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HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK

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For More Info: Rachel Carroll Rivas, Co-Director, Montana Human Rights Network media@mhrn.org

Bozeman Conference Features Slate of Extremist Conspiracy Theorists

This weekend Bozeman will play host to the “Red Pill Expo.” The event is primarily a combination of paranoid conspiracy theorists; far-right, anti-democratic libertarians; and alternative health charlatans.

The name of the event is a reference to *The Matrix* and is used frequently by the white supremacist alt-right to indicate that its followers are the only ones who “know the truth” about what is really going on in America today.

“It’s important to remember that the so-called ‘alt-right’ is merely traditional white supremacist ideology repackaged in way to try and make it more palatable in mainstream circles,” said Rachel Carroll Rivas, Co-Director at the Montana Human Rights Network. “By using the term ‘red pill,’ the event organizers are tapping into this ready-made crowd of extremists who advocate bigotry and are familiar with the term.”

The Red Pill Expo is a classic bait and switch. By using issues that have some appeal across the political spectrum, like alternative medicine and “natural” farming, the organizers can push standard far-right pabulum, including conspiracies about Jewish people controlling the banking industry and pushing for one-world-government.

The wide-ranging scope of topics is purposeful. The organizers hope to find people who will attend due to being interested in one topic and then be exposed to the wider right-wing agenda. Topics including whole foods and alternative medicine are designed to appeal to folks across the political spectrum, which is exactly what the white supremacist alt-right is working to do at college campuses, online, and in gated communities across the country.

“In looking at the speakers for the Red Pill Expo, it might have been more accurate to name the event ‘Conspiracy Theory Carnival’ for the bizarre stuff it is selling,” said Carroll Rivas. “Many of the speakers appear to make their living by writing about and presenting on the grand conspiracy theories they claim to have uncovered. They claim supposed evil doers have hijacked the: banking system, healthcare industry, conservation movement, and have falsified what happened on 9/11. Folks should know what they are paying for when they walk in the door. Many well-meaning people may not have had their guard up about this event, but they should.”

The Red Pill Expo has little legitimate value. On one hand, it's simply a vehicle to promote the far right's agenda and try to recruit more followers, while on the other it's the live version of an internet infomercial selling a cure for everything that ails you or is paining your loved one. While well-known "natural farming" activist Joel Salatin may bring in a wide spectrum of attendees, any semblance of it simply being an educational gathering flies out the window when it features speakers like Richard Mack. Mack is a hero to the anti-government militia movement and a leader in radical-right efforts to trick county sheriffs into fighting federal agencies.

The headliner of the Red Pill Expo, G. Edward Griffin, has long held minor celebrity status in the radical right for writing *The Creature from Jekyll Island*. The book basically compiled all of the conspiracy theories about the Federal Reserve and banking system into one book. Many anti-government groups cite the book as proof for their anti-Semitic conspiracy theories that Jews control the banking industry.¹ Griffin proudly declares he is a "life member of the John Birch Society" and served as a staff member in the 1960s when the organization made its mark as, not only an ultra-conservative leader, but an ardent opponent to the civil rights movement.² Much of the Bozeman Expo is dedicated to quack ideas about the source and cure for cancer. Griffin not only advocates for scientifically-proven falsities about cancer treatment, but HIV denial as well.³

Griffin's organization is Freedom Force International, and Montanan Dan Hoppel sits on its leadership team.⁴ Hoppel is an anti-democratic activist and former Madison County Commissioner who has advocated for a variety of militia-based policies and conspiracy theories including: secession; the gold standard and usage of silver coin only; state supremacy; the supposed unconstitutional nature of the income tax, and "birtherism."⁵ Hoppel has summarized the Red Pill Expo as being about "individualism vs. collectivism" and a fight-back against socialism.

While Hoppel's summary might ring true for some Expo speakers, the Human Rights Network views the event as a bit of a relapse to the mixed ideological company that appeared at Preparedness and Survivalist Expos in the late 1990s that promoted and tried to capitalize on Y2K fears. Like the scare then, the Red Pill Expo seems to tap into the weird crossover of conspiracy theorists on the right and left.

