Twitter Thread by Amanda Marcotte



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Man, I remember when I first started reporting on the Proud Boys and their founder, Gavin McInnes. One major form of pushback I got was, " Why are you wasting your time on these nobodies?"

This is why.

At the time, the Proud Boys got a lot of credulous coverage from mainstream outlets that passed McInnes off as a "provocateur," as if this was all about having a little fun at the expense of the "politically correct". McInnes's claims not to be racist were taken at face value.

McInnes understood that if he forefronted his group's sexism and told reporters the group was about reclaiming manhood and putting women back in the kitchen, that would successfully conceal the racism of the Proud Boys. Most reporters don't understand the two are linked.

Moreover, mainstream media continues to treat misogyny as a harmless peccadillo, just a matter of being "old-fashioned". (Anti-choicers have benefitted from this for a long time, as well.) This, even though misogyny is the root of most prejudice-driven violence in our country.

One in 5 women will be raped, and 1 in 4 will experience domestic violence. 3 women are murdered *a day* by partners or former partners. Misogyny is violent and deadly, but if a group portrays itself as proudly sexist, they get to pretend it's just "Leave It To Beaver" longings.

Moreover, as many experts in extremism were pointing out, misogyny was the gateway to white supremacy. White supremacists lurk in male chauvinist spaces and start gradually warming members up to the idea that the "Jews" and "multiculturalism" is what "spoiled" women.

McInnes presented himself to reporters as "alt-right without the racism". This wasn't true, and I did what I could to expose that. Thank you to @JulietJeske for her invaluable research. https://t.co/WgvN6mEfmO

More reporting from 2017, which focused on how McInnes played footsie with overtly bigoted rhetoric, so he could pass himself off as a Fox News-friendly commentator. (Fox has gone more white nationalist since then, so maybe he didn't need

to worry.) https://t.co/feJ9cLDvSJ

In 2016, I was warning that McInnes and Trump were introducing a more hostile, more secular, and less paternalistic misogyny into the discourse — and that it was dangerous and violent. This was before Trump was outed as a serial sexual predator. https://t.co/qoITvOFH1R

And one more, about how the Proud Boys used false claims of "self-defense" as cover to cultivate a violent, fascistic internal culture. https://t.co/TQsEZohXka

I’m sure I seemed obsessed. Gavin certainly thought so! But I was driven by a belief that there was a huge appetite among a lot of white men for what he was selling: A reactionary masculinity that wasn’t the dopey, Bible-clutching form dominant in conservatism at the time.