND WORLDVIEW

“ARYANS of all classes and of all nations, recognize your common enemy,  
International Jewry.”

-Richard G. Butler, *The Aryan Warrior*<sup>29</sup>

Hearts in mourning...  
A race headed for doom;  
Satan’s minions are forming...  
Asking from jew mongrels a boon;  
Greydogs, race traitors...  
Brought us to this;  
Commies, jews, niggers...  
See them smile, hear them hiss;  
Aryans! Arise! For family and Race...  
Take back Yahweh’s gift,  
Our sweet heritage...  
With sword held tight by Aryan fist.  
A new day is dawning...  
Hope bursts from our hearts  
For Faith, Race, and Nation...  
The battle now starts.

-Lonnie J. Shelly Sr., *Calling Our Nation* Newsletter<sup>30</sup>

The Aryan Nations was formed in 1973 by Richard Girnt Butler who envisioned an Aryan homeland in the Pacific Northwest. Butler was born in Bennett, Colorado in 1918 but grew up in East Los Angeles, California, during the Depression. There, he studied aeronautical engineering and science at City College.<sup>31</sup> After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, Butler enlisted in the Army Air Corps, where his infatuation

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<sup>29</sup> Richard G. Butler, “The Aryan Warrior,” (Aryan Nations, 1980), 20.

<sup>30</sup> Lonnie J. Shelly Sr., *Calling Our Nation* Newsletter, no. 36. MC 131, James Aho Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Idaho State University.

<sup>31</sup> Jim Camden, “Richard Butler, founder of Aryan Nations, dies at 86,” *The Spokesman-Review* September 9, 2004.

with Adolf Hitler and Nazi National Socialist Germany grew. Butler never left the states during the war, as he stayed on an American base to teach aircraft hydraulics, but he enjoyed watching newsreels that showed waves of marching Germans in Europe. Butler became infatuated with Hitler and explained in an interview that, “in those days, all we knew was that Hitler hated communists, and so did my folks, as we did as teenagers.”<sup>32</sup> During his military service, he was exposed to the idea that Jews were responsible for the rise in Communism, and his sympathy for the Nazi German cause grew. He reflected as feeling he, “fought on the wrong side during World War II.”<sup>33</sup> While serving in the Royal Indian Air Force before World War II, his personal servant Jerami asked why the Americans were fighting their own brethren in Europe. According to Butler, “I couldn’t answer him. He said he was an Aryan too, and I laughed. Jerami said, ‘I represent the pollution of the race. I’m proud I have some of your blood in my veins.’ It bothered me that a servant knew more about my ancestry than I did, so I began what became a lifelong study.”<sup>34</sup> This search for the truth eventually led him to create the Aryan Nations.

After serving in the military, Butler experienced a time of immense post-World War II American pride and nationalism.<sup>35</sup> After serving in the war, he raised his family in an America that embraced its soldiers and gave them opportunities to succeed at home through the Selective Service Readjustment Act, or GI Bill of Rights, which included college tuition, job opportunities, and low interest rates on home loans. It quickly generated a robust middle class of suburban living, mass consumption, and office jobs.

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<sup>32</sup> Camden, “Richard Butler, founder of Aryan Nations, dies at 86.”

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Aho, *The Politics of Righteousness*, 56.

<sup>35</sup> Butler was a flight engineer instructor for the Army Air Corps. Barker discusses Butler’s history fully in *Aryan America*.

William Barker, *Aryan America: Race, Revolution, and the Hitler Legacy*, (St. Maries, ID: Falcon Ridge Publishing, 1993), 13.

This GI Bill was written as inclusive of all military service members, but in reality largely benefited White veterans as it was written to uphold Jim Crow laws.<sup>36</sup> Black, Native American, Japanese American, and Mexican American soldiers faced racial backlash upon return from war. After serving in a diverse military, desegregated in 1948, they came home to the harsh segregation and blatant racism they had grown accustomed to. Veterans of color, especially Black men, were denied GI Bill benefits because loan offices, banks, schools, and employers were not obliged to serve these veterans.<sup>37</sup> This is just a small but important example of the benefits of whiteness Butler had witnessed through his lifetime. He became accustomed to seeing White men succeed and lead society politically and socially. The Aryan Nations served as a tool for Butler that would secure this future of success and leadership for White men once again, by separating from the lost and corrupt America he once knew.

The country went through a period of intense American pride and nationalism, aided by the GI Bill and the resulting flourishing economy. Butler began attending anti-Communist meetings and functions in the early 1950s after the start of the Cold War and grew increasingly concerned by Russian Communism, which likely threatened the safety and freedom of America.<sup>38</sup> Through these meetings Butler came to accept the “truth” that Jews controlled the American federal government, monetary systems, and United Nations. Spreading Communism was their way of bringing an end to Democracy, America, and the Aryan race.<sup>39</sup> Through these meetings, Butler met William Potter Gale

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<sup>36</sup> Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America*, (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005).

<sup>37</sup> Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*, (New York: Random House, 2008).

<sup>38</sup> Camden, “Richard Butler, founder of Aryan Nations, dies at 86.”

<sup>39</sup> William E. Barker, *The Aryan Nations: A Linkage Profile*, 1986.

who introduced him to Posse Comitatus and the religion of Christian Identity.<sup>40</sup> Butler attended a Christian Identity church in 1961, the Anglo-Saxon Christian Congregation in Lancaster, California, run by Reverend Wesley Swift. Swift shared the same anti-Communist, anti-Jewish sentiments as Butler.<sup>41</sup> Both men embraced the conspiratorial notion, as inspired by Nazi propaganda heard through World War II, that America was witnessing a government controlled by the Zionist Occupational Government (ZOG) and the Aryan race's eminent demise. By aiding the Civil Rights movement and feminism, Jews were breaking down the Christian family structure and giving more power to nonwhites in American society. To Butler, Jewish Marxist Bolshevism would destroy America through destruction of the government by infiltrating it and encouraging multiculturalism and assimilation.<sup>42</sup> By using these steps, they would dilute Aryan power in America and the concentrated population of the Aryan race. Butler says in *The Aryan Warrior*, "the Jews who have come in amongst us have not only evidenced a 'sedate settled design' upon our lives but openly carry out the killing of members of our racial household and looting of our property and sustenance."<sup>43</sup> The teachings of Christian Identity helped form these conspiratorial ideas. As explained by Aho, Christian Identity is "the idea that there are two species of human being, Adamic man and Satanic man: true man-the Aryan European descendants of Israel-and *homo bestialis*-the sons of Lucifer, including among others, the Jews and 'Satan's footsoldiers,' the black Africans."<sup>44</sup> Christian Identity taught that activism for feminism and multiculturalism was a Jewish

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<sup>40</sup> Camden, "Richard Butler, founder of Aryan Nations, dies at 86."

<sup>41</sup> Barker, *Aryan America*.

<sup>42</sup> Butler, "The Aryan Warrior," 19.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>44</sup> Aho, *The Politics of Righteousness*, 55.

ploy to destroy the White man led by “Satan’s footsoldiers.” Feminists were disrupting the traditional family structures by encouraging women to work, to be independent, and to have access to abortion services, while multiculturalism was encouraging a blending of races, destroying the pure blood of the Aryan race. Butler felt, after meeting Swift, that he finally understood and could help unveil the reality that few others saw in America.<sup>45</sup> After Swift’s death, Butler started his own branch of Christian Identity. He blended the religious beliefs with the Adolf Hitler-centric, anti-Semitism conspiracy theory he had picked up in World War II, that asserted that Jews were responsible for the decline of German power and unity.<sup>46</sup> While Butler may have been serving on the American side in World War II, he privately supported Hitler. He absorbed the anti-Semitic rhetoric and believed, as Hitler did, that Jews were the best explanation for the White man’s decline in power and position. Butler and White men throughout the nation benefited from the GI Bill, separating them financially and physically from people of color. This cushion of “safety” from nonwhites was threatened as Blacks pushed for further equality and inclusion through the Civil Rights movement.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Fair Housing Act of 1968, all threatened the tight grip White men held on elections, high paying jobs, secure and safe neighborhoods, etc. Minorities, specifically Black men and women, were slowly entering the political and social realms of America, swaying elections, entering White

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<sup>45</sup> David Aaronovitch, *Voodoo Histories: The Role of the Conspiracy Theory in Shaping Modern History*, (New York: Riverhead Books, 2010).

<sup>46</sup> Butler’s hero was Adolf Hitler. In the Aryan Nations compound, there were Hitler statues and relics all over the office, printing room, and the church service area. Videos online and photos of Butler’s sermons show him preaching to his followers in front of a swastika flag, a bust of Adolf Hitler, and the Aryan Nations’ flag.

Idaho Public Television, “The Color of Conscience: Human Rights in Idaho,” (Public Broadcasting Service, May 5, 2011).

public schools, and moving into White neighborhoods. In Los Angeles, Butler had encountered the Second Great Migration – the movement of five million Black people out of the South and into the North and the West – where 386,861 Southern-born African Americans had moved by 1980.<sup>47</sup> Butler, through his conspiratorial mindset, saw this influx of Southern-born Blacks as the work of Jewish actors. Butler believed that Jews had financed the Civil Rights movement and encouraged people of color to fight for and win equality legislation. To him, this led to the destruction of Aryan power and encouraged multiculturalism and interracial relations, which were serious sins within Christian Identity. The Second Great Migration was perceived as simply another wave of this Jewish inspired and funded push for multiculturalism. This sparked a White backlash as men like Butler saw the American status quo being upended before their eyes. The Aryan Nations that he later formed adopted a heavily influenced Hitleresque rhetoric, believing that Hitler had laid out a blueprint that would save the Aryan race in America. According to Pastor Carl Franklin, Chief of Staff of the Aryan Nations, “the racial and economic miracle that was the Third Reich ranks as the greatest resurgence of our Race in twelve short years.”<sup>48</sup> As explained by Jeffrey Herf in *The Jewish Enemy*, the Nazis had uncovered the greatest secret that all of humanity failed to see, “within the ‘delirious discourse’ of radical anti-Semitism, all riddles were solved, all historical contingency was

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<sup>47</sup> James N. Gregory, “The Second Great Migration: A Historical Overview,” in *African American Urban History: The Dynamics of Race, Class and Gender since World War II*, ed. Joe W. Trotter Jr. and Kenneth L. Kusmer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

<sup>48</sup> He also says, “Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party were really the instruments of nationalism in Germany earlier in the century. They were opposed by the internationalists, the Jews, in their drive to place the German people back on their feet and with racial respect. National Socialism is grounded in Christian ethics and culture and hearkens all the way back to the Hebrew Republic that Moses instituted for Israel at the command of Yahweh God.” They very much saw themselves as honoring the memory of the Nazi party. Striving to achieve what they could not in Germany.

Carl Franklin, “A Youngster Asking,” *Calling Our Nation* Newsletter no. 80, 1993., MSS 139-2, Box 144, Larry LaRocco Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Boise State University.

eliminated, and everything became explicable.”<sup>49</sup> Furthering the Nazi’s struggle against the Jewish enemy became Butler’s adopted mission. He sought to reveal the truth to free his Aryan brethren from their destined demise. With this conspiratorial mind in tow, Butler continued his quest for the “truth” even after the anti-Communism meetings declined and people moved on to other political agendas in the 1970s, post-Vietnam war era. After Swift’s death in 1970, Butler created the Aryan Nations, his own far right organization committed to defending the Aryan race.

Butler’s vision for the new Church of Jesus Christ Christian, which later became the official religion of the Aryan Nations, was to separate from the government and create a pure, Aryan America. Butler was a senior marketing engineer at Lockheed Aircraft in Palmdale, California, (a city located within Los Angeles county) in 1968.<sup>50</sup> He and his wife began taking trips on their private small plane to northern Idaho in the 1970s. Because of Butler’s career success, he retired early with money to spare. By 1973, they bought 20-acres in Hayden Lake, Idaho for a compound that would be the western focal point of the racist right movement of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Hayden Lake which only had a minority population of 1.69 percent in 1980, would be the capitol of this all-White nation and used as the training ground of the Aryan resistance. After spending roughly 20 years in Idaho, in 1999 Butler said, “living in the Panhandle of Idaho is wonderful, some 98% White with clean schools, blond headed children out in the playgrounds, beautiful clean stores and restaurants in other words a White Aryan

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<sup>49</sup> Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy. Nazi Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 6.

<sup>50</sup> Camden, “Richard Butler, founder of Aryan Nations, dies at 86.”

community – clean-pristine beauty.”<sup>51</sup> Butler appealed to survivalists around the country who were moving to states like Idaho in the 1970s due to a decline in natural resource-based jobs, the ongoing paranoia that big cities would be targets in a possible nuclear war, and White flight. Butler was one of 1.4 million immigrants that left California between 1992-2000. White flight immigrants like Butler were increasingly Conservative voters, moving away from the recession, earthquakes, racist integration and race riots into more remote, White areas.<sup>52</sup> Idaho was 95.52 percent White in 1980, making it a popular area for men like Butler.<sup>53</sup> According to the *Idahonian/Daily News* Butler, “considered the Northwest an ideal homeland: rural, conservative and lacking many blacks, Jews and other minorities.”<sup>54</sup> While there were many reasons to move to Idaho, such as cheap land and the natural isolated beauty of the resort town, there was also a sense of apathy among Idahoans towards racism. According to William Barker, a police officer in Kootenai County, the Posse Comitatus chapter was already in Idaho before Butler arrived. Posse Comitatus, Latin for “power of the country,” was founded in 1970. They were devoted to a citizens’ government and aimed to defend their land and people with full force against the government. They held anti-Semitic beliefs and targeted farmers in Idaho facing economic hardships.<sup>55</sup> Idaho and the Pacific Northwest quickly became a haven for the Anglo-Israel movement, anti-government militias, and Church of Jesus Christ Christian

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<sup>51</sup> Richard Butler, “Aryan Nation Lawsuit Part 2,” March 9, 1999. Tony Stewart Collection, Binder 3, Molstead Library, North Idaho College.

<sup>52</sup> Sierra Crane-Murdoch, “How right-wing emigrants conquered North Idaho,” *High Country News* (<https://www.hcn.org/issues/45.8/how-right-wing-emigrants-conquered-north-idaho>) May 20, 2013.

<sup>53</sup> University of Idaho, “Indicators of Idaho,” <http://indicatorsidaho.org/DrawRegion.aspx?Action=DrawDynamicTables&IndicatorID=4&RegionID=160> 55.

<sup>54</sup> *Idahonian/Daily News*, *Aging supremacist leader has some new young followers*, April 19, 1989, MS 131, James Aho Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Idaho State University.

<sup>55</sup> Daniel Levitas, “Hate Group Expert Daniel Levitas Discusses Posse Comitatus, Christian Identity Movement and More,” interview by Southern Poverty Law Center Intelligence Report, 1998.



members. Butler simply followed the stream of retired racists to places like northern Idaho. As explained by sociologist Aho, Idaho may have been targeted due to the large amount of family who were descendants of Confederate loyalists who moved to Idaho after the Civil War, living in the counties surrounding the White Bastion compound. One of these descendants said, “we’re a pretty easy goin’ bunch. There’s only two things we don’t like, intolerance and niggers.”<sup>56</sup> While not all Idahoans thought this way, the Aryan Nations was surrounded by anti-federal government militias and retired Christian Identity members who supported or would come to support the White Bastion cause. The miniscule minority population and the largely Conservative voter base made Idaho seem welcoming or somewhat conducive to Butler’s vision. He was later met with opposition, bad publicity, and the Kootenai Country Task Force on Human Relations, which ultimately defeated the Aryan Nations in court.<sup>57</sup>

The White Bastion or the Great White Hope (the nickname Butler gave to Idaho and the surrounding states) was to be a separate nation, occupying Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Montana, and Wyoming. To achieve this separation, Butler encouraged his followers to buy land in Idaho and the surrounding states of Montana, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming, the area he considered to be the White Bastion.<sup>58</sup> According

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<sup>56</sup> Aho, *the Politics of Righteousness*, 57.

<sup>57</sup> Tom Alibrandi and Bill Wassmuth, *Hate is My Neighbor*, (Idaho: University of Idaho Press, 2001).

<sup>58</sup> This plan changed from a more extensive list of states (Butler originally wanted the border to extend down to Nevada, including the states of California, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, etc.) he scaled this back to just the Northwest corner of America. In other circles surrounding the Aryan Nations, they agreed on different White Bastion plans. The Posse Comitatus wished for an all-White territory that would include, Alaska, western Canada, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, California, Nevada, some of Utah, and Arizona. The rest of the nation would be split up for other races of people. Butler originally had visions like a “Golden Triangle” back in 1980, which was termed by the Christian-Patriots Defense League’s John Harrell. Harrell called people to leave the middle of the continent (the Midwest), to wait out Communism. Pastor Robert Miles, a Klansman, was more than likely, the first person to suggest an Aryan migration to the Pacific Northwest.

to Rich Benjamin, author of *Searching for Whitopia*, “in 1993 alone, 11,212 people fled California for Idaho, after Los Angeles erupted from the Rodney King verdict... The one-way truck rentals from California to Idaho were so overwhelming, U-Haul had to pay people to drive trucks back empty.”<sup>59</sup> Since Butler realized the impossibility of jumpstarting an uprising against the tyrannical government, he decided to put all his effort behind White separation. This physical compound was to be the meeting place of God’s chosen people. The idea of a physical White separatism became the backbone of the organization, given their goal to ““separate from all alien mongrel people, with its own laws and administration, and to provide for the common defense of (the Aryan) racial nation.””<sup>60</sup> Pastor Robert Miles, leader of the Mountain Church of Jesus Christ (the Midwest equivalent to the Aryan Nations), mapped out “The Re-ethnization of North America” and included this notion in his speech at the 1986 Aryan Nations World Congress. There he stressed that White people would “win the Northwest by out-breeding our opponents.”<sup>61</sup> Aryan women were essential to this aspect of the Aryan Nations’ mission. In Butler’s 1980 publication of *The Aryan Warrior*, he outlined the goals of the Aryan Nations’ movement, including gender roles and family relations. Butler explained that the Aryan woman was an important aspect of the movement as she is responsible for producing pure Aryan children to help, “out-breed” the nonwhites in America. He said that men and women should have separate but complimentary spheres and that women

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*The Washington Times*, “Farrakhan: The final war,” November 5, 1985. MC 131, James Aho Collection.; Betty A. Dobratz and Stephanie L. Shanks-Meile, “White Power, White Pride!” *The White Separatist Movement in the United States*, (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997), 99.