The variety of extremists that an event like the Red Pill Expo can bring together became apparent to the Human Rights Network when a local bar reported that a self-described attendee from out-of-state left literature at the establishment emblazoned with a swastika. The attendee is reportedly part of the right-wing libertarian anarchist community. These anarchists blatantly oppose democracy, labeling America's system of government as an:

"unconstitutional totalitarian cults of parasites, criminals, and terrorists -- opposed to liberty, freedom, self-determination, sovereignty, and nature -- that pretend to be some form of a unanimously elected majority in order to tax, rob, indebt, and enslave the individuals of a society through denying and usurping their life, liberty, property, and natural rights."

These Expo attendees are promoting some kind of utopian anarchist state based in extreme purist libertarianism that is destructive to democracy and community.⁶

This libertarian anarchist perspective is represented at the Expo by speaker Jeff Berwick. Berwick is a

major Bitcoin investor and popular anarchist. Bitcoin is well-liked by libertarians who like that it's not controlled by a government or a central bank. The much hated Federal Reserve can't regulate inflation of Bitcoin, and it's based on the supply and demand of a free market. Bitcoin isn't taxed, because income can be hidden from the government. Because of these features, Bitcoin [can attract criminals](#) looking for new ways to move their funds without government scrutiny. This includes popular white supremacist alt-right websites that praise Bitcoin as a solution to their "Jewish problem," including one that states:

"One of the biggest problems we have in the nationalist sphere is that we don't have any money. This isn't because we're all broke NEETs (well... for the most part), but rather because the Jews keep shutting all of our stuff down. They can do so because they have total control over the banking and financial system. Some people promote the use of silver or gold as an alternative to the Jew banking system. The problem with that, other than the fact that Jews own most of the gold, is that you can't send it through these tubes to support activists. Bitcoin, on the other hand, doesn't suffer from those problems...make no mistake, these [sic] 'federal reserve-style' debt-based currencies are a key factor in how the Jews have enacted our dispossession, at the material level. Bitcoin makes it possible to completely bypass the Jew system, and trade among ourselves without our enemy's permission. "7

"If the attacks on Montana's Jewish community this winter teach us anything, it's to be weary of these anti-Semitic conspiracy theories and stop them in their tracks before they lead to harassment, intimidation and violence," said Carroll Rivas. "There is no reason Bozeman needs to put out the welcome mat for a gathering like the Red Pill Expo that builds off of conspiratorial tendencies and props up extremists."

From every angle, it seems that the organizers of the Red Pill Expo are preying on potential attendees. They are offering a solution to every problem, someone or thing to blame for every challenge, and a simple answer to an increasingly complex world. This event is nothing more than a recruiting attempt by the alt-right. It does nothing to bring the community together and form real solutions to move the community forward.

Some of the Speakers Scheduled for Red Pill Expo

Richard Mack, Militia Hero

Richard Mack is a former county sheriff in Arizona and a hero to the anti-government militia movement. He became a rising star in the militia movement during the 1990s when he sued the federal government over the Brady Bill, a gun control measure. He now does the militia speaking circuit, peddling a brand of county supremacy in tradition of the white supremacist Posse Comitatus. The Posse viewed the sheriff as the highest legitimate law officer in the land. It believed citizens were not subject to state or federal authorities. Mack's statements over the years reflect the Posse tradition that the federal government doesn't have any jurisdiction to tell the sheriff what to do. Following the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995

by a militia adherent, Mack said, “People get all upset when they hear about militias, but what’s wrong with it? I wouldn’t hesitate for a minute to call out my posse against the federal government if it gets out of hand.” In 2004, he edited a book by Randy Weaver, whose standoff at Ruby Ridge, Idaho, was a seminal moment for the militia movement of the 1990s. More background on Mack can be found [here](#).

