Fuentes and his America First hangers-on succeed by making extremism seem normal to those who already espouse right-wing views. They collaborate with Republican lawmakers and bring them into the same room with hardened white supremacists. They put a youthful, conservative face on radical, far-right ideas, and do so while turning a profit. They eschew gloomy hate symbols, and instead embrace Americana and praise the fascist leaders America once fought to eradicate.

Fuentes told SPLC through a lawyer that he abhors political violence, but the America First movement unabashedly supports the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection. Not only did Fuentes publicly raise the notion of killing disloyal Republican lawmakers in the run-up to the attack on the Capitol on Jan. 6, but he has also expressed no remorse for the deadly outcome of the day's events.[2] He said of the attack on the Capitol on the eve of its first anniversary: "This is a holiday. This is a historic moment for us. We should celebrate that it happened, absolutely."[3] Fuentes and his collaborators will seize another opportunity to promote political violence on the scale of the Capitol attack, or worse, if given a chance.

Origins of Fuentes' America First movement

Fuentes wins fans on the far right by speaking directly about his ambitions. He talks about further radicalizing the Republican Party and building an extremist movement to control our government. He describes his ambitions to protect America's "white demographic core," defining his movement explicitly along racial lines.[4]

future. … Into a truly reactionary party. It's incremental. We're not going to drag them all the way over. But if we can drag the furthest part of the right further to the right, and we can drag the center further to the right, and we can drag the left further to the right … then we're winning," Fuentes told his followers in May 2021.[5]

Fuentes' mostly young, white, and male followers refer to themselves as "groypers," which is the name of a toad-shaped cartoon character who commonly appears in internet memes.[6] People who call themselves groypers also identify as being America First, but this brand has no formal vetting process, membership structure or hierarchy. Fuentes calls his fans to events, and the young, mostly white, and almost exclusively male groypers appear. Fuentes made such calls in the run-up to Jan. 6, 2021, and groypers appeared at "Stop the Steal" evmos0052≥1117(m)-7uentes calls his f8≥1160B6≥40055150n4≥1117(m)-7uentes calls hy at sul th(u)-11(

From white nationalist activism to AFPAC

In 2017, Fuentes marched alongside Klansmen, neo-Nazis, skinheads, and other white

Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, who rose to political power through the audience she built as a QAnon promoter, spoke at the third AFPAC event.[17]

Conservative aesthetics, neofascist ambitions

Fuentes has said his goal is to "take over the conservative movement" and has called contemporary America "the great satan."[22] He and his followers champion stringent anti-LGBT laws, white identity politics, brutal nativism, and authoritarianism. Some give voice to Holocaust denialism or revisionism. Neo-Nazi Andrew Anglin of *The Daily Stormer* described Fuentes as the "future dictator of America" in a January 2022 post on his website, underscoring his appeal to other open admirers of fascism.[23]

Despite this extremism, Fuentes and other America First activists still manage to build bridges with mainstream politicians. They do this by softening their aesthetic and avoiding the stereotypical trappings of white power activity.[24] America First collaborator Patrick Casey has called traditional white nationalism a "dead brand" and urged his fans to distance themselves from uniform-wearing or terroristic neo-Nazi groups.

"Like it or not, when you define yourself as a white nationalist, you're linking yourself to the [white supremacist novel] Turner Diaries, [the neo-Nazi group] the Order, indefensible policy proposals, neo-Nazism, etc. … I really don't see how anyone can look at the political landscape and self-described white nationalists are ever going to take power. It's a dead brand," Casey posted to Telegram in October 2019.[25]

Fuentes found middle ground between the white nationalist fringe and the mainstream Republican Party through public support of the populist presidency of Donald Trump. Throughout the Trump era, Fuentes and his cohorts exploited the 45th president's popularity with young conservatives to deepen support for his own livestreams and events.

"I don't want to see anyone Roman saluting," Fuentes told his fans on a livestream during the summer of 2020, urging his followers to avoid being caught identifying publicly with Nazism while supporting Trump.[26] "I want to so bad right now, though. I want to Roman salute my president so bad."

Fuentes has praised Hitler, the Italian fascist Benito Mussolini, and the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, while at the same time lifting up former President Trump as a heroic and noble figure.[27]

America First and 'Stop the Steal'

Fuentes and others in the America First tent hyped the "Stop the Steal" movement and gave the protest events surrounding Trump's lies an air of youthful enthusiasm. Former Trump adviser Roger Stone created "Stop the Steal" during the 2016 election and used it to cast

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[22] https://twitter.com/RightWingWatch/status/1504167055557201925; https://www.bitchute.com/video/vu4HQrPiG9pf/.
[23] Andrew Anglin, "Why

doubt on the integrity of U.S. elections.[28] When Stone ally and notorious disinformation

2020-12-24	1068	2,237.96	Thursday	Stop the Steal

Evolution of livestreaming and life after 'Stop the Steal'

Fuentes built his celebrity through his one-man livestreams, in which he speaks alone in front of a green screen backdrop.[38] Fuentes started livestreaming as a first-year student at Boston University in 2017. His work aired on the Trump-aligned Right Side Broadcasting Network until that August. He subsequently attempted to move his stream to other livestreaming platforms, including mainstream platform YouTube and video game-focused Twitch, but these sites also banned him. He began streaming on the small DLive platform in early 2020 and remained there until they also suspended Fuentes on Jan. 9, 2021, following the attack on the Capitol. In February 2021, he launched an independent streaming service initially called AmericaFirst.live and then later re-launched in October 2021 as Cozy.TV.[39] Fuentes launched Cozy.TV through the help of white supremacist activists, as SPLC's Hatewatch reported in November 2021.[40]