<sup>59</sup> Rich Benjamin, *Searching for Whitopia: an improbable journey to the heart of white America*, (New York: Hyperion, 2009)., 116.

<sup>60</sup> Barker, *Aryan America*, 20.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

were to be treated with the greatest respect.<sup>62</sup> To guarantee continuation of the Aryan race, Butler's Aryan Nations enforced strict gender roles to safeguard the future White children. The men of the Aryan Nations adopted strict male roles, ready to defend their women, children, and the Aryan race as a whole.

Butler fused the racist teachings of the Christian Identity belief with his own vision of a White homeland to create a separate nation which had a capitol city (Hayden Lake, Idaho), core beliefs based on a selected reading of the Founding Fathers' documents, and a national religion. Butler's Aryan Nations' government was based on their interpretation of God's law as laid out in the Bible as well as an amended Constitution. In a newsletter to Aryan Nations' followers, Butler wrote about the "Amendment to the Constitution Averting the Decline and Fall of America" written by New York attorney James O. Pace.<sup>63</sup> This proposed amendment would "repeal the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments and alter the Tenth Amendment by adding the word 'expressly' before the word 'delegated,'" limiting American citizenship to European Whites.<sup>64</sup> He asserted this was the only way for America to save itself lawfully, without the Aryan Nations' army acting. To Butler, there were only two sides in this race war, those on the side of Jesus and God's law, and those who fought against it. Aryans who read and studied the Constitution and therefore recognize that the government was made for them. In their eyes, Americans had been brainwashed into believing America was created as a nation for everyone, that "We the people..." meant people of color and

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<sup>62</sup> Butler, *The Aryan Warrior*.

<sup>63</sup> Richard Butler, "Aryan Nations Newsletter," No. 62, MC 131, Box 26, Folder 1, James Aho Collection, Idaho State University.

<sup>64</sup> John R. Vile, *Encyclopedia of Constitutional Amendments, Proposed Amendments, and Amending Issues, 1789-2002*, (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2003)., 337.

those of differing religions. According to a newsletter distributed by the Aryan Nations revolving around the patriotism of The Order,<sup>65</sup> “we might note in the Preamble to the Constitution the words ‘...to ourselves and our posterity...’ Every one of the thirty-seven men who framed and signed this document was a white freeman of the Christian faith, leaving little doubt as to whom they meant by ‘We the People...’”<sup>66</sup> In *The Aryan Warrior*, Butler described the Aryan Nations’ Constitution as one inspired by political philosophers like John Locke, who wrote about the oppressive nature of tyranny. Butler quoted Locke extensively while outlining the goals of the Aryan Nations and compared British tyranny to the perceived Jewish tyranny inflicted on White Christians. In their view, the Communist Jews and liberals had taken over their beloved America during the Civil Rights era and the Order, the Aryan Nations’ violent and active arm, were simply fighting for the true American government which had been discarded and corrupted.

According to Butler, the goal of the Aryan Nations was to create a living, breathing organism of racial identity and kindred spirit to combat the Jewish World Revolution. As Butler explained in *The Aryan Warrior*, by separating off from the rest of the nation, the Aryan race would be able to, “ordain, establish, and pledge our fidelity to our Aryan Racial Nation, under the Law of God, the uniting of our individual strength as a united lawful power, for the preservation and total independence from all alien influence and control over our Faith, Children, and Destiny.”<sup>67</sup> The physical separation of the Aryan race from the United States, which had theoretically, in their minds, abandoned

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<sup>65</sup> The off-shoot group that was committing crimes around the country. The country was referring to them as criminals and anti-government because of their bombings of federal buildings, shootings of police officers, and printing of their money.

<sup>66</sup> “The de jure Citizenship of Organic Law Pertains Solely to Free White Persons,” *Calling Our Nation* Newsletter, no. 52, MC 131, Box 25, Folder 4, James Aho Collection.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

them and turned to Jewry, was the only way for Aryans to establish a state government that could be governed by and for them. America, in Butler's mind, was originally founded as a White nation and because of the invasion of Jewry and the push towards inclusion and immigration, White people had no racial nation of their own. In an issue of *Calling Our Nation*, Butler explained that the "government was established for the sole purpose 'to protect and to preserve the people' with a national state! Our constitution, which was based upon God's ordained life law, establishes 'the people' (our kindred family) as our nation's highest authority, and gives us the responsibility to enforce these laws to preserve our national interests."<sup>68</sup> Butler saw countries like Mexico and Russia as being racial nations explicitly for Mexicans and Russians and believed that America was originally founded to serve as the Aryan's.<sup>69</sup> By creating the Aryan Nations in Idaho, they would be one step closer to obtaining their racial nation.

The religious arm of the Aryan Nations was essential to the legitimacy of the organization. By tying the Aryan Nations to a specific branch and practice of Christianity, Butler was able to place his anti-Semitic teachings and fundamental ideology within an interpretation of the Bible. Throughout speeches to Aryan Nations members and sermons to Sunday church service attendees, he constantly cited the Bible as supporting anti-Semitic teachings. The Christian Identity belief sees Jews as being the Devil's offspring with an ultimate goal to destroy God's chosen people, the Aryan race. Butler stressed the importance of Christianity in *The Aryan Warrior* and stated that Christian belief must be purged of any Jewish ties and thought. He said, "Christianity for

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<sup>68</sup> Richard Butler, "Attention White Men," *Calling Our Nation* 76 (1995). MSS 139-2, Box 144, Larry LaRocco Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Boise State University.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

the Aryan is Race and Race is Christianity,” furthering the idea that Christianity is essential for the creation of an Aryan Nation State and the preservation of the Aryan race.<sup>70</sup> According to Anti-Defamation League, this Christian Identity movement was adopted from Great Britain in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century. In the Anti-Defamation League’s 1983 publication, “‘The Identity Churches:’ A Theology of Hate,” they described the religious branch as offering “theological rationalization for racial and religious bigotry.” Butler based his entire Aryan Nations movement on the Christian Identity belief that the Aryan race was God’s chosen people and the “true Jews,” derived from the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel,<sup>71</sup> “I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. And so, Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. For thou art an holy people unto YAHWEH they God: YAHWEH thy god hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.”<sup>72</sup>

The Christian Identity teachings of the Bible placed blame on the Jewish population for the imagined threat of White men’s political and social positions. As stated by the Aryan Nations, Jews were “the literal children of Satan in the world today... There is a battle and a natural enmity between the children of Stan and the Children of The Most High God.”<sup>73</sup> Swift warned his followers of the evil that Jews possessed and their plot to destroy the White man and American Democracy through the instrument of Communism. Swift and Butler believed that the relative success of the Civil Rights era

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<sup>70</sup> “The Aryan Warrior,” 17.

<sup>71</sup> Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith, *An ADL Special Report, The Hate Movement Today: A Chronicle of Violence and Disarray*, 1987, MC 131, James Aho Collection.

<sup>72</sup> “America” pamphlet, MC 131, James Aho Collection.

<sup>73</sup> Religious Advisory Council, “Basic Principles of the Church of Jesus Christ, Christian of Hayden Lake,” May 9, 1984. MC 131, Box 25, Folder 5, James Aho Collection.

and the feminist movements exemplified Jewish people's influence over America. While Butler's vision of the White Bastion was tied to Christian Identity, he encouraged other religious far right groups and leaders to visit his compound. By uniting the far right and inviting them into the compound, he aimed to create a coherent voice and movement, centered on his own practices and beliefs. While this did not come to fruition, his efforts of uniting the far right became a legacy, a teaching point for newer organizations like the alt right, who are continuing this mission.

The Aryan Nations became one of the most influential White separatist groups in the nation because of the vast scale of recruitment Butler accomplished. The Klanwatch Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center stated, "the phenomenal growth of the Aryan Nations was the most startling development in the White supremacist world in 1994. The Aryan Nations' unexpected return to the forefront of the organized hate movement is the direct result of at least two years of aggressive recruiting in North America and Europe."<sup>74</sup> Butler welcomed a large array of right wing thinkers to help him achieve a White Bastion.<sup>75</sup> Mass communication was key to the Aryan Nations' survival. Butler's compound was secluded but highly connected to right wing leaders, the media, and his followers across the country. At the compound on Hayden Lake, Butler developed a printing press room that fueled these correspondences. In 1992, Pastor Carl Franklin wrote to the members of the Aryan Nations about the requests for information packets had reached twenty-five per day. The print room had a 24-hour FAX line, a bookbinding

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<sup>74</sup> Brad Knickerbocker, "White separatists plot 'pure' society," *Christian Science Monitor* 87, no. 101 (1995).

<sup>75</sup> The phrase, "Idaho, the Great White Hope," can be seen in the *Calling Our Nation* newsletter, number 80. The phrase is accompanied by an image of the state of Idaho that is filled in by stripes of the American flag with the stars replaced by small swastikas. Beside Idaho is the Aryan Nations' symbol.

*Calling Our Nation* newsletter, no. 80, MSS 139-2, Box 144, Larry LaRocco Collection.

station, and video tape reproduction capabilities.<sup>76</sup> While the internet is an essential tool for the alt right and current racist right groups, Butler experimented with early internet message boards to connect to Americans who couldn't vacation in Hayden Lake. Louis Beam, "Ambassador at Large" for the Aryan Nations, created the online forum, Aryan Nations Liberty Net.<sup>77</sup> In Beam's first online post to the forum he wrote about the importance of unifying the racist right by saying, "imagine, if you will, all the great minds of the patriotic Christian movement linked together and joined into one computer. Imagine any patriot in the country being able to call up and access these minds... You are on line with the Aryan Nations brain trust."<sup>78</sup> Coupled with print material and online forums, the Aryan Nations reveled in media attention. In 1992 after a year of heavy political action involving the Coeur d'Alene tribe and loggers fighting environmental regulations, the Aryan Nations updated their followers with their media success. Pastor Franklin listed the many news outlets they had been featured on saying they reached, "over 235 stations throughout North America. The Lake issue and the Logger issue brought media coverage off over two-thirds of the nation and into Canada also. Aryan Nations has traveled further, wider, higher, longer and faster with the Truth than ever before!"<sup>79</sup> Butler's broad recruiting techniques helped bring together a diverse group of racist White men, changing the way hate groups operated.

By inviting pastors, survivalists, Skinheads, home schoolers, ranchers, militia men, and Ku Klux Klan members, Butler put forth a showing of power and size, an

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<sup>76</sup> Carl Franklin, "Report to the Membership," (Aryan Nations, January 10, 1992),

<sup>77</sup> AP Writer, "Former KKK Leader Establishes New Neo-Nazi Computer Network," *Idaho State Journal* May 20, 1985. James Aho Collection.

<sup>78</sup> Laura Smith, "In the early 1980s, white supremacist groups were early adopters (and masters) of the internet," *Timeline*, October 11, 2017.

<sup>79</sup> Franklin, "Report to the Membership."



image the rest of the nation took note of. Uniting the racist right behind the idea of the White Bastion cause gave it a sense of authority and a large voice that became nationwide as visitors of the compound returned home, united under the Aryan Nations. Butler tried to appeal to survivalists like Kurt Saxon and his audience. Saxon published how-to journals for men and women of the working class who were afraid of losing jobs and wanted to prepare for the apocalypse. In *The Survivor* in 1976, Saxon wrote, “towns with under 50,000, in rural areas, have more contact with life’s basics and can reorganize their populations if necessary. So a small town in a rural area is your best bet. A patch of land and a modest home just outside a village gives the greatest security.”<sup>80</sup> Butler aligned himself with these survivalists, encouraging them to build those “modest home[s]” in the White Bastion. According to Aho, “while many, probably most, survivalists eschewed racism, others—deadly, cold-blooded, serious Christian ‘men of integrity’ as one described himself—were retreating to the woods to arm themselves for what they saw as an impending racial war. A handful of these would find their way to Idaho.”<sup>81</sup> Butler’s training ground for the Aryan army was open to these survivalists and other members of the racist right, such as the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazi Skinheads, and various militia members who differed in official religions and set goals. Their common thread was fear of the White man losing his earned place on top of the American political and social structure. The Aryan Nations compound trained these individuals on gun handling, how to legally meander within the American legal structure, and how to mass market themselves through use of the printing press housed on the compound. Butler

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<sup>80</sup> Kurt Saxon, *The Survivor*.

<https://archive.org/stream/KurtSaxonSurvivorVol.2/Kurt%20Saxon%20-%20Survivor%20Vol.%201#page/n1/mode/2up>, 1976.

<sup>81</sup> Aho, *The Politics of Righteousness*, 60.

taught his followers that the government in place was not the rightful or lawful government. In turn, every “illegal” action they committed was not illegal in God’s eyes, the true lawmaker of America.

Butler’s Aryan Nations was the most inclusive “hate group” in the nation during the 1970s through the 1990s. It was a racist organization unlike anything seen before. While the Ku Klux Klan had been active since 1866, with resurgences throughout America’s history, they mainly acted alone and recruited members that shared their vision and Protestant religion. By the 1950s, its identity had reverted from nationalism in the 1920s to a Southern-oriented identity. The Klan’s racial violence once overlooked by media, local law officials, and the government, was outlawed by Civil Rights legislation.<sup>82</sup> After passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, The Federal Bureau of Investigation arrested Klan members for racial violence against Civil Rights activists, and juries increasingly found them guilty in court rooms. By the 1970s, the FBI claimed that one out of every six Klansmen was an informant of the FBI. The Klan implemented marketing changes from “hatred of Blacks” to emphasizing “love of the White race” during the 1970s, since members were losing contract deals and jobs because of their ties to the Klan. Grand Wizard David Duke was essential to this branding change. He told college students that the Klan would “protect, preserve, and advance the white race.”<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> “Constitutional Amendments and Major Civil Rights Acts of Congress Referenced in *Black Americans in Congress*,” U.S. Government Printing Office, 2008., <http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/BAIC/Historical-Data/Constitutional-Amendments-and-Legislation/>.

<sup>83</sup> David Chalmers writes an excellent piece of Ku Klux Klan history in *Hooded Americanism*. Please refer to *Hooded Americanism* and others;

David M. Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987).; David Chalmers, *Backfire: How the Ku Klux Klan Helped the Civil Rights Movement*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003).; Patsy Sims, *The Klan*, (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996).; Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930*, (Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks, 1992).; Robert Alan Goldberg, *Hooded Empire: The Ku Klux Klan in Colorado*, (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1981).

Duke wanted to shift the focus to explicit protection of the White race, leaving minorities behind physically and rhetorically.<sup>84</sup>

The 1970s revival of the Klan produced a form of poor-boy politics. The working-class Southerner who refused to accept the changing of racial politics and power, took to the streets and clashed with Civil Rights protesters.<sup>85</sup> They were increasingly sought by new Klan members like Duke who were college graduates and charismatic. Leaders like Duke formed bonds with college educated men like Butler and elevated their arguments and wishes, making them sound publicly more academic and grounded in science, knowledgeable of the nation's founding documents, and credible as indisputable sources of the "truth" that liberal media was supposedly hiding. Duke's image helped create a nationally acceptable form of racism disguised as "White pride." Their hateful "ignorance" was shifted to hateful academic arguments. Some differences between the Aryan Nations and the Klan included their views on Christianity. Christian Identity being a very specific reading of the Bible and belief in the eleven lost tribes of Israel. The Klan also very much believed in the supremacy of the White race, while the Aryan Nations sought to separate themselves entirely, governing over only the Aryan race. In the Aryan Nations' own words, they shared some common beliefs and "on occasion, find ourselves on common ground. But we go much further than they do in that vis-à-vis the KKK, we

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<sup>84</sup> Duke eventually left the Klan to create the National Association for the Advancement of White People (NAAWP).

Dominic J. Pulera, *Sharing the Dream: White Males in Multicultural America*, (New York: Continuum, 2004), 311.

<sup>85</sup> As seen with the Freedom Rides of 1961. CORE, the Congress of Racial Equality sent thirteen whites and blacks on a Greyhound through the Deep South to draw attention to the segregation in bust station waiting rooms. The Ku Klux Klan caught wind of this activism and attacked the bus riders, slashed the tires of the bus, and threw a fire-bomb onto the bus. This made national news as President Kennedy pleaded with the riders to call off the rides.

Chalmers, *Backfire: How the Ku Klux Klan Helped the Civil Rights Movement*, 29-31.

are racial separatists, while they are white supremacists. We want a separate and cleaned racial nation, period, with no other races living within our Territorial Imperative.”<sup>86</sup>

Another difference was the Klan’s connection to the government and police forces. The 1920s and 1970s Klan both worked with local police units to gain intelligence on Black activist activities, especially through the Civil Rights movement. Butler and many of the anti-federal government men that the Aryan Nations attracted, were highly suspicious of any police forces or federal government agencies. Due to their anti-Semitic ties, Butler and his men despised the federal government, convinced they were tools of the ZOG.

This anti-federal government emphasis is very specific to the Aryan Nations as it is a common thread through the West’s history. These feelings differed from the Klan, as they believed in the power of the government, specifically on the state level. Klansmen increasingly entered the local political spheres throughout the 1950s and 1960s by forming Citizens’ Councils, federations for constitutional government, and anti-Communist crusades.<sup>87</sup> They believed the government, if run by White men, could enact and protect the laws that kept the Whites in power and minorities in their lesser, separate spheres.<sup>88</sup> They believed in the government to protect racist laws while the Aryan Nations were less trusting of the government, believing too much damage to the law had been done. Despite these differences, the Aryan Nations reached out to various hate groups, including atheist Skinheads, neo-Nazis, various Ku Klux Klan branches, gun enthusiasts, survivalist groups, tax-resistors, militias, and Christian home educators in hopes of creating a large group of like-minded men. Butler told a journalist who infiltrated the

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<sup>86</sup> Franklin, “A Youngster Asking.”

<sup>87</sup> Chalmers, *Backfire: How the Ku Klux Klan Helped the Civil Rights Movement.*, 2

<sup>88</sup> Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan.*

Aryan Nations that, “it’s going to become apparent (that) we have to become one united people with one united goal. In other words, that has to become the paramount thing in our lives. And as we come together, we will exert more power. People are drawn to power.”<sup>89</sup> According to Captain William Barker of the Kootenai County Sheriff’s Office, the Aryan Nations by the 1990s had been able to reach at least 1,700 extremist far right organizations through mail and on the physical compound grounds.<sup>90</sup> Their print house facilitated their national and international reach, making them a diverse cast of racist right leaders and members. They combined aspects of the Southern-based Klan racism with Western anti-federal government rhetoric to attract a wide range of “White pride” activists.

These connections were nurtured at Butler’s Aryan World Congress gatherings held every June at the compound on Hayden Lake. The first was in 1986, with a third of its attendees being media representatives.<sup>91</sup> At the Aryan World Congresses, members of the racist right attended target practice and speeches by leaders like Louis Beam. Before that, he had been a part of the Texas chapter of the United Klans of America. Beam had served in the Vietnam War where he had felt joy in killing Communists there. Beam encouraged his followers to continue the Vietnam War mentality at home, killing Communists and dissenters on American soil.<sup>92</sup> Beam forged a friendship with Butler and

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<sup>89</sup> Barker, *Aryan America*, 22.

<sup>90</sup> Barker lists notable representatives at the various Aryan Nations World Congresses like Donald Black and Thomas Robb of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, James Ellison of the Covenant, The Sword, and The Arm of The Lord, Robert Miles of Mountain Church, and William P. Gale of the Ministry of Christ Church.

William E. Barker, *The Aryan Nations: A Linkage Profile*, 1986.

<sup>91</sup> Aho, *The Politics of Righteousness*, 59.

<sup>92</sup> Beam outlines this in his 1983, *Essays of a Klansman*. Belew states, “he meant a literal extension of military-style combat into civilian space. He referred to two wars: the one he had fought in Vietnam and the white revolution he hoped to wage in the United States.”

they collaborated to bring the Christian Identity message to the internet.<sup>93</sup> After speeches were made at the World Congresses, children would attend workshops and classes where they learned to be “good nightriders,” while hearing the history of the Ku Klux Klan from Pastor Robert Miles.<sup>94</sup> The adults improved their shooting skills by participating in “Nigger Shoots,” firing at targets shaped as running Black men.<sup>95</sup> To conclude a World Congress weekend, families gathered around a cross lighting ceremony, a tradition adopted from the Klan. Butler also targeted skinheads through an annual Aryan Youth Assembly held every April.<sup>96</sup> To close out the 1992 AYA Youth Conference, they held a swastika lighting that Pastor Carl Franklin, the Aryan Nations Chief of Staff, called, “very beautiful and inspiring!”<sup>97</sup> In 1995, the compound hosted 250 to 400 members of the youth corps, the skinhead branch of the Aryan Nations. Butler hosted skinhead bands to entice visitors.<sup>98</sup>

While Butler did not stray from his White Bastion plan or compromise the importance of the Christian Identity aspect of his movement, he helped bring together like-minded individuals through events like the Aryan World Congress, which became a catalyst for violent events that occurred throughout their active existence. These groups

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Kathleen Belew, *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 3.

<sup>93</sup> “Louis Beam,” Extremist Files, accessed February 2, 2018, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/louis-beam>.

<sup>94</sup> Jim Sparks, “Children get word: 'You'll be good nightriders for us',” *Unknown* 1986. James Aho Collection.

<sup>95</sup> In the newsletter sent out by Butler in 1981, he suggested “there will be no charges to anyone bringing live targets...Niggers, Jews, Mexicans, Gooks, etc., are also welcome as live targets!”

Richard Butler, *Subject Residents of the Aryan Empire: Summer Conference and Nigger Shoot - July 24, 25, 26, 1981*, (1981). James Aho Collection.

<sup>96</sup> C-SPAN, “C-SPAN Cities Tour - Coeur d'Alene: Richard Butler and the Aryan Nations,” in *Cities Tour* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JLyDE0kDK-w>, December 2013).

<sup>97</sup> Carl Franklin, Report to the Membership, January 10, 1992, Boise State Special Collections and Archives, Aryan Nations.

<sup>98</sup> Knickerbocker, “White separatists plot 'pure' society.”

came together to shape their shared message, exchange ideas, and brainstorm tactics for taking back their nation. If the Aryan race lived and breathed together in one area, they could raise a new generation to fight for the heritage of their people. Beam agreed with this, saying in 1983 that, “we must now separate ourselves from the mongrel nation that envelopes [sic] us. If our race is to have a future then a nation for ourselves, of ourselves, and by ourselves must be born on this continent.”<sup>99</sup> Butler hoped that through the Aryan World Congresses and continued collaborations with the racist right, they would all agree that the Northwest Imperative was the next step for the White race. By inviting them to the gorgeous setting of Hayden Lake, which mirrored a corporate retreat center, he encouraged the interested parties to join him in his White separatist vision. This collaborative exchanging of ideas and shaping of plans was what made this movement so unique and powerful. The Aryan World Congresses became a learning and teaching ground that inspired generations of White separatists, old and new, to continue fighting for their people. It sparked a movement unlike any before in the White supremacy realm. Groups gathered to discuss their shared concerns and goals of creating a White separate nation, which strengthened the movement by adding numbers and a sense of legitimacy to what once were small, fringe groups acting alone. With a common meeting ground and mutually supportive goals, these fringe groups had a retreat center, vacation area, print house, brethren and a possible Aryan homeland.

Violence, crimes, and general chaos were tied to the Aryan Nations’ throughout their presence in Idaho. Members of the Aryan Nations were responsible for a string of bombings in Coeur d’Alene in 1986. A pipe bomb exploded in Father Bill Wassmuth’s

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<sup>99</sup> “*White Power, White Pride!*,” 102.

house, the leader of the Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations. Three weeks later, bombs exploded in front of the Federal Building and two business fronts, including an undetonated one on the roof of another office.<sup>100</sup> Since Butler invited the racist right to his compound every summer, anyone who had been spotted at an Aryan World Congress who later committed a crime was automatically tied to the Aryan Nations. Large national crimes like the assassination of Jewish radio talk-show host, Alan Berg of Denver, were tied to the Order, an Aryan Nations off-shoot group. The Order members were responsible for the assassination and served jail time for the hate crime.<sup>101</sup> Butler and the Aryan Nations were connected to the Order by the media because of the crossover of members and time they had spent on Butler's compound. The reality was that Beam and Mathews who conducted the Order's missions had been slowly moving away from Butler's tactics. While Butler and the Aryan Nations caused chaos in Northern Idaho, their tactics were too slow. The Order wanted to bring the violence to the federal government, the next step in taking their country back. Their connection with the Vietnam War and the *Turner Diaries*,<sup>102</sup> a fictional book that detailed the race war that

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<sup>100</sup> "Bombs Rock Idaho City Torn by Strife Over Racists," *The New York Times* (<https://www.nytimes.com/1986/09/30/us/bombs-rock-idaho-city-torn-by-strife-over-racists.html>) October 3, 1986.; Wallace Turner, "Idahoans Calm in Face of Bombings," *The New York Times* (<https://www.nytimes.com/1986/10/03/us/idahoans-calm-in-face-of-bombings.html>) October 3, 1986.

<sup>101</sup> Andrea Dukakis, "Murder of Colorado Radio Man Alan Berg still Resonates 30 Years Later," *Colorado Public Radio* June 18, 2014; Andrew H. Malcolm, "Outspoken Talk Show Host Slain Outside Denver Home," *The New York Times* 1984.

<sup>102</sup> This impending "race war" rhetoric comes from the highly cited and read book of fiction called, the *Turner Diaries*, written by a university professor, William L. Pierce (published under the pseudonym, Andrew Macdonald), in 1978. The FBI caught wind of this book after the formation of The Order, which is modeled after the organization in the book, even using the same name. The rhetoric of the "race war" became popular among militias, survivalists, and various racist right groups. It was even used as the blueprint for the Oklahoma City bombing, plotted and acted out by Timothy McVeigh. The book is a diary of a fictional character, Earl Turner and his experience through the "race war." The book opens with Turner describing the events leading up the "race war" and how the federal government seized all weapons from whites, as an army of people of color, led by Jewish politicians took over the government. J.M. Berger's research paper, *The Turner Legacy: The Storied Origins and Enduring Impact of White Nationalism's Deadly Bible*, cites 200 murders as inspired by the book.

Andrew Macdonald, *The Turner Diaries*, Second ed., (New Jersey: Barricade Books, Inc, 1996).



would be started by people of color and Jewish government officials against the White man, called them to action. They began assassinating people and bombing federal buildings in order to jump start the impending race war. Beam and Mathews felt that their country had turned on them, sent them out to an unwinnable war, and then turned their backs on the veterans.<sup>103</sup> Butler espoused a more rhetorical and slow-moving mission for White separatism and some of his followers and affiliates held differing views on how to achieve supremacy and separation.

When the Aryan Nations were hit with a large 2000 lawsuit, *Keenan vs. Aryan Nations*, many followers were already leaving the compound and abandoning the White Bastion mission. Butler's ability to unite others dwindled as the Order began executing their own violent plans and Butler stayed in North Idaho. They robbed banks to fund the weapons required for the impending race war they were preparing for.<sup>104</sup> The assassination and bank robberies performed by the Order were just precursors to both the Waco Siege of 1993 and the Oklahoma City Bombing of 1995. The men behind both of these events took physical actions against the government. David Koresh led a 51-day standoff against The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (The ATF), as they sought to arrest him for the large amount of weapons he and his Branch Davidian followers possessed at their Mount Carmel complex. This led to an exchange of gunfire and a fire that killed 75 people, including Koresh.<sup>105</sup> Timothy McVeigh and Terry

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J.M. Berger, *The Turner Legacy: The Storied Origins and Enduring Impact of White Nationalism's Deadly Bible*, 2016.

<sup>103</sup> Belew cites that "The Order's Declaration of War in November 1984 would name congressional betrayal of soldiers in the Vietnam War as a key justification of their violent campaign."

Belew, *Bring the War Home*, 117.

<sup>104</sup> Belew, *Bring the War Home*, 117-119.

<sup>105</sup> Melissa Chan, "The Real Story Behind the Waco Siege: Who Were David Koresh and the Branch Davidians?," *Time Magazine* (<http://time.com/5115201/waco-siege-standoff-fbi-david-koresh/>) January 24, 2018.;

Nichols drove a truck bomb into the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building to simulate the race war as laid out in the *Turner Diaries*, resulting in 168 deaths and 700 injuries.<sup>106</sup>

Both of these acts of anti-government resistance were the type of actions that Beam and Mathews wanted to accomplish – chaos and disruption towards the corrupt American government.

High profile members like Beam and Mathews started leaving the Aryan Nations community while activist efforts by Idahoans all over the state were heightened. The nation-wide negative press associated with the Aryan Nations created a stain on Idaho's reputation. The Aryan Nations' mere presence left Idaho as branded the "Hate State," making it difficult to attract new tourists, businesses, or even a minority presidential candidate for North Idaho College.<sup>107</sup> The Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations formed in 1981 during the Aryan Nations' most active period. They raised money to fund educational and community driven programs to combat racism in Idaho and leading their own peaceful protests in parks while the Aryan Nations marched in the streets.<sup>108</sup> In 1998, they teamed up with the Southern Poverty Law Center when Hayden Lake residents, Victoria Keenan and her son, Jason, were shot at by Aryan Nations members after accidentally driving past their compound during the night.<sup>109</sup> The court

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<sup>106</sup> "Oklahoma City Bombing: 20 Years Later," *FBI.gov* (<https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/oklahoma-city-bombing-20-years-later>) April 16, 2015; Paul A Nakonezny, Rebecca Reddick, and Joseph Lee Rodgers, "Did Divorces Decline after the Oklahoma City Bombing?," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66, no. 1 (2004).; Neiwert, *In God's Country: The Patriot Movement and the Pacific Northwest.*; Stern, *A Force Upon the Plain: The American Militia Movement and the Politics of Hate.*

<sup>107</sup> Benjamin, *Searching for Whitopia: an improbable journey to the heart of white America.*, 114.

<sup>108</sup> Alibrandi and Wassmuth, *Hate is My Neighbor.*; Television, "The Color of Conscience: Human Rights in Idaho.;" Matt Guilhem, "Legacy of Hate: Human Rights Task Force Talks Aryan Nations and North Idaho Culture," *Boise State Public Radio* (<http://boisestatepublicradio.org/post/legacy-hate-human-rights-task-force-talks-aryan-nations-and-north-idaho-culture#stream/0>) October 2, 2017.

<sup>109</sup> Alison Boggs, "North Idaho marks 10 years since Aryan Nations verdict," *The Spokesman-Review* (<http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2010/sep/07/north-idaho-marks-10-years-aryan-nations-verdict/>) September 7, 2010.; Alison Boggs, "Lawyer Recounts Legal Rout of Aryan Nations," *The*

case eventually bankrupted Butler in 2000, forcing him to forfeit his compound. There was no final physical and violent standoff with the federal government to keep the compound. Butler was big on speeches but rarely rallied his men into action, which caused many members to form off-shoot organizations like The Order. Many men had left the compound at the time of the court case and put their faith into other leaders who inspired courageous acts of violence, unlike Butler. The Keenan family won \$6.3 million dollars in court. The compound was torn down and a Peace Park with a stone monument was erected. In 2010, the self-described national director of the Aryan Nations, Paul Mullet, told *The Spokesman-Review*, “the Aryan Nations will never leave North Idaho.”<sup>110</sup> Mullet was not entirely wrong. Just two years after the lawsuit, the popular TV drama, “ER,” had an actor explain to one of the main characters, “I’m from Idaho. The potato part, not the white supremacist part.”<sup>111</sup> Idahoans all over the state were upset with the statement, reminding them that America was still not over the state’s past. The governor at the time, Dirk Kempthorne told *The Spokesman-Review* that, “the ‘courage’ of a jury to bankrupt the Aryan Nations, and the work of local civil rights leaders should not be overlooked.”<sup>112</sup> While Idaho had physically pushed the Aryan Nations out of the state, their reputation lingered.<sup>113</sup> Butler’s example and legacy still influences groups

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*Spokesman-Review* (<http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2009/apr/04/lawyer-recounts-legal-rout-of-aryan-nations/>) April 4, 2009.; John K. Wiley, “Jury: Aryans to pay \$6.3M in suit,” *The Washington Post* ([http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/aponline/20000908/aponline045946\\_000.htm](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/aponline/20000908/aponline045946_000.htm)) September 8, 2000.; “Landmark Case: Keenan V. Aryan Nations,” Southern Poverty Law Center, <https://www.splcenter.org/seeking-justice/case-docket/keen-an-v-aryan-nations>.

<sup>110</sup> Boggs, “North Idaho marks 10 years since Aryan Nations verdict.”

<sup>111</sup> Alan J. Levi, “ER: Beyond Repair,” (NBC, January 10, 2002).

<sup>112</sup> Thomas Clouse and Susan Drumheller, “Idahoans critical after ‘ER’ Remark; white supremacist comment pronounce terminally unfunny,” *The Spokesman Review* January 12, 2002.

<sup>113</sup> Governors before Kempthorne were trying to keep Idaho’s reputation intact long before the court case expelled the group. In one letter from November 17, 1988, Governor Cecil D. Andrus responded to a concerned New Yorker, John J. Sheridan who was nervous to move to Coeur d’Alene. Andrus ended his letter by saying, “If you move to Coeur d’Alene, your most serious complaint might well be the lack of time in which to enjoy the natural beauty and community activities that abound there.”

today as seen through the Northwest Front and Redoubt Movement which is led by men who still hold onto Butler's White Bastion, separatist vision. The idea and plan of action Butler put forth to unite the right have been emulated by the alt-right along with his specific brand of academic racism. Butler's distinct racism was influenced by the most American aspects of the nation – a deep connection with romanticized Wild West history and a connection to color-coded rhetoric as espoused by Conservative politicians. Idahoans may have rejoiced that the Aryan Nations were gone, but the racist and separatist rumblings have still continued in Idaho and the broader Pacific Northwest.

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Cecil D. Andrus, "Letter to Mr. John T. Sheridan," MSS 141, Box 148, Folder 40, Governor Cecil D. Andrus Papers, 1970-1995, Special Collections and Archives, Boise State University.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE WILD WEST MYTHOS

### Part One:

“Eastward I go only by force; but westward I go free.”