Christopher Monckton, Anti-Science Activist

Christopher Monckton is a well-known skeptic of mainstream science’s understanding of climate change. He toured Montana last fall with two militia groups in the state, the Northwest Liberty News and Concerned Citizens of Northwest Montana. At the event in the Flathead, Monckton went so far as to boast of Montana’s right to secede from the United States.⁸ He is no stranger to controversy, including: advocating that all those with AIDS should be forcibly separated on an island; falsely claiming that LGBT people are sinners and more promiscuous than drug abusers; and questioning President Obama’s citizenship as a supporter of the “birther” conspiracy.⁹

Alex Newman, Anti-Public Schools Author and Speaker

Alex Newman is the co-author of *Crimes of the Educators* in which he claims public teachers’ crimes include child abuse, treason for deliberately dumbing down the nation in order to overthrow the government, and contributing to the delinquency of a minor for including sex education in health curricula. Newman claims that public schools were meant to teach Christian religion, but instead promote Satanism and do everything they can to destroy a child’s belief in the Bible. He also complains that public school teachers promote the “propaganda” of evolution. Newman claims schools push drugs and are engaged in extortion. He calls for the abolition of the Department of Education and for teaching from the Bible in schools.¹⁰

Patrick Wood, One-World Government Conspiracist

Patrick Wood is an author and radio host who is followed by anti-government activists and anti-Semitic white supremacist groups as the foremost authority on the conspiracy theories about the Trilateral Commission and “one world” globalist agenda. He also warns against “technocracy,” or the idea that scientific thinking, and the scientists and engineers that promote science, are attempting to control world governments with a scientific dictatorship.¹¹ The technocracy conspiracy concludes that Christians are being oppressed and religions will be banned under this Satanic plan.

Holly Swanson, Anti-Conservation Activist

The Red Pill Expo site bills Swanson as a “leading authority on the hidden agenda of the environmental movement.” It says her research confirms that conservation ideology promotes communism, and environmental education is used to brainwash children. Swanson is the founder and director of We Choose Freedom, an organization that promotes her conspiracy theories regarding the conservation movement using schools to indoctrinate children. In a video interview with the John Birch Society’s magazine, Swanson said the environmental movement is pushing communism in public schools in order to ultimately “change our government system, change our economic system, and change our culture. That is definitely a treasonous act.”¹⁴ In her worldview, conservation education must be defeated in order to save America itself.

Endnotes

1. Southern Poverty Law Center, [“Margins to the Mainstream”](#) and [“Midwifing the Militia”](#).
2. [Political Research Associates, “The John Birch Society’s Anti-Civil Rights Campaign of the 1960s, and Its Relevance Today”](#).
3. G. Edward Griffin, YouTube, “The HIV=AIDS Fraud - G Edward Griffin ON HIV AIDS Big Pharma Fraud” and Media Matters, [“Who Is G. Edward Griffin, Beck's Expert On The Federal Reserve?”](#).
4. Freedom Force International, Leadership Council, website.
5. Montana Human Rights Network, [“Bozeman Tea Party Promoting Anti-Government Activists”](#).
6. People for Anarchy, Voluntaryism, Non-Aggression, and Liberty, Facebook page.
7. Daily Stormer, “Nazi Currency Bitcoin Hits \$1000 USD Value,” website.
8. *Flathead Beacon*, [“Climate Science Skeptic Calls Global Warming a ‘Huge Exaggeration’”](#) and DESMOG, [“Climate Science Denier Lord Monckton Tours Montana Thanks To GOP Group And An Extreme Fringe”](#).
9. *Washington Post*, [“Lord Monckton mocked as ‘newest Sacha Baron Cohen’ character”](#) and *Huffington Post*, [“Christopher Monckton Argues That Gays Have As Many As 20,000 Sexual Partners, Defending Anti-LGBT Lawmaker”](#).
10. Alex Newman, YouTube, “Crimes of Educators” and Eagle Forum, book review, website.
11. The Mental Militia, “Patrick Wood Reveals the Foundation of the Globalizing Statist Thrust Toward ‘A New International Economic Order’” and Amazon description of *Technocracy Rising*.
12. *The New American*, “Education Author Exposes Environmentalist Movement’s Agenda”.