Fuentes has welcomed a wealth of far-right extremist content creators to Cozy.TV, including Andrew Torba, CEO of the extremist-friendly social media site Gab[41]; Milo Yiannopoulos, a former Breitbart staffer and alt-right apologist;[42] Gionet, the white nationalist livestreamer who faces federal charges over his alleged breach of the Capitol on Jan. 6;[43] and Daryush "Roosh" Valizadeh, a male supremacist who claims to have renounced his ways in favor of traditionalist Christianity.[44] Infowars' Alex Jones, who has expressed admiration for Fuentes, also mirrors broadcasts of his show on Cozy.TV. Because taking monetary donations is a key purpose of the video livestreams, Fuentes also installed a homebrew version of YouTube's "superchat" donation function on Cozy.TV using the Canada-based monetization platform Entropy. SPLC reported that when Fuentes announced that Entropy's payment processor "forced them to ban [him]," its parent company built him a custom-made platform to monetize his livestreams, helping to keep him afloat.[45]

Fuentes had boasted that his verified Twitter handle helped drive traffic to his livestreams after losing access to one site or another, but the company suspended him in July 2021, following an SPLC investigation into the platform's role in buoying the far right.[46] Relegated to Telegram and the fringe social media website Gab, he has in recent months sought to

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[38] Hannah Gais, "The Extreme Right's Pivot to (Live) Video," https://www.splcenter.org/20220309/year-hate-extremism-2021#pivot-live-video, SPLC *Year in Hate and Extremism 2021,* March 9, 2022.

[39] Hannah Gais, "Nick Fuentes Deplatformed: A White Nationalist's Journey Through Alt-Tech," https://www.splcenter.org/20220309/year-hate-extremism-2021#nick-fuentes, SPLC *Year in Hate and Extremism 2021,* March 9, 2021.

[40] Hannah Gais, Michael Ed1 3 4C1 76 0051 >1 16 0035 56 0045 1 16 0058 >1 16 0052 >1 16 005C 004C 1 76 0051 >1 16 004A 1 16 0035 56 0057 56 004] TJET

make connections with other extremists banned from mainstream platforms to help expand his fanbase, such as Proud Boys founder Gavin McInnes.[47]

Fuentes has also sought to exploit divides over the response to the COVID-19 pandemic by hosting two "Vax Watch" events in New York City in November 2021. There, he used the COVID-19 vaccine debate as a way into promoting his hard-right, authoritarian worldview, as well as Christian nationalist politics.[48] Fuentes has also increasingly expressed paranoia and displeasure following the scrutiny he has faced after Jan. 6, 2021.

"We have to do what we have to do," he said of his activism during a February 2022 livestream. "I don't think I'll ever be happy. I enjoy what I do. It fulfills me. I'm content. But I'm never going to have the things that will make me happy because this is very tough. It's just a tough, grueling, miserable deal."[49]

The Southern Poverty Law Center deeply appreciates the work of the Select Committee and we are a willing partner in your essential assignment. We look forward to continuing to work with you as you focus your urgent attention on investigating the deadly January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol, establishing and reporting facts, and holding those responsible accountable.

Sincerely,

Michael Edison Hayden
Senior Investigative Reporter/Spokesperson
Intelligence Project

Megan Squire, Ph.D.
Senior Fellow
Intelligence Project

Hannah Gais
Senior Research Analyst
Intelligence Project

Susan Corke

Susan Corke
Director
Intelligence Project

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[47] Southern Poverty Law Center, "Proud Boys," https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/proud-boys.
[48] Michael Edison Hayden, "Nick Fuentes Faces Scrutiny Following Jan. 6 Subpoena," https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2022/01/20/nick-fuentes-faces-scrutiny-following-jan-6-subpoena, SPLC Hatewatch, January 20, 2022.
[49] https://twitter.com/RightWingWatch/status/1491106087558578178.

2020-04-24	930	877.87	Friday
2020-04-25	1606	2,062.06	Saturday
2020-04-26	3	8.05	Sunday
2020-04-27	2	5.36	Monday
2020-04-28	1525	1,086.77	Tuesday
2020-04-29	1088	735.66	Wednesday
2020-04-30	641	551.99	Thursday
2020-05-01	7	5.42	Friday
2020-05-02	1788	689.29	Saturday
2020-05-03	5.		

2020-06-02	4	10.73	Tuesday
2020-06-03	4	8.06	Wednesday

2020-09-29	551	518.51

2020-11-07	535	989.05	Saturday
2020-11-08	6	13.42	Sunday
2020-11-09	3	8.05	Monday
2020-11-10	1020	847.27	Tuesday
2020-11-11	692	609.35	Wednesday
2020-11-12	9	11.10	Thursday
2020-11-13	4	10.73	Friday
2020-11-14	1	2.68	Saturday
2020-11-16	4	40.23	Monday
2020-11-17	1318	1,512.81	Tuesday
2020-11-18	1285	809.37	Wednesday
2020-11-19	7	16.12	Thursday
2020-11-20	925	524.67	Friday
2020-11-21	2	5.36	Saturday
2020-11-22	9	13.55	Sunday
2020-11-23	6		

2020-12-17	6	16.09	Thursday
2020-12-18	412	858.59	