

## Steve Bannon: Five Things to Know

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### 1. BANNON HAS EMBRACED THE ALT RIGHT

Bannon, the former chief strategist in the Trump administration, has expressed his enthusiasm for the [alt right](#), a loose network of individuals and groups that promote white identity and reject mainstream conservatism in favor of politics that embrace implicit or explicit racism, antisemitism and white supremacy. Alt right adherents oppose multiculturalism, immigration and often claim that there is a Jewish conspiracy to advocate for “white genocide.” These messages are often delivered via social media, using “ironic” memes and/or slogans.

Bannon “proudly” told a Mother Jones reporter at the 2016 Republican National Convention [“we’re the platform for the alt right,”](#) referring to Breitbart News, which he headed at the time. In the same interview, Bannon denied that the alt right is inherently racist or antisemitic, and under his leadership, Breitbart published an

article co-authored by Milo Yiannopoulos, a figure associated with the alt right, downplaying the racism of some of the alt right's main ideologues.

In August 2016, alt right personality Richard Spencer told the Daily Beast, "Breitbart has elective affinities with the alt-right and the alt-right has clearly influenced Breitbart. In this way, Breitbart has acted as a 'gateway' to alt-right ideas and writers."

When President Trump named Bannon as his chief strategist, numerous [well-known white supremacists](#) celebrated the appointment. [David Duke](#) called the selection of Bannon "excellent," adding that Bannon was "basically creating the ideological aspects of where we're going." Peter Brimelow, who runs the racist site VDare, said that the Bannon hire was "amazing."

[Jared Taylor of American Renaissance](#), Brad Griffin of Occidental Dissent, and Rocky Suhayda of the American Nazi Party predicted that Bannon would help hold Trump to his campaign promises on immigration. While in the White House, Bannon reportedly reached out to far-right political figures, including France's Marine Le Pen. In November 2016, she tweeted that he had invited her to work in concert with the new Trump administration.

In August 2017, Bannon was dismissed from his duties at the White House, and resumed his position as executive chairman at Breitbart News. He stepped down five months later after Michael Wolff's book "Fire and Fury" revealed his controversial statements about Trump family members. Bannon also reportedly had disagreements with financial backers of the publication.

## **2. BANNON CHAMPIONS NATIONALISTS IN THE U.S. AND EUROPE**

Since leaving Breitbart in January 2018, Bannon has turned his attention to far-right political candidates and parties in the U.S. and Europe. In 2017, he supported Roy Moore, a controversial Republican candidate who ran for the U.S. Senate in Alabama. Moore is known for putting a monument to the Ten Commandments in

the state judicial building in Montgomery and for allegedly sexually assaulting a number of women and girls.

In March 2018, Bannon, who has met with far-right European leaders from Germany, Italy and France, told the New York Times that he wanted “to build a vast network of European populists to demolish the Continent’s political establishment.”

That same month, Bannon spoke at a meeting of the far-right National Front in France, where he reportedly told attendees, “Let them call you racists. Let them call you xenophobes. Let them call you nativists. Wear it as a badge of honor.”

### **3. UNDER BANNON, BREITBART PUBLISHED INFLAMMATORY PIECES ABOUT WOMEN, MUSLIMS, AND OTHER POPULATIONS.**

Bannon had been on leave from Breitbart since August 2016 when he took over as CEO of the Trump campaign, and he resumed his job as Breitbart’s executive chairman from August 2017 until January 2018. In Bannon’s absence, the right-wing “news” site continued to publish a stream of inflammatory, creatively-sourced “stories.”

Many of the Breitbart headlines published under Bannon’s tenure demonstrate a virulently anti-Muslim, misogynistic worldview, including: “[Planned Parenthood’s Body Count](#) Under Cecile Richards is Up to Half a Holocaust,” “Would You Rather Your Child Had [Feminism or Cancer?](#)” and “Political Correctness Protects [Muslim Rape Culture.](#)” As Bannon’s defenders have pointed out, these headlines are designed to attract attention and readers, and are not necessarily evidence that Bannon himself is an antisemite, a misogynist, or an anti-Muslim bigot.