-Henry David Thoreau<sup>114</sup>

The West has a complex history that has been shaped by Westerners themselves, academics, and popular culture. Like any history, it can take on a personal and almost spiritual meaning for some of the historians that study it and many people who live within the area. Western history before the 1970s was Anglo-Saxon centric. This affected the way pop culture has exemplified the West, influencing the way White Westerners have perceived themselves, which in turn has created a sense of Western identity. This Western identity or ideal of a White Western man is often personified as a lone ranger cowboy. The cowboy inhabits traits of ruggedness, fierce independence, and a distaste for federal government oversight and intervention affecting the freedom afforded by the physical distance the West has from Washington DC. This image of the cowboy has been shaped by tv and movies, painting a picture of a man braving the elements and conquering the land. In the 1930s, this image was largely televised as a White man, further skewing the cowboy mythology.<sup>115</sup> This legacy of the cowboy created standards in which White Western men have tried living up to, including people like Cliven Bundy,

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<sup>114</sup> Richard E. Nicholls, “Westward I Go Free,” *The New York Times* April 12, 1996, Opinion.

<sup>115</sup> Buck Rainey, *The Reel Cowboy: Essays on the Myth in Movies and Literature*, (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1996), 11.

a rancher who led an armed resistance against the federal government to oppose restrictions placed on public grazing land. Because of this Western legacy, White men like Bundy and Butler have become modern day cowboys by violently resisting the government to protect private property, participating in rhetoric of ancestral ties and duties to the land. This Western identity and romanticization was essential in the formation of the Aryan Nations as it gave them a way to relate to Idahoans. They were able to tie their White separatist ideals to the Western freedom rhetoric and idealization common throughout the West to transform themselves into a powerful racist right group that still has influence throughout the nation.

The romanticized version of Western history as glorified on television, film, and through early academic works like Turner's Frontier Thesis (the Turner Thesis), often tells the story of brave White men, hacking their way through untouched landscape. These men left everything behind, started from scratch, built up the land around them, and found riches that benefited their family. The hard-working Western cowboy idealization was alive and well in places such as Idaho when the Aryan Nations were active. As explained by Boise, Idaho mayor, Dirk Kempthorne in his speech to the GOP National Convention in 1992, the hero of the Old West was a lone figure on horseback.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Boise major, Dirk Kempthorne, echoed the concerns of his Idaho constituents in his address to the GOP National Convention in Houston, Texas in 1992. Kempthorne, in his speech, said that he represented the New West, full of Idahoans concerned for their state and the strength and power of the federal government. He talked about how the Republican party was, "the party of the individual in a country that glorifies individualism." He goes on to discuss how the individualism inherent in the West has been represented in the traditional hero of the lone figure on horseback. This lone figure is now accompanied by farmers, scientists, miners and teachers in Idaho who are ushering in a new post-Communism century. As a representative of the New West, he called upon his fellow Idahoans and Republicans to embrace the party of "individualism and self-worth, family values, free enterprise and private property rights."

C-SPAN, "Republican National Convention AM Session," (C-SPAN, August 18, 1992).  
<https://www.c-span.org/video/?31286-1/republican-national-convention-session>.

As quoted in the *Lewiston Morning Tribune*, “Kempthorne compared the rugged individualism of the cowboy who conquered the Old West to the young workers and business entrepreneurs of today. Both, he said, are heroes.”<sup>117</sup> Idaho politicians referred to this Western legacy with pride and adoration and many still do. Thirty second and current Governor of Idaho, Clement Leroy “Butch” Otter, won over many Idahoans through his cowboy persona. In 2010, Otter sought reelection and stressed his ranching and dairy farm background while wearing cowboy hats and boots and large belt buckles during campaign ads. His opponent, Democrat Keith Allred did the same. One journalist commented on the Governor race saying, “meet the candidates for Idaho governor – two champion horsemen who seem to be running as much for cowboy-in-chief as they are for the state’s top political office...The cowboy theme has injected an Old West feel into a governor’s race that has been more competitive than originally expected.” State representative and Idaho rancher, Scott Bedke, also commented on the events saying it was nice to see politicians, “embrace the cowboy way, even if it’s to win over voters.” He went on to say, “The persona of a cowboy is, he had common sense, he was original, he was an individualist, he made do with what he had.”<sup>118</sup> Embracing a cowboy persona was not just about getting the farming or ranching demographic vote, but to exude individuality, independence, and a dedication to an older way of life – the cowboy life. A life dedicated to agriculturally based employment, land rights belonging to the people, and the right to bear arms as necessary. This lifestyle harkens back to the Frontier Thesis where the landscape was described as a space that White men settled, conquered, and

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<sup>117</sup> Mike Carter, “Kempthorne stumps on a national stage,” *Lewiston Morning Tribune* August 1992.

<sup>118</sup> John Miller, “Idaho gov. candidates play up cowboy credentials,” *The Associated Press* (Washingtonpost.com) September 30, 2010.

civilized rather than colonized. This image shaped how White Americans in the West saw themselves, setting expectations and values upon Western men. Men have adopted these expected traits, using them as excuses or justifications to violently protect their land. As stated by historian Richard White, “modern westerners see themselves as part of a lineage that conquered a wilderness and transformed the land; they spring from a people who carved out their own destiny and remained beholden to no one.”<sup>119</sup> Westerners are faced with the narrative of farmers and agricultural workers as being fiercely independent, individualistic, and as the all-important food providers of the nation.<sup>120</sup> They are often expected to adopt Conservative ideals, such as protection of traditional family structures, enforcement of Christian morals, and support of free-enterprise economics. The myth painted Western men as dominant over their surroundings, just as their forefathers supposedly were before them. According to popular culture, their ancestors fought with their bare hands for the farms, ranches, and plots of land White Westerners call home today.<sup>121</sup> Butler was aware of this strong Western mythos and used it as a justification for the Aryan Nations’ occasional use of violence to protect their compound. He told the *Idaho State Journal*, “the (indigenous) people have a right to fight back. Conflicts come

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<sup>119</sup> Richard White, and Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Frontier in American Culture*, Edited by James R. Grossman (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994).

<sup>120</sup> From Judith Butler’s *The Psychic Life of Power*, she says, “What is a farmer? A farmer is a man who feeds the world. What is a farmer’s first duty? To grow food. What is a farmer’s second duty? To buy more land. What are the signs of a good farm? Clean fields, neatly painted buildings, breakfast at six, no debts, no standing water. How will you know a good farmer when you meet him? He will not ask you for any favors.”

Eric Ramirez-Ferrero, *Troubled Fields: Men, Emotions, and the Crisis in American Farming*, (New York City: Columbia University Press, 2005).

<sup>121</sup> In literature enjoyed by Roosevelt and readers of popular nineteenth-century popular fiction, farmers were a “secondary figure while the hunter/Indian-fighter was at the center of the action,” according to historian Richard Slotkin.

Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America*, (New York: Atheneum, 1992), 33.



when you bring aliens to your land.”<sup>122</sup> In this case, Butler’s use of the word “indigenous” means White European men and “aliens” refers to Mexicans. This romanticized past shaped the expectations that Westerners inhabited, either real or imagined. These expectations have been set by Western television, film, and popular culture’s representations of life in the West.

As Evelyn Schlatter explains in her work, *Aryan Cowboys*, it is important to examine these aspects of the West because of reoccurring patterns of “frontierism,” which Schlatter uses to describe “the attempt to resurrect an imagined, romanticized past inhabited by white archetypes triumphing over land and human others, often eking out a living by the sweat of their white male Protestant brow.”<sup>123</sup> Schlatter further explains how pop culture keeps this romanticized tradition alive through television and film. John Wayne and other Hollywood cowboys served as the epitome of American masculinity from World War II onward through their roles in Westerns.<sup>124</sup> As a classic example of the Wild West romanticization in popular culture, the 1954 edition of *Pictorial History of the Wild West*, highlighted photographs and stories revolving around “bad men, desperadoes, rustlers and outlaws of the Old West – and the men who fought them to establish law and order.” The book covered celebrated outlaws and ruffians of the West, including Billy the Kid, Wyatt Earp, and Butch Cassidy. According to the authors James D. Horan and Paul

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<sup>122</sup> John K. Wiley, “Violence necessary in race war, Butler says,” *Idaho State Journal* April 21, 1989. James Aho Collection.

<sup>123</sup> Schlatter coins the term “frontierism” in the introduction of her book. She uses this term to explain the phenomena of looking upon that “frontier” past and lifestyle with rose-tinted glasses.

Evelyn A. Schlatter, *Aryan Cowboys: White Supremacists and the Search for a New Frontier, 1970-2000*. (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2006), 3.

<sup>124</sup> She cites that, “in 1959 alone, no fewer than thirty-five Westerns ran concurrently on television and eight of the top ten shows had Western themes. John Wayne, as Western hero, became a leading symbol of American masculinity from World War II to Vietnam.”

Schlatter, *Aryan Cowboys*, 3.

Sann, the appeal of the Wild West stemmed from the romantic vision Eastern Americans long crafted of the landscape. As the authors explained, “the timeless allure of the Wild West may rest on the inherent drama of its vast setting, the average America’s assumption that any story of the West equals stirring adventure and the symbols—a fleet horse and a trusty six-shooter ‘who run together like molasses,’ as a famous captain of the Texas Rangers once said.”<sup>125</sup> Horan and Sann also explain that Americans were slowly accepting a more realistic view of the West but that “it is doubtful, however, that the phony romance surrounding those wild years will ever be completely abandoned.”<sup>126</sup> This “phony romance” is what the Aryan Nations adopted and held onto, seeing themselves reflected in these Wild West tales. They bought into this view of the West, marketing themselves as outlaws and cowboys like Wyatt Earp and Billy the Kid in order to resonate with their Western neighbors. To the Aryan Nations, their violent actions against the federal government were simply homages to famous cowboys – their ancestors who had fought for their pieces of land. Through their actions, they were reflecting this imagined past. For the Aryan Nations, reflecting this imagined past was extremely important to their outside image and appeal to their Western neighbors. By aligning themselves with this part of history it served as the justification for their fierce devotion to their land and their people.

While the authors of *Pictorial History of the Wild West*, Horan and Sann, expressed hopes that a more realistic version of Western history would be displayed within popular culture, the film industry has not been quick to change. Western movies

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<sup>125</sup> James D. Horan and Paul Sann, *Pictorial History of the Wild West*, (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1954), 9.

<sup>126</sup> Horan and Sann, *Pictorial History of the Wild West*, 9.

continue to portray the West as a wild territory that was fought for by the White man, showing brave cowboys killing Native peoples for their plot of land. It also shows, according to Douglas J. Den Uyl, brave Western heroes as lone figures, “possessed of extraordinary self-sufficiency facing problems that ordinary men would be either unable or too fearful to handle.”<sup>127</sup> According to the Internet Movie Database (IMDB), there were at least 94 Western-themed films in 1970. These included films about Native Americans and Mexicans in the West, a prequel to *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969), and a movie called *Monte Walsh* (1970) with the description being, “an aging cowboy realizes that the West he knew and loved will soon be no more—and that there will be no room for him, either.”<sup>128</sup> *Monte Walsh* is the typical Western film, showing the masculinity of White men, dealing with the inevitable loss of their beloved Wild West, just as the Aryan Nations were. In the 1980s, there were at least 100 Western-themed films ranging from time travel movies set in the West, comedies like *Three Amigos* (1986), and various films surrounding women in the West.<sup>129</sup> While Westerns from the 1990s and 2000s started to include more narratives focused specifically on non-whites and women experiences, they typically followed the standard Western plot. Movies such as *The Hateful Eight* (2015) and *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford* (2007) are considered neo-Westerns, films that challenged the traditional Western film plot, focusing on women and non-White people or re-examining White Western

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<sup>127</sup> Douglas J. Den Uyl, “Civilization and Its Discontents, The Self-Sufficient Western Hero,” in *The Philosophy of the Western*, ed. Jennifer L. McMahon and B. Steve Csaki (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2010), 31.

<sup>128</sup> The movie quoted from was *Keoma* (1976).

Internet Movie Database, “List of Western Films of the 1970s” August 30, 2012, <http://www.imdb.com/list/ls003590892/>.

<sup>129</sup> Internet Movie Database, “Genre: Western, 1000 Films: 1960-2013,” August 28, 2013. <http://www.imdb.com/list/ls051626178/>.

heroes through modern and questioning lenses. These neo-Westerns re-examine understandings of traditional Western film heroes. Journalist Clarisse Loughrey explains that the Western film genre is dead, as filmmakers replaced it with the neo-Western, “the product of a long, burdened evolution which gradually tore down the grizzled heroism of John Wayne. The hopeful patriotism of the 1950s disintegrated into disillusionment, and US actions in foreign wars began to call into question the validity of this American mythos.”<sup>130</sup> These Western films whether they be classic or neo-Westerns, all represent the romantic Western picture America still dreams of. The Aryan Nations bought into this cultural imagination of the Wild West and hoped to become the cowboys of their new homeland – masculine, rugged, gunslinging protectors of their Aryan West.

Not only has the romanticized version of the West been a poignant aspect of Western life, but anti-federal government rhetoric has rippled through regions of the West from the opening of the frontier to today. While Americans have a more well-rounded version of Western history circulating in academia and public schools, a more nuanced history of Western land disputes have yet to enter the public dialogue completely.<sup>131</sup> The idea of land ownership is an extremely important aspect of American

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<sup>130</sup> Clarisse Loughrey, “The Hateful Eight is the latest film to prove the neo-western genre is here to stay,” *The Independent* (<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/features/the-hateful-eight-is-the-latest-film-to-prove-the-neo-western-genre-is-here-to-stay-a6796446.html>) January 4, 2016.

Unfortunately, while a film like *The Hateful Eight* has been referred to as new and refreshing for the Western genre, it still depicts Western men as exceptionally violent, particularly towards people of color and women. For more on the neo-Western film genre, including analysis of the film *Napoleon Dynamite* set in Idaho, please refer to:

Nicolaas Mink, “A (Napoleon) Dynamite Identity: Rural Idaho, the Politics of Place, and the Creation of a New Western Film,” *Western Historical Quarterly* Vol 39, no. No. 2 (2008).

Dustin Luke Nelson, “Napoleon Dynamite & the Neo-Western Film,” *JStor Daily* (<https://daily.jstor.org/napoleon-dynamite-neo-western-film/>) September 9, 2015.

<sup>131</sup> The West was full of hardships like taming the land and making it profitable and productive for themselves and Americans. Jobs were scarce and because of the new developments, families often arrived in places like California in towns without proper plumbing or places to stay. For more on this, please refer to Jo Ann Levy’s *They Saw the Elephant* and Nancy Isenberg’s *White Trash*.

and Western life as a whole. Western land from the opening of the frontier has been under federal government ownership so the government could help parcel the land as well as drive Natives off of it. The federal government had to essentially control the “untamed” West to help aid American expansion into the landscape. According to Richard White, “the government did not pursue pioneers west; it more often led them there. Anglo Americans did not compel the government to follow; instead, the government conquered the region, agents of the federal government explored it, federal officials administered it, and federal bureaucrats supervised (or at least tried to supervise) the division and development of its resources.”<sup>132</sup> This government activity in every aspect of Western life created a sense of resentment within White Western men, particularly miners, loggers, farmers and ranchers who were so far removed physically from the federal government but still had to work with it daily. The journey out west proved to be extremely difficult as showcased by the squatter whose hopes and dreams of the Western American dream were squashed as they faced legal persecution, harsh weather conditions, and the threat of lawlessness that did exist in the early stages of American conquest of the West. As Limerick discusses in *Legacy of Conquest*, Westerners who were unhappy with their journey out West, increasingly shifted the blame to the federal government, “since it was the government’s responsibility to control the Indians and, to control nature, Westerners found it easy to shift the direction of their resentment. Attacked by Indians or threatened by nature, aggrieved Westerners took to

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Jo Ann Levy, *They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992).

Nancy Isenberg, *White Trash. The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America*, (New York: Penguin House, 2016).

<sup>132</sup> Richard White, “It’s Your Misfortune and None of My Own” *A New History of the American West*, (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 58.

pointing accusingly at the federal government.”<sup>133</sup> This resentment is still present since Westerners still rely on farm subsidies and land management, resulting in recent violent clashes between ranchers and the federal government. The physical vastness of the Western landscape beckoned for freedom and individualism, creating this dichotomy of wanting distance from the government while also relying on the many resources the nation could provide.

As discussed by Nancy Isenberg in *White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America*, land was important to the colonizers on the east coast of America. Isenberg explains that “before they even established new and busy societies, colonizers denoted some people as entrepreneurial stewards of the exploitable land; they declared others (the vast majority) as mere occupiers, a people with no measurable investment in productivity or in commerce.”<sup>134</sup> Land has set class distinctions, it has separated people by wealth and race, and attributed a set of expectations for a space in a landscape. As falsely painted in classic Western films and most public schools, the opening of the frontier was a huge democratic landgrab, open to all Americans. However, as Isenberg points out, the landgrab was open exclusively to wealthy White speculators. The federal government held most of the land in the West and kept prices high enough to weed out the undesirable and poor who migrated there in search of the American dream. Because of this, squatters had no choice but to inhabit and build their homes on land illegally, causing federal government panic. Squatters were described by the media at the time as scum of the Earth who were out to disrupt social order of the West. An important aspect here is that common perceptions and treatment of White squatters changed through

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<sup>133</sup> *Legacy of Conquest*, 44.

