

Fox and its white supremacists in suits give succour to mass killers



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Columnist

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White supremacy in the United States was once typified by men in white hoods brandishing burning crosses. They were concentrated in the former confederacy southern states and were unequivocally aligned with the Democratic Party.

Today's white supremacists tend to wear expensive suits and to work out of corporate or political offices. You will find more than a few at 1211 Avenue of the Americas in New York City, which is the headquarters of News Corp and its subsidiary Fox Corp, and in the big white building that sits atop of Capitol Hill in Washington DC. All these men and women, without exception, are firmly within the Republican Party.

Between the end of the Civil War (1865) and 1950 more than 6400 black men, women and children were lynched in the 12 Southern states, the victims of extrajudicial acts of hatred and revenge whose "black bodies swinging in the southern breeze" made for "a strange and bitter crop", as Billie Holiday expressed it in her iconic 1939 song *Strange Fruit*.

On March 22 this year, after more than 100 previous failed legislative attempts, President Joe Biden signed into law the Emmett Till Antilynching Act. The law is named for 14-year-old Emmett Till, who was lynched in Mississippi in 1955 for apparently flirting with a 21-year-old white woman in her family's grocery store. The passing of the act is largely symbolic as the preferred weapon of white supremacists today is not the noose but the semi-automatic weapon which enables black or brown people to be murdered *en masse*.



President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden pay their respects to the victims of the Buffalo massacre last Saturday.

The direct perpetrators of these crimes are not the well-suited executives, broadcasters, politicians and others who are the propagandists and their enablers. The actual killings are carried out by the foot soldiers of the movement, the unmoored young men – and they are all men – who identify as white supremacists and who are, according to FBI director Christopher Wray, the biggest internal terrorist threat faced by the US.

But their murderous actions are given grist and, in their eyes, justification by the constant mantra of the “great replacement theory” and anti-immigration tirades espoused by right-wing broadcasters. This is also now the dominant ideology of the Republican Party.

Foremost among these broadcasters is Tucker Carlson, whose nightly show on Fox News, which attracts an ardent, angry audience of 3.21 million, has been described by *The New York Times* as “the apex of a programming and editorial strategy” that, like the Republican Party itself, “has sought to wring rising returns out of a slowly

declining audience: the older white conservatives who make up Mr Trump's base and much of Fox's core viewership".

In 2018, when blue-chip advertisers left Fox after Carlson declared on air that mass immigration made America "poor and dirtier", Lachlan Murdoch, his effective boss, assured him there would be no consequences. Murdoch has told investors since then that Carlson's original content for Fox Nation, Fox's new streaming service, has increased subscriptions by 40 per cent.

Stefanik is a frequent visitor to the Mexican border and is a leading Republican voice in condemning non-white immigration.

On Monday, two days after publication of the Buffalo murderer's 10-page manifesto that asserted "white genocide" will result from the high fertility rates of non-white immigrants, Stefanik tweeted: "Democrats desperately want wide open borders and mass amnesty for illegals allowing them to vote. Like the vast majority of Americans, Republicans want to secure our borders and protect election integrity."

This is more than code. In the current political climate in the US, this comes perilously close to endorsement of racist theories that young men have used to justify their race-based murders.

The toll for these murders is rising: Buffalo last Saturday, 10 killed; 2019 El Paso – 23; 2018 Tree of Life synagogue – 11; 2015 Charleston 9. That's 53 such murders in seven years. But the count needs to also include the 51 murders in Christchurch in 2019 and the 77 in Norway in 2011, both of which were similarly racially motivated, and both served as inspirations for the American slaughters. That gives us a grim total of 181 deaths, stemming directly from an ideology that declares whites to be supreme.

Following Buffalo, Biden condemned white supremacy as "a poison running through our body politic", and condemned those "who spread the lie for power, political game and for profit". Senate Majority leader Chuck Schumer went further, [writing to Rupert and Lachlan Murdoch](#): "I urge you to immediately cease the reckless amplification of the so-called 'Great 'Replacement' theory on your network's broadcasts." At time of writing, the Murdochs had not responded.

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