

Trump's notion of putting women into prison for getting abortions may well be read as support by a wide range of people who claim to be defenders of the unborn, including those who kill doctors for providing abortion services. This, unfortunately, is nothing new. Trump's plan of banning Muslims, however, marks the first time in modern American history that any national candidate promised to stop people at the border with a religion test. It boggled the mind, but at the same time it caressed the fear and rage that many people felt. Clearly, that was Trump's calculated game. But his execution was imperfect. His ego kept betraying him. "I know more about ISIS than the generals!"

Those eight words were laughable, and top Republican experts on national security publicly branded Trump as "incompetent" and "dangerous." But this didn't matter to Trump's base. They loved his promise to upend the Washington establishment and his wild promises to bring back manufacturing jobs and cut taxes while spending trillions on building up the military. They ignored his failure to release his tax returns, his bizarre bromance with Vladimir Putin, his call for Russia to cyber attack the U.S., his abuse of women, and his failures to pay contractors.

Lurking in the background of the millions of Trump supporters is the rage-filled base, the men in the dark rooms like the three members of the Kansas "Crusaders," whose plot allegedly included the deliberate slaughter of children. As one of them said on the secret FBI recording: "When we go on operations there's no leaving anyone behind, even if it's a one-year-old. I'm serious."

By the time the Crusaders began to conceptualize their "wake-up call" (as they called it), Trump's Fear-the-Muslims initiative was already three months old. It had been repeated endlessly, especially on extreme-right-wing media, and it was the kind of talk the neo-Nazis and other radical communities had long embraced. For them, Trump was encouragement, even validation.

One of the most influential voices of the alt-right, a website called the Daily Stormer, refers to Trump as America's "Glorious Leader." The Southern Poverty Law Center, which tracks hate groups across the country, noted (verbatim) these posts found on the Daily Stormer's website: "When [Trump] wins, the libtards, freaks nigs, mystery meats and republicucks will probably pop off, led by the cheerleading kikes like always, but the might of people behind [Trump] should be able to put down with little effort. It'll be bloody but I think if enough heads are busted it will become loud and clear—BACK IN THE CLOSET OR GET THE FUCK OUT."

I follow a data scientist named Jonathon Morgan. He's the founder and CEO of New Knowledge, a nonprofit think tank, and he's been crunching numbers on Trump and right-wing extremists. Morgan used Facebook activity to find armed militia supporters who engaged with Trump's claims of a rigged election. He wrote: "Faced with probable defeat, Donald Trump is now claiming the election is rigged (it's not). While election officials (were) trying to reassure the public that U.S. democracy is intact, Trump surrogates doubled down on their candidate's accusations, warning of widespread voter fraud, and suggesting that supporters revolt."

Morgan said the numbers show that the destabilizing, anti-

democracy message is resonating. "Over 100,000 people commented or reacted to Trump's Facebook posts about election rigging. Though at rallies some of Trump's supporters insist the tough talk is not a call to violence, others discussed armed rebellion and assassination, and buried amongst the supporters who engaged with the candidate's message on Facebook are at least 210 people who are involved with armed militia groups."

Morgan cited one extremist who wrote: "The problem is we have a rigged election and Hillary is going to flood us with muslims [sic]. I hate to say it, but if she wins, and it looks like she will (only because she owns the media and the Republican party) it's over, time for a revolution." He added, "Enough of being tough in the blog, be tough in real life."

Today, if a bomb goes off at a U.S. government center, a mosque, a synagogue, or an apartment complex where Muslims or Mexicans live, some of the blame may well belong at the feet of Donald Trump.

His us-versus-them campaign of fear gave aid and comfort to the more than 800 U.S. right-wing hate groups that dwell in the shadows.

Muslims in general had been placed on their enemies list after 9/11. Before that it was Jews, LGBTQ people, black and brown people, and women who don't shut the fuck up. The feelings and doctrines of the members of these hate groups were mostly confined to private spaces, fenced-in compounds, and websites where they spend their fantasy lives while hand-loading their very real ammunition.

When Trump's anti-Muslim declarations began in December of 2015, extreme right-wing websites lit up with delight. The Ku Klux Klan and a prominent former leader of the Klan who ran for public office said the GOP was finally espousing Klan doctrine.

On Trump's path to "Make America Great Again," people who get loaded on dehumanizing others raised their glasses to the guy who had been the boss on *The*

*Apprentice*. Suddenly, it looked like he had a shot at the White House.