<sup>134</sup> Isenberg, *White Trash*, 19.

history. While the government saw them initially as law breakers, damaging the reputation of America, by the 1830s and 1840s they were described as “a symbol of partisan politics, celebrated as the iconic common man who came to epitomize Jacksonian democracy.”<sup>135</sup> Due to President Andrew Jackson’s own Western heritage, squatters were deemed patriotic and as possessing a true American spirit just like their President, who had invaded Florida, forced the Cherokee Nation out of Tennessee, and cleared land without any legal authority. In the early 1900s, with the Turner Thesis in full bloom, Theodore Roosevelt even talked about the squatters through rose-tinted glasses saying that the squatter experience had, “transformed white Americans into superior stock.” He believed that “every middle-class American male had to stay in touch with his inner squatter; he must never lose the masculine traits that attached to the ‘strenuous life.’”<sup>136</sup> This kind of masculine, hard-working, independent thinking has followed millions of Americans into the West. Originally, what the squatters did was illegal, looked down upon, and laughed at. With later government support and a reimagining of the history of squatters, which served to paint land-stealing White Western men and Western Presidents in a more heroic and respectful light, they became brave men who should be emulated.<sup>137</sup> This kind of squatter mentality encouraged White men to fight

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<sup>135</sup> Isenberg, 112.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

<sup>137</sup> Both Ariela Gross and Ira Katznelson write great histories on how the meaning of whiteness has changed and how whites have been able to use their whiteness in varying ways in America. Katznelson discusses how whites through American history have received affirmative action through government initiatives like the GI Bill, but feuds over affirmative action and welfare are dominantly “inner-city” or black issues. Gross discusses the “Caucasian cloak” and how the definition of whiteness has changed over time through court systems. Both of these histories help explain how white squatters were able to escape government and social ridicule over time. They were able to use their “Caucasian cloak” to get away with illegally squatting on government land, something that a person of color could never have gotten away with.

Ariela J. Gross, *What Blood Won't Tell: A History of Race on Trial in America*, (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2008).

against the federal government for what they believe in, which typically involved pieces of land.

Idaho politicians played into this hard-working, rugged Westerner vision. Many Idaho politicians in the 1990s worked hard to fight off federal government invasion and intervention in regards to wildlife protection specifically.<sup>138</sup> In 1994, Lt. Governor “Butch” Otter, Idaho Representative Alan G. Lance, and Secretary of State Pete T. Cenarrusa, pushed back on the federal government’s attempts to drawing down Dworshak Reservoir located in Clearwater County, Idaho. The federal government wanted to do this to help save the chinook salmon population. Lance asserted that the Democratic White House was declaring war on the West with their new regulations and attempts to save the chinook salmon. As quoted in the *Lewiston Morning Tribune*, Lance said, “if Bill Clinton wants to declare war on the West, you have a fighter in Al Lance.”<sup>139</sup> Idaho and the West in general has upheld this sense of Wild West, anti-government motif throughout history, harkening back to the squatters. The Aryan Nations found a conducive home here and were encouraged by the local efforts to keep Idaho free from intrusive federal government regulations and protecting the working man’s right to work and earn a living through the inherited jobs and careers of their forefathers, those being agriculturally based jobs. This fit with the Aryan Nations’ needs for limited federal government intervention so they could operate their White Bastion compound as they wanted. Idaho politicians, in the eyes of the Aryan Nations, seemed to fight for the rights

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Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America*.

<sup>138</sup> “Members of the U.S. Congress,” Library of Congress.  
<https://www.congress.gov/members?q=%7B%22member-state%22%3A%22Idaho%22%2C%22congress%22%3A%22102%22%7D>

<sup>139</sup> Andrea Vogt, “Otter charges feds are lying about drawdowns,” *Lewiston Morning Tribune* June 25, 1994.



of such alternative and self-sustainable lifestyles, as they pushed back on federal efforts to control Western land and the people living within it. While they were not specifically fighting for the Aryan Nations' right to train an Aryan army on a privately-owned compound, they certainly fought for the right for Idahoans to live out their Western ideals, by protecting agricultural and natural resource-based jobs. Idaho politicians encouraged that lasting mythical spirit of the squatter when Cenarussa, "vowed to return government back to the people;"<sup>140</sup> those people being the squatter, the cowboy, the miner, the pioneer, the Christian man, the Aryan man. This legacy of blaming the federal government manifested itself again within the Sagebrush Rebellion.

The rebellion began in 1979 when Nevada passed a law that gave the state ownership and control of over 48 million acres or 79 percent of Nevada territory, all originally owned by the federal government.<sup>141</sup> The purpose of Nevada's action was to draw attention to new legislation that expanded how much land the federal government possessed through the Bureau of Land Management. In 1976, Congress passed the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, which ended the practice of homesteading (allowing public lands to be used for agriculture), leaving these huge areas of public hands in the hands of the BLM.<sup>142</sup> This was coupled with the increased environmental regulations enacted in the 1970s that affected the now federally owned land. These new environmental protections placed increased regulations on the day to day operations of miners, ranchers, and farmers. According to R. McGregor Cawley in *Federal Land*,

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<sup>140</sup> Vogt, "Otter Charges Feds Are Lying About Drawdowns."

<sup>141</sup> R. McGregor Cawley, *Federal Land, Western Anger: The Sagebrush Rebellion and Environmental Politics*, (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 1.

<sup>142</sup> "War in the West: The Bundy Ranch Standoff and the American Radical Right," Southern Poverty Law Center, July 9, 2014.

*Western Anger: The Sagebrush Rebellion and Environmental Politics*, “93 percent of the total federal estate and 99 percent of the BLM lands are located in twelve western states...”<sup>143</sup> This sparked a Sagebrush rebellion throughout the West that reflected anger of agricultural workers and land owners towards the federal government that, in their eyes, sided with environmentalists to their detriment. Environmental regulations focused on protection of wildlife added to Westerner’s fears over the increasing strength and overreach the federal government possessed. Ronald Reagan supported the Sagebrush Rebellion during his 1980 presidential campaign, siding himself with the farmers and ranchers who showcased their anger towards the managerial reach of the government, a popular political campaign issue at the time.<sup>144</sup> Idaho Congresswoman, Helen Chenoweth, served in the House of Representatives for Idaho’s first district in 1994. She built her own success and image on the Sagebrush Rebellion as she was an active supporter and lobbyist for the cause. She lobbied for grazing and land rights that favored farmers and ranchers. Chenoweth even married one of the Sagebrush Rebellion crusaders, Wayne Hage in 1999.<sup>145</sup> Chenoweth fought for protection of Idaho land, siding with agricultural workers who wanted independence from new environmental regulations.<sup>146</sup> Throughout her campaign for Congress, she sided herself with these men by appealing to the traditions of Westerners and Idahoans by stating in her 1994 position

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<sup>143</sup> Cawley, *Federal Land, Western Anger*, 2.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>145</sup> He sued the federal government for \$28 million in 1991, to compensate for the “taking” of his land (Hage owned 7,000 acres but used 752,000 acres of public and federal land).

Jodi Peterson, “One Sagebrush Rebellion Flickers out - Or Does it?,” *High Country News* September 21, 2012.

Rich Landers, “Aging sagebrush rebel keeps up fight against feds,” *The Spokesman-Review* November 30, 2011.

<sup>146</sup> As Boisean Helen Langworthy pointed out in her opinion piece to the *Idaho Statesman* in 1994, the movement had not died in the 1980s, as it was finding supporters in key political positions.

Helen Langworthy, “She’s a Sagebrush Rebel,” *Idaho Statesman* (Boise, ID) 1994.

papers, “extremist groups that advocated ‘Cattle free by ‘93’ completely disregarded the livelihood and proud cultural heritage of Idaho’s cattlemen and their families. Sustained management of natural resources, success for family recreation and the protection of Idaho jobs and ranches... THIS IS THE IDAHO WAY!”<sup>147</sup> Chenoweth also fought for the protection of American jobs over the environment. In a 1996 speech presented at the Second Annual Seminar of Conservative Women Leaders, she spoke about the importance of private property rights in the West and said that, “even in the Endangered Species Act, far down the road to bondage, do we realize is that particular act, the Endangered Species Act, does not allow for automatic standing for humans that have been damaged by the law through a taking of their property or their ability to make a living.” She aligned herself with the Aryan Nations even further by citing that “while they love America, fifty-two percent of Americans in recent polls say they fear their government.” This was in regards to ranchers and farmers losing private property due to new regulations and laws regarding protected species and environmental protections.<sup>148</sup> This Western cultural heritage also drove Nevada cattle rancher, Cliven Bundy.

Cliven Bundy and his family had been involved in legal battles against the federal government since 1989. Bundy, whose family bought his ranch in 1877, refused to move his cattle off of Nevada land after the government purchased grazing privileges on it to help save the desert tortoise, which became an endangered species. Before the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, his family had been free to graze his cattle on the public lands. Bundy continued to use the protected land and refused to pay the resulting

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<sup>147</sup> Helen Chenoweth, *Position Papers* (1994)., MSS 139-2, Box 1, Folder 13, Larry LaRocco Collection.

<sup>148</sup> C-Span, “Idaho Congressional Debate,” (<https://www.c-span.org/video/?75795-1/idaho-congressional-debate>, October 6, 1996).

federally appointed fines. The tensions between Bundy and his followers, other ranchers and farmers who had been affected by stricter government regulation, and the Bureau of Land Management officers escalated. By 1993 a bomb was tossed in the BLM headquarters in Reno, Nevada and a bomb had been set off in the U.S. Forest Service office in Carson City, Nevada by unknown Bundy protestors in 1995. The small protest garnered support from local cattle ranchers and conservatives across the West. Militias and every day patriots threatened BLM officials, staged protests and marches, and found ways of shutting down environmental regulations throughout the 1990s and 2000s. The Southern Poverty Law Center cited an extensive list of events in their 2014 Fall issue of the Intelligence Report of “patriot” activities versus the federal government through 1994-2000 and then 2009-2014.<sup>149</sup> These bombings, standoffs, murders and general lawlessness were seeded in the belief that these environmental protections and new regulations on public lands were the beginnings of the New World Order – a global government run by Jews and socialists.<sup>150</sup>

In 2014, the Bundy rebellion caught media attention as militia members pointed weapons at federal officers tasked with rounding up Bundy’s cattle.<sup>151</sup> Many men who were interviewed cited their resentment and fears toward the overarching and invasive federal government control. Rancher Cliff Gardner, who had stood by the Bundy family

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<sup>149</sup> “Land Use & the 'Patriots',” Southern Poverty Law Center, August 20, 2014.

<sup>150</sup> The Bundy cause faced backlash among Conservative politicians who originally supported the movement because of Bundy’s racist comments filmed in 2014. Bundy was caught on film, asking if the “Negro” was better off as a slave. Bundy explained, “they abort their young children, they put their young men in jail, because they never learned how to pick cotton. And I’ve often wondered, are they better off as slaves, picking cotton and having a family life and doing things, or are they better off under government subsidy? They didn’t get no more freedom. They got less freedom.”

Aaron Blake, “Cliven Bundy on Blacks: ‘Are They Better Off as Slaves?’” *The Washington Post*, April 24, 2014. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2014/04/24/cliven-bundy-on-blacks-are-they-better-off-as-slaves/?utm\\_term=.8d7bf3c4dc6f](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2014/04/24/cliven-bundy-on-blacks-are-they-better-off-as-slaves/?utm_term=.8d7bf3c4dc6f).

<sup>151</sup> “Land Use & the 'Patriots'.”

from the beginning, was quoted in 2014 as saying, “I think Cliven is taking a stand not only for family ranchers, but also for every freedom-loving American, for everyone.” He went on to say that he planned to fight along the family through life or death.<sup>152</sup> Images of families with large guns, riding on horseback in the Nevada desert, confronting federal officials in military garb caught the attention of national media.<sup>153</sup> The Aryan Nations used similar rhetoric and visual imagery as the Bundy family. They believed in freedom from radical government oppression and the right to bear arms to protect their ancestral land. Racial hostilities and anti-government sentiment are deeply tied in the West. Despite Bundy’s openly racist comments, followers flocked to Nevada to stand against the government as a true testament to the lasting legacy of the Western spirit tie to the land and all that it represents – freedom, independence, American patriotism, and masculinity. According to historian Patricia Limerick, “in a one-to-one correspondence between nature and politics, the wide-open spaces were meant to be the setting for a comparable wide-open independence for Westerners. This independence, the speaker will assume, is the West’s legitimate heritage from history.”<sup>154</sup> This search and longing for independence from the federal government has resulted in violent acts in order to achieve such independence that has continued through the 2000s.

## Part Two:

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<sup>152</sup> Jaime Fuller, “The long fight between the Bundys and the federal government, from 1989 to today,” *The Washington Post*, January 4, 2016. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2014/04/15/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-long-fight-between-cliven-bundy-and-the-federal-government/?utm\\_term=.47dad2b7cbed](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2014/04/15/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-long-fight-between-cliven-bundy-and-the-federal-government/?utm_term=.47dad2b7cbed) (accessed, January 16, 2018).

<sup>153</sup> The Independent, “Bundy Ranch Standoff, exclusive video report by Michael Flynn,” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ADdToI9AkW>, 2014).

<sup>154</sup> Limerick, *Legacy of Conquest*, 78.

The romantic notions of the “Wild West” has had exceptionally dangerous consequences for states like Idaho. Westerners who made their homes in Idaho after the opening of the frontier were encouraged by images of the Manifest Destiny as produced by the federal government. This Manifest Destiny, or the “duty destined by God,” spirit has been perpetuated through film and television. The Manifest Destiny imagery was a way for the federal government to justify stripping lands from Native tribes and Mexicans while encouraging White men and women to begin settling the newly purchased lands. The Aryan Nations held onto this Manifest Destiny mission even in the 1980s and 1990s, as they began tying their White Bastion efforts to their “God-given duty,” using the Manifest Destiny as a justification for the White separatist ideals. The Aryan Nations, in their worldview, were simply occupying what was theirs, as fought for by their ancestors. As stated in a letter by the founder of The Order, Robert Mathews, which was published in an Aryan Nations’ newsletter, “a secret war has been developing for the last year between the regime in Washington and an ever growing number of white people who are determined to regain what *our* forefathers discovered, explored, conquered, settled, built, and died for.”<sup>155</sup> Mathews has bought into the idea that White men, by conquering the West, were the sole inheritors of such space. In his eyes, his ancestors were responsible for creating the West; without them, this landscape would have been empty, barren, and useless. Historian, Howard R. Lamar, explains that “for the American West to come into national consciousness as a concept, it had to be invented or defined, then explored, and then occupied and redefined on the basis of actual

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<sup>155</sup> Barker, *Aryan America*, 461.

experience.”<sup>156</sup> In the eyes of Mathews, his ancestors were the ones responsible for the American West and its creation. The Aryan Nations bought into this Manifest Destiny legacy. Richard Butler bought his piece of land, defined the space as central to the White Bastion, explored the surrounding wilderness, and encouraged other like-minded men to join him. Together, the Aryan Nations and other groups invented, defined, occupied and then redefined the Inland Pacific Northwest as their Great White Hope.

One Aryan Nation member traveled to Oregon to recruit loggers to the White Bastion cause by appealing to them on an economic level. The fliers he distributed proclaimed that the, “Aryan Nations supports the *right* of the White *logger* and all hard-working White *taxpayers* to make a living.” The Aryan Nations member, Floyd Cochran, was appealing to White workers whose jobs were disappearing due to the increase of environmental regulations and new technologies. The flier continued with, “loggers vs. the birds. We have heard a lot about *rights* lately! What about the *rights of the logger*? Do they not have a *right* to work?...Or are the *rights* of a few *birds* (spotted owls) far more important?”<sup>157</sup> The Aryan Nations aligned themselves with the working class White man against federal overreach in terms of wildlife protection. This mindset was the same mindset the Bundys inhabited during their continued fight against the federal government. Butler and his members continued to showcase their American ruggedness and commitment to the Western way of life – that being protection of the White man’s right to be free in their pursuit of wealth and property.

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<sup>156</sup> Michael L. Johnson, *Hunger for the Wild: America’s Obsession with the Untamed West* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 76.

<sup>157</sup> Paul Shukovsky, “Racists aim for down-and-out loggers,” *Seattle PI* June 4, 1991.; Franklin, Report to the Membership.

Idaho, in its wide-open lands and agriculturally centered economy seemed to embody the Western way of life that Butler strove for. He saw Idaho as carved out by White men for White men. Butler stated in a letter to Cecil Andrus in 1987, that Idaho was established as an Anglo-American state. “From the inception of Idaho as a territory, then as a state, and on to this date,” as he argued, “it has been occupied by our White (Aryan) Race. Though this may grieve your ADL masters’ anti-White stand, it shall nevertheless remain a White (Aryan) land.”<sup>158</sup> He saw his followers as embodying the conquering and reclaiming mission of the Western pioneers who came to the West to escape the race problems of the rest of the country. By putting down roots in northern Idaho, they were simply reenacting the acts of their forefathers – placing a flag on their desired piece of land and preserving a redefined place for themselves. Butler used television and radio interviews to call out to White Americans proclaiming there was a better solution to the racial tensions elsewhere, saying, “Wyoming is one of the five northwestern states where we are actually encouraging people to start pioneering a new home for the white race.”<sup>159</sup> They had a vision of a new territory that was theirs for the taking, beckoning them to make it their own.<sup>160</sup> The Aryan Nations’ ultimate goal was to

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<sup>158</sup> When Butler refers to “ADL masters”, he is referring to the Anti-Semitic agency, the Anti-Defamation League. The Aryan Nations refer to the Anti-Defamation League as one of their biggest enemies.

Richard Butler to Cecil Andrus, April 17, 1987, MSS 141, Box 26, Folder 1, Governor Cecil D. Andrus Papers 1970-1995, Special Collections and Archives, Boise State University Library.

<sup>159</sup> “Butler Reaffirms Northwest Haven Plans,” *Northwest Beacon* 8 (April 1990).

<sup>160</sup> As explained by Richard E. Nicholls of *The New York Times*, “We began almost immediately to load an impossible series of expectations onto the West: It would provide abundant land, new freedom and chance to reinvent our lives. The frontier was never as simple as we imagined it to be. In attempting to adapt elements of the mythic West to their purposes, the alleged Unabomber and the Freemen are only doing what we Americans have been doing for almost two centuries: reading into the West what we wanted to see. That it could not fulfill their dreams – and ours – says more about us than the land itself.” The Aryan Nations faced this reality during their time in Idaho. They projected their desires on Idaho and did not receive what they hoped.

Nicholls, “Westward I Go Free.”



keep this reclaimed territory of the Pacific Northwest White man and away from the mongrel peoples of the rest of America who were tools of the Jewish federal government. Pastor Franklin described the plan of the Aryan Nations, which was to, “foster personal initiative and entrepreneurship with state backing to bring back the Spirit of the American way of life.”<sup>161</sup> One man who embodied this Spirit was Randy Weaver, who fought for his plot of land at the top of a mountain, Ruby Ridge, surrounded by support from and respect of the local Aryan Nations.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation’s standoff on top of Ruby Ridge in Naples, Idaho in 1992, was yet another wave of White separatist violence that drew national attention to the Pacific Northwest. The Weavers originally moved to Idaho from Iowa to home school their children more freely away from the public-school system they believed was poisoning their children with liberal ideology and multiculturalism.<sup>162</sup> According to Vicki Weaver, Randy Weaver’s wife, they moved to Idaho to escape the racial problems of the rest of the nation. ““We don’t have the freedom to believe what we want. We moved here to remove our children from the trash being taught in public schools and to practice our beliefs...to keep Yahweh’s laws.””<sup>163</sup> The Weaver family took up arms against the FBI after Randy Weaver was indicted in Boise in December 1990 for allegedly selling a sawed-off shotgun to an undercover agent.<sup>164</sup> He met this agent at an

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<sup>161</sup> Franklin, “A Youngster Asking.”

<sup>162</sup> According to an opinion piece in the *Lewiston Morning Tribune*, Idaho “repealed what little regulation over them [home schooling] the state had.” The writer argues that if Idaho had not repealed the many home schooling regulations, the Weaver family would not have moved here.

J.F., “Idaho’s lure to Randy Weaver, home schooler,” *Lewiston Morning Tribune* September 1, 1992.

<sup>163</sup> Stern, *A Force Upon the Plain*, 19.

<sup>164</sup> John K Wiley, “U.S. deputy marshal gunned down,” *Lewiston Morning Tribune* August 22, 1992.

Randy Weaver was acquitted in 1993. He was found guilty for two charges in relation to his failure to appear in court in 1991.

Aryan Nations church service. After failing to attend his court date, FBI agents arrived at his home, a cabin that he and his family built themselves, on the top of Ruby Ridge. What followed was an eleven-day standoff that captivated the nation, even garnering Hollywood attention only a month after the events ended.<sup>165</sup> The standoff resulted in multiple deaths, including a U.S. Marshals Service deputy, and Randy's son and wife.<sup>166</sup> A documentary released by the Public Broadcasting Service called *American Experience: Ruby Ridge*, shows the moment at the police barricade when a federal agent publicly declared Vicki and Sam Weaver dead. The shock and anger that reverberated through the crowd was aired on television by the news outlets on scene.<sup>167</sup> The racist right, ranchers, farmers and everyday Western families supported the Weavers and their fight against the government. Their physical presence at the police barricade served as a testament to the growing dissatisfaction and outrage Americans felt towards the heavy-handed approach of the federal government. The events on top of Ruby Ridge helped launch a new era of

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Timothy Egan, "Rebuking the U.S., Jury Acquits 2 in Marshal's Killing in Idaho Siege," *The New York Times* (<https://www.nytimes.com/1993/07/09/us/rebuking-the-us-jury-acquits-2-in-marshall-s-killing-in-idaho-siege.html>) July 9, 1993.

<sup>165</sup> A documentary crew were in talks about covering the Weaver standoff. They cited that most of the attention was on the FBI at the time and were interested in covering the events from their point of view. The FBI work with Bo Gritz is an important aspect of this.

Susan Cliff, "Lights, camera, standoff," *Lewiston Morning Tribune* September 4, 1992.

<sup>166</sup> The violence began as federal officials started surveillance around the Weaver residence. The Weaver's dog alerted the family of U.S. marshal presence near their cabin. After multiple shots were fired, Randy Weaver's 14-year-old son, Sam, was shot along with their dog and a U.S. marshal. After their son's death, the Weavers stayed locked away. Randy left the cabin to check on his son's body, prompting U.S. marshals to fire at him and the cabin. Randy was shot in the shoulder as he returned to his family. His wife, who was carrying their baby and holding the door open for Randy, was shot and killed. While not much has been written on the Ruby Ridge Standoff, many newspaper articles exist covering the events. Media attendance was large during the standoff because of the alleged murders of U.S. Marshall, and the mother and son of Randy Weaver. There was also a large presence of white separatists and skinheads at the federal government barricade that aroused interest. Interviews were given by the skinheads, concerned Idahoans, and supportive separatists. Newspapers like the *Lewiston Morning Tribune*, *The Coeur d'Alene Press*, and the *Times News* all have extensive coverage of the events.

Susan Cliff, "Weaver Surrenders," *Coeur d'Alene Press* September 1, 1992.

<sup>167</sup> Public Broadcasting Service, "Ruby Ridge," in *American Experience* (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/ruby-ridge/>, August 24, 2017).

organized and united White supremacy that led to numerous domestic terrorist acts and deaths of police officers and citizens.

Members of the Aryan Nations were interviewed at the police barricade during the standoff. They used the national media attention to showcase how mainstream their ideas were. They stood side by side with “normal” Idaho residents during the standoff while they issued statements and interviews, expressing their horrors as the violence on Ruby Ridge unfolded. The Aryan Nations even published a press release in support of Randy and his family, positioning themselves as sympathetic to the everyday Western man.<sup>168</sup> In it Louis Beam warned, “the blood of these innocent ones, like a prism, makes everything clear...Someday, without a signal from anyone – yet, as if a signal had come from everyone – [men] will walk quickly out their front doors with a look of grim determination on their faces...it will happen nationwide. Ten thousand Randy Weavers are spread out from one coast to another.”<sup>169</sup> They saw Randy as one of them, a survivalist, deeply tied to his family and God. As stated by Susan Cliff, a journalist for *Coeur d’Alene Press*, “although the vast majority of people in the area are not white supremacists or white separatists, many feel a growing disenchantment with the federal government.”<sup>170</sup> Randy and his family moved West, just as Butler had encouraged Aryans to do, and he inhabited the spirit of the Western dream. The Weavers were free to raise and educate their children outside of the system, practice their apocalyptic form of Christianity, and be free of the racial tensions in other parts of the nation. They adhered

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<sup>168</sup> “De Facto Government Wages War Against White Christian Citizens,” *Aryan Nations* Newsletter, no. 79, 1992. Box 144, Larry LaRocco Papers.

<sup>169</sup> Brad Knickerbocker, “Why 1992 shooting in Idaho has become a rallying point,” *Christian Science Monitor* 87, no. 196 (1995).

<sup>170</sup> Cliff, “Weaver Surrenders.”

to many of Butler's teachings as they started to practice Christian Identity while visiting the compound regularly.<sup>171</sup> While they were not directly part of Butler's movement, they lived a survivalist life believing that the Jewish-led federal government would kickstart the end of the world.<sup>172</sup>

The Weaver family became martyrs for the racist right movement. Their struggle against the overbearing and intrusive ZOG became an inspiration that launched the Estes Park Meeting in Colorado in 1992. This gathering led by Pastor Peter J. Peters of LaPorte Church of Christ, included far right leaders from across the country. According to Pastor Peters, 160 Christian men from different religious backgrounds attended the meeting.<sup>173</sup> This included Richard Butler and members of the Aryan Nations. They were outraged by the "innocent bloodshed in the land" committed by the FBI and found it necessary to unite to prepare for a predicted impending race war.<sup>174</sup> They felt Christian men needed to gather in order to stand with Weaver against the tyranny that White Christian men were experiencing.<sup>175</sup> Pastor Peters published a "Special Report" that detailed the talking points from the meeting which served as a blueprint for how the far right would

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<sup>171</sup> Cliff, "Weaver Surrenders."

<sup>172</sup> Rachel Martin, "The Federal Response to Oregon Occupation May Have Roots in Ruby Ridge," *National Public Radio* (<https://www.npr.org/2016/01/31/465000760/the-federal-response-to-oregon-occupation-may-have-roots-in-ruby-ridge>) January 31, 2016.

<sup>173</sup> Pastor Peters says, "Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the meeting was the diversity of leaders who did attend. Men came together who in the past would normally not be caught together under the same roof, who greatly disagree with each other on many theological and philosophical points, whose teachings contradict each other in many ways."

Scriptures for America Ministries, *Special Report on the Meeting of Christian Men Held in Estes Park, Colorado - October 23, 24, 25, 1992*, October 1992, 4. James Aho Collection.

<sup>174</sup> Berger, *The Turner Legacy: The Storied Origins and Enduring Impact of White Nationalism's Deadly Bible*.

<sup>175</sup> According to Aryan Nations member, Jeffrey S. Dissell, in a *Calling Our Nation* newsletter, "Randy Weaver and his family, because of their strong Christian beliefs, were targeted by an anti-Christ controlled federal government, a government that is so in fear of its people that it needs to manufacture fictitious charges

Jeffrey S. Dissell, "Letter to President Bush," *Calling Our Nation newsletter* 69 (1992), MSS 139-2, Box 144, Larry LaRocco Papers.

proceed.<sup>176</sup> Some of these new ideas included the Leaderless Resistance as described by Louis Beam. His plan imagined a far-right organization split into smaller groups that acted on their own, creating chaos for the federal government. Plans like this had emerged out of fear of undercover agents indicting Aryan Nations members like Weaver. These racist right groups began preparing for such violent federal government actions but had not yet seen evidence of their beliefs until the Weaver standoff. Beam also believed that groups like the Aryan Nations finally had the proof they had been waiting for, saying that “us 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 call for: non-organization. One should keep in mind that it is not in the government’s interest to eliminate all groups. Some few must remain in order to perpetuate the smoke and mirrors vision for the masses that America is a ‘free democratic country’ where dissent is allowed.”<sup>177</sup> The Aryan Nations used the Ruby Ridge incident as a driving force in their cause, further gaining traction with Idahoans who also felt disturbed by the federal government violence.

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<sup>176</sup> This Leaderless Resistance was to be comprised of small phantom cells of men individually causing chaos and dismantling the tyrannical government, making it harder for them to be pinpointed and thrown in prison. With the current system of pyramid group organizing like the Aryan Nations, infiltrators from inside the government could take down the groups. The reason Randy Weaver had been served with a court date was because of one of these undercover officers. With one specific leader like Butler and one specific meeting space like the Aryan Nations compound, the government had an easier time identifying members, and charging them with a variety of crimes. With smaller groupings of men without designated leaders, they would be harder to trace. Beam’s outline, according to him, came from the U.S. patriots during the American Revolution. If it worked for them, it could work for various white separatist and racist groups gathered at the Estes Park meeting.<sup>176</sup> He cited the fears of Communism among the older far right leaders like Butler and explained how their fears and energy should be focused instead on the overreach and threat posed by the federal government. He explained that, “communism now represents a threat to no one in the United States, while federal tyranny represents a threat to everyone. We are seeing the last grasps of freedom in America.”

“Louis Beam,” Extremist Files.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

The “Special Report” released after the Estes Park gathering was highly significant for the movement because it helped set out a new path for racist right groups like the Aryan Nations. Butler and other Aryan Nations representatives present in Colorado brought the ideas of unity back with them to Hayden Lake. The Weaver standoff gave the Aryan Nations faction additional leverage and a new way of connecting with Idahoans, reaching out through newsletters and pamphlets. According to a short survey of *Lewiston Tribune* readers, more than half thought that Randy and his family should have been left alone on their “mountain hideaway.”<sup>178</sup> Randy Weaver’s lawyer, Gerry Spence reflected Idahoans fear and blame of the federal government when he said, “here you had Federal agents come into a little county in northern Idaho, suspend state law and then say they had the right to eliminate anyone with a gun.”<sup>179</sup> One neighbor of the Weavers, Ken Grover, reflected a polarization felt among Idahoans, especially among residents who had to evacuate their homes during the standoff. He said, ““there are some who feel the feds should have come and bombed the house and everybody in it a long time ago. Others feel nobody should have messed with him.””<sup>180</sup> The chairman of Idaho’s Libertarian party, Joe Rohner, told the *Lewiston Morning Tribune* that although Randy may have been a “bigot,” the federal government should have allowed him to be so in peace. The author of *Eco-Warriors* who attended the same rally as Rohner, said, “nothing is more precious to any of us than the land upon which we live.”<sup>181</sup> The land on which

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<sup>178</sup> The survey was only of 213 people, with 108 answering yes to “Before the standoff, should federal officers have left Randy Weaver alone?” While people may have been “divided,” many Idahoans thought the immediate federal government reaction was harsh and uncalled for.

“Callers are divided on treatment of Weaver,” *Lewiston Morning Tribune* September 6, 1992.

<sup>179</sup>

<sup>180</sup> John K. Wiley, “The besieging forces depart,” *Lewiston Morning Tribune* September 2, 1992.

<sup>181</sup> David Johnson, “Libertarian defends rights of Weaver,” *Lewiston Morning Tribune* (Spalding, Idaho) August 31, 1992.

they lived must be protected at any cost. Inherent in Western identity is the idea that land ownership equates to liberty, given the independence that it brings, and men have a right to defend it violently. The Aryan Nations knew this and were prepared to fight for the Aryan man's right to live on such land.

References to a "destiny" ordained by God for the Aryan race are scattered throughout the Aryan Nations' newsletters and pamphlets. The Manifest Destiny propaganda of the 1800s was still fundamental to the Aryan Nations worldview. In a welcome packet, Butler stated, "you are one of the millions of our racial family on earth. It was not by accident that you today are a member of this family, but by deliberate choice that you today bear their life blood and inner spirit to carry out the destiny ordained to our Race." He further explains how aliens have been pouring into "our ancestral lands, threatening dispossession of the heritage, culture, and very life blood of our prosperity."<sup>182</sup> The Aryan Nations' mission was to take back this inherited land and awaken a "renewed Aryan 'Folk Spirit' or 'Folk Unity' which will induce throughout the race a realization of a common Aryan Origin and Destiny..."<sup>183</sup> This language echoed Manifest Destiny propaganda when referring to the WASP male destiny of inheriting the frontier. Calls to the West can be found throughout Aryan Nations literature and was meant to be a strong appeal to men and women who identified with this romantic Western ideal. According to Schlatter, "the foundations of American nationalism, which are based on ideas about 'divine mission' and westward expansion, have lent themselves quite handily to exclusionist rhetoric and policies toward nonwhite people. However, the

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<sup>182</sup> Richard G. Butler, "To Our Kinsmen," news release, undated., MC 131, James Aho Collection.

<sup>183</sup> H.A. Wilcox, "The Rise of the White Racist Elite," *Calling Our Nation*, n/a., MC 131, James Aho Collection.

very nature of what it means to be ‘American’ can itself provide justification and ideological groundwork for those who do [subscribe to racist beliefs].”<sup>184</sup> Butler wanted to create an entire independent state in the Pacific Northwest, full of men like Randy, men who held convictions of independent living and Christian Identity morals and beliefs and were prepared to take up arms to protect themselves from a nation that had been taken from them by the ZOG and its liberal and feminist pawns.

This belief in a White-centered America had been upheld and glorified by a handful of Conservative politicians through America’s history. While the Aryan Nations discussed their disgust of “alien” races in harsh terms that were not politically correct (PC), politicians from Oregon fed into the “anti-immigration hysteria” by introducing legislation in 1998 that would remove labor protections for the majority migrant farmworkers. Any complaint or attempt by an employee to better the working conditions would result in firing and deportation.<sup>185</sup> Political legislation and campaign promises throughout the 1980s and 1990s served as favorable steps for the Aryan Nations in their hope to make America an Aryan nation. While the Aryan Nations rarely supported particular politicians, their White Bastion mission of freeing America from the clutches of the liberal feminist ZOG, seemed more attainable every time a Conservative politician fought against federal government overreach, the destruction of traditional Christian morals and White American freedom. They were able to find politicians all over the West who held to these larger shared ideals and pushed for pro-White male policies.

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<sup>184</sup> Schlatter, *Aryan Cowboys*, 2.

<sup>185</sup> “Oregon Elected Officials Use Anti-Immigrant Sentiments to Attack Farmworkers,” *Northwest Beacon: Newsletter of the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment* June 1998.



## CHAPTER THREE: THE SOUTHERN STRATEGY:

### **Part One:**

The political climate of the United States shaped the Aryan Nations, specifically the rhetoric of conservative politicians. While it is safe to assume this group would have existed without the emergence of racialized rhetoric in the post-1960s GOP, their tactics, methods of promotion, and the way they portrayed themselves would not have been the same. Racist organizations like the Ku Klux Klan had been visibly racist since their inception. The new racist right of the 1980s and 1990s tried new rhetorical ways of finding White support. Beginning in the mid-1960s, conservative politicians pioneered color-coded language to win the disaffected White vote after the Civil Rights victories of that decade. The 1960s political climate was rapidly changing. As Black men and women entered the political voting sphere due to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Southern Democratic party (the only party in the South which represented White men and women) had to make changes for the new demographics. African Americans increasingly voted within the Democratic party, displacing White votes in the South. Because of this, Southern whites slowly started voting with the Republican party. This shift was demonstrated by the 1964 presidential candidacy race between Barry Goldwater and Lyndon B. Johnson. Johnson represented the liberal (moderate whites, African American, and Hispanic) Democrats while Goldwater represented the racist White Democrats who had held the South for generations. Johnson's presidency and liberal political positions shifted the Democratic party more to the left, creating a strong dividing line between

them and Republicans. According to Merle Black in “The Transformation of the Southern Democratic Party, “thinking of oneself as a Democrat, a belief that had been normative in southern white male culture for generations, had clearly collapsed after President Johnson’s Great Society programs went into effect.”<sup>186</sup> This pitted White racist Americans against the “new” Democrats, creating even more tension in the South. Conservative Southern Democratic politicians moved to the Republican party but needed to keep their White voter demographic. In order to ensure White voters in the South would remain loyal, they developed a new way of talking about racial issues while not being explicitly racist, called dog whistles.

Post 1964 politics entered into a period called the Southern Strategy, a new way of talking to White voters who were caught in the divide between the new liberal Democrats and Southern Democrats turned Republicans. They needed a way of reforming their White voter base, peeling away votes from the Democratic party. After the civil rights era, politicians knew bigoted policy stances and racist language on television would drive away Americans. Candidates who could hide their racism by switching out the N-word with “inner city” folk, could find backing by moderate Whites, moving them to the Republican party.<sup>187</sup> This use of racially coded language captured the attention of Whites throughout America while hiding under a non-racist veil. Lopez describes this language in his work, *Dog Whistle Politics* as, “a new way of talking about

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<sup>186</sup> Merle Black, “The Transformation of the Southern Democratic Party,” *The Journal of Politics* 66, no. 4 (November 2004), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2004.00287.x>.

<sup>187</sup> Hawley argues that “race was clearly a major issue for many Republicans in Congress such as Jesse Helms, and the party clearly continued to rely on White racial anxiety for votes. However, the conservative movement, broadly speaking, was trying to move beyond the more transparent racism that was once common within its ranks.”

George Hawley, *Right-Wing Critics of American Conservatism*, (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2016), 51-52.

race that constantly emphasizes racial divisions, heatedly denies that it does any such thing, and then presents itself as a target of self-serving charges of racism.”<sup>188</sup>

Conservative candidates like George Wallace, Richard Nixon, and Ronald Reagan perfected the art of talking about these issues in ways that appealed to racist and non-racist people alike without using harsh, racist terms. Political scientist, George Hawley helps illustrate this change within Republican party rhetoric by quoting an interview with Lee Atwater, the advisor to President Reagan:

You start out in 1954 by saying, “Nigger, nigger, nigger.” By 1968 you can’t say “nigger” – that hurts you. Backfires. So you say stuff like forced busing, states’ rights and all that stuff. You’re getting so abstract now [that] you’re talking about cutting taxes, and all these things you’re talking about are totally economic things and a byproduct of them is [that] blacks get hurt worse than whites.

And subconsciously maybe that is part of it. I’m not saying that. But I’m saying that if it is getting that abstract, and that coded, that we are doing away with the racial problem one way or the other. You follow me – because obviously sitting about saying, “We want to cut this,” is much more abstract than ever the busing thing, and a hell of a lot more abstract than “Nigger, nigger.”<sup>189</sup>

By constantly referring to crime and the inner cities in the same breath, presidents like Nixon and further down the line, Bill Clinton, were all able to speak to their audience with racially coded language without ever needing to use racist language.

Politicians used covert racist language to unite the conservative voter base that had been ripped apart by the Civil Rights era of equality reform and resulting backlash of unpopular conservative politics. Mainstream news coverage of Martin Luther King Jr. and the various Civil Rights activist groups had been gripping television for American families for years before Nixon had won the Presidency in 1969. Americans at home and in the streets had witnessed the horrific violence police inflicted on peaceful protestors.

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<sup>188</sup> Lopez, *Dog Whistle Politics*, 4-5.

<sup>189</sup> Hawley, *Right-Wing Critics of American Conservatism*, 52-53.

The famous images of school children being sprayed with fire hoses were imbedded in the American consciousness. The fight for Civil Rights had awoken many White Americans. Politicians who used excessively racist language on television became unpopular.<sup>190</sup> This included men like George Wallace who fired up a crowd in Montgomery, Alabama during the height of the Civil Rights protests in 1963 with the now infamous White supremacy rallying cry; “in the name of the greatest people that have ever trod this earth, I draw a line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny, and I say, segregation now, segregation tomorrow and segregation forever.”<sup>191</sup> Wallace was tapping into the racial hostilities within communities of White Americans across the country. In the audio of Wallace’s inauguration speech, which was open to the public but did not allow blacks to attend, he exclaimed to the angry White crowd, “and we know, wherever you are, away from the hearts of the South land, that you will respond. For though you may live in the farthest reaches of this vast country, your heart has never left Dixieland.”<sup>192</sup> Wallace was a representative of his Republican voter base. With that speech, he gave them a sense of power and strength; a major politician was speaking the words they wanted to hear, and they took action. Whites in the South went

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<sup>190</sup> Thomas Sugrue and Juan Williams have both written important works surrounding the Civil Rights Era in American history. Sugrue starts his history in the 1920s and 1930s in New York, with various religious and Communist groups fighting for fair housing and equal opportunity. Williams, the more well-known author, starts his history in the South in 1954. While his history is less well-rounded and one-sided, it showcases the struggle in the South and paints an important picture of the Civil Rights Era we all know.

Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North.*; Williams, *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1965.*

<sup>191</sup> “Segregation Forever’: A Fiery Pledge Forgiven, But Not Forgotten,” January 10, 2013, accessed February 9, 2018, <https://www.npr.org/2013/01/14/169080969/segregation-forever-a-fiery-pledge-forgiven-but-not-forgotten>.

Dan Carter also writes extensively on George Wallace in, *The Politics of Rage.*

Dan Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, The Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics*, Second Ed ed., (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995).

<sup>192</sup> “Segregation Forever’: A Fiery Pledge Forgiven, but Not Forgotten.”

on night-rides and burned crosses after the speech. Within that same year, a bomb went off in the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church in Alabama, killing four Black girls.<sup>193</sup> This was ten years before Butler formed his Aryan Nations and inspired others to bomb government buildings in Northern Idaho.

While some Whites felt a sense of solidarity around politicians like Wallace, that heated racist language became unpopular due to the nation's growing embarrassment surrounding the treatment of African Americans in the South specifically. Even Wallace after his famous speech, started to back away from such specific, racist language. As explained by Lopez, "a contemporary of Wallace marveled, 'he can use all the other issues-law and order, running your own schools, protecting property rights- and never mention race. But people will know he's telling them 'a nigger's trying to get your job, trying to move into your neighborhood.' What Wallace is doing is talking to them in a shorthand, a kind of code.'"<sup>194</sup> Though he tried to change the way he campaigned, his reputation was already tarnished, and he lost the presidency to Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964.

When politician Nixon took the stage, the Republican party could support him fully because of the covert language he used during the entirety of his campaign speeches. There was no blatantly racist speech already on the books like the one Wallace had espoused. Nixon knew that the racial tensions still existed and legitimized the racism that was still lurking in the corners of everyday American life that Wallace had been speaking to. Nixon and the Republican party knew that this racism was not just tied to the South where heavy Civil Rights activities were taking place, but that fears of an

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Lopez, 16-17.

imbalance of power and of uprising African Americans were present throughout the nation.<sup>195</sup> Nixon's Republican nomination acceptance speech in 1968 spoke to the fears whites had at home, watching the civil unrest on television. In Nixon's speech, he laid out his plan to restore law and order to America, that essentially being a code for directing the police towards African American protestors. He spoke of hope for "peaceful change," but that "some of our courts, and their decisions, have gone too far in weakening the peace forces against the criminal forces in this country." He acknowledged the importance of the court's job in recognizing civil rights but "let them first recognize the first civil right of every American is to be free from domestic violence and that right must be guaranteed in this country."<sup>196</sup> This language directly equates "domestic violence" with Civil Rights protests, alluding to the fact that they are criminal lowlives.<sup>197</sup> By "rioting" in the streets and calling for equal rights and opportunities, Black protestors and their allies were causing civil unrest and violence in the South, which Nixon promised to take care of with a new Attorney General and a "tough on crime" approach to policy.<sup>198</sup> In later addresses to Americans, Nixon supported states rights' in their decision to push

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<sup>195</sup> "First, Wallace realized with a shock that hostility toward blacks was not confined to the South. 'He had looked out upon those white Americans north of Alabama and suddenly been awakened by a blinding vision: 'They all hate black people, all of them. They're all afraid, all of them. Great god! That's it! They're all Southern. The whole United States is Southern.' Wallace suddenly knew that overtures to racial resentment would resonate across the country."

Lopez, 16.

<sup>196</sup> C-SPAN, "Richard Nixon 1968 Acceptance Speech," (<https://www.c-span.org/video/?4022-2/richard-nixon-1968-acceptance-speech&start=600>, August 8, 1968).

<sup>197</sup> "Ultimately, the language of law and order justified a more 'quiet' form of violence in defense of the racial status quo, replacing lynchings with mass arrests for trespassing and delinquency." "Yet race remained the indisputable, intentional subtext of the appeal."

Lopez, 24.

<sup>198</sup> In this speech, Nixon claims to sympathize with the Civil Rights activists. They can fight for civil rights, but by his rules. He addresses that critiques had called out his "law and order" term as being code for racism. His reply is, "our goal is justice, justice for every American. If we are to have respect for law in America, we must have laws that deserve respect. Just as we cannot have justice without order, we cannot have order without progress."

C-SPAN, "Richard Nixon 1968 Acceptance Speech."

back on forced integration. Lopez cites this language of pro-states' rights and anti-busing and forced integration as a "dog whistle that blasted like the shriek of an onrushing train."<sup>199</sup> The Republican party perfected this language and found what united their voter base. This language helped propel them to becoming the White Man's Party and turned the West into a GOP hub in the 1960s.<sup>200</sup> The militias, the Aryan Nations, and angry White men were listening.

Ronald Reagan continued this dog whistle tactic by telling "stories of Cadillac-driving 'welfare queens' and 'strapping young bucks' buying T-bone steaks with food stamps," in his public addresses.<sup>201</sup> This language helped align himself with the "tax paying" members of society, which in his and the GOP minds, were White men.<sup>202</sup> With Reagan's presidency, a new kind of rhetoric appeared that has been popular in the West, that being a White victimization rhetoric. A California native, he stayed in tuned with the victimization at the hands of the federal government that Westerners had felt for decades, putting these wedge issues on the top of his campaign promises. He tapped into the rugged individualism trope inherent in Western culture and fed into the resentment Western Americans felt against the government forcing farming, logging, and agricultural regulations, forced racial integration post-Civil Rights movement, and property rights and restrictions. Limerick discusses this idea of Western victimization and how entrenched it became saying, "it was second nature to see misfortune as the doings of an outside force,

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<sup>199</sup> Lopez, 26.

<sup>200</sup> Lopez, 18 and Hawley, *Right Wing Critics of American Conservatism*.

<sup>201</sup> Lopez, 4.

<sup>202</sup> "Beyond propagating the stereotypical image of a lazy, larcenous black woman ripping off society's generosity without remorse, Reagan also implied another stereotype, this one about whites: they were the workers, the tax payers, the persons playing by the rules and struggling to make ends meet while brazen minorities partied with their hard-earned tax dollars."

Ibid., 58-59.

preying on innocence and vulnerability, refusing to play by the rules of fairness.”<sup>203</sup> This is exactly what Reagan tapped into, giving life to the victimization White Americans were feeling at the time, convinced that undeserving minorities were partying with their hard-earned tax money.<sup>204</sup> Without being explicitly racist like Wallace, Reagan helped unite the White voter base over racially-tinged issues. This strategy did not just win over lower-class whites, or win politicians a few elections, it helped launch a more vehement and powerful White supremacy movement that the Aryan Nations was a part of. It gave them a new sense of strength, as their political issues were being represented by powerful politicians and presidents. Their love for the White man and the traditional values of America were popular again, as the Republicans tried to dismantle the liberal state that had been slowly put in place.

This color-coded, dog whistle language was popular among Republican candidates even in Idaho. Idahoans supported Conservative politicians as the state had been a Republican stronghold for decades. The last Democratic president who won Idaho was Lyndon B. Johnson, chosen over Goldwater. Since then, Idaho has been a Republican state, even helping elect President Trump in 2016 with 59.2% of the vote.<sup>205</sup> Idaho politicians have mixed Western mythology with dog whistle rhetoric. In 1994, Idaho Lt. governor, “Butch” Otter, was involved in the Dworshak Reservoir fight as mentioned in chapter two. Otter claimed that federal officials were lying about the

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<sup>203</sup> Limerick discusses White victimization as being a legacy of pioneers finding out the harsh realities of the West. They were constantly hit with bad soil, high prices on land, droughts, mines that became dangerous or used up, natural and unrelenting forces, etc. Farmers and agricultural workers had to ask for government help throughout the opening of the frontier in order to stay afloat. She says, “to a striking degree, the lessons of the problems of the American welfare state could be read in the nation’s frontier past.”

Limerick, 47, 89.

<sup>204</sup> Lopez, 58-59.

<sup>205</sup> “2016 Idaho Presidential Election Results,” Politico, December 13, 2016.



scientific evidence they had which gave them the authority to lower the Reservoir to help save chinook salmon. He was quoted as saying, “it was Nes folks; there was no scientific or biological data that could support their position.” Here, Otter uses the phrase “Nes folks” to describe the Nez Pierce tribe that still lived in Orofino, Idaho, where the reservoir in question resided. This phrasing of “Nes folks” harkens back to the Wild West rhetoric – Native peoples have always been in the way of White American development and progress. They care too much about the land and have been physical obstacles for pioneers to overcome through their conquering of the Western landscape. The use of “Nes folks” is a dog-whistle, alerting Idahoans that this Reservoir drawdown was a Native tribe issue and would not benefit Idaho working men, who relied on the Reservoir.<sup>206</sup> Helen Chenoweth, still in the race for the Idaho Representative seat at the time, blocked a proposed Coeur d’Alene basin clean-up bill in 1994. She said that it gave, “too much control to tribal agencies, and [places] a difficult financial burden on the mining industry.”<sup>207</sup> She even described Native tribe sovereignty as a “special privilege.”<sup>208</sup> Chenoweth publicly favored the mining and logging industries and fully supported their right to work, even when Tribal Agencies and the federal government wanted to place restrictions to help save wildlife and habitats. Her far right conservative background led her to fight for the preservation of White jobs over Native people’s claim to the land that had been originally stripped from them. The Aryan Nations’ stance on helping the working man and protecting wildlife jobs reflected the actions of Idaho politicians.

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<sup>206</sup> Vogt, “Otter charges feds are lying about drawdowns.”

<sup>207</sup> Oliver Staley, “Chenoweth looking at campaign from different perspective this year,” *Shoshone Press* September 11, 1994.

<sup>208</sup> “What’s Happening in the Northwest, Idaho,” *Northwest Beacon* 3 (December 1996).

The Republican party could maintain their majority White voter-base with a new way of talking about racial problems, just as the Aryan Nations could evoke sympathy from White Idahoans with anti-federal government and White pride rhetoric. The Southern Strategy inadvertently influenced men like Butler, who saw himself reflected in the Republican party's political discourse. While the Aryan Nations only supported a smattering of local politicians, they despised the federal government. As stated by Carl Franklin, "Race traitors like Ronald Reagan, George Bush, and Bill Clinton are not our presidents and this government and Jewish society is not ours."<sup>209</sup> Despite their opposition to politicians, they still found strength in politicians who fought against federal government regulations like Helen Chenoweth as discussed above and local politicians who supported movement like the Bundy Rebellion and the Weaver Standoff. The Republican party supported these movements publicly or privately and slowly attuned and tweaked their rhetoric to attract men like Butler, Bundy, and Weaver. This is not to say that Republicans are the same as the Aryan Nations, however conservative candidates have won elections because of racist or color-coded language promising to wipe out crime in inner cities, end affirmative action, limit or end welfare, and tighten up immigration borders. The difference here is that Republicans have used this color-coded racism as a strategy to win elections, while Butler used it in a more malicious way to eventually make Idaho and the surrounding states an all-White haven.

### **Part Two:**

Local Idaho politicians had fought for many of the same causes that the Aryan Nations did. In a *Report to the Membership* from 1992, Pastor Franklin updated Aryan

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<sup>209</sup> Carl Franklin, "A Youngster Asking", (Aryan Nations, March 22, 1993). James Aho Collection.

Nations members with progress had made throughout in Idaho to protect Aryan men. He explained how the Aryan Nations had successfully challenged the proposal made by the Coeur d'Alene Tribe that wanted to exercise its tribal right to control the section of Lake Coeur d'Alene that fell within its reservation borders.<sup>210</sup> Pastor Franklin said they found evidence that a treaty did not exist that gave them ownership over the lake. They gathered White Aryan landowners to protest the tribe's efforts. While the tribe ultimately won the case, the Aryan Nations felt encouragement from Idahoans and local politicians who supported their actions.

The Aryan Nations, as an organization are fringe; their members are not representative of a majority of Americans. Their rhetoric is viciously anti-Semitic, explicitly racist, and vehemently pro anti-miscegenation laws. Print material distributed to their fellow Idahoans were overtly racist, harkening back to Ku Klux Klan and German Nazi propaganda. One flier featured the image of a young White boy with the caption, "STOLEN" above it. Below the image read, "A future for White Children in America. Description: blond hair, blue eyes, intelligent, inquisitive, healthy, playful. Future stolen by hateful and treasonous politicians," with the Aryan Nations contact information below. Another flier included the image of two White children standing next to their bicycles with the caption, "Help Protect America's Most Valuable Resource. Heritage, Heritage, Heritage. Non-Whites Destroyed Theirs – And Now Want Yours." Another more explicitly racist flier had a photo of a White child and a Black child hugging each other with their faces pressed together, with the words "stop the abomination!" below it.