That said, Breitbart News under Bannon provided a platform for [anti-Muslim extremists](#) Pamela Geller, Robert Spencer, and others. The website published a number of articles attacking the family of Capt. Humayun Khan, who died while serving in Iraq, and accusing his father [Khizr Khan](#) of having “deep ties to the

government of Saudi Arabia—and to international Islamist investors.” Advocating for an immigration ban that would target majority Muslim countries, which Trump suggested during his presidential campaign and attempted to enact once in office, the website called it an [“Extraordinary, Brilliant’ Move”](#) and published articles defending its constitutionality.

While still at the helm of Breitbart, Bannon made a number of comments about the West being at war with Islam. At a speech at the Vatican in 2014, he said, [“We are in an outright war against jihadist Islamic fascism.”](#) During 2015 and 2016 broadcasts of the Breitbart News Daily radio show, he called Islam “the most radical religion in the world” and alleged that “Islamist sympathizers had infiltrated the U.S. government and news media,” [according to an article](#) in USA Today.

According to [a report](#) in The Washington Post, Bannon planned in 2007 to make a three-part movie that imagined radical Muslims taking over the United States and remaking it into the “Islamic States of America.” A draft of the outline for the movie focused on “the culture of intolerance” behind Sharia law and also pointed to a “Fifth Column” made up of “Islamic front groups” as well as enablers, including the American Jewish community, which allowed for the rise of “Islamic fascism” in America.

#### **4. BANNON IS A FIERCE CRITIC OF THE REPUBLICAN ESTABLISHMENT AND THE LEFT.**

Bannon, who has held positions at Goldman Sachs and Affinity Media, is also the co-founder of the Government Accountability Institute (GAI), whose stated mission is “to investigate and expose crony capitalism, misuse of taxpayer monies, and other governmental corruption or malfeasance.” He has produced and financed a number of documentary films on right-wing figures, including Ronald Reagan and Sarah Palin.

Today, Bannon is largely dismissive of traditional Republicans. Instead, he advocates a brand of American nationalism and wants to advance a “global populist movement” that will challenge the current political establishment in the U.S. and Europe.

An August 2016 [article in The Atlantic](#) cites Bannon’s promotion of a populist uprising against the GOP establishment. He told a gathering of conservatives in 2013, “We don’t believe there is a functional conservative party in this country and we certainly don’t think the Republican Party is that. It’s going to be an insurgent, center-right populist movement that is virulently anti-establishment, and it’s going to continue to hammer this city, both the progressive left and the institutional Republican Party.”

In an interview about his 2010 film, “Fire from the Heartland: The Awakening of the Conservative Woman,” Bannon lauded conservative women like Michele Bachmann and Ann Coulter, saying, “These women cut to the heart of the progressive narrative. That’s one of the unintended consequences of the women’s liberation movement—–that, in fact, the women that would lead this country would be feminine, they would be pro-family, they would have husbands, they would love their children. They wouldn’t be a bunch of dykes that came from the Seven Sisters schools.”

## **5. WE ARE NOT AWARE OF ANY ANTISEMITIC STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO BANNON.**

While there is evidence that Breitbart News served as a platform for a wide range of bigotry, and there is some controversy related to reported statements from Bannon’s divorce proceedings in 2007, we are not aware of any antisemitic statements made by Bannon himself. In fact, [some of Breitbart’s](#) Jewish employees have defended him from charges of antisemitism. Some have pointed out that Breitbart Jerusalem was launched during Bannon’s tenure.

Nevertheless, Bannon's stint at Breitbart positioned him as the chief curator of the alt right. Under his stewardship, Breitbart emerged as the leading source for the extreme views of a vocal minority who peddle bigotry and hate.