In early 2016, an FBI informant inside that Kansas militia group made this covert recording of a would-be domestic terrorist: "The only fucking way this country's ever going to get turned around is it will be a bloodbath and it will be a nasty, messy motherfucker. Unless a lot more people in this country wake up and smell the fucking coffee and decide they want this country back...we might be too late, if they do wake up...I think we can get it done. But it ain't going to be nothing nice about it."

According to the FBI recordings, the conspirators planned to detonate multiple car bombs around a housing complex to kill Muslim residents. Their battle plan called for them to then kick in doors and shoot to death any survivors, including women and children. That "wake-up" event was to occur on the day after the national election. The plotters apparently hoped that their action would trigger a national uprising against all 3.5 million Muslims in America. (Side note: American Muslims include many medical doctors, professors, scientists, as well owners of small businesses. They have very low rates of crime and high levels of family stability.)

Trump loved using the term "Crooked Hillary," echoing a 30-year

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Timothy McVeigh

## THE PRICE OF HOMEGROWN RAGE

It was the worst single act of terrorism committed on American soil.

The Oklahoma City bombing, April 19, 1995. When all the smoke cleared and the screaming subsided, 168 innocent people had been killed, another 680 wounded. The perpetrators were white racist Christians born in the U.S. who were disgruntled Army veterans.

One of them, Terry Nichols, had previously renounced his American citizenship and declared the government had no jurisdiction over him. He grew up in an area of Michigan where hatred of the federal government was common. Nichols helped plot leader Timothy McVeigh assemble the huge truck bomb, but refused to participate in the actual placing of the weapon. As a result, McVeigh ridiculed Nichols for liking to “talk tough,” but ultimately being under the control of “[his] bitch and [his] kids.”

The next day, McVeigh drove the weapon into the heart of Oklahoma City, parked it at the federal building while it was full of people, and at a safe distance he detonated the bomb. The explosion, ensuing fire, and building collapse smashed the bodies of babies in the day-care center and their parents who worked in the building, as well as any visitors. One-third of the building was completely destroyed.

After police captured them, Nichols and McVeigh said they had done it to avenge the FBI standoffs at Waco in 1993) and Ruby Ridge in 1992, which had left almost a hundred dead, including five federal agents. Both of those incidents became rallying cries for the growing anti-government militia movement and resulted in changes in the way federal law enforcement operates around religious fanatics and survivalists.

The Oklahoma City bombing—perpetrated 21 years ago by so-called “patriots”—came during the early days of the internet. Today, there are thousands of government-hating extreme-right-wing websites. Some people spend hours every day clicking into that





consciousness of racial hatred and paranoia. The Trump campaign played to that audience, making them feel that their point of view was honored. They loved him back.

Trump's legacy includes an unprecedented level of unrequited rage and fear. Some analysts say the national mood has not been this bad since the Civil War. One survey of public opinion showed that 42 percent of Trump supporters said they would feel "panicked" if Trump were to lose the election. That number means more than 12.6 million Americans. If only *one percent* of that number were to feel so panicked that they would consider violence against their perceived enemies, that is still 1,260 people. What might those panicked people do? We got a chilling look into that kind of future, thanks to the heads-up work of the FBI's counterterrorism team in Kansas.

As the presidential campaign was winding down, I went looking for answers to this question: How do we create space for reconciliation for the nation and in our own relationships?

Pastor Max Lucado of San Antonio, a powerful evangelical minister and author of many best-selling books, offers this challenge to each of us: "Quit being so mean to each other. We've got to stop it. Make a personal commitment to being kind to everyone and live up to that commitment." Lucado said during the campaign he was baffled as to how other evangelicals could support Trump. "We have lost our joy as a nation. But our nation will weather the storm."

Doc Antle, the famous animal behaviorist and trainer of apex predators like tigers and lions, is also a keen observer of the human animal. I asked him to look at the emotional wreckage caused by the presidential campaign. He offered this advice to end the cycle of rage: If your candidate won and you feel like crowing about it to someone who backed the other candidate, don't do it. "Just shut up," he said. Let it go. Move on to the next thing that you need to do together. Avoid any talk of politics. No jokes. It's not funny. It's an open wound.

Antle said we must be conscious of the fact that in the aftermath of the election there is still considerable fear, and, "Fear is the great stealer of your capacity to think; it gets underneath your skin and eats away at you, making you believe that something is going to be taken away from you." That is what a lot of people are going through. We all need to respect this and act accordingly. Ultimately, it requires humility and even forgiveness. Let's be careful not to cut each other off.