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<sup>210</sup> Pamela D. Bucy, "Coeur d'Alene Tribe of Idaho v. State of Idaho," *Public Land and Resources Law Review* 19 (1998); Pamela D. Bucy, "This Land is Our Land, or Coeur d'Alene Tribe of Idaho v. State of Idaho," *Public Land and Resources Law Review* 19 (1998); Franklin, Report to the Membership.

<sup>211</sup> At first glance, these fliers seem shocking. Opinion pieces were written into newspapers such as the *Lewiston Morning Tribune* from concerned Idahoans who received such material in their mailboxes or on their car windshields.<sup>212</sup> This propaganda displays the typical, “White power, White pride” discourse that Americans were used to seeing from groups like the KKK, a discourse common in American history. What separated the Aryan Nations from the KKK or any group that came before them, was that they operated explicitly and unabashedly racist on the surface but not externally as an organization or when dealing with press and Idaho politicians. In doing so, the Aryan Nations came very close to mastering a Southern Strategy style of rhetoric influenced by Republican candidates.

The Aryan Nations participated in the Estes Park gathering after the shootout with Randy Weaver and the FBI. There, they learned how to channel their strengths and energy into preparing for a predicted and eminent race war that would be started by the Jewish-led federal government. After the meeting, they ramped up their violent activities and gave strength and resources to groups like the Order to physically begin to fight back against the government.<sup>213</sup> Within that Special Report produced after the meeting, there was no mention of race. The discussion was largely based around how they (the various different radical right groups in attendance) were to fight against the federal government and take America back by force. Their language transformed from overt racism focused on the evil of Jews to discussion on federal government power, the Constitutional protections, American rights and freedoms, and what their ancestors expected of them.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> Aryan Nations pamphlets found in MC 131, James Aho Collection.

<sup>212</sup> Found in James Aho Collection.

<sup>213</sup> Stern, *A Force Upon the Plain*.

<sup>214</sup> Scriptures for America Ministries, *Special Report*.

The Special Report was mainly distributed to the racist right who either could or could not attend the meeting. The racist right experienced a similar rhetoric change as Wallace did during his political career. He began by running as a “racial reactionary, openly courting the support of the Klan and fiercely committing himself to the defense of segregation.” After that failed to work, he started to avoid racial epithets when speaking to the public and emphasized instead, “the illegal usurpation of power by the Central Government.”<sup>215</sup> The Aryan Nations followed this Southern Strategy and aligned themselves with loggers, angry agricultural workers, and the White families horrified by the Ruby Ridge incident. Even though the Aryan Nations equated Jews with the federal government, they publicly disavowed the federal government specifically. David Neiwert, a freelance journalist who followed the Patriot movement closely, explained in his book, *In God’s Country*, how Patriots like the Militia of Montana, the Freeman, and groups like the Aryan Nations and the Order, discussed “restoring the Constitution.” This to them, included rolling back protections on minorities and establishing a new reading of the Second Amendment that protected their freedom to own large amounts of guns.<sup>216</sup> By meeting at town halls and simply discussing the importance of bringing the Constitution back to its original form acted as a dog-whistle. The men and women at that town hall understood that rolling back the Constitution implied revocation of equality legislation passed during the Civil Rights era. Butler learned how to justify Aryan Nations’ violent activities through the founding documents, claiming they were originally written to protect the liberties of the Aryan race. By quoting the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and individual founding fathers, they were able to place their own beliefs

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<sup>215</sup> Lopez, 14.

<sup>216</sup> Neiwert, 35.

into a grounded history – one they felt originally supported the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant property-owning man. To Butler, the Order and his own organization were simply carrying out the forefathers’ wishes and bringing America back to that WASP dreamland.

Robert Mathews, leader of The Order, wrote an open letter to the U.S. Congress in 1984, stating:

Most of you will say that you are against the forced busing of school children, that you are against the Black terror which stalks the streets of our cities, that you are against the ‘reverse discrimination’ which takes jobs away from Whites and gives them to Blacks, that you are against the flooding of America with illegal immigrants, because you know all these things are unpopular. But you brought every one of these plagues down our heads. YOU passed the ‘civil rights’ laws which gave us busing in the first place, and then you refused repeatedly to specifically outlaw this monstrous crime against our children.<sup>217</sup>

Mathews, because of the Southern Strategy influence and the political climate of the “color-blind” America, knew who was responsible for the destruction of the White man’s place in society. He believed that men in Idaho and the Pacific Northwest were losing logging, mining, and agricultural jobs because of illegal immigrants and spotted owls, while their precious tax dollars were going to welfare checks for undeserving Blacks in the inner cities. Aryans felt the White population diminishing as America became more multicultural. Cover stories like the one from *TIME* magazine in 1990, “America’s Changing Colors,” helped prove to themselves that they were right to fear the future of multiculturalism. The magazine which was copied into a *Calling Our Nation* newsletter, showed a full page of newborns of varying skin colors accompanied by the headline, “hey, whitey, your turn at the back of the bus. Sometime soon, white Americans

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<sup>217</sup> Barker, *Aryan America*, 461.

will become a distinct minority in a largely brown cultural and racial mix.”<sup>218</sup> Their television screens and newspapers had been riddled with this rhetoric, blaming the supposed decline of the White population and public and political power on people of color. The Aryan Nations believed in this fully, using this rhetoric to participate in this mainstream backlash of the Civil Rights era.

The Aryan Nations tapped into the White working-class fears and used their *Calling Our Nation* newsletter to reach as many Westerners as they could. They had tapped into the victimization rhetoric of the Estes Park gathering and expertly weaved it into their articles of White racial injustices and Jewish conspiracies. Aryan Nations members like Roy B. Mansker wrote about how Aryans were moving into the Pacific Northwest to reclaim their homeland. In his piece he explained how, “no longer will the children be bussed to schools where the jungle animal has charge – where they are beaten and robbed of their lunch money – where they suffer every indignity that can be thought of by that primitive beast.”<sup>219</sup> While Presidents Nixon and Reagan did not use the term, “primitive beast,” they both ran on the anti-busing platform, garnering support from Americans opposed to the logistics of busing and/or the prospects of their children sharing schools with kids of color.<sup>220</sup> In the same article by Mansker, he cited the fact that the Aryan man was “fed up with alien scum sweeping in like a flood to eat the good of the land, with jew parasites claiming civil rights for these diseased animals, with sharing

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<sup>218</sup> The TIME magazine article was from a *Calling Our Nations* April 9, 1990 print, Volume 135, No. 15.

“Hey, Whitey, Your turn at the back of the bus,” *Calling Our Nation* 68 (1992); *April 20th - Year 103*, (Hayden Lake, Idaho: 1992)., MSS 139-2, Box 144, Larry LaRocco Papers, Special Collections and Archives, Boise State University.

<sup>219</sup> Roy B. Mansker, “The Aryans are Coming,” *Calling Our Nation* 32 (unknown). James Aho Collection.

<sup>220</sup> “Reagan Echoes Nixon's Anti-Busing Position,” Richard Nixon Foundation, May 27, 2015, 2018.

the fruits of their labor with those who seek to destroy them, the Aryans are coming, and their fury is mounting!”<sup>221</sup> Republican politician, Pat Buchanan,<sup>222</sup> echoed this sentiment in 2006, writing in his book, *State of Emergency: The Third World Invasion and Conquest of America*, that children born this year ““will witness in their lifetimes the death of the West. . . . We must stop the invasion. But do our leaders have the vision and the will to do it?”” He appeared on the “Today” show to promote his 2006 book, explaining that President Bush’s legacy will be to ““lose the American Southwest to Mexico linguistically, ethnically and culturally.’ He likened undocumented Latino workers to ‘de facto scabs and strikebreakers.’” During the publicity run of the release of his book, he was quoted as saying the forefathers’ vision of America was one of ““shared ties of blood, soil and memory,”” which harkens back to the Nazi and Aryan Nations claims to the importance of “blood and soil” in a united Racial Nation that Butler so craved.<sup>223</sup> The Aryan Nations found allies in politicians like Buchanan. The Aryan Nations’ adopted more mainstream, less anti-Semitic rhetoric as they saw their political beliefs and White Bastion dreams reflected by mainstream politicians.

The Aryan Nations eventually took these politically popular narratives into the streets when they held a 1997 rally and march through Coeur d’Alene where they, “represented nothing less than a heroic Triumph of Will against Jewish threats and police

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<sup>221</sup> Mansker, “The Aryans are Coming.”

<sup>222</sup> Pat Buchanan was senior advisor to Presidents Nixon, Gerald Ford, and Ronald Reagan. He ran for the presidential candidacy in 1992 and 1996 and ran for president on the Reform Party ticket in 2000. According to Politico, his campaigns provided a template for Trump’s campaign and “laid the foundation for its eventual success.”

Tim Alberta, “The Ideas Made it, But I Didn’t,” *Politico* (Politico.com) May/June 2017.

<sup>223</sup> Buchanan wrote an entire book in 2001, *The Death of the West*, about the influx of immigrants into America and how their presence is destroying Western culture.

“Pat Buchanan promotes white nationalism, anti-immigration agenda,” Southern Poverty Law Center, October 19, 2006.



terrorism,” as written by the *New Order Newspaper*. The hundred marchers demonstrated their Christian and European pride, just as “blacks, Jews, Latinos, Asians, Injuns and every other specimen of colored low-life are encouraged to take pride in their racial identities.” The writer of the article points out that the march did not feature any anti-Semitic material or racism, as it could have been mistaken for any patriotic event.<sup>224</sup> This rally was a way for the Aryan Nations to inhabit the color-blind rhetoric made popular by conservative politicians. They used more rhetoric that was based on “White pride” rather than non-White hate. 1994 Aryan Nations’ youth corps leader, Sean Haines, was quoted by Brad Knickerbocker as stating that he is not a racist, but a “racialist,” or “one who practices race promotion, one who follows purity laws and laws of nature.”<sup>225</sup>

The Aryan Nations witnessed the strong Western identity rhetoric and the color-coded racist rhetoric prevalent in Idaho politician speeches. While they may have caused fear in Idahoans, they had garnered support from local politicians, with Chenoweth winning two terms in Congress. She agreed with the Aryan Nations, stating that, “white males were the only endangered species.”<sup>226</sup> The Aryan Nations had a successful run in Idaho due to its adaptability, as Butler adopted rhetoric styles from Conservative politicians and intertwined this with Western identity rhetoric that resonated with Idahoans. Idahoans tried to distance themselves from the Aryan Nations by erecting human rights monuments and Peace Parks to save Idaho’s reputation they had been branded a “Hate State.”<sup>227</sup> Despite their seemingly fringe qualities of violence and blatant

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<sup>224</sup> “Aryan Nations “Unstoppable,” Terrorists Fail to Halt March,” *The New Order* September/October, 1998. Tony Stewart Collection, Binder 3, Molstead Library, North Idaho College.

<sup>225</sup> Knickerbocker, “White separatists plot 'pure' society.”

<sup>226</sup> “What's Happening in the Northwest, Idaho.”

<sup>227</sup> Alibrandi and Wassmuth, *Hate is My Neighbor*.

racism, the Conservative rhetoric of the Southern Strategy helped launch a new era of White supremacy and separatism- an era in which these groups moved closer to the mainstream, seeing themselves reflected in mainstream politics and discourse, and as saviors needed for the White race. Their rhetoric became more academically based and palatable to the patriotic “nonracist” American.

## CONCLUSION

“The old period is over, and a new period is going to begin...I’m here to tell you that if we can’t have this country, as far as I’m concerned, no one gets it.”

-Louis Beam<sup>228</sup>

Before President Trump popularized the slogan, “Make America Great Again,”<sup>229</sup> before the Unite the Right rally in August 2017,<sup>230</sup> and before the “Muslim travel ban” formally known as Executive Order also in 2017,<sup>231</sup> the Aryan Nations united racist right organizations under an umbrella of white separatist sentiments and wild west mythology declaring independence. This combination helped disguise racism in a Hollywood cowboy-type, rugged individualist, all-American-male package. While their violent extremism offended even the conservative White state they inhabited, the post-racial

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<sup>228</sup> Anti-Defamation League, “Special Report,” James Aho Collection.

<sup>229</sup> President Trump’s campaign slogan of “Make America Great Again” has been a rallying cry for the alt right and white supremacist factions across the nation since his presidential run in 2016. The slogan has been criticized as evoking white supremacy, racism, and hyper nationalistic emotions among Conservative voters.

Kelly J. Baker, “Make America White Again?,” *The Atlantic* March 12, 2016.

<sup>230</sup> The Unite the Right Rally of 2017 was the first and largest gathering of its time, uniting white supremacists from different factions and groups. The rally took place at the University of Virginia and alt right favorites like David Duke, Richard Spencer, and Matthew Heimbach were all in attendance. The rally quickly grew violent as activists clashed with skinheads, neo-nazis, Identity Evropa members, Klansmen, Confederate supporters and racists. One woman died after as a far right supporter drove his car into a crowd of protestors.

Joe Heim, “Recounting a day of rage, hate, violence and death,” *The Washington Post* August 14, 2017.

<sup>231</sup> The “Muslim Ban” or “travel ban” is in reference to Executive Order 13769 or the Executive Order Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States issued on January 27, 2017.

“Executive Order Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States,” Executive Orders, WhiteHouse.gov, January 2017.

rhetoric and wild west imagery they used to recruit effectively fused southern and western White identities learned from Conservative politicians and past white supremacist groups. This White separatist group that shrouded itself among the mountains and forests of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho had rooted its core identity within Wild West myths and employed color-coded racism to speak to their audiences. The romanticization of the Wild West mythical identity coupled with the coded racist rhetoric popularized by conservative politicians reinforced a romantic patriarchal notion that would once again put the White man on top—a desire held by some White men who felt threatened by civil rights era legislation and social changes. The Aryan Nations saw themselves as champions of this defense effort for the White race.

What Butler was able to do exceptionally well was cloak his blatant racism under the historical tension between farmers, ranchers, and citizens of the West and the federal government while using color-coded racist rhetoric. The Aryan Nations' White separatism beliefs were not radical or new, but their branding was. Butler diverged from the old racism of the Ku Klux Klan where members visibly tortured and killed African American neighbors just to intimidate minorities and keep them out of White spaces. Butler's academic brand of racism clouded his racist intentions as he based his racism within the Bible and myths of the independent American West. The Bible, in his eyes, upheld a human hierarchical scale placing the White man at the top with Jews and Blacks at the bottom as sons of the Devil. The legacy of the violent conquering of the American West helped Butler articulate how the Pacific Northwest had been established as a White homeland from the opening of the frontier. Butler used imagery of a mythical Wild West, one where the White man had lived free from federal government overreach and

multiculturalism. In Butler's words, Skinheads were joining the movement because, "they're beginning to wake up to the fact that they've been conquered and that the land their fathers bled and died for has been taken away."<sup>232</sup> Their right to create a separate Aryan nation depended upon ideas of independence, self-sufficiency, and protection of White manhood. They believed the Aryan man deserved this independence because America was founded by them – the White, Anglo-Saxon, property owner – for them. The West had been carved out and tamed by their ancestors. To engage support from Idahoans, Butler used highly academic rhetoric while addressing the public. This rhetoric became less explicitly racist and centered more on White pride rhetoric, protection of agricultural and logging jobs, and preservation of Christian morals. Butler and the various far right organizations followed the trend of color coded rhetoric used by Conservative politicians.

By adopting the imagery of individual White cowboys found in the West and colorblind rhetoric inherited from Republican politicians, the Aryan Nations created a new brand of White separatism organization that influenced current right wing organizations. By understanding the Aryan Nations and their tactics, researchers can further analyze the mainstream alt right that is active today. Nearly forty-five years after the founding of the group, President Trump, the alt right, and White supremacy groups across America like Butler, united under a cause of White separatism and White American exceptionalism. Butler was not the first to unite such men, nor will he be the last. The Aryan Nations created a precedent for future far right organizations like the alt right. Richard Spencer, leader and founder of the alt right, imagined a European ethno-

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<sup>232</sup> "Aging supremacist leader has some new young followers," *Idahonian/Daily News* April 19, 1989.

state that mirrors Butler's White Bastion. Spencer launched the alt right into mainstream attention through use of internet mobilization, a path pioneered by Butler and Louis Beam. The alt right acts as an all-inclusive far right group uniting racist members and ideologists from the broad spectrum of White supremacy thought just as Butler gathered militia men, home schoolers, loggers, and the Ku Klux Klan on his compound. Butler's influence can be heard in Spencer's explanation of the alt rights' goals in 2013 when he said, "Our dream is a new society, an ethno-state that would be a gathering point for all Europeans. It would be a new society based on very different ideals than, say, the Declaration of Independence."<sup>233</sup> This ethno-state is what Butler dreamt of while building his compound in Northern Idaho. Like Butler, the alt right leaders replace terms such as "race" with "culture" and talk about promoting "European Civilization" instead of White supremacy. Westerners and Americans alike must unpack the Aryan Nations' and the racist rights' rhetoric and worldview to understand ourselves better. They point a mirror towards the nation, showing the unsettling and unsavory parts of ourselves; the covertly racist politicians, the secretly racist Idaho logger, or the survivalist stock piling weapons for the impending race war. The Aryan Nations' exposed these aspects of Idaho and the nation during their heyday using a Wild West inspired identity coupled with the coded racist rhetoric of conservative politicians, making them the most American White separatist group to date which has influenced the current racist right, moving them closer to the mainstream. The Aryan Nations' influence is still unfolding as the new far right takes new forms under President Trump. This thesis simply begins the possible

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<sup>233</sup> CJ Ciaramella, "White Nationalists Gathered in DC Last Weekend," *Vice* October 29, 2013.

connections researchers and historians can draw from to help explain the roots of this new White separatism.